Chapter 12: Sloy Pumped Hydro Storage Scheme: Landscape and Visual

Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Contents

Figures

Appendices

12. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

12.1. Executive Summary

12.1.1. INTRODUCTION

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken for the Proposed Development within a study area of 2.5km. The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects at ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), a registered practice with the Landscape Institute, in accordance with best practice guidance, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA).

The LVIA considers two separate subjects of landscape and visual amenity as follows:

- The landscape assessment has considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character, designated and protected landscapes.
- The visual assessment has considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the visual amenity of those present within the landscape, including established views from residential areas and routes.

Mitigation measures including landform and planting are proposed to help minimise or offset significant and other effects of the Proposed Development. The residual effects of the Proposed Development with proposed mitigation measures have been assessed after 10 years, allowing for the growth of proposed planting.

12.1.2. SUMMARY OF EFFECTS

12.1.2.1. Landscape Effects

The majority of landscape effects arising from the Proposed Development within the study area are predicted to be not significant and temporary during the construction phase. Construction works would be perceived as a potential minor distraction within the wider context.

A temporary significant effect is predicted within a localised landscape area in close proximity to the Proposed Development around Inveruglas. The extent of works occurring is predicted to lead to a noticeable change from a landscape generally recreational in character, to one more characterised by construction activities. This effect would be largely reversed following completion of the construction works, the restoration of areas used for construction activities and the reinstatement of boundary walls and gates. Although there would continue to be a perceptible change to the setting around the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station, where the current situation of the building within a mature amenity, parkland type setting would be changed to one more characterised by built development, this would not be significant, and the high standard of design proposed is predicted to lead to the building being a generally positive addition within the wider setting.

Once construction works were completed, the effect on the wider landscape beyond this immediate area is predicted to be negligible as the Proposed Development would be seen within a wide context, adjacent to existing similar development and therefore unlikely to appear out of place.

No significant effects are predicted to the presence of the Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park (LLTNP).

12.1.2.2. Visual Effects

The majority of visual effects arising from the Proposed Development would be not significant during both construction and operation. Significant effects are predicted during the construction phase only for recreational visual receptors at the Inveruglas Visitor Centre, carpark and terrace, and using a localised part of two long distance walking routes, both of which follow the same route past the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station and the Proposed Development alongside the A82: The Three Lochs Way / Loch Lomond and Cowal Way. These effects would reduce following the completion of the Proposed Development with visual effects for all receptors within the study area predicted to reduce to a negligible level after 10 years.

12.1.2.3. Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

The cumulative assessment has considered the temporary effects of the Proposed Development in addition to other proposed activities relating to two other developments:

- Sloy Transformer Replacement Project; and
- Cruach Tairbeirt Forestry Works.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

The cumulative landscape assessment has identified that there would be a significant landscape effect within a localised area around the Proposed Development affecting the area of Inveruglas, where the Proposed Development in addition to the Sloy Transformers would lead to an extended area of construction affecting a wider part of the local landscape area.

Whilst a greater area of development associated with the cumulative sites would be perceptible within other areas, including landscape areas on the opposite shore of Loch Lomond, this is not predicted to be significant. The Proposed Development would be perceived as a very small addition in relation to the other developments and the separation between these landscapes and the works created by the loch would lead to the overriding characteristics of these areas being maintained.

The cumulative effects identified are not predicted to be significant in the context of the LLTNP as a whole or any of the Special Landscape Qualities.

Cumulative Visual Effects

Significant cumulative effects are predicted for a small number of visual receptors during construction, comprising the same receptors that would experience non-cumulative significant effects: recreational visitors to the Inveruglas Visitor Centre, carpark and terrace where the Proposed Development would be seen within the context of the forestry works at Cruach Tairbeirt, and walkers on the Three Lochs Way / Loch Lomond and Cowal Way who would pass both construction sites. None of the other visual cumulative effects are predicted to be significant because, where seen in the context of the other developments, the Proposed Development would be a very small addition to views already featuring a noticeable degree of construction works or activities.

