

# REPORT

## Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

Proposed Battery Energy Storage System, Spittal

Client: Field Spittal Ltd

Reference: PC3506-RHD-07-XX-RP-Z-0014

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# Project Related

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Document Purpose

Royal HaskoningDHV has been commissioned by Field Spittal Ltd (Field) to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey in relation to the construction and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) on land located to the south of the existing Spittal 275 kV substation in Spittal, approximately 450 metres (m) northwest of Spittal Mains Farm, in the Highland Region of Scotland (ND 15632 55021).

The purpose of this document is to provide an understanding of the potential effects of the Proposed Development in regard to heritage. This report constitutes a full desk-based assessment including a setting assessment and walkover survey.

## 1.2 Site Description and Proposed Development

The Proposed Development principally comprises a battery energy storage system (BESS) with a capacity of up to 300 megawatts (MW) which will charge and discharge electricity from the adjacent Spittal 275 kV substation. It includes:

- A BESS compound comprising:
  - Individual battery storage containers arranged into rows.
  - Medium voltage (MV) skids (i.e. one MV skid per two battery containers), each of which houses two power conversion system (PCS) units and one MV transformer.
  - Ancillary infrastructure including low voltage (LV) cabinets, auxiliary transformers and underground ducting and cabling.
- A high voltage (HV) substation compound comprising:
  - Three HV 132 / 275 kV grid transformers
  - Auxiliary transformers and LV distribution infrastructure
  - An on-site substation building, comprising a control room, HV switch room and welfare facilities.
- An underground 275 kV grid connection cable between the substation compound and the existing Spittal substation.
- 3-metre-high palisade security fencing around the site.
- Cut and fill / earthworks and foundational civil structures to create a level compound upon which the batteries, substation and other ancillary structures will be located.
- Access arrangements, including a new access road onto the A9, internal access tracks throughout the BESS and substation compounds and parking spaces.
- CCTV and lighting columns across the site.
- Drainage infrastructure, including an attenuation basin.
- Landscape measures, including two earth bunds along the site's southern and eastern boundaries; and
- Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures.

Whilst the exact specifications are subject to detailed design, the principal components described form the basis of the application for Section 36 Consent and deemed planning permission to allow environmental assessments and mitigation to be appropriately scoped.

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The Proposed Development's overall planning boundary (48.58 ha) is much larger than the anticipated area that would be subject to intrusive construction works (referred to henceforth as the development footprint), which measures approximately 9.51 ha. The primary reason for this has been to incorporate the entire existing Spittal 275 kV substation site into the planning boundary to ensure appropriate flexibility is provided for the point of connection, as well as the proposed accesses from Spittal Mains and the A9. The planning boundary also includes land to the east of the development footprint which accommodates bunding, a new access road and a temporary construction compound. This assessment considers the effects of construction works associated with groundworks and infrastructure within the development footprint and the operation of the completed development (**Appendix A, Figure A 1**). The development footprint comprises the BESS compound, substation building, 275 kV underground cable connection, new access road and temporary construction compound (which would be constructed as permitted development), drainage and landscaping, as shown on the Detailed Site Layout Plan in **Appendix D**.

The proposed BESS and substation compound are situated within an improved field c. 11 ha in size, approximately 300 m west of the A9 road, between Spittal and Banniskirk. The name Spittal refers to a guest- or lodging-house for pilgrims, also called 'hospitals' in many parts of the Highlands<sup>1</sup>. The BESS compound is situated on a gentle west-facing slope which sits between 87 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the west and 100 m AOD in the east.

The BESS compound is located approximately 200 m south of the Spittal 275 kV substation which was constructed in tandem with the associated upgrade to the overhead line transmission network to support renewable-generated electricity. Various archaeological investigations were undertaken as part of these works and are described in **Section 6.3**.

## 2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this desk-based assessment is to outline from existing information the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment baseline resource within the study area (**Section 6**) and, where relevant, its immediate surroundings, to provide an archaeological and historical baseline summary and context for the Proposed Development.

This report also assesses the likely level of any impact that the Proposed Development may have on known and potential heritage assets, as well as the significance of any assets affected and a consideration of the setting of any affected assets. Where there is the potential for impacts, the report sets out any mitigation necessary to address those impacts.

The specific aims of this assessment are:

- To outline the known and potential heritage assets within the development footprint, based on a review of existing information, in order to provide an archaeological and historical baseline context within a defined study area (defined in **Section 4.2**);
- To assess the importance of the known and potential heritage assets through a weighted consideration of their valued components and to provide a consideration of the setting of heritage assets, where relevant; and
- Make recommendations on any likely next steps and mitigation required to address any adverse effects.

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<sup>1</sup> (*Scottish Language Dictionaries et al. website accessed 2024*)

### 3 Consultation

In the pre-application advice from THC (reference 300070741), HES raised concerns on the impacts of the Proposed Development on the scheduled monument of St Magnus' Church, burial ground and hospital (SM5413) (hereafter referred to as 'St Magnus' Church'). Since this time, Field has worked very closely with HES to address their concerns. This has included:

- Extensive stakeholder engagement, including an accompanied site visit and follow-up meetings;
- The production of additional consultation material including technical notes and further visualisations; and
- Several design amendments including the introduction of bunding and a reduction in the overall height and footprint of the Proposed Development.

Full details of the consultation and associated design amendments are provided below.

An initial meeting was held with HES on 14 February 2024. HES responded in writing on 20 February to state that they would likely object to any Section 36 application brought forward for the Proposed Development as proposed at that time; however, would reconsider any alternative proposals that achieved a higher level of retention of / improvement to the existing setting, by way of mitigation. HES accepted the offer of a site meeting to discuss the matter further. They also suggested providing photomontage visualisations from two locations at the monument and on the A9 to illustrate the appearance of the completed development.

A site meeting took place on 18 April with HES to discuss the provided photomontage viewpoints and potential design enhancements and further advice was received from HES. HES also attended the formal pre-application meeting called by The Highland Council in May 2024.

HES were provided with photomontage visualisations illustrating a revised design, and a technical note setting out that design evolution on 30 July 2024. A further consultation meeting was held with HES on Monday 5 August 2024 to consider this design evolution and the photomontage visualisations. HES noted that the supplied visualisations were useful, but requested that the existing visualisations be produced using both planar and cylindrical projections in order to more fully understand the likely setting impacts, particularly:

- To show the land to either side to give a better understanding of how the increase in height caused by the bunding might look relative to its surroundings and how it might look in relation to the monument itself; and
- HES requested a third visualisation depicting both the monument and the Proposed Development when viewed from the south to give a better idea of how the Proposed Development might appear when approaching the monument in its wider setting, as well as clarifying how the difference in elevation might affect how much of the scheme would be visible on approaches from the south.

The Cultural Heritage and Archaeology visualisations are based on a combination stakeholder consultation with HES and best practice guidance contained in: TGN-06-19-Visual\_Representation (Landscape Institute 2019) and Visual Representation of Wind Farms Guidance (Scottish Natural Heritage 2017). HES requested CH visualisations at both cylindrical (90°) and planar (53.5°) projections for photomontages to provide both a broader understanding of how the development would appear in its wider surroundings (cylindrical) and an approximation of how it would appear to the human eye (planar).

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“ Visualisations are intended to represent design, form and context to a reasonable degree of objectivity and accuracy , once which can be understood and relied on by competent authorities and others.” (TGN-06/19 LI- Para 4.4.3)

Subsequent to this consultation, further design changes were implemented, focused on using an updated battery technology to allow for a slightly more compact layout, reducing the overall footprint of the Proposed Development and therefore increasing its distance from St Magnus' Church. These additional visualisations were provided to HES on 3 October 2024. HES noted that a further site visit would be useful to see the proposals in context.

Collated design information including the proposed landscape plan was provided to HES on 15 November 2024 in advance of their unaccompanied site visit on 20 November 2024. Subsequent to that unaccompanied site visit, alterations to the proposed landscaping scheme were made, primarily the omission of the proposed scrub planting to the south of the bund and the adoption of a mixed highland grass seed mix for planting in this area. This was notified to HES on 16 December 2024. HES responded on 17 December 2024 to advise that they would not be likely to object to the scheme as proposed.

A summary of HES' comments and the design responses are outlined in **Table 1** below.

*Table 1 Summary of HES concerns and design response*

HES Comment	Design Response
The proximity of the Proposed Development to the monument	<p>As part of its assessment of alternatives and in response to HES' concerns, Field has explored the potential acquisition of a parcel of SSE-owned land between the Spittal substation and the development footprint; this would allow the development footprint to be located further north and increase its distance from St Magnus Church. SSE however have confirmed that they are not willing to sell or lease this land to Field.</p> <p>Field has also engaged with SSE in an attempt to secure rights over the existing Spittal substation access road (immediately off the A9) in order to remove the need for the construction of a new access as part of the Proposed Development. SSE have however confirmed that they require 24/7 operational access to all of their sites and so they do not grant shared access rights.</p> <p>The potential to move the Proposed Development west of the existing substation was considered however this was rejected due to existing electrical infrastructure and the close proximity of residential receptors at Achanarras. As a result, it is not possible to relocate the Proposed Development to the lower lying land to the west. This movement would also have been clearly visible from St Magnus Church and would have considerably extended the perceived area occupied by infrastructure development in views from the south.</p> <p>Design work has therefore focused on optimising the Proposed Development in the planned location.</p> <p>The southern edge of the development footprint is set back from the field boundary as far as possible given site constraints (i.e. clearance</p>

## Project Related

HES Comment	Design Response
	<p>regulations around high voltage overhead lines), preventing a shift of the development to the west. However, as detailed below, the following design mitigation measures have been implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The height of Proposed Development has been reduced;</li> <li>• Adoption of a revised battery technology has allowed for a decrease in the overall footprint of the site; and</li> <li>• Bunds are proposed to the south and east of the Proposed Development</li> </ul>
<p>The potential for cumulative effects with other existing and proposed electricity storage and transmission infrastructure around the existing Spittal substation.</p>	<p>The height of Proposed Development has been reduced as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site civil works have been re-designed in order to reduce the ground level in the higher, eastern part of the site by a maximum of 1.5 m and create a level surface. Site-won material for the excavations will also be re-used within the bunding in order to reduce construction impacts.</li> <li>• The tallest elements of the Proposed Development (i.e. the transformers and switchgear within the substation compound) have been re-located to this lowered area, reducing its maximum height by typically 1m, and the overall height of the control building has been reduced by a slackening the roof pitch, achieving a further reduction in height of approximately 1m.</li> <li>• The transformers and switchgear, which comprise the tallest element of the Proposed Development, would be located towards the northern edge of the development, maximising its distance from St Magnus Church. Coupled with its reduction in height (as a result of the lower ground levels), these would be backgrounded against the existing bunding to the Spittal substation in views from the south and would not break the horizon in these views.</li> </ul> <p>As a result of the above embedded mitigation by design, taller infrastructure and bunding would sit below the existing horizon, helping preserve the longer views that serve to St Magnus Church in its distinctive regional context in the open Caithness landscape, and in relation to the putative and conjectured pilgrimage routes.</p> <p>The adoption of an updated battery technology has also allowed for a decrease in the overall footprint of the site.</p>
<p>The effective removal of the buffer between the existing Spittal substation and the monument in views from the A9</p>	<p>In response to HES’s comments, bunds are now proposed to the south and east of the Proposed Development as follows. As noted above, the bunds will be created from site-won material, thereby reducing construction impacts.</p>
<p>The need for screening which may be useful in</p>	<p>The southern bund provides screening of the infrastructure in views northwards from St Magnus Church and in views over it from the south. In line with HES’ recommendation, and as shown in the attached</p>

## Project Related

HES Comment	Design Response
reducing the magnitude of any effect on (harm to) the setting and associated significance of the monument, with a preference for bunding over planting.	<p>photomontages (<b>Annex 2</b>), the bunds would be planted with highland grassland mix, to use the subtle variations in height, colour and texture to break up the form of the bunding, and to reflect the colours and textures of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>The southern bund would screen the battery units in views north from St Magnus Church whilst also screening the lower parts of the switchgear and substation building, thereby reducing the viewer's perception of the proximity of the Proposed Development to St Magnus Church. It would also screen the lower elements of the existing Spittal substation in these views (Viewpoint 1). This screening would be somewhat less effective in views northwards from the more elevated viewpoint at Spittal Mains but would still provide a discernible separation between the asset and the proposed development. (Viewpoint 2)</p> <p>Additional land has since been leased from the landowner to accommodate an eastern bund and a native hedgerow to the eastern edge of the development footprint, which would provide screening of the eastern part of the Proposed Development in views from the A9 in which St Magnus Church as also visible. Visibility of the proposed battery units would be greater in views further south on the A9, closer to the shelter belt at Spittal Mains, but St Magnus Church is not apparent in these views, being screened by the existing planting and the underlying topography (Viewpoint 3).</p> <p>Based on feedback from HES, the bunds have undergone detailed profiling to ensure they align as much as possible with the site's surrounding landform character.</p> <p>In views from the south, the monument itself is not prominently visible, and these views serve primarily to locate it within a wider, regionally distinctive landscape context, and allow an imaginative reconstruction of a pilgrimage route northwards. The proposed battery units and switchgear would be more visible in these views than in views from St Magnus Church itself as a result of the greater elevation. The Proposed Development would, however, also be lower in the view behind St Magnus Church and would be visible only in the section of the view already occupied by the existing substation and electricity transmission infrastructure, which would remain the dominant element in these views. The clustering of taller elements of the Proposed Development where they would be backgrounded by the existing converter station would remain, and these elements would remain lower than the corresponding elements of the existing substation. The Proposed Development would not break the skyline or disrupt views to the open landscape beyond the existing substation.</p>
Visibility of the Proposed Development in views of the monument from the south	<p>Additional land has since been leased from the landowner to accommodate an eastern bund and a native hedgerow to the eastern edge of the development footprint, which would provide screening of the eastern part of the Proposed Development in views from the A9 in which St Magnus Church as also visible. Visibility of the proposed battery units would be greater in views further south on the A9, closer to the shelter belt at Spittal Mains, but St Magnus Church is not apparent in these views, being screened by the existing planting and the underlying topography (Viewpoint 3).</p> <p>Based on feedback from HES, the bunds have undergone detailed profiling to ensure they align as much as possible with the site's surrounding landform character.</p> <p>In views from the south, the monument itself is not prominently visible, and these views serve primarily to locate it within a wider, regionally distinctive landscape context, and allow an imaginative reconstruction of a pilgrimage route northwards. The proposed battery units and switchgear would be more visible in these views than in views from St Magnus Church itself as a result of the greater elevation. The Proposed Development would, however, also be lower in the view behind St Magnus Church and would be visible only in the section of the view already occupied by the existing substation and electricity transmission infrastructure, which would remain the dominant element in these views. The clustering of taller elements of the Proposed Development where they would be backgrounded by the existing converter station would remain, and these elements would remain lower than the corresponding elements of the existing substation. The Proposed Development would not break the skyline or disrupt views to the open landscape beyond the existing substation.</p>
Request for additional visualisations (additional viewpoint at Spittal Mains, cylindrical and Planar projections)	<p>A third photomontage visualisation has been produced from a viewpoint immediately north of Spittal Mains (Viewpoint 2) in line with a request by HES. Visualisations from all viewpoint locations have been produced in cylindrical and planar projections, responding to HES' request for visualisations using a cylindrical projection that show St Magnus Church</p>



## Project Related

HES Comment	Design Response
	<p>and Proposed Development in their wider landscape context as well as the more closely focused visualisations presented by the planar projections.</p> <p>VP1 (St Magnus' Church) - This viewpoint shows the views from the church ruins. In this view, the southern bund would screen all but the tallest elements of the Proposed Development, which would remain backgrounded by the existing Spittal 275 kV substation. The bunding would allow for a perceptual separation of the monument from the Proposed Development and would not affect the views to the further horizon or into the valley at Achanarras that contribute to understanding and appreciation of St Magnus Church's place in the wider landscape. The existing electricity transmission infrastructure would remain the visually dominant element of this view.</p> <p>VP2 (Spittal Mains) - This viewpoint shows the view on the approach to St Magnus Church along the private track leading north out of Spittal Mains. The monument is visible with some effort as low, ruinous walls within improved pasture. The southern bund would screen the majority of the battery units, with the western part of the development only appearing in the view behind the bunding, again appearing low in the view at the bases of the existing overhead transmission towers. As noted above, it is not possible to utilise the existing SSE access at the existing Spittal substation. Therefore, in order to allow access to the site a gap is required between the bunds. The gap between eastern and southern bunds is visible and the switchgear would be visible, but backgrounded by the existing Spittal 275 kV substation, and no elements of the Proposed Development would break the horizon or preclude views into the wider landscape; the village of Halkirk would remain visible in the further background. The cylindrical projection shows the landscape context clearly, while the planar projection allows closer visibility of the relationship between the switchgear of the Proposed Development and the existing substation and the eastern and western bunds. The bunding would allow for a perceptual separation of St Magnus Church from the Proposed Development and the existing electricity transmission infrastructure would remain the visually dominant element of this view.</p> <p>VP3 (A9) - this viewpoint shows the appearance of the Proposed Development in views north-westwards from the A9. In this view, the cylindrical projection gives a good sense of congruence of the planting with the wider landscape. The switchgear of the Proposed Development would be visible, low in the valley and against the bases of the existing overhead transmission towers, with some of the battery units. The Proposed Development would not break the horizon nor obscure existing views to the monument or into the valley at Achanarras. The Church of</p>

HES Comment	Design Response
	St Magnus is not visible in this view, but the bunding would allow for a clear separation of St Magnus Church from the Proposed Development in views in which it is visible, and the existing electricity transmission infrastructure would remain the visually dominant element of these views.

The response to the issues raised by HES is further discussed in **Section 7.2**.

## 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

The following methodology has been designed in a manner consistent with good practice professional guidance outlined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standards and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (CIfA, 2020). Other best-practice guidance is referenced in the text where appropriate.

### 4.2 The Study Area

As discussed in **Section 1.2**, this assessment focuses on the development footprint, as shown in **Appendix A, Figure A 1**. For the purpose of assessing the potential impacts upon settings of cultural heritage assets, a study area was established using a 2 km radius from a centre point within the BESS compound at ND 15632 55021 for designated heritage assets (**Appendix A, Figure A 2**) for which data was acquired from HES.

For the purpose of assessing any potential physical impact of development within the development footprint on cultural heritage assets, a study area based on a 1 km buffer of the site boundary at that time was established to gather Historic Environment Record (HER) data from the Highland Council for non-designated heritage assets (**Appendix A, Figure A 3**).

The study areas were established based on the Proposed Development area at the time those searches were made. The Proposed Development has subsequently expanded to include the eastern field accommodating a temporary construction compound and access track, in addition to elements of the A9 road. It was considered that for the purposes of this assessment, the original study areas be retained those study areas provided an appropriate context for understanding the intrusive elements of the scheme, and the increased application boundary derived primarily from areas where no intrusive works are planned (such as use of the existing A9 road and connections into the existing converter station).

### 4.3 Sources

The following documentary, cartographic and internet-based sources were consulted in compiling this desk-based assessment:

- Highland Council Historic Environment Record HER (<https://her.highland.gov.uk/>);
- Canmore – National Record of the Historic Environment (<https://canmore.org.uk/>);
- Historic Environment Scotland (<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/downloads>);
- Archival information held at the Nuclear and Caithness Archives;
- Historic Mapping held by the National Library of Scotland (<https://maps.nls.uk/>);



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- The First and Second Statistical Accounts of Scotland (accessed online);
- The Caithness and Sutherland Landscape Character Assessment, commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage (Stanton, 1998); and
- National Collection for Aerial Photography (NCAP) (<https://ncap.org.uk/>).

A commercial search of the Highland Council HER was requested on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024. For the purposes of this search the HER carried out data enhancement to incorporate new records resulting from recent archaeological investigations in the area. The data was also refined to remove duplicate records within the area. The HER data was received on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The HER data used to compile this assessment is presented gazetteer style in **Appendix B**.

### 4.3.1 Cartographic Sources

Pre-Ordnance Survey maps of the development footprint, held by the National Library of Scotland (NLS), were identified and consulted on-line. Relevant maps range in date from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Pre-Ordnance Survey Estate maps did not cover the development footprint.

The Nuclear and Caithness Archives was visited as part of the walkover assessment, where additional cartographic sources were viewed, but provided no additional information for potential heritage assets at the development footprint. The site can be roughly located within an area of rig and furrow illustrated on the Roy Military Survey map of the Highlands (1747-52).

First, second and subsequent editions of the Ordnance Survey maps of the area of interest were identified and examined via NLS.

### 4.3.2 Site Investigation

Ground investigations undertaken across the development footprint identified a dark brown very gravelly silty sand topsoil ranging in thickness between 0.15 m – 0.3 m across the site. Superficial deposits of Devensian Till were encountered underlying the topsoil in all exploratory hole locations, which measured between 0.5 m – 1.7 m in thickness. The bedrock geology of the Spittal Flagstone Formation was typically encountered directly underlying superficial deposits in the majority of exploratory locations at depths ranging from 0.7 – 0.4 m below ground level (bgl). Exceptionally, the bedrock was encountered in trial pit (TP) TP18 at 0.2 m bgl and as deep as 1.4 m bgl. In BH09 and TP18, the unweathered bedrock was encountered directly underlying the topsoil and was described as weak, grey/orangish-brown flagstone recovered as locally clayey, angular, fine to coarse gravel (Curtins, 2024). No archaeological remains were observed (AOC 2024).

### 4.3.3 Aerial Photographic Data

An aerial image of Spittal was consulted at the Nuclear and Caithness Archives centre, but the extents of the development footprint were not visible. No LiDAR data covering the development footprint was found via NLS or the Scottish LiDAR Remote Sensing Portal. The development footprint is within grid squares covered by Phase 1 LiDAR but no topographic detail is available. The NCAP on-line archive holds four aerial photographs covering the development footprint dated from 1942 - 1988 at scales of 1:10000, 1:15000 and 1:24000 (Sortie: M/134/WIC/048, Royal Air Force Second World War Aerial Reconnaissance; Sortie: 106G/Scot/UK/0074, National Air Photograph Survey; Sortie: ASS/60988, All Scotland Survey) none of which are at a sufficiently large scale to identify any additional discernible archaeological features.

### 4.3.4 Walkover Survey

A walkover survey was carried out on 21st February 2024 to determine the topography of the development footprint and existing land use, the nature of the existing visible heritage assets (e.g. structures and earthworks), and assess factors which may have affected the survival or condition of any known or potential heritage assets.

The visit extended beyond the development footprint boundaries for the purposes of scoping designated heritage assets and their intervisibility with the development footprint for the settings assessment.

## 4.4 Assumptions and Limitations

Data used to compile this report primarily consists of secondary, pre-existing information derived from a variety of sources. The assumption is made that the secondary data, as well as that derived from other secondary sources, is reasonably accurate.

The records held by the sources used in this assessment are not a record of all surviving heritage assets, rather a record of the discovery of a range of archaeological and historical components of the historic environment for the study area. The information held within these sources is not complete and does not preclude the subsequent discovery of further elements of the historic environment that are, at present, unknown.

## 4.5 Setting Assessment

This setting assessment has been undertaken in line with the guidance within 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting' (Historic Environment Scotland 2020b). This industry-standard guidance document recommends a stepped (stage-based) approach for assessing the implications of development proposals, as follows:

- Step 1: identify those heritage assets whose settings might be affected;
- Step 2: define the setting of each historic asset; and
- Step 3: assess the impact of any new development on the setting and evaluate the extent to which any negative impacts can be mitigated.

The results of Steps 1 and 2 are presented in **Section 6** Baseline Environment. The Step 3 assessment can be found in **Section 7.2**.

## 4.6 Copyright

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# 5 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

## 5.1 Legislation

The Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014 sets out HES's role and legal status, including changes in processes for the designation of monuments and buildings (scheduling and listing) and for consents relating

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to scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas. The Act amended the following relevant legislation:

- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

Under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, an archaeological site or historic building of national importance can be designated as a Scheduled Monument and is registered with HES. Any development that might physically affect a Scheduled Monument is subject to the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent. Historic Environment Scotland advises the Scottish Government on individual cases for consent and offers advice on the management of Scheduled Monuments.

Under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 statutory protection for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, and their settings, is provided. A Listed Building is that which is seen to be of special architectural or historic interest, and a Conservation Area comprises an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance.

A Listed Building may not be demolished, altered or extended in any manner which would affect its character without Listed Building Consent being granted. Listed Buildings are put into one of three listing categories according to their relative importance:

- Category A: Buildings of special architectural or historical interest which are outstanding examples of a particular period, style or building type;
- Category B: Buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are major examples of a particular period, style or building type; and
- Category C: Buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are representative examples of a period, style or building type.

## 5.2 National Planning Policy

Overarching national planning policy in Scotland is managed through National Planning Framework 4 (Scottish Government, Adopted February 2023) which subsumed the earlier two primary documents:

- Scottish Planning Policy (Scottish Government, 2014b); and
- National Planning Framework 3 (Scottish Government, 2014).

National Planning Framework 4 sets out the policy aim to '*...protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places*' and key provisions for dealing with assessment of effects on historic assets or places (Policy 7a), scheduled monuments (Policy 7h), and non-designated heritage assets (Policy 7o).

Heritage-specific policy is given in the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (2019a), which is managed by HES. The policy supports good decision making for Scotland's unique places and outlines how the Historic Environment will be considered by Scottish Government in planning decisions. There are six main policies and principles:

### Policy on Understanding and Recognition

- HEP1 - Decisions affecting any part of the historic environment should be informed by an inclusive understanding of its breadth and cultural significance.

### Policies on Managing Change

- HEP2 - Decisions affecting the historic environment should ensure that its understanding and enjoyment as well as its benefits are secured for present and future generations.
- HEP3 - Plans, programmes, policies and strategies, and the allocation of resources, should be approached in a way that protects and promotes the historic environment. If detrimental impact on the historic environment is unavoidable, it should be minimised. Steps should be taken to demonstrate that alternatives have been explored, and mitigation measures should be put in place.
- HEP4 - Changes to specific assets and their context should be managed in a way that protects the historic environment. Opportunities for enhancement should be identified where appropriate. If detrimental impact on the historic environment is unavoidable, it should be minimised. Steps should be taken to demonstrate that alternatives have been explored, and mitigation measures should be put in place.
- HEP5 - Decisions affecting the historic environment should contribute to the sustainable development of communities and places.
- HEP6 - Decisions affecting the historic environment should be informed by an inclusive understanding of the potential consequences for people and communities. Decision-making processes should be collaborative, open, transparent and easy to understand.

Policy HEP1 is particularly relevant to this appraisal and states that decisions affecting any part of the historic environment should be informed by an inclusive understanding of its breadth and cultural significance. The policy gives the core principles on understanding and recognition as:

- Recognising the cultural significance of sites and places supports good decision-making.
- A place must be understood in order for its cultural significance to be identified.
- A wide range of factors contribute to cultural significance.
- Knowledge and information about the historic environment is critical to our understanding of our past, present and future.
- The historic environment changes over time, and so does how it is understood and appreciated.
- Research, discussion and exchange of ideas can all contribute to our understanding of the historic environment.
- Understanding will improve when information is made widely available, and everyone has the opportunity to contribute to knowledge of the historic environment.

National heritage policy is also managed via the following supplementary planning documents:

- Our Place In Time: The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland (Scottish Government, 2014a);
- Historic Environment Scotland Circular 1: Processes and Procedures (Scottish Government, 2019b);
- Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (Scottish Government, 2015); and
- Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology (Scottish Government, 2011).

### 5.3 Local Planning Policy

A specific local development plan for Caithness was formally adopted in 2018, named CaSPlan (Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan) which details the relevant policies in paragraphs 71 – 73 of the Environment and Heritage section.

CaSPlan operates alongside the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) which was adopted in 2012 and remains extant and relevant as part of the adopted local development plan. The HwLDP policies relevant in terms of heritage and archaeology are:

- Policy 28 Sustainable Design;
- Policy 29 Design Quality and Place-making;
- Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage; and
- Policy 61 Landscape.

### **5.4 Additional Heritage Guidance**

The methodology within this assessment is based on the following professional guidance documents:

- Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook (Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland, 2018)
- Principles of Cultural Heritage Assessment (Institute of Environmental Managers and Assessors, 2021).
- Standards and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists', 2020); and
- Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting (Historic Environment Scotland 2020b).

## 6 Baseline Environment

### 6.1 Designated Heritage Assets

There are eight Scheduled Monuments within the study area (**Appendix A, Figure A 2**) which are detailed in **Table 2** below.