All identified cumulative effects would be temporary, occurring during the construction phase of the Proposed Development only.

12.2. Introduction

This Chapter presents the findings of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the Proposed Development. The purpose of the LVIA is to identify and describe the potential significant effects which may occur as a result of the Proposed Development to views obtained by those living,

working and visiting in the area, and to the wider landscape resource, and the residual predicted significance of effects after mitigation.

The LVIA has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects at ASH design + assessment Ltd (ASH), a registered practice with the Landscape Institute. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA). A table presenting relevant qualifications and experience of key staff involved in the preparation of this Chapter is included in **Appendix 5.1: EIA Team**, contained within **Volume 4** of this EIA Report.

12.3. Scope Of Assessment

12.3.1. CONSULTATION AND SCOPING

The scope of the assessment has been determined through a combination of professional judgement, to the relevant guidance documents and consultation with stakeholders through a formal EIA scoping process and pre-application advice.

The Scoping Opinion was issued by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit on 13 December 2023 (see **Volume 4, Appendix 6.2**). **Table 12.1** provides a summary of the key responses from consultees which are relevant to the subject areas of landscape and visual amenity and provides comment as to how these have been addressed.

Table 12.1: Scoping Responses

Organisation	Response	Comments
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA)	Request further consultation on study area, viewpoint location, and a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).	Further consultation was undertaken (see **Section 12.3.2** below).
	The ZTV should include proposed tree removal rather than current tree cover.	The ZTV has been produced using a bare ground model and therefore shows a worst case scenario with no tree cover.
	Suggest usage of viewpoints proposed for the Sloy Transformers LVIA.	These viewpoints were considered but would mostly not give a good representation of the Proposed Development due to the different location. Visualisation Locations for the Proposed Development were provisionally agreed with LLTNPA on 21st November 2023, with subsequent advice provided on 14th December 2023 before final approval by LLTNPA on 15th February 2024, as illustrated in **Volume 2, Figure 4.4** and **Figure 12.1**.

	Photomontages should be provided from all viewpoints.	Photomontages have been included from all the agreed visualisation locations – see **Volume 3, Figures 4.5 – 4.9**)
	Consider that National scale Landscape Character Types are likely to be too broad a scale. Use of the LLTNP 2010 Landscape Character Assessment could be considered with site visits and reference to the more recent, broader scale NS LCTs where appropriate.	Both landscape studies have been used as a basis to establish Local Landscape Zones (LLZs) to reflect the scale and effects of the Proposed Development as detailed in **Section 12.6.3**.
	The pump storage and the replacement transformers development should use a consistent approach to the landscape character assessment to allow a coherent analysis to the overall change and impacts to the landscape character visual amenity of the area.	The replacement transformers development LVIA is being undertaken by a different consultant and was not available at the time of writing this LVIA. However, this LVIA has been made available to SSEN Transmission, to enable them to adopt a similar approach, as necessary.
	Request for three additional Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) to be considered in the assessment of the SLQs of the LLTNPA (see Section 12.8.2)	The requested SLQs have been considered (see **Section 12.8.2**).
	Request that the UGL connection, A82 upgrade, access tracks to facilitate undergrounding OHLs as part of the VISTA scheme and the Cruach Tairbeirt access road, forest felling and restocking should be considered in the cumulative assessment.	Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects are considered in **Section 12.10**.
	Agree to scope out Wild Land Area (WLA) assessment but request that LVIA and SLQs should reference and be informed by the WLA 7 description and the LLTNP Relative Wildness Study.	Consideration has been given to the relevant documents.
	Viewpoint assessment is likely to include locations in WLA 7 and the LL&TNP Core Areas of Wildness such as the WHW and summit views.	A receptor-based assessment has been undertaken considering all likely visual receptors, rather than a less detailed viewpoint-based assessment. Visualisation Locations (VLs) to illustrate the Proposed Development have been agreed with LLTNPA (see **Section 12.3.2** below). These do not include locations within the WLA, but the West