*Table 2 Scheduled Monuments within the study area*

ID / Highland HER	Name	Easting	Northing	Distance from the Application Boundary
SM5413 / MHG1350	St Magnus' church, burial ground and hospital	315881	954875	75 m
SM528 / MHG188	[Prehistoric] Fairy Hillock, chambered cairn southeast of Spittal Mains	316374	954386	0.21 km
SM2402 / MHG1349	[Prehistoric] Achanarras, hut circle	314756	955772	0.45 km
SM2400 / MHG13619	[Prehistoric] Achanarras, cairn 800m northwest of	314464	955754	0.63 km
SM475 / MHG1327	[Prehistoric] The Shean, cairn 500m west-northwest of Achanarras	314539	955259	0.67 km
SM2401 / MHG1330	[Prehistoric] Achanarras, cairn 800m northwest of	314538	955753	0.7 km
SM2235 / MHG1326; MHG39762	[Prehistoric] Achies, broch 800m northeast of	313999	955653	1.14 km
SM509 / MHG1328	[Prehistoric] Achies, broch 180m east of	313637	955060	1.6 km

St Magnus' Church (SM5413) is situated approximately 75 m south of the Site and comprises the drystone ruins of a former hospital likely dedicated to the Norse Saint Magnus Erlendsson, Earl of Orkney. The exact date of construction is uncertain, but historic records viewed at The Nuclear and Caithness Archives possibly date the structure to as early as 1106 AD with later additions and modifications. The church remained in use as the parish church of Spittal until the sixteenth century, and by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was long used by the Clan Glenn as a burial ground. The area of both the graveyard and the church is covered with uninscribed gravestones and is enclosed by an old sunken wall. There is a lengthy discussion of the history of the house in the Old Statistical Account, which suggests the hospital was dissolved in the reign of Queen Mary or King James VI, and notes the presence or the former presence of 'several' houses around the

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chapel and further to the west at Auchinarras (presumably the modern Auchanarras farm (OSA, vol. XIX: [Statistical Accounts of Scotland \(edina.ac.uk\)](#)). The schedule notes that the asset is primarily of importance for its ability to inform study of the medieval pilgrimage routes to Dornoch and to St Magnus' on Orkney, and their influence on local culture, trade, and economy, as well as understanding aspects of the architecture, use and development of the chapel.

Approximately 0.21 km southeast of St Magnus' Church (SM5413) is the site of Fairy Hillock, a chambered cairn [burial mound] southeast of Spittal Mains (SM528). The monument (asset) is described as a Neolithic short horned cairn, possibly of Orkney-Cromarty type. It is now visible as an oval, turf-covered mound with signs of a chamber on the top. The monument has the potential to offer further understanding of funerary practices in the Neolithic period.

The Shean, a cairn 500 m west-northwest of Achanarras (SM475), comprises a small cairn likely dating to the Bronze Age period. The monument measures 30 ft in diameter and 3 ft in height, with a slight depression on the top suggesting that it may have been excavated or robbed in antiquity. Three non-designated hut circles are recorded in the HER to the immediate south of the cairn and are likely associated with it (described in **Section 5.2.1.2**).

A scheduled hut circle (SM2402) and two further scheduled cairns (SM2400 and SM2401) are recorded 0.45 km – 0.7 km northwest of the Site. The hut circle (SM2402) is described as a circular grassy enclosure 0.5 m high and 13 m in diameter, with a central low mound measuring 3 m x 2 m and 0.3 m high. The entrance is in the west and the enclosing bank is spread to a width of 4 m. The two scheduled cairns (SM2400 and SM2401) are situated approximately 195 m west of the hut circle and are likely associated. The monuments present an opportunity to further understand Prehistoric funerary and settlement activity.

A possible broch 800 m northeast of Achies (SM2235) is situated c. 1.14 km northwest of the Site, consisting of a large grassy mound measuring around 150 ft in diameter and 12 to 14 ft high. Although there are no visible signs of masonry, it is very probable that the remains of an Iron Age broch lie beneath the turf. When the site was partially excavated in 1805, human remains of an unknown date were discovered (MHG39762), suggesting that the monument also offers evidence of prehistoric funerary practices.

An additional possible broch 180m east of Achies (SM509) is recorded c. 1.6 km west of the Site. The monument comprises a grass-covered hillock with a diameter of 90 ft, the eastern side of which has been considerably removed in antiquity. The exposed building and depressions on the summit suggest that this is an Iron Age broch.

It is worth mentioning the record of the Skida Mire Battle Site (MHG1352), which was spoken of by Torfæus (1866), an oral tradition of a battle in Easterdale (which is described as within more than a mile of Spittal Hill) between Liotus, Earl of Orkney, and his brother, Sculius. At the time of writing, Torfæus states that the battle was fought on the mossy plain ground near Spittal Hill, which appears to refer to the land around the Loch of Toftingall, and it was here that the slain members of Liotus's army were interred. Possibly contradictory to this, in an earlier text the battle is said to have taken place at Kilmster in Bower parish (NSA, 1845), some 10 km northeast of Spittal; Spittal Hill is, however, not an entirely uncommon place name and the tradition is somewhat uncertain. The battlefield is not registered on the Scottish Battlefield register. It is not possible to confidently locate this battle, due to the limited documentary evidence and the absence of any material evidence, which is typical of early-medieval battlefields, which frequently leave behind very little material culture. Given the topographic description by Torfaeus and the potential alternative locations, it appears that, if this site is located in the study area, it is most likely located in the lower-lying marshy ground to the south-west of the site, around the Loch of Toftingall. While the likelihood of exposing remains associated with this historic battle cannot be ruled out entirely, it seems extremely unlikely – while



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archaeological desk studies have identified this possibility, no records of archaeological remains potentially associated with the battlefield have been identified to date.

With consideration to the recently awarded Flow Country World Heritage Site (WHS) boundary and reference to the management plan (The Flow Country, 2023), the Proposed Development lies 5 km north of the Munsary-Shielton boundary at its nearest point towards Halsary. The separation between the Proposed Development and the Flow Country WHS is not expected to affect the setting of the WHS insofar as that setting relates to its heritage value.

There are no Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes, or Inventory Historic Battlefields within the study area. There are five further Scheduled Monuments located just immediately outwith the study area:

- Spittal Farm, broch 180m east of (SM582) – 2.03 km southeast;
- Cnoc Donn, broch 600m east-southeast of (SM541) – 2.3 km southwest;
- Ballone, broch 360m northeast of Spittal (SM521) – 2.3 km southeast;
- Dale Farm, broch 800m southeast of (SM545) – 2.4 km southwest; and
- Knockglass, broch east of (SM561) – 2.6 km southeast of the Site.

These monuments are characterised as grass-covered circular mounds which represent a defined cluster of scheduled, possibly Iron Age, broch remains in the region that have not yet been subject to modern investigation techniques. It is noted that while the broch 180m east of Spittal Farm (SM582) falls slightly outwith the study area, no impacts to the setting of the monument would be anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development, based on the rise in the landscape to the southeast which entirely screens the development from views towards or of the broch.

All other Designated Heritage Assets located beyond the study area are not considered further in this assessment, predominantly due to their distance from the Proposed Development. It was concluded, based on the results of the walkover survey, that due to the nature of these assets and their settings, their distance from the Proposed Development and the development's likely scale, impacts to the setting of these assets would not arise.

## 6.2 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

### 6.2.1 Highland Council Historic Environment Record Data

#### 6.2.1.1 Within the Site

There are no HER records of non-designated heritage assets within the development footprint. Similarly, the walkover survey did not identify any further evidence of extant, previously unrecorded heritage assets within the area to be developed. On the earliest cartographic source (Roy Highlands, 1747-52) the development footprint can be broadly located within an area of agricultural fields depicted between 'Spittel' and 'Harpsdale', which demonstrates the historic use of the landscape for cultivation.

#### 6.2.1.2 Within the 1km Study Area

A summary of non-designated heritage assets within 1 km of the development footprint is presented in **Appendix A, Figure A 3** and in **Appendix B**.

The Highland HER records the remains of a farmstead (MHG19151) at Spittal Hill, approximately 185 m northeast of the development footprint. The farmstead is described as a rectangular bipartite structure of Post Medieval date (1560 AD to 1900 AD), with the southwestern unit probably consisting of a byre dwelling



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as it contains a fireplace and at the other end a drainage channel. The northeastern unit represents a later addition.

Approximately 300 m northwest of the development footprint, the HER records the location of a Chapel (MHG1429) and a broch (MHG673) at Achanarras. The Statistical Account (OSA, 1797) refers to ecclesiastical remains of the Chapel (MHG1429) 'at a place on a rising ground to the west of the church called Auchinarras'. The exact location is unknown. The HER notes that this seems more probable that the entry in the Statistical Account is a misinterpretation of the broch remains found slightly to the northeast (MHG673). The possible broch (MHG673) comprises a grassy mound, 25 ft in diameter and 4 ft high, dated to the Iron Age period (550 BC to 560 AD). At present, the asset lies within an active farmyard in a fairly eroded condition.

The Highland HER records the site of a farmstead (MHG19904) and a disused mineshaft (MHG18434) at Black Pool, roughly 360 m southwest of the development footprint. The farmstead (MHG19904) is described as two roofed buildings depicted on the first edition OS 6-inch map (Caithness 1877, sheet xviii), but these are not shown on the 1976 edition of the OS 1:10,000 map. An unroofed structure, marked as a disused mineshaft (MHG18434), is depicted on the current edition of the OS map.

Spittal Mains (MHG37044) is recorded in the HER as an historic farmhouse and farmstead of an unassigned date. The farm is still in use, situated some 400 m southeast of the development footprint.

The location of a longhouse farm (MHG18435), a lead mine (MHG51712) and a modern stone quarry (MHG33106) at Achanarras are recorded in the HER, approximately 430 m southwest of the development footprint. The farm (MHG18435) is depicted as two roofed buildings on the first edition OS 6-inch map (Caithness, 1876, sheet xvii). One unroofed building and one unroofed structure are shown on the 1976 edition of the OS 1:10,000 map. The HER notes that the lead mine (MHG51712) was still active in 1918, citing the Grampian Speleological Group (2008).

The Highland HER describes the location of a possible broch (MHG672) at Achcomhairle, located c. 715 m northeast of the Proposed Development. The asset comprises a low, circular mound about 24 m in diameter and 0.8 m high, with a central depression 12 m in diameter and 0.5 m maximum depth, situated on a false crest on the gentle west facing slope of Spittal Hill. The HER record cites the original entry in the Object Name Book (ONB, 1872) as 'Tulloch – the remains or ruins of a Pict's House'. Tulloch is the local name applied to suspected locations of 'Pictish Houses', though the lack of structural features suggests the site may actually be that of a cairn.

Torr An Fhidlier (MHG189), the remains of a grassy sub-oval mound evidently covering a broch, is situated 520 m southeast of the Proposed development. Soil erosion has exposed a mass of small non-coursed stone slabs, resembling cairn more than broch material, with a possible cistern set up on the summit. The mound has been attributed to the Iron Age period, but the limited nature of the remains and the absence of exposed built structures preclude classification.

Buolinach farmstead (MHG18437) is described in the HER as a longhouse farm comprising a longhouse, enclosure and a well of Post Medieval date, situated c. 790 m southwest of the Proposed Development. Two roofed buildings are depicted on the first edition OS 6-inch map (Caithness 1877, sheet xviii), but only one is shown on the 1976 edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

Spittal Mains Cottages (MHG19144) are situated approximately 530 m southeast of the Proposed Development, described in the HER as a barely discernible rectangular structure abutting a field wall. Three

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unroofed buildings, two of which are long buildings, is depicted on the first edition OS 6-inch map (Caithness 1877, sheet xviii), but is not shown on the 1976 edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

A building at Spittal Hill (MHG19150) located 805 m east of the Proposed Development is recorded in the HER as an unroofed building depicted on the first edition OS 6-inch map (Caithness 1877, sheet xviii), but this is not shown on the 1976 edition of the OS 1:10,000 map

The location of a building at Achanarras Hill (MHG18432) situated 810 m west of the Proposed Development is noted in the HER and is dated to the Post Medieval period. The structure is described as a roofed building within a triangular enclosure depicted on the first edition of the OS 6-inch map (Caithness 1876, sheet xvii), but depicted on the 1963t OS map as unroofed.

The Highland HER records three undated farmsteads at Spittal Hill (MHG18431, MHG19152 and MHG19149). The first structure (MHG18431) is situated c.890 m northeast of the Proposed Development and is described in the HER as two rectangular longhouses with internal divisions, and a third enclosure or possible structure with no internal divisions. The second structure (MHG19152) sits c.1.1 km northeast of the Proposed Development and comprises a rectangular structure defined by grassy walls 0.7 m high, with four compartments. An associated enclosure is shown on the 1971 edition of the OS 1:10560 map. The third structure (MHG19149) is situated c.970 m east of the Proposed Development and is described as a possible farmstead comprising two unroofed buildings, one of which is a long building, that is depicted on the first edition OS 6-inch map (Caithness 1877, sheet xviii) but is not shown on the 1976 edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

A further undated farmstead (MHG19148) is recorded in the HER at Spittal Mains. The Canmore database records this feature c.970 m southeast of the Proposed Development, whereas the Highland HER depicts the site a further 36 m to the southeast. It is described as an unroofed, long building and enclosure depicted on the first edition OS 6-inch map (Caithness 1877, sheet xviii). The structure is not shown on the 1976 edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

The HER describes the site of an unroofed building (MHG18883) at Achalone, c. 760 m northwest of the Proposed Development. The building is depicted on the first edition OS 6-inch map (Caithness 1876, sheet xvii), but is not shown on the 1971 edition of the OS 1:10,560 map.

The Highland HER describes three hut circles (MHG1333, MHG33101 and MHG33102) to the south of 'The Shean' scheduled cairn (SM475). The hut circles lie just beyond the 1 km study area, situated approximately 1,081 m northeast of the Proposed Development, but are included in this report due to their likely association with the The Shean (SM475). The HER notes that on the flat hilltop there are the grass-covered footings of three circular enclosures, two of which are joined. The hut circles are likely Bronze Age in date (2400 BC to 551 BC), offering further insight into the prehistoric activity in this region. At the approximate location of the recorded hut circles, the site of a sheepfold is illustrated on the first edition 6-inch OS map of 1877 (Caithness, Sheet XVII).

### 6.3 Previous Archaeological Investigations

Various previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken within and adjacent to the Proposed Development prior to the construction of the Spittal 275 kV substation and associated overhead power line connections (**Appendix A, Figure A 4**).

A desk-based assessment was carried out in 2000 by A&D Sutherland in advance of an extension to the Flagstone Quarry at Spittal (EHG640) situated c.775 m southeast of the Proposed Development. This assessment identified a number of scheduled monuments in the wider area, noting that the area to be

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developed had been intensively ploughed and any archaeological remains were likely heavily disturbed. The Skida Mire battle site was noted tentatively, but it was concluded that the evidence linking the battle to the area south of Spittal Hill was incredibly imprecise. However, the possibility of stray finds relating to the battle could possibly remain (A&D Sutherland, 2000).

In 2006 a desk-based assessment and walkover survey was conducted by RPS Consultants in advance of a proposed wind farm development near Spittal (EHG4314). The area to be developed comprised land approximately 800 m to the east of the Proposed Development and contained a single scheduled monument, Spittal Farm broch (SM582), in addition to ruined crofts with drystone walled fields now used for grazing. Construction activities were assessed and concluded to be at a considerable distance from the broch, ensuring no direct effects from the development. The wind farm was predicted to have no direct effects on the significance of cultural heritage assets within the site boundary or wider area (RPS, 2007).

A desk-based assessment and walkover survey was carried out by ORCA in 2010 for the route of a 100 m buried cable corridor from Stealky Head to the site of the Moray Firth and Caithness HVDC Connection substation at Spittal (EHG5402). The construction corridor was, at its closest, 500 m to the east of the Proposed Development. Within the construction corridor were several sites of uncertain but potentially regional importance, including mounds, clearance cairns and battle sites. Due to route alterations, no walkover survey was conducted for the section of the corridor between Toftingall and Achanarras, but the desk-based study identified three scheduled monuments and numerous non-designated heritage assets in this region. The DBA also noted the possibility of the Skida Mire battle site potentially extending into the cable corridor, but did not cite an approximate area where this might be (ORCA, 2010).

Later in the year of 2010, an additional desk-based assessment and walkover survey of the site of the Moray Firth Hub & Caithness HVDC Connection substation at Mybster was carried out by ORCA (EHG5401), which included the northern extent of the development footprint. Only one archaeologically sensitive site was identified, Spittal Hill Farmstead (MHG19151), which lies to the east of the Proposed Development. No known sites were identified within the footprint of the converter station during the walkover survey besides a modern clearance cairn. A total of 35 cultural heritage sites were identified within 1 km of the site, most (23) of which were considered of low importance (e.g. modern quarries and ruined farm buildings). Six sites of medium importance including brochs, Bronze Age hut circles and prehistoric mounds were identified, in addition to five highly (nationally) important sites, all of them scheduled monuments.

A desk-based assessment was carried out by Highland Archaeological Services (EHG4611) to assess the potential impacts upon Archaeology and Cultural Heritage resulting from the construction of a new overhead power line between the substation at Spittal and a proposed extension to the existing Mybster substation, which covered the western extent of the development footprint. It was noted that while the works involving the access road adjacent to St Magnus' Church (SM5413) would not directly affect the monument, there could be associated buried archaeology there. It was concluded that the works had the potential to impact the monument through accidental disturbance and change to the assets' setting (SSE, 2013).

Following this desk-based assessment, targeted watching briefs were undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between March 2015 and February 2016 during groundworks for the Dounreay to Mybster Overhead Line upgrade works (EHG5327). Two lengths of access road were stripped of topsoil within the vicinity of St Magnus' Church, burial ground and hospital (SM5413), the northernmost access road falling within the Proposed Development. Access tracks through Spittal Mains had been constructed under a previous contract associated with the new Spittal substation. A number of rubble field drains were recorded across the stripped areas, besides which no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were recorded during the watching brief. Following discoveries made at Area A, additional excavation work was undertaken to record features revealed to the immediate west of Knock Urray Broch. The features comprised an oval

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structure defined by ditches and three interior pits, possibly representing a house or monument of likely prehistoric date (CFA Archaeology, 2016).

A geophysical survey covering approximately 27 ha was undertaken at the preferred location of the Spittal 275 kV substation by Headland Archaeology in 2014 (EHG4168), approximately 0.22 km to the northwest of the Proposed Development. Anomalies indicative of quarrying / infilling, drainage / land improvement, post-medieval agricultural activity and geological variation were identified. No anomalies of obvious archaeological origin were identified within the survey area, and the archaeological potential of the site was considered to be low (Headland Archaeology, 2014a).

Following the geophysical survey, Headland Archaeology undertook a trial trenching evaluation at the preferred location of Spittal 275 kV substation, approximately 0.22 km northwest of the Proposed Development, in 2014 (EHG4269). The evaluation comprised sixty trial trenches, none of which contained features of archaeological interest, other than a series of drains relating to modern agricultural improvements. Trenches targeting the geophysical anomalies identified in the geophysical survey established that they were of natural origin (Headland Archaeology, 2014b).

Archaeological mitigation works were undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between March 2015 and February 2016 for the Dounreay to Mybster Overhead Line upgrade works in Caithness (EHG5327). The project aimed to demarcate sites in proximity to the construction access routes and targeted watching briefs to be undertaken during groundworks in areas of archaeological sensitivity. Two lengths of access road were stripped of topsoil within the vicinity of St Magnus' Church, burial ground and hospital (SM5413), the northernmost access road falling within the Proposed Development. Access tracks through Spittal Mains had been constructed under a previous contract associated with the new Spittal Substation. A number of rubble field drains were recorded across the stripped areas, besides which no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were recorded during the watching brief. Following discoveries made at Area A, additional excavation work was undertaken to record features revealed to the immediate west of Knock Urray Broch. The features comprised an oval structure defined by ditches and three interior pits, possibly representing a house or monument of likely prehistoric date (CFA Archaeology, 2016).

A watching brief was undertaken by Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology (ORCA Archaeology) in 2022 (EHG5994) during the groundworks for the geotechnical investigations in advance of the construction of an electricity substation at Spittal, Caithness. All ground-breaking works associated with the project were monitored and a total of forty-one trial pits were excavated. One test pit was excavated within the eastern extent of the proposed development footprint. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were encountered. The deposits encountered primarily represented modern agricultural activity and improvement, with some areas offering greater potential for the preservation of archaeological features in less intensely improved areas of land (ORCA, 2023).

### 6.4 Cultural Significance of Heritage Assets

The importance of defining cultural significance is set out in HEP1 of Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (Historic Environment Scotland, 2019) – “This involves thinking about its physical and material elements – how much of it has survived or how much of it has changed through time, as well as its wider context and setting. Elements of places which may not have a physical presence, but which contribute to cultural significance need to be recognised. These intangible qualities include the knowledge and associations people have with a particular place.”



### 6.4.1 St Magnus' church, burial ground and hospital (SM5413)

St Magnus' church, burial ground and hospital (SM5413) survives as an area of rough grass measuring approximately 75 m east to west by 65 m north to south, defined by low earthwork banks containing the remains of the chapel walls which survive to between 1.7 m and 2.7 m in height. The schedule notes the survival of a gravestone dated 1819; during the walkover survey two gravestones were identified almost entirely overgrown (**Plate 1**). The schedule notes that the asset is primarily of importance for its ability to inform study of the medieval pilgrimage routes to Dornoch and to St Magnus' on Orkney, and their influence on local culture, trade and economy, as well as understanding aspects of the architecture, use and development of the chapel.

The hospital was first recorded in a Royal Charter of 1476 and gave its name to the nearby hamlet of Spittal. The term hospital was used in the Medieval period to identify a place where the sick were cared for, but was more often a generic term for a place offering hospitality, frequently alms-houses or inns on a pilgrimage route. There is a lengthy discussion of the history of the house in the Old Statistical Account, which suggests the hospital was dissolved in the reign of Queen Mary or King James VI, and notes the presence or the former presence of 'several' houses around the chapel and further to the west at Auchinarras (presumably the modern Achanarras farm) (OSA, 1797). The chapel remained in use as the parish church of Spittal until the sixteenth century, and by the early 19th century was in use as a cemetery for the Clan Gunn. It is possible that there may be some burials outwith the boundaries of the present scheduled area, although the extent of any earlier unenclosed cemetery is likely to be limited. The monument is a valuable resource as it has the potential to increase our understanding of secular and religious architecture, monastic settlement, parish evolution, medical history, burial practices and material culture during the Medieval and early modern period.



Plate 1 Gravestones within the scheduled grounds of St Magnus' church, burial ground, and hospital (SM5413)

The schedule notes that the monument's importance is enhanced by its stage on the pilgrimage routes north to St Magnus' in Orkney and south to St Gilbert's at Dornoch. This sense of connection is one that is experienced by sequential movement through the landscape and is not dependent on specific views, although a conjectural or imaginative understanding of potential routeways may contribute. A potential route is identified on information boards at Spittal Community Centre, passing roughly from northeast to southwest through the scheduled site, although the existing topography of the landscape suggests a more north to south axis, and these routes likely constituted multiple pathways organised in different orders, which were taken dependant on variables such as the time of year, mode of transport, etc. This process of imaginative reconstruction allows the viewer to engage with an understanding of the pilgrimage routes on a personal level.

### **6.4.2 Fairy Hillock (SM528)**

The site of Fairy Hillock (SM528) represents a short-horned cairn, possibly of Orkney-Cromarty type, which may infer a Neolithic presence within the Study Area. The cairn is considered of national importance and as such has been designated as a Scheduled Monument (providing a specific legal protection). Orkney-Cromarty cairns are made up of a rectangular chamber, divided into stalled 'compartments' and covered by round or rectangular shaped cairns. Similarities to early Orcadian domestic architecture led to the notion that Orkney-Cromarty cairns were the first monumental mortuary structures in the north, dating from between 3750 - 3500 BC in Caithness (Ashmore 1996: 29).

### **6.4.3 Prehistoric remains at Achanarras (SM2400, SM2401, SM475 and SM2402)**

The two cairns (SM2400 and SM2401) at Achanarras to the northwest of the development footprint survive as stony mounds, with a likely associated hut circle (SM2402) situated a further 200m east. These assets are designated scheduled monuments and are part of a much wider network of surviving prehistoric settlement and agriculture in this area, including the scheduled site of 'The Shean' [cairn] (SM475) and likely associated cluster of hut circles (**Plate 2**) situated immediately to the south (MHG33101, MHG33102 and MHG1333). Funerary cairns involving the practice of individual burials within stone boxes known as cists became more prevalent in the Bronze Age period, with the site of Tor An Fhidlier (MHG189) c. 520m southeast of the Proposed Development described as containing a possible central cistern.





*Plate 2 Adjoined hut circles (MHG1333 and MHG33101); [Background] The Shean (SM475) photograph taken looking northwest*

#### **6.4.4 Broch remains (SM2235 and SM509)**

The Iron Age activity in Caithness is best characterised by the construction of brochs, which comprise large double walled stone towers, often with surrounding settlements and external fortifications. Several brochs are recorded in the HER within the study area, with a further five brochs identified just beyond, evidencing an established prehistoric presence in the area. Two brochs within the Study Area have been designated as scheduled monuments (SM2235 and SM509), representing nationally significant structures with the potential to provide further information on Prehistoric domestic and defensive features. Human remains are noted to have been discovered in AD 1850 at the broch near Achies (SM2235) on the 6-inch first edition OS map of 1877 (Caithness, Sheet XVII).

The presence of hut circles (SM2402, MHG33101, MHG33102 and MHG1333), brochs (SM582, SM2235) and survival of similar and likely associated Prehistoric settlement and funerary features in the wider landscape indicates there is moderate potential for further previously unrecorded heritage assets to be present buried beneath the surface. The survival of these assets shows there has been little change to land use and agricultural regimes in terms of intensive cultivation since their abandonment. It is notable that archaeological investigations to the immediate north, west, south, and test pitting within the Proposed Development itself, did not identify any features alluding to archaeological remains.

#### **6.4.5 Post-medieval remains**

The ruins of several post-medieval farmsteads are extant within the Study Area to the south, east and west of the Proposed Development (MHG19904; MHG19149; MHG18883; MHG19152; MHG19150; MHG19151), with some still retaining their extant former enclosures (MHG18435; MHG18437; MHG18432; MHG18431; MHG19148). There is a particular concentration of ruined longhouses and remnants of agricultural boundaries to the east of the A9 at Spittal Hill, which appears to continue eastward to the Crofts of Hillpark. Remnants of longhouses are also recorded to the west of the Proposed Development at

## Project Related

Achanarras Quarry (MHG18435) and Black Pool (MHG19904), with note of a lead mine at Achanarras (MHG51712) which was still active in 1918.

The visible above ground remains of Post-medieval farmsteads in the wider area (MHG19904; MHG19149; MHG18883; MHG19152; MHG19150; MHG19151; MHG18435; MHG18437; MHG18432; MHG18431; MHG19148; MHG18435; MHG19904) represents the historic agricultural landscape which continues eastward over Spittal Hill, with areas of moorland and rough grazing to the north of the Proposed Development. These dwellings and the surrounding landscape retain discernible elements of the landscape, allowing the viewer to reconstruct the nature of the original landscape. This suggests there is a potential for further previously unrecorded heritage assets to be present buried beneath the surface, but for surface traces of those remains to have been removed during Improvement of the field that make up the site. Taking into consideration the previous investigations which have been undertaken at the development footprint, these remains are most likely to be limited to remnants of field systems and associated drainage features. One farmstead to the northeast of the development footprint (MHG19151) possibly represents a byre-dwelling, where cattle and humans shared the same household, a common domestic dwelling type in the Highlands throughout the post-medieval period. While the farmsteads and associated field boundaries, enclosures and dykes survive mainly as stony features within banks and ditches, they survive as visible above surface remains of diagnostic (broadly dateable) morphology. They are generally representative of traditional rural dwellings in Scotland.

## 7 Impact assessment

### 7.1 Impact to Buried Archaeological Remains

In the absence of any previously recorded heritage assets within the Proposed Development, there would be no physical effects on any previously recorded archaeological remains. Any groundworks within the Proposed Development have the potential to adversely impact unknown heritage assets of local to regional value and of low to medium importance. Though unlikely, it should be considered that burials may exist outwith the designated area associated with St Magnus' Church, burial ground and hospital (SM5413) and could, as a worst case, be of equivalent value, although it is not expected that significant structural remains extend into the development footprint. Given the presence of Prehistoric remains in the wider area, some of which are nationally important scheduled monuments, there is a possibility that sub-surface Prehistoric remains exist within the development footprint, though this possibility is expected to be low as no archaeological features were identified during ground investigations in 2022 (ORCA, 2023). No surface earthworks suggestive of archaeological remains are present, and any archaeological remains within the development footprint are likely to be very shallow and have been significantly disturbed by agricultural activities.