		Highland Way is considered within the assessment of routes and broadly represented by VL 4 (Inversnaid Hotel Car Park – see **Volume 3, Figure 4.8a-c**).
	Lighting during construction and operation should be included in the assessment.	The requirement for lighting during construction and operation has been considered. Only essential temporary lighting, limited, to the site establishment / site compounds and essential working areas, would be required during construction, for reasons of health, safety and security. During the operation of the scheme, any lighting would be very similar to existing, whereby there would be minimal lighting during the hours of darkness during the working day in the winter, and beyond this, lighting would only be used infrequently for emergencies, essential maintenance or access reasons which would be unlikely to lead to any significant effect. A lighting assessment has therefore been scoped out of the LVIA.
NatureScot	No further comments on the LVIA.	

12.3.2. ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

Further consultation was undertaken by email and meeting with LLTNPA regarding the study area and locations for visualisations as requested within the LLTNPA scoping response. A ZTV and proposals for visualisation locations were provided to LLTNPA on November 6th 2023 and were provisionally agreed with LLTNPA on 21st November 2023. Further advice regarding visualisation locations was provided by LLTNPA on 14th December 2023 and it was subsequently agreed that one additional wireline would be produced to illustrate the appearance of the Proposed Development from Inveruglas Bay. This has been located on the shore of Inveruglas Isle. Final agreement on visualisations was made with LLTNPA on 15th February 2024.

The agreed locations for visualisations are listed in **Section 12.3.5** below.

12.3.3. STUDY AREA

The study area comprises the area where any potentially significant effects resulting from the Proposed Development would be likely to occur and has been established through consideration of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) (see paragraphs below), and professional judgement. Following initial site visits and review of the ZTV, a study area of 2.5km was identified. Although theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is indicated beyond this distance, this is considered highly unlikely to result in any significant effects.

12.3.4. ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)

As an aid to establishing the scope for the LVIA, a ZTV has been produced for the Proposed Development and is presented in **Volume 2, Figure 12.1**. The ZTV is a computer-generated diagram which uses a terrain model to indicate areas from which the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible. The ZTV for the Proposed Development has been generated using ESRI ArcGIS software based on a terrain modelled using Ordinance Survey (OS) T5 DTM data.

The ZTV has been run using the projected height for the tallest part of the proposed pumphouse as shown on **Volume 2, Figure 12.1**. A height of 18m has been used with a ground level of 12m AOD.

The ZTV has been prepared based on a viewer height of 2m above ground level in line with the NatureScot, 2017 Guidance, with earth curvature and light refraction set to 0.075.

Whilst the ZTV is a useful tool for the identification of potential effects, it is not indicative of an effect in itself. The ZTV does not take into account the potential screening effects of woodland and other localised features such as buildings, trees or local landform which are not captured by the OS T5 data. Nor does it give an indication of the way in which a development may relate to its broader landscape context and the receding scale and visibility of features with distance. However, consideration of these aspects is taken into account during the assessment, including through professional judgement.

12.3.5. VISUALISATIONS

Five visualisations have been produced to support the LVIA including four photomontages and one wireline. These show the Proposed Development during the operational phase at approximately 10 years post construction. Visualisations have been produced from the following Visualisation Locations (VLs) and are illustrated in **Volume 3, Figures 4.5 – 4.9**):

- VL1 – Inveruglas Car Park Footpath;
- VL2 – A82, South of Sloy Power Station;
- VL3 – Inveruglas Visitor Centre Terrace;
- VL4 – Inversnaid Hotel Car Park; and
- VL5 – Inveruglas Island (wireline only).

The visualisations have been produced to support the LVIA work and are intended to show the appearance of the Proposed Development within the landscape setting. Visualisation Locations (illustrated in **Volume 2, Figures 4.1 and 12.1**) have not been assessed as viewpoints. The visual assessment has been undertaken as a receptor-based assessment (giving consideration to all potential visual receptors) rather than a less detailed viewpoint-based assessment.

12.4. Legislation, Policy and Guidance

The assessment has taken into account national, regional and local policy and guidance relating to landscape character and visual amenity relevant to the Proposed Development. Detailed information on planning policy is contained within the Planning Statement accompanying the application for the Proposed Development and **Chapter 7: Planning and Policy Context**. The following provides a summary of key policy documents with respect to the LVIA.

12.4.1. NATIONAL CONTEXT

The following national policy documents and statements have been referred to in carrying out this assessment:

- The Fourth National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF4) (2023);
- Planning Advice Note 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (PAN60), 2000;
- Renewable Energy and the Natural Heritage, SNH Policy Document, 2010; and
- Wildness in Scotland's Countryside, SNH Policy Statement 02/03;
- The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, with relevance to the Aims of the National Park, notably with reference to landscape and visual amenity:
  - To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area; and
  - To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public.

12.4.2. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Regional Policy is outlined in the Draft National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029.

Specific Regional Planning policy is covered by the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) 2017 – 2021. The following policies from the LDP are of relevance to the subjects of landscape and visual amenity:

- Natural Environment Policy 1: National Park Landscapes, Seascape and Visual Impact, which aims to protect the Special Landscape Qualities of the National Park (see Section 12.6.2).
- Natural Environment Policy 8: Development Impacts on Trees and Woodlands, which relates to the protection of important amenity trees and woodland and ancient and semi-natural woodland from development.
- Natural Environment Policy 9: Woodlands On or Adjacent to Development, which relates to the protection of retained trees.

Further policy is included in Supplementary Guidance to the LDP and Planning Guidance and includes:

- Design and Placemaking Supplementary Guidance - Landscape Considerations; and
- Renewable Energy Planning Guidance – Sections on Landscape and Visual Impact Considerations and Assessing Cumulative Impacts.

12.5. Methodology

12.5.1. ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

The LVIA has been prepared with reference to the *Guidelines for Visual Impact Assessment,* Third Edition (GLVIA3)[1] and *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*[2]. For assessment of effects on the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, *Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities (Working Draft 11)* (Scottish Natural Heritage[3] (SNH) and Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), 2018) has been considered.

[1] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. (2013). *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.* Routledge.

[2] Scottish Natural Heritage, The Countryside Agency. (2002). *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*.

[3] Scottish Natural Heritage and Cairngorms National Park Authority (2018) *Guidance for Assessing the Effects on Special Landscape Qualities* (Working Draft 11).

12.5.2. PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. As part of this assessment, professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to evaluate landscape value and landscape and visual sensitivity, magnitude and significance of effect. The assessment has been undertaken and verified by two Landscape Professionals (Chartered Landscape Architects) to provide a robust and consistent approach.

12.5.3. KEY STAGES OF THE ASSESSMENT

GLVIA3 advises that landscape and visual effects should be assessed from a clear understanding of the development proposed and any mitigation measures which are being adopted.

The GLVIA3 methodology for landscape assessment involves an appreciation of the existing landscape resource, the susceptibility of its key components to accept the change proposed, and an understanding of the potential effects which could occur and how these could affect these key components.

Familiarity with the site and the extent, nature and expectation of existing views by visual receptors is a key factor in establishing the visual sensitivity in terms of the development proposed. The guidelines require evaluation of magnitude of change to views experienced by sensitive receptors, comprising individuals living, working, travelling and carrying out other activities within the landscape, and the subsequent evaluation of the significance of effects.

The potential to mitigate adverse effects should also be considered for both landscape and visual assessment.

There are five key stages to the assessment:

- Establishment of the baseline;
- Appreciation of the development proposed;
- Identification of key landscape and visual receptors;
- Identification of potential effects; and
- Assessment of significance of effect.