Similarly, the survival of archaeological remains within the route of the underground cable connection into Spittal substation is expected to be limited, as the ground here would be heavily disturbed, or artificial, as a result of construction of the existing substation.

### 7.2 Change to the Setting of Heritage Assets

In terms of setting, there are eight scheduled monuments within the study area. **Table 3** below describes the current setting and the potential change as a result of the Proposed Development and forms Step 1 of the setting assessment.



## Project Related

Table 3 Potential change to the setting of heritage assets

ID / Highland HER	Name	Distance from application boundary	Setting	Potential Change
SM5413 / MHG1350	St Magnus' church, burial ground and hospital	0.75 km	Within an arable field situated in a broad hollow. Pylons within the field are visible looking west and the upper tiers of Spittal substation can be seen looking north	Proposed development would be clearly visible in close proximity to St Magnus Church in views of and from the monument. This is assessed further at <b>Section 7.2.2.</b>
SM528 / MHG188	[Prehistoric] Fairy Hillock, chambered cairn SE of Spittal Mains	0.95 km	Within an area of improved grazing situated downhill, not visible from the A9	Proposed Development would be screened by the intervening topography and modern forestry plantation. No further assessment required.
SM475 / MHG1327	[Prehistoric] The Shean, cairn 500 m WNW of Achanarras	1.1 km	With an area of rough grass with forestry plantations to the immediate north, east and west	The Proposed Development would be visible as a background element in views from the asset. This is assessed further at <b>Section 7.2.3.</b>
SM2402 / MHG1349	[Prehistoric] Achanarras, hut circle	1.15 km	Within an area of rough grassland on land that slopes gently to the east	Proposed Development would be screened by modern forestry plantations. No further assessment required.
SM2400 / MHG13619	[Prehistoric] Achanarras, cairn 800 m NW of	1.3 km	Within an area of rough grassland on land that slopes gently to the west	Proposed Development would be screened by modern forestry plantations. No further assessment required.
SM2401 / MHG1330	[Prehistoric] Achanarras, cairn 800m NW of	1.37 km	Within an area of rough grassland on land that slopes gently to the west	Proposed Development would be screened by modern forestry plantations. No further assessment required.
SM2235 / MHG1326; MHG39762	[Prehistoric] Achies, broch 800m NE of	1.7 km	Surrounded by modern forestry plantations on all sides, with a clearing to the southwest	Proposed Development would be screened by intervening topography and modern forestry

## Project Related

ID / Highland HER	Name	Distance from application boundary	Setting	Potential Change
				plantations. No further assessment required.
SM509 / MHG1328	[Prehistoric] Achies, broch 180m E of	1.9 km	Within an open field of improved grazing, with modern forestry plantations bordering the field to the east	Proposed Development would be screened by topography and modern forestry plantations. No further assessment required.

Following the walkover survey, it was apparent that intervening modern forestry plantations prevent any intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the Prehistoric cairn and hut circles near Achanarras (SM2400; SM2401; SM2402) to the northwest. The undulating landscape and intervening woodland also block any direct views from or of the Proposed Development towards the Prehistoric brochs 180 m east of and 800 m northeast of Achies (SM509; SM2235) to the northwest and west, and Fairy Hillock (SM528) near Spittal Mains to the southeast. Following Steps 1 and 2 of the guidance 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting' (Historic Environment Scotland 2020b) (see **Section 5**) it was assessed (Step 3) that the cultural significance of these assets would not be affected by the Proposed Development, in terms of material changes to their setting and how the assets are understood and appreciated. This is based on the factors discussed above such as the distance of the heritage assets from the Proposed Development, and the nature, extent and scale of intervening vegetation and topography between the heritage assets and the Proposed Development.

It was however assessed that potential changes to the setting of The Shean (SM475) and St Magnus' Church, burial ground and hospital (SM5413) may arise with the addition of the Proposed Development, which are discussed in more detail below.

### 7.2.1 The Shean, cairn 500 m west-northwest of Achanarras (SM475)

There is the potential for intervisibility between The Shean, a cairn 500 m west-northwest of Achanarras (SM475) looking from the monument towards the Proposed Development. The existing setting of the asset comprises a relatively quiet hilltop with limited views to the north, east and west due to modern forestry plantations, but with longer views of Spittal Hill and Achanarras farm to the east and southeast. The form of the monument may be appreciated from all angles; however, the presence of likely associated hut circles (MHG1333, MHG33101 and MHG33102) to the southeast (refer to **Plate 2** above) particularly invite a north-westerly view of the asset to inform an understanding of its place in the landscape and connection to other Prehistoric remains.

Looking southeast from the monument, aspects of the Proposed Development would be visible through the modern deer fence which comprises a noticeable element of this viewpoint (**Plate 3**). There is visibility of the overhead powerline on lattice pylons and the existing Spittal substation, although these are backgrounded by Spittal Hill and the substation is partly screened by planting, reducing its visual prominence. The position of The Shean (SM475) on a hilltop may be understood for its intervisibility with other Prehistoric monuments in the wider area, particularly the Bronze Age cairns and hut circles downhill to the north, though this intervisibility is, at present, precluded by modern forestry plantations. Similarly, a possible Iron Age broch to the southeast at Achanarras farm (MHG673) could be inferred by an informed

## Project Related

viewer, however the asset is visibly obscured by modern farm refuse. The qualities of the existing setting therefore limit the experience of the asset in its wider multi-period context.

Visibility of the proposed development would be limited in views from the asset, with the BESS being backgrounded against the hillside in views that are already characterised by visibility of the existing overhead line; it would be visually contained within the improved field and appear as an element in the background of these views. Some limited background noise can be heard from the traffic on the existing A9, which is insufficient to cause any noticeable impact to the experience of the asset. With the addition of the anticipated noise levels from the BESS, it is considered unlikely that a significant adverse effect upon the setting of the scheduled monument would arise, given its distance from the Proposed Development. Considering these factors and the distance from the asset to the Proposed Development, and the important northwest views of the monument with the adjacent hut circles, it is not expected that the Proposed Development will discernibly alter the experience of the asset.



*Plate 3 View of the Site from The Shean (SM475) photograph taken looking southeast*

### **7.2.2 St Magnus' church, burial ground and hospital (SM5413)**

#### **7.2.2.1 Embedded Mitigation**

The proposed development would be located in close proximity to the Church of St Magnus, burial ground and hospital, and could be prominently visible in views of and from the church. This area is presently improved grazing, which, while not reflecting a 'contemporary' setting for the church, does form part of the regionally distinctive Caithness landscape and is visually congruous.

Through ongoing pre-application consultation, elements of the Proposed Development have been refined and implemented in the design to minimise any potential harm to the setting and heritage significance of St Magnus' church. Landscape and Visual Assessment photomontages have been included to demonstrate the expected outcomes of the proposed embedded mitigation measures with regards to the monument in its wider landscape context, as well as the more closely focused visualisations presented by Planar projections (Viewpoints 1 and 2). These mitigation measures comprise:

- Reduction in level of the BESS site to achieve a typical height reduction of up to 1.5 m of infrastructure and win material for the construction of screening bunds;
- Construction of screening bunds which have been profiled to better accord with the underlying landscape, to east and south of the BESS compound;

## Project Related

- Relocation of taller elements of the BESS to the area of maximum cut and to be backgrounded against the existing Spittal Converter Station in views from the South; and
- Planting the bunds with highland grass seed mix to use varying textures, colours and length of vegetation to break up the form of the southern bunds and tone with other areas of grassland in the view.

The Proposed Development includes a bund along the southern boundary of the BESS compound to screen the battery units, substation building and other aboveground infrastructure in views of and from the monument to the north. This would be located approximately 85 m to the north of the monument. The closest battery units would be located approximately 150 m north of the monument, but the indicative photomontage (VP1 in **Appendix D**) demonstrates that with the addition of the bund, there would be effective screening of the infrastructure in northward views from the monument. These elements have been located at the northern edge of the Proposed Development, where they would be furthest from the monument and would be backgrounded against the existing substation, preserving the longer views that site the monument in its distinctive regional landscape and historic context. Although the infrastructure would be closer to the monument than at present, the southern bund would maximise the perceptual separation of the monument from the Proposed Development and would not affect the views to the further horizon or into the valley at Achanarras that contribute to understanding and appreciation of the monument's position in the wider landscape.

The southern bund additionally provides screening of the closest elements of the existing Spittal 275 kV substation directly north of the Proposed Development, subsequently hiding a gap in its southern bund that exists to provide necessary clearances for the OHL into the Spittal 275 kV substation site. Furthermore, the bund would be in keeping with the local natural environment through highland grass planting. Consideration was given to planting scrub to the south of the BESS to further break up the form of the bunding, but these proposals have been removed following consultation with HES, where it was noted that this type of planting would adversely affect the openness of the landscape.

An eastern bund is also proposed to provide screening of the Proposed Development from the A9 road; this screening would be strengthened by a native hedgerow to the east of this bund. Views of St Magnus' Church from the A9 are important as the road today denotes the route of the tentative pilgrimage routes as a spiritual reference point on routeways from the north and towards Thurso, although these views are fleeting. As indicated in VP3 in **Appendix D**, the upper parts of the switchgear and substation building would remain visible in views towards the monument from the A9. However, as the monument lies partially within a sunken area, this infrastructure is likely to be visible only to the informed viewer and would not break the horizon nor obscure existing views to the monument or into the valley at Achanarras. The bunding creates a clear separation of the monument from the Proposed Development and the existing electricity transmission infrastructure would remain the visually dominant modern element of this view, with the visible elements introduced by the Proposed Development representing a relatively limited addition.

On the approach to the monument from Spittal Mains via the private track heading north, the monument is somewhat visible within the improved pasture landscape (VP2 in **Appendix D**). Comprising low, ruinous walls, the monument would be seen against the southern bund which would obscure the majority of the battery units, while the western part of the development would be seen behind the bunding, appearing low in the view at the base of the existing overhead transmission towers. No elements of the Proposed Development would break the horizon or obstruct views of the wider landscape; the village of Halkirk would still be visible in the distant background. The cylindrical projection clearly shows the landscape context, while the planar projection provides a closer view of the relationship between the switchgear, the existing substation, and the eastern and southern bunds. In this view, the bunding would help to perceptually



## Project Related

separate the monument from the Proposed Development, with the existing electricity transmission infrastructure remaining the dominant visual element in this view.

The proposed bunding to the south and east of the Proposed Development have undergone detailed profiling, aiming to reflect the gentler topography of this part of Caithness, to ensure they respond to the surrounding landform character and reflect a minor change to the existing topography of the landscape immediately surrounding the scheduled monument. Therefore, the proposed bunds would not appear as significant modifications to the existing landscape in views on the approach to the monument and views of the monument from the A9, and do not detract from the perceived remote location of the monument. As such, it is considered that with the additional screening provided by mitigation, the key views from the chapel and the hospital across the open Caithness landscape would be retained, and the Proposed Development would not outweigh the monument's presence within its surroundings.

### 7.2.2.2 Potential change to the Setting of the Heritage Asset

*Managing Change* advocates considering change to setting as it appears currently, as opposed to what that setting might have looked like in an imagined past landscape. The current setting of the hospital of St Magnus' Church is clearly part of the agricultural improvements of Caithness which occurred during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The immediate surrounding landscape has significantly changed from as it would have appeared during the use of the chapel, and similarly, there are no designed or fortuitous architectural compositions in which the church is experienced. Infrastructure development is a prominent element of the existing landscape to the north of the monument. The existing Spittal 275 kV substation is clearly visible in views to the north as the planting at the substation provides limited screening due to a break in the bunding and vegetation, exposing the lower elements of the infrastructure.

There would be limited visibility of the electrical elements of the Proposed Development from St Magnus' Church (SM5413), although the bunding would be more prominently visible. This bunding and taller elements of the infrastructure will be noticeable in views from the monument towards the site, in views across the monument towards the site, and as the viewer approaches the monument from Spittal Mains.

The upper elements of the switchgear and substation building will be visible in views from the A9, as would the battery units in the western part of the Proposed Development. Views from the monument will, however, remain backgrounded by views across open land to the horizon and the existing skyline, and long-range views down the valley along the tentative pilgrimage route will be retained. Noise modelling indicates that the operational noise level (~37 dB) would not be sufficient to change the existing soundscape at St Magnus' Church in a way that would affect the experience of the site. Noise from the Proposed Development may be perceptible with difficulty on a quiet day, but overall, the area will remain a quiet location. The magnitude of noise is likely to temporarily increase during the construction phase when the access track adjacent to the hospital of St Magnus' Church is in use, however it is expected that operational noise from the BESS would not contribute to an adverse impact.

The temporary construction compound and construction traffic on the A9 access track would result in a temporary change to the setting of St Magnus' Church, altering the experience of the monument from that of a rural agricultural area to that of an active construction zone. This would be a very short term effect, however, as construction of the permanent access route would be the first activity in any construction schedule. The construction impacts would, however, be temporary in nature, and would not represent a long-term change to the fabric of the perceived rural setting which contributes to the cultural significance of the scheduled monument.



*Plate 4 St Magnus' church, burial ground and hospital (SM5413) photograph taken looking northwest*

### 7.2.2.3 Assessment of Effects

The impact of the Proposed Development upon the setting of St Magnus' Church (SM5413) would be adverse, arising as a result of the addition of new development in close proximity to the monument. With the embedded mitigation, however, which includes screening of the substation through bunding and a more compact design, the Proposed Development would not appear dominant in key viewpoints and would limit the view of the existing infrastructure in northward views. Therefore, the Proposed Development would represent a low magnitude of change to the setting of St Magnus' Church and would not appear as an intrusive modern element of the existing rural setting. The bunding would remove the potentially 'cluttered' and modern appearance of the battery units as well as reducing the sense of encroachment from the electricity transmission infrastructure by screening the lower-level elements of the Proposed Development in views from the monument.