12.5.4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BASELINE

Establishment of the baseline conditions has been undertaken through a combination of desk study and site appraisal. The desk review has involved review the following general documents and sources:

- National and Local Development Plans, as detailed in **Section 12.4**;
- The Scoping Opinion and other consultation responses for the Proposed Development (see **Section 12.3** and **Volume 4, Appendix 6.2**);
- Online mapping and aerial photography resources from Ordnance Survey, Google, Bing and National Library of Scotland; and
- The ZTV for the Proposed Development (see **Volume 2, Figure 12.1**).

Site survey to further inform the baseline was also undertaken in October and November 2023 and March and April 2024.

The following specific baseline activities were undertaken for the two differing assessments of landscape and visual effects:

12.5.4.1. Landscape Assessment Baseline Tasks

The desk review for the landscape assessment has included a review of the following additional documents and resources:

- NatureScot Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Descriptions[4] (SNH, 2019 [online]);
- *Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Landscape Assessment* (NatureScot, 2009);
- *The Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park* (SNH 2010(a)); and
- *The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas* (SNH, 2010(b)).

Identification of Baseline Landscape Value

The value of the landscape is an important consideration in informing later judgement of the significance of effects. Landscape value concerns the perceived importance of the landscape when considered as a whole, and within the context of the study area and is established through consideration of the following factors:

- Presence of landscape designations, other inventory or registered landscapes / landscape features or identified planning constraints;
- The scenic quality of the landscape;
- Perceptual aspects, such as wildness or tranquillity;
- Conservation interests such as cultural heritage features or associations, or if the landscape supports notable habitats or species;
- Recreational value; and
- Rarity, either in the national or local context, or if it is considered to be a particularly important example of a specific landscape type.

It should be noted that absence of a designation does not necessarily mean that a landscape or component is not highly valued, as factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality highly valuable as a local resource.

Criteria for the allocation of perceived landscape value are outlined in Table 12.1**Table 12.2** below:

Table 12.2: Landscape Value Criteria

Landscape Value	Criteria
High	• The landscape is closely associated with features of international or national importance which are rare within the wider context; • The landscape is of high scenic quality and forms a key part of an important designated landscape or planning constraint; and/or • The landscape is an example of a scarce resource within the local context and is of considerable local importance for its, scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.
Medium	• The landscape is associated with features of national or regional importance which are relatively common within the wider context;

[4] NatureScot: (2019): Scottish Landscape Character Types Map and Descriptions [ONLINE] https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions [accessed March 2024].

	• The landscape forms part of a designated landscape or is associated with other features of importance but is not rare or distinctive within the local context; and/or • The landscape is one of a number within the local context appreciated for its scenic quality, recreational opportunities or cultural heritage associations.
Low	• The landscape characteristics are common within the local and regional context and the landscape is not associated with any particular features or attributes considered to be important; and/or • The landscape is of poor scenic quality and is not appreciated for any recreational or cultural associations.

12.5.4.2. VISUAL Assessment Baseline Tasks

A combination of desk and field survey was used to establish the range and distribution of potential visual receptors within the study area. Visual receptors can be defined as individuals occupying and using the study area with the potential to obtain views of the Proposed Development. Potential visual receptors included in the assessment have included those experiencing views from locations such as buildings, recognised routes and popular viewpoints used by the public.

The following additional resources were used to enhance understanding of the use of the study area by potential visual receptors:

- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Core Paths Plan (LLTNPA, 2023 [online])[5];
- *Scottish Hill Tracks* (Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (Scotways), 2011)[6]; and
- Other web based and published sources providing information on local resources and activities within the study area (see the list of references in **Section 12.14**).

Site visits were undertaken in March and April 2024 to verify the visual receptors identified through desk study, identify any further potential receptors and collate information on baseline visual amenity, including information on the types and activities of visual receptors likely to be present, and the nature of the existing views which are obtained. Site recording involved the completion of standardised recording forms and annotation of 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey plans, supported by a photographic record of views from key receptor locations.