The visibility of the access road from the A9 and construction compound would increase the magnitude of change, but as the construction period is relatively short term, this would not present a lasting change to the setting of the monument; the access road would be retained but would not be prominently visible in views of or from St Magnus Church. St Magnus' Church would remain perceptible as part of an open Caithness landscape, retained within its original regionally distinctive landscape setting. This would allow the viewer to be able to appreciate, understand and experience the monument from its key viewpoints even with the addition of the Proposed Development. The key elements of the monument's setting would remain the same, and therefore, the integrity of the setting would be preserved.

There is likely to be an increased magnitude of impact during the early part of the construction phase, particularly where access is taken along the farm track adjacent to the scheduled monument. It was assessed during the walkover survey, however, that the dike separating the scheduled area from the track would prevent inadvertent harm to the monument (i.e. truck swerving off the track). The visibility of the construction compound and A9 access road would further contribute to an increased magnitude of impact, however this change is considered temporary, with the construction period anticipated to be relatively short term, and as such this would not present an increase in the lasting impacts to the integrity of the monument's setting.

With the implementation of embedded mitigation measures outlined in **Section 7.2.2.1**, the impacts to the setting of St Magnus' Church are anticipated to be adverse but would not be sufficient to compromise the integrity of the monument's setting.

### 7.3 Cumulative Effects

The assessment of cumulative effects has considered the following developments:

- West of Orkney Wind Farm (Onshore Substation and Infrastructure) (23/05353/PIP (THC), 24/03205/PNO), Decided 18 June 2024;
- Ayre Offshore Wind Farm (Onshore Substation and Infrastructure) (SCOP-0049 (Marine Scotland), 24/00243/SCOP (THC)), Decided 29 Feb 2024;
- Banniskirk Hub (New Spittal Area 400 kV substation and HVDC converter station) (23/05829/SCOP (THC)), Decided 6 Feb 2024;
- Mybster Croft BESS (23/05424/FUL (THC)), Under Consideration (application received 14 Nov 2023);
- Fig Power - Spittal BESS (24/01076/PAN (THC), Decided 13 June 2024;
- Ouglassy Wind Farm (ECU00005046 (ECU), 24/00902/SCOP (THC)), Decided 10 June 2024;
- Achanarras BESS (ECU00005078 (ECU), 24/02020/SCRE (THC)), Decided 11 June 2024;
- Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beaully 400 kV Connection (ECU00006008 (ECU) 24/04588/SCOP (THC)), Under Consideration (scoping report published 28 Oct 2024); and
- New quarry, Spittal (24/03693/PAN (THC)), Validated (application received 21 Aug 2024).

No potential for cumulative physical effects has been identified, and the assessment of cumulative effects therefore focuses on the potential for cumulative change to setting of heritage assets.

Assessment of cumulative effects on the setting of St Magnus' Church has been undertaken. Other than the existing substation and overhead lines (which are considered above), the locations of other proposed infrastructure development in the area around the Proposed Development are either insufficiently defined to allow an assessment (Ayre Offshore Wind Farm, Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beaully 400kV connection), or would not be sufficiently perceptible to give rise to any cumulative effect in views of or from the assets considered in this assessment (Banniskirk Hub, Synchronous condenser, Achanarras, Mybster Croft BESS, Fig Power BESS, and quarry, Spittal).

The West of Orkney Wind Farm EIA did not identify any adverse effect on the setting of St Magnus' Church arising from the development of the West of Orkney substation. This development would be located north of the existing Spittal 275 kV substation and views from St Magnus' Church would therefore be largely screened, as well as benefitting from its own landscaping scheme; it would not be readily visible in simultaneous or sequential views of St Magnus' Church from the A9, although some upper elements may appear beyond the existing Spittal 275 kV substation in views from Spittal Mains. It is therefore considered that the addition of the Proposed Development to a future baseline, including the proposed West of Orkney substation would not give rise to any cumulative effect.

Similarly, the ZTV submitted with the Ouglassy Wind Farm scoping report predicts minimal, if any, visibility of the proposed wind farm from St Magnus' Church and views in its immediate vicinity towards the proposed turbines. Therefore, no cumulative effect is anticipated.

There is a successive sequence of electricity generation and transmission infrastructure as the viewer travels northwards along the A9 that contributes to an overall sense of modern landscape change. As a viewer travels over Spittal Hill, the overhead line passing through the valley to the west of the A9 and Spittal 275 kV substation come into view, and the addition of the Proposed Development into these sequential views would have the potential to contribute to this sense of change. However, the Proposed Development has been designed to be screened in these views and as a result of its careful siting and screening would

appear in only fleeting views in this approach. The proposed Development would therefore not contribute to that sense of a wider energy infrastructure landscape.

Consequently, it has been assessed that there would be no cumulative effect upon the setting of St Magnus' Church.

## 8 Further Mitigation

As a worst-case scenario, which includes the use of the existing access track adjacent to St Magnus' Church for construction traffic, there would likely be a very limited potential for inadvertent disturbance to a monument of high importance (e.g. vehicle leaving the road) for a short period. However, this can be suitably mitigated using acceptable demarcation (e.g. signage) of the scheduled area, and it was determined during the walkover that the dike separating the track from the scheduled monument would prevent inadvertent harm.

Furthermore, any groundworks associated with the Proposed Development have the potential to adversely impact any unknown heritage assets buried beneath the surface. In this case, a detailed programme of archaeological works in line with Highland Council's approved 'Standards for Archaeological Work' (2012b), and proportionate to the nature of the remains identified, would be required in order to mitigate impacts to below ground archaeological remains.

It is considered that the embedded mitigation measures discussed in **Section 7.2.2.1**, present an effective mitigation for any adverse effects on the setting of St Magnus Church as such no further mitigation measures are recommended.



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## Appendix A – Figures





**Legend:**

- Planning Boundary
- 1km Study Area
- 2km Study Area

Source: © Haskoning DHV UK Ltd, 2024;  
Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right, 2022.

<b>Client:</b> Field Spittal Ltd	<b>Project:</b> Spittal Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
-------------------------------------	---

**Title:**  
Site Location

Figure: 1      Drawing No: PC3506-RHD-SP-ZZ-DR-GS-0001

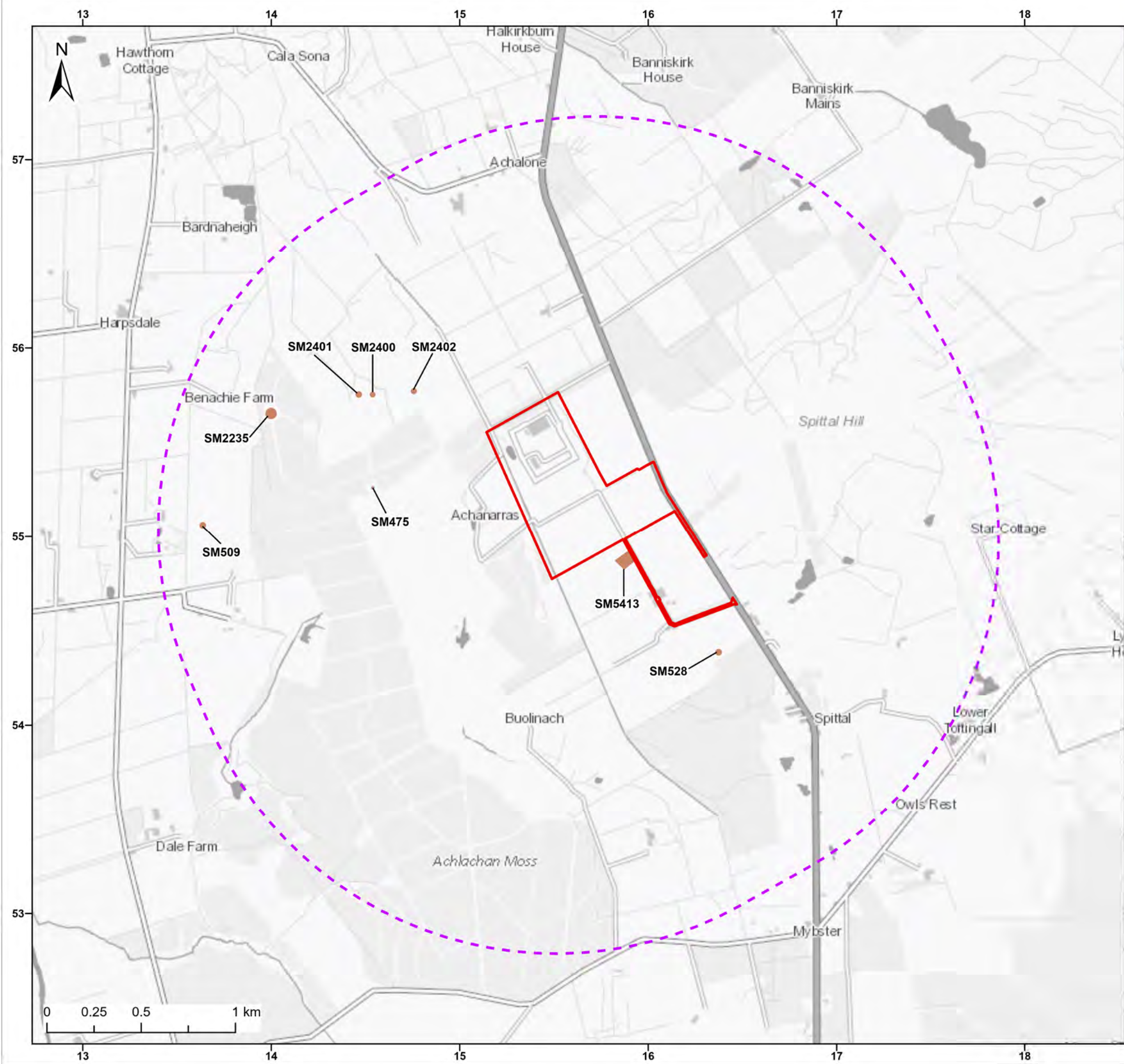
Revision:	Date:	Drawn:	Checked:	Size:	Scale:
02	11/12/2024	JH	GC	A3	1:20,000
01	21/05/2024	MW	GC	A3	1:20,000

Co-ordinate system: British National Grid



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Legend:

- Planning Boundary
- 2km Study Area
- Scheduled Monuments within 2km

Source: © Haskoning DHV UK Ltd, 2024; © Historic England, 2024; Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right, 2022.

<p>Client:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Field Spittal Ltd</p>	<p>Project:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Spittal Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment</p>
---	---

Title:

Designated Heritage Assets

Figure: 2      Drawing No: PC3506-RHD-SP-ZZ-DR-GS-0002

Revision:	Date:	Drawn:	Checked:	Size:	Scale:
02	11/12/2024	JH	GC	A3	1:20,000
01	21/05/2024	MW	GC	A3	1:20,000

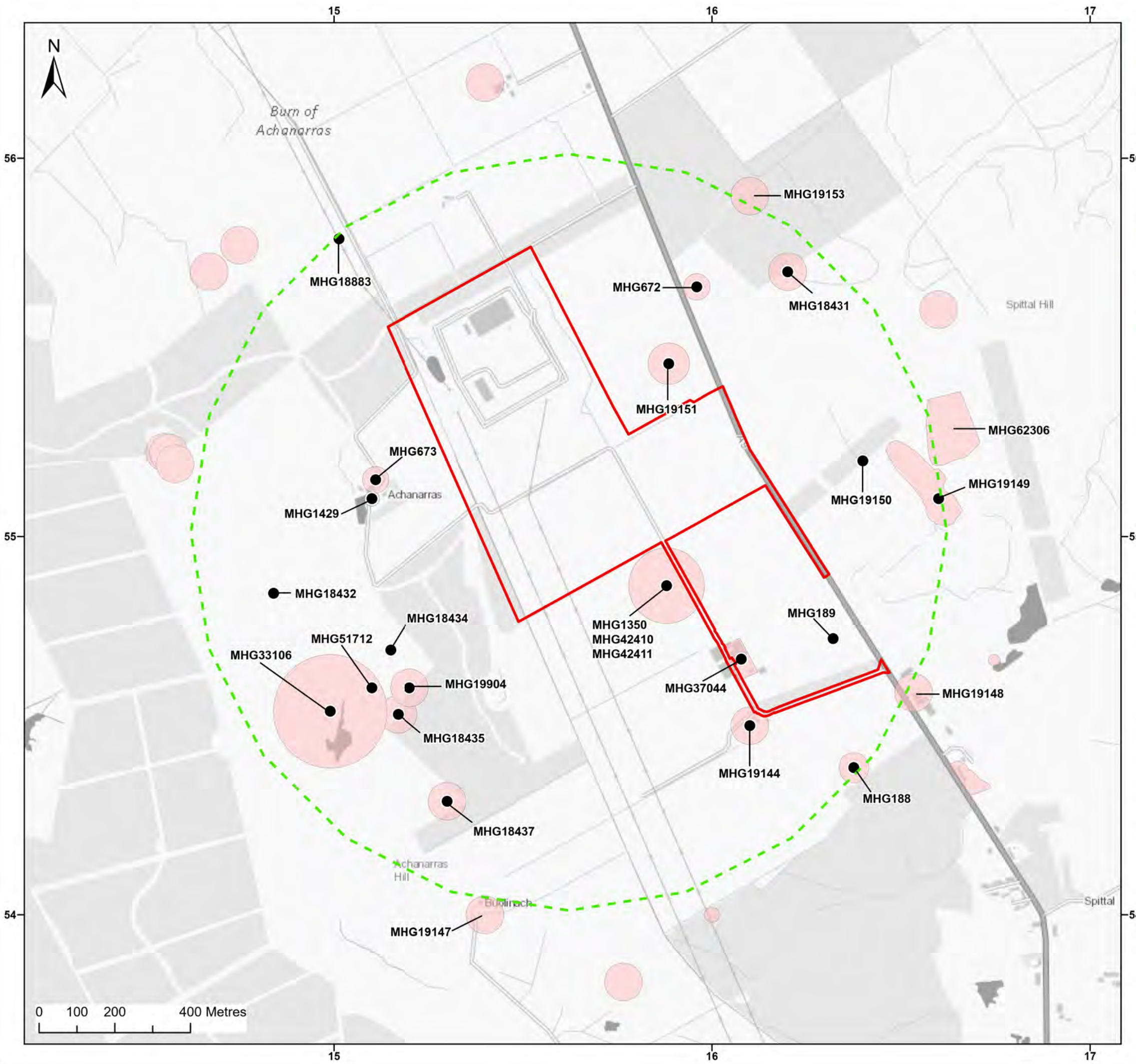
Co-ordinate system: British National Grid



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**Legend:**

- Planning Boundary
- 1km Study Area
- Spittal HER point
- Spittal HER polygon

Source: © Haskoning DHV UK Ltd, 2024; © Historic England, 2024; Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right, 2022.

Client: <b>Field Spittal Ltd</b>	Project: <b>Spittal Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment</b>
-------------------------------------	---

Title:  
**Non-designated Heritage Assets**

Figure: 3      Drawing No: PC3506-RHD-SP-ZZ-DR-GS-0003

Revision:	Date:	Drawn:	Checked:	Size:	Scale:
02	11/12/2024	JH	GC	A3	1:10,000
01	21/05/2024	MW	GC	A3	1:10,000

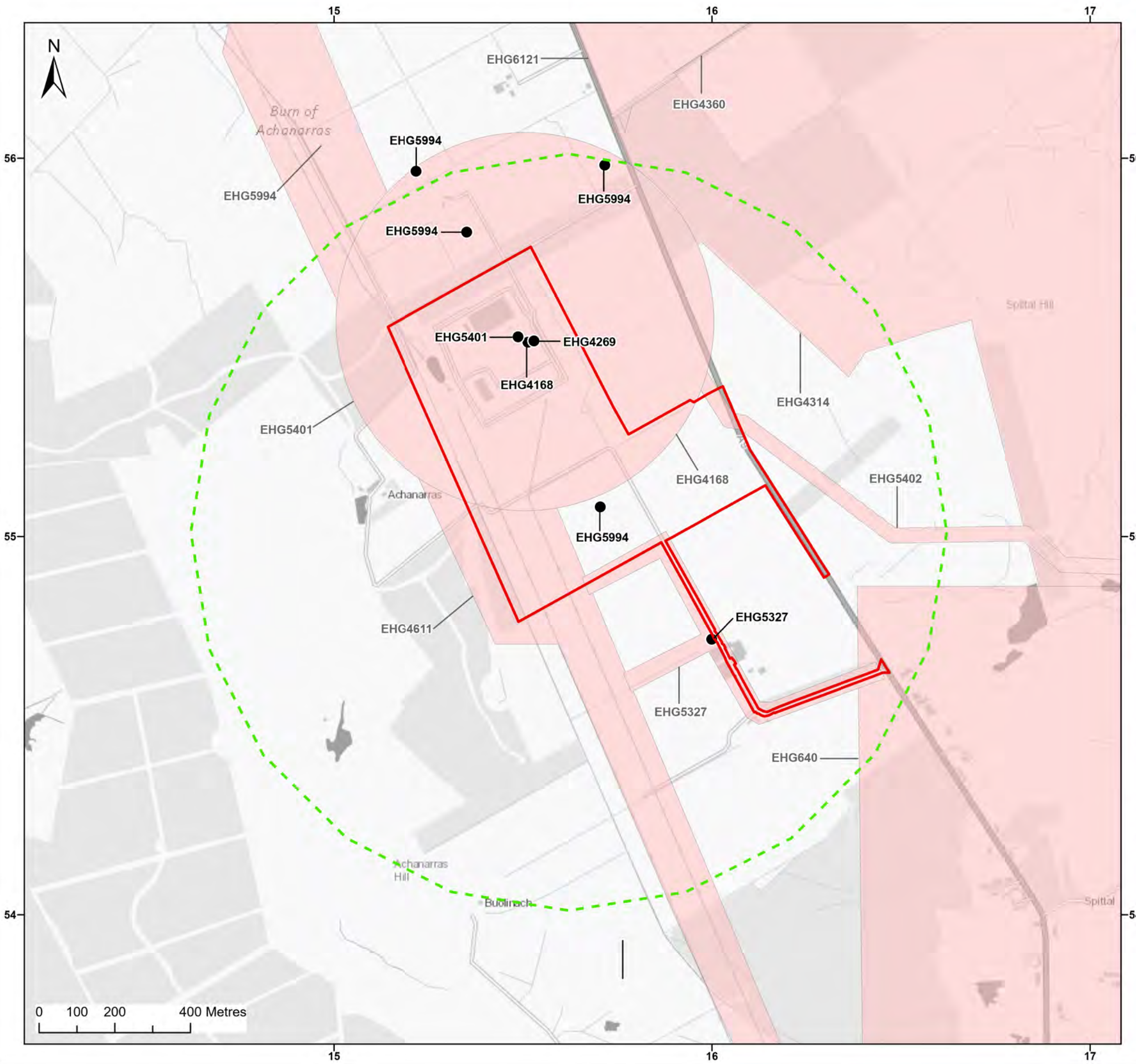
Co-ordinate system: British National Grid



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Legend:

- Planning Boundary
- 1km Study Area
- Spittal HER event points
- Spittal HER event polygons

Source: © Haskoning DHV UK Ltd, 2024; © Historic England, 2024; Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right, 2022.

Client: <b>Field Spittal Ltd</b>	Project: <b>Spittal Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment</b>
-------------------------------------	---

Title:  
**Previous Investigations**

Figure: **4**      Drawing No: **PC3506-RHD-SP-ZZ-DR-GS-0004**

Revision:	Date:	Drawn:	Checked:	Size:	Scale:
02	11/12/2024	JH	GC	A3	1:10,000
01	21/05/2024	MW	GC	A3	1:10,000

Co-ordinate system: **British National Grid**



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## Project Related

### Appendix B - Gazetteers

Table A1: Highland HER Data

HER ID	Name	Monument Type	Highland HER Website
MHG1429	Chapel, Achanarras	CHAPEL	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG1429">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG1429</a>
MHG18431	Spittal Hill	FARMSTEAD	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18431">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18431</a>
MHG18432	Achanarras Hill	BUILDING	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18432">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18432</a>
MHG18434	Black Pool	BUILDING	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18434">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18434</a>
MHG18435	Achanarras Quarry	FARMSTEAD	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18435">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18435</a>
MHG18437	Buolinach	FARMSTEAD	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18437">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18437</a>
MHG18883	Achalone	BUILDING	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18883">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG18883</a>
MHG189	Mound, Torr an Fhithlier	MOUND; BROCH	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG189">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG189</a>
MHG19144	Spittal Mains Cottages	FARMSTEAD	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19144">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19144</a>
MHG19149	Farmstead - Spittal Hill	FARMSTEAD	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19149">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19149</a>
MHG19150	Spittal Hill	BUILDING	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19150">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19150</a>
MHG19151	Farmstead - Spittal Hill	FARMSTEAD	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19151">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19151</a>
MHG19904	Black Pool	FARMSTEAD	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19904">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG19904</a>
MHG33106	Achanarras Quarry	STONE QUARRY	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG33106">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG33106</a>
MHG37044	Spittal Mains	FARMHOUSE; STEADING	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG37044">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG37044</a>
MHG51712	ACHANARRAS	LEAD MINE	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG51712">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG51712</a>

## Project Related

HER ID	Name	Monument Type	Highland HER Website
MHG672	Possible Broch - Achcomhairle	CAIRN?; BROCH?; MOUND	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG672">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG672</a>
MHG673	Broch, Achanarras	BROCH	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG673">https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG673</a>

Table A2: Highland HER Event Record Data (previous investigations)

HER ID	Name	Location	Date	Type	Highland HER Website
EHG3050	Desk-based assessment and walkover survey - Knocknagael, Essich	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael, Essich	July 2008	Whole site extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3050">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3050</a>
EHG3537	Watching brief - Passing Places M, N, O, Knocknagael	Passing Places M, N and O, Knocknagael	January 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3537">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3537</a>
EHG3538	Watching brief - Passing Places U, V and W, Knocknagael	Passing Places U, V and W, Knocknagael	March 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3538">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3538</a>
EHG3541	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (tower junctions)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	March 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3541">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3541</a>
EHG3541	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (tower junctions)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	March 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3541">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3541</a>
EHG3543	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Haul Road 1)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	August 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3543">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3543</a>
EHG3544	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Haul Road 2)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	June 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3544">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3544</a>
EHG3545	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Haul Road 3)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	June 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3545">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3545</a>
EHG3593	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 402R)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	July 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3593">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3593</a>

## Project Related

<i>HER ID</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Highland HER Website</i>
EHG3594	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 402AR)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	September 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3594">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3594</a>
EHG3595	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 403AR)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	September 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3595">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3595</a>
EHG3595	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 403AR)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	September 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3595">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3595</a>
EHG3595	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 403AR)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	September 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3595">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3595</a>
EHG3595	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 403AR)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	September 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3595">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3595</a>
EHG3596	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 404R)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	September 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3596">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3596</a>
EHG3596	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 404R)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	September 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3596">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3596</a>
EHG3596	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 404R)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	September 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3596">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3596</a>
EHG3596	Watching brief, Knocknagael substation (Tower 404R)	Proposed substation site, Knocknagael	September 2010	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3596">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3596</a>
EHG3642	Watching brief, water main for Knocknagael Substation		August 2011	Watching brief extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3642">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3642</a>
EHG3867	DBA and walkover survey - Balvonie of Leys, by Essich, Inverness	Balvonie of Leys, by Essich, Inverness	Sept 2010	Survey extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3867">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3867</a>
EHG4689	DBA and Walkover Survey - Moy Wind Farm 33Kv Underground Cable Grid Connection	Moy Wind Farm 33Kv Underground Cable Grid Connection	July 2014	Survey extent	<a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG4689">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG4689</a>

## Project Related

<i>HER ID</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Highland HER Website</i>
<i>EHG4900</i>	<i>DBA and Walkover Survey - Knocknagael - Tomatin 275 kV OHL</i>	<i>Knocknagael - Tomatin proposed 275 kV OHL</i>	<i>Aug 2014</i>	<i>Survey extent</i>	<i><a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG4900">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG4900</a></i>
<i>EHG4167</i>	<i>Watching brief - Knocknagael cable undergrounding works</i>	<i>Knocknagael</i>	<i>Sept 10-Jan 11</i>	<i>Watching brief extent</i>	<i><a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG4167">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG4167</a></i>
<i>EHG3534</i>	<i>Trial trenching, Knocknagael substation site</i>	<i>Proposed substation site, Knocknagael</i>	<i>March 2010</i>	<i>Trenches</i>	<i><a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3534">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG3534</a></i>
<i>EHG5277</i>	<i>Watching brief - electricity substation, Knocknagael</i>	<i>Electricity substation, Knocknagael</i>	<i>Jan-Feb 2010</i>	<i>Watching brief extent</i>	<i><a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5277">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5277</a></i>
<i>EHG5278</i>	<i>Watching brief - Knocknagael cable undergrounding works (2nd line, Phase 4)</i>	<i>Knocknagael</i>	<i>Jan-Feb 11</i>	<i>Watching brief extent</i>	<i><a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5278">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5278</a></i>
<i>EHG5591</i>	<i>Watching brief - Knocknagael to Tomatin, 275kV Overhead Line</i>	<i>Knocknagael to Tomatin</i>	<i>May 2017 - Aug 2018</i>	<i>Monitored areas</i>	<i><a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5591">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5591</a></i>
<i>EHG5720</i>	<i>DBA and walkover survey - new 33kV Cable, Moy</i>	<i>Moy</i>	<i>June 2020</i>	<i>Survey area</i>	<i><a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5720">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5720</a></i>
<i>EHG5722</i>	<i>DBA and walkover survey - Knocknagael to Clune Wood Cable</i>	<i>Knocknagael to Clune Wood</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>Survey area</i>	<i><a href="https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5722">https://her.highland.gov.uk/event/EHG5722</a></i>

## Appendix C – Photomontages





Date December 2024	By AW		<p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.</li> <li>2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.</li> <li>3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BNG).</li> <li>4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.</li> </ol> <p>Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024</p>
Image Size 820 x 222mm	QA DT		
Paper Size 840 x 297mm	Rev 0		
0886-CH-Visuals_CYL_90			
<p><b>Viewpoint Information:</b></p> <p>Grid Reference: 315886E 954877N</p> <p>Ground Height: 100.8m AOD</p> <p>Direction of Centre of View: 315.8°</p> <p>Horizontal Field of View: 90°</p> <p>Vertical Field of View: 24°</p> <p>Viewing Distance: 522mm</p>		<p><b>Photography Information:</b></p> <p>Camera: NIKON D600</p> <p>Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length</p> <p>Camera Height: 1.5m</p> <p>Photography Date: 18/04/2024</p> <p>Photography Time: 14:13</p> <p>Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%</p>	



Spittal BESS

**Viewpoint 1: St Magnus' church, burial ground and hospital  
EXISTING VIEW**





Date December 2024	By AW		<p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.</li> <li>2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.</li> <li>3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BNG).</li> <li>4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.</li> </ol> <p>Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024</p>
Image Size 820 x 222mm	QA DT		
Paper Size 840 x 297mm	Rev 0		
0886-CH-Visuals_CYL_90			
<p><b>Viewpoint Information:</b></p> <p>Grid Reference: 315886E 954877N</p> <p>Ground Height: 100.8m AOD</p> <p>Direction of Centre of View: 315.8°</p> <p>Horizontal Field of View: 90°</p> <p>Vertical Field of View: 24°</p> <p>Viewing Distance: 522mm</p>		<p><b>Photography Information:</b></p> <p>Camera: NIKON D600</p> <p>Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length</p> <p>Camera Height: 1.5m</p> <p>Photography Date: 18/04/2024</p> <p>Photography Time: 14:13</p> <p>Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%</p>	







Date	December 2024	By	AW
Image Size	820 x 261mm	QA	DT
Paper Size	840 x 297mm	Rev	0
0886-CH-Visuals_PLN_53p5			



Notes:  
 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.  
 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.  
 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (GNO).  
 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

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**Viewpoint Information:**

Grid Reference:	315886E 954877N
Ground Height:	100.8m AOD
Direction of Centre of View: °	315.8°
Horizontal Field of View:	53.5°
Vertical Field of View:	18.2°
Viewing Distance:	812.4mm

**Photography Information:**

Camera:	NIKON D600
Lens:	50mm Fixed Focal Length
Camera Height:	1.5m
Photography Date:	18/04/2024
Photography Time:	14:13
Enlargement Factor:	approx. 96%



**Spittal BESS**

**Viewpoint 1: St Magnus' church, burial ground and hospital**  
**EXISTING VIEW**





Date	December 2024	By	AW
Image Size	820 x 261mm	QA	DT
Paper Size	840 x 297mm	Rev	0
0886-CH-Visuals_PLN_53p5			



**Notes:**

- 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.
- 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.
- 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BNG).
- 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024

**Viewpoint Information:**

Grid Reference: 315886E 954877N  
 Ground Height: 100.8m AOD  
 Direction of Centre of View: 315.8°  
 Horizontal Field of View: 53.5°  
 Vertical Field of View: 18.2°  
 Viewing Distance: 812.4mm

**Photography Information:**

Camera: NIKON D600  
 Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length  
 Camera Height: 1.5m  
 Photography Date: 18/04/2024  
 Photography Time: 14:13  
 Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%



**Spittal BESS**

**Viewpoint 1: St Magnus' church, burial ground and hospital  
 PHOTOMONTAGE (YEAR 10)**





Date December 2024	By AW
Image Size 820 x 222mm	QA DT
Paper Size 840 x 297mm	Rev 0
0886-CH-Visuals_CYL_90	



Notes:  
 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.  
 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.  
 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BNG).  
 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

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**Viewpoint Information:**  
 Grid Reference: 316005E 954741N  
 Ground Height: 109.1m AOD  
 Direction of Centre of View: 320.3°  
 Horizontal Field of View: 90°  
 Vertical Field of View: 24°  
 Viewing Distance: 522mm

**Photography Information:**  
 Camera: NIKON D600  
 Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length  
 Camera Height: 1.5m  
 Photography Date: 18/04/2024  
 Photography Time: 14:06  
 Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%



**Spittal BESS**

**Viewpoint 2: Spittal Mains access track**  
**EXISTING VIEW**





Date December 2024	By AW
Image Size 820 x 222mm	QA DT
Paper Size 840 x 297mm	Rev 0
0886-CH-Visuals_CYL_90	



Notes:  
 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.  
 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.  
 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BNG).  
 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024

**Viewpoint Information:**  
 Grid Reference: 316005E 954741N  
 Ground Height: 109.1m AOD  
 Direction of Centre of View: 320.3°  
 Horizontal Field of View: 90°  
 Vertical Field of View: 24°  
 Viewing Distance: 522mm

**Photography Information:**  
 Camera: NIKON D600  
 Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length  
 Camera Height: 1.5m  
 Photography Date: 18/04/2024  
 Photography Time: 14:06  
 Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%



Spittal BESS

**Viewpoint 2: Spittal Mains access track  
 PHOTOMONTAGE (YEAR 10)**





Date December 2024	By AW
Image Size 820 x 261mm	QA DT
Paper Size 840 x 297mm	Rev 0
0886-CH-Visuals_PLN_53p5	



Notes:  
 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.  
 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.  
 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BNQ).  
 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024

**Viewpoint Information:**  
 Grid Reference: 316005E 954741N  
 Ground Height: 109.1m AOD  
 Direction of Centre of View: 320.3°  
 Horizontal Field of View: 53.5°  
 Vertical Field of View: 18.2°  
 Viewing Distance: 812.4mm

**Photography Information:**  
 Camera: NIKON D600  
 Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length  
 Camera Height: 1.5m  
 Photography Date: 18/04/2024  
 Photography Time: 14:06  
 Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%



Spittal BESS

**Viewpoint 2: Spittal Mains access track  
 EXISTING VIEW**





Date December 2024	By AW
Image Size 820 x 261mm	QA DT
Paper Size 840 x 297mm	Rev 0
0886-CH-Visuals_PLN_53p5	



Notes:  
 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.  
 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.  
 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BN0).  
 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

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**Viewpoint Information:**  
 Grid Reference: 316005E 954741N  
 Ground Height: 109.1m AOD  
 Direction of Centre of View: 320.3°  
 Horizontal Field of View: 53.5°  
 Vertical Field of View: 18.2°  
 Viewing Distance: 812.4mm

**Photography Information:**  
 Camera: NIKON D600  
 Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length  
 Camera Height: 1.5m  
 Photography Date: 18/04/2024  
 Photography Time: 14:06  
 Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%



Spittal BESS

**Viewpoint 2: Spittal Mains access track  
 PHOTOMONTAGE (YEAR 10)**





Date December 2024	By AW
Image Size 820 x 222mm	QA DT
Paper Size 840 x 297mm	Rev 0
0886-CH-Visuals_CYL_90	



Notes:  
 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.  
 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.  
 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BNQ).  
 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

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**Viewpoint Information:**  
 Grid Reference: 316331E 954863N  
 Ground Height: 121m AOD  
 Direction of Centre of View: 284.6°  
 Horizontal Field of View: 90°  
 Vertical Field of View: 24°  
 Viewing Distance: 522mm

**Photography Information:**  
 Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII  
 Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length  
 Camera Height: 1.5m  
 Photography Date: 22/08/2024  
 Photography Time: 09:23  
 Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%



Spittal BESS  
**Viewpoint 3: A9, South  
 EXISTING VIEW**





Date December 2024	By AW
Image Size 820 x 222mm	QA DT
Paper Size 840 x 297mm	Rev 0
0886-CH-Visuals_CYL_90	



Notes:  
 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.  
 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.  
 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BN0).  
 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024

**Viewpoint Information:**  
 Grid Reference: 316331E 954863N  
 Ground Height: 121m AOD  
 Direction of Centre of View: 284.6°  
 Horizontal Field of View: 90°  
 Vertical Field of View: 24°  
 Viewing Distance: 522mm

**Photography Information:**  
 Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII  
 Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length  
 Camera Height: 1.5m  
 Photography Date: 22/08/2024  
 Photography Time: 09:23  
 Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%







Date	December 2024
Image Size	820 x 261mm
Paper Size	840 x 297mm
0886-CH-Visuals_PLN_53p5	



Notes:

- 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.
- 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.
- 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BNQ).
- 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024

**Viewpoint Information:**

Grid Reference:	316331E 954863N
Ground Height:	121m AOD
Direction of Centre of View: °	284.6°
Horizontal Field of View:	53.5°
Vertical Field of View:	18.2°
Viewing Distance:	812.4mm

**Photography Information:**

Camera:	Canon EOS 6D MkII
Lens:	50mm Fixed Focal Length
Camera Height:	1.5m
Photography Date:	22/08/2024
Photography Time:	09:23
Enlargement Factor:	approx. 96%



Spittal BESS

**Viewpoint 3: A9, South  
EXISTING VIEW**





Date	December 2024
Image Size	820 x 261mm
Paper Size	840 x 297mm
0886-CH-Visuals_PLN_53p5	



**Notes:**

- 1) This visualisation is a cylindrical projection panorama. It provides landscape and visual context only.
- 2) This data has been output directly from the wireline model. It ignores screening effects of woodland and other intervening objects.
- 3) All directions given as bearings relative to Grid North (BNQ).
- 4) Location map scale: 1:25,000.

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**Viewpoint Information:**

Grid Reference: 316331E 954863N  
 Ground Height: 121m AOD  
 Direction of Centre of View: 284.6°  
 Horizontal Field of View: 53.5°  
 Vertical Field of View: 18.2°  
 Viewing Distance: 812.4mm

**Photography Information:**

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII  
 Lens: 50mm Fixed Focal Length  
 Camera Height: 1.5m  
 Photography Date: 22/08/2024  
 Photography Time: 09:23  
 Enlargement Factor: approx. 96%



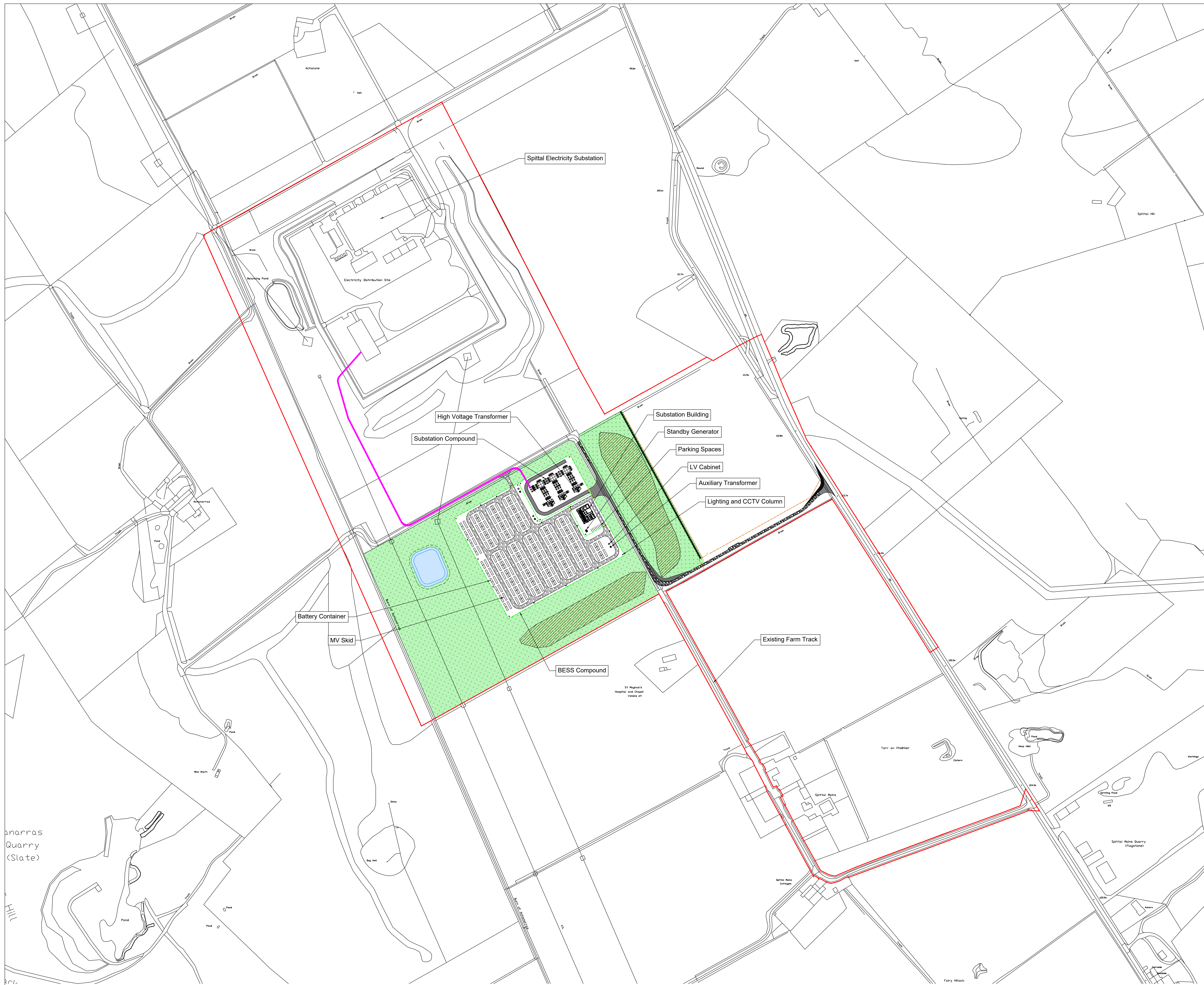
Spittal BESS

**Viewpoint 3: A9, South  
 PHOTOMONTAGE (YEAR 10)**



## Appendix D - Indicative Site Layout Plan

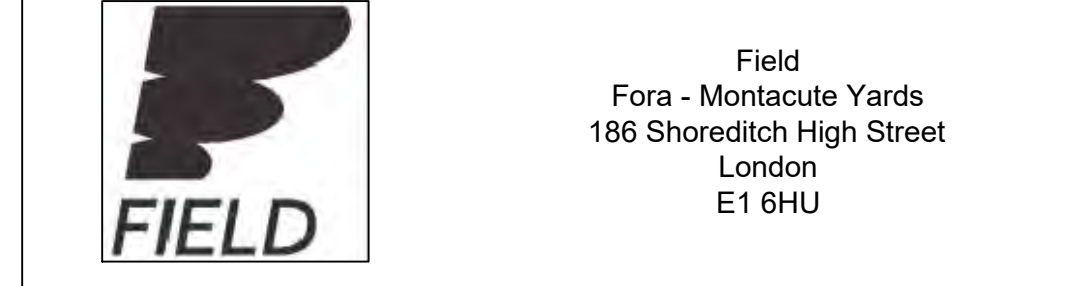




- Drawing Notes:**
- All dimensions are shown in metres unless noted otherwise.
  - Do not scale from this drawing.
  - Planning boundary area = 48.583ha.
- Legend**
- Planning Boundary
  - Indicative Underground Grid Connection Cable
  - Landscaping Area
  - Native Hedgerow
  - Attenuation Basin
  - 2.4m Palisade Fence with 0.6m Electric Topper
  - Stock Proof Fencing
  - Access Track - Unbound Finish
  - Access Track - Asphalt Finish
  - AIL Run-over Area - Unbound Finish
  - Landscaping Bund

1:100	1m	2m	3m	4m	5m	6m	7m	8m	9m	10m
1:500	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m	35m	40m	45m	50m
1:1000	10m	20m	30m	40m	50m	60m	70m	80m	90m	100m
1:2000	20m	40m	60m	80m	100m	120m	140m	160m	180m	200m
1:5000	50m	100m	150m	200m	250m	300m	350m	400m	450m	500m
1:10000	100m	200m	300m	400m	500m	600m	700m	800m	900m	1000m

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHKD
11	17.12.2024	Landscaping/vegetation amended	EW	JH
10	12.11.2024	Bund shape & bus transformer detail adjusted	EW	AP
9	21.10.2024	Access road, drainage and planning boundary amended. Stock proof fencing added.	JH	AP
8	10.09.2024	Bund amended	EW	JH
7	10.09.2024	Site layout amended	JH	RS
6	10.09.2024	Planning boundary adjusted	EW	AP
5	07.08.2024	100m covered area, attenuation grass area & irrigation water main updated. Fenced channel for farm access between field gates added. 1m boundary edge.	EW	JH
4	08.04.2024	BESS location and layout adjusted	EW	JH
3	04.04.2024	New showing Emission system. TC sub station detail updated with P50K sign, layout adjusted. Capacity & location amended. Option site boundary adjusted. Site parking area added.	EW	JH
2	02.02.2024	Planning boundary amended	JH	AP
1	25.01.2024	Site layout amended	JH	AP
0	31.08.2023	Site layout plan - for information	WL	RS



PROJECT	Spittal			
TITLE	Indicative Site Layout Plan			
DISCIPLINE	PLANNING			
DRAWING STATUS	FOR PLANNING			
SCALE	DATE	DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY
1:2000 @ A0	31.08.2023	WJL	RS	RS
PROJECT NO.	DRAWING NO.			REV.
BTGBSP101	001.1			11

1 Indicative Site Layout Plan Scale 1:2000 @ A0