12.5.5. APPRECIATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT THAT IS PROPOSED

Appreciation of the Proposed Development involves the accumulation of a thorough knowledge of the proposal, its nature, scale and location within the baseline landscape, and any peripheral or ancillary features proposed. Analysis of the proposed activities and changes which would take place leads to an understanding of the potential effects that may occur to the landscape and visual resource.

[5] Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) (2023) [ONLINE] Core Paths Plan - Here. Now. All of us. - Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park (lochlomond-trossachs.org) [accessed April 2024].

[6] The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (Scotways) (2011): Scottish Hill Tracks (Fifth Edition) Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

This stage has included review of all available desk-based information relating to the Proposed Development in terms of its long-term physical appearance and requirements for construction and access.

12.5.6. IDENTIFICATION OF KEY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL RECEPTORS

The identification of key landscape and visual receptors with the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development is the first step in the analysis of the potential for significant effects to occur. Landscape and visual receptors can be described as follows:

- **Landscape receptors** comprise key characteristics or individual features which contribute to the value of the landscape and have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development. Landscape receptors are identified through analysis of baseline characteristics when considered in relation to the impacts which might result from a development of the type proposed.
- **Visual receptors** comprise individuals experiencing views from locations such as buildings, recognised routes and popular viewpoints used by the public. Potential visual receptors are identified through analysis of desk resources, mapping and field survey, as described under 'Establishment of the Baseline' above. A review of the ZTV in the context of site survey is used to identify the potential for visual receptors to be affected by the Proposed Development.

12.5.7. IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

The second step in the assessment process involves the identification of potential effects which may occur as a result of the interaction of the Proposed Development with the identified landscape and visual receptors.

The assessment takes into account direct effects upon existing views, landscape elements, features and key characteristics and, also, indirect effects which may occur secondarily to changes affecting another landscape component or area. The identification of potential effects is a two-fold process, giving consideration as to how these effects may arise from aspects of the Proposed Development and how they may be accommodated by the existing baseline features.

Where it is established that potential effects could be limited by mitigation measures, these are also given consideration.

Potential effects are evaluated through the allocation of criteria for sensitivity and magnitude.

12.5.7.1. Landscape and Visual Sensitivity

Sensitivity concerns the nature of the baseline landscape or visual receptor, and the ability to accommodate development of the type proposed without compromising the key characteristics and / or composition.

There are two aspects which contribute to the evaluation of landscape and visual sensitivity: value and susceptibility to change. The consideration of these two separate aspects in the differing assessments for landscape and visual amenity are outlined below:

- Landscape
  - Value: The baseline value of the landscape and the contributory value of individual landscape receptors to the landscape as a whole; and
  - Susceptibility: The ability of landscape receptors to accommodate development of the type proposed without changing the intrinsic qualities of the landscape as a whole.

- Visual Amenity
  - Value: The baseline value of a particular view to the visual receptor, including the perceived value of individual features or aspects within the view; and
  - Susceptibility: The susceptibility of the viewer to changes to the view, giving consideration to the particular activity they may be involved in and also the composition of the baseline view and importance of the proposed area of change as a part of the view.

Criteria for the evaluation of sensitivity to change are presented in **Table 12.3**.

Table 12.3: Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Criteria

Sensitivity Rating	Landscape Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity
High	A highly valued landscape of particularly distinctive character susceptible to relatively small changes of the type proposed.	Visual receptors obtaining views from: • dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and • recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present.
Medium	A reasonably valued landscape with a composition and characteristics tolerant of some degree of change of the type proposed.	Visual receptors obtaining views from: • dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; • recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; • roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is an important element in the view and there are no detracting features present; and • workplaces where the changed aspect is an important element of the view and there are no detracting features present.
Low	A relatively unimportant landscape which is potentially tolerant of a large degree of change of the type proposed.	Visual receptors obtaining views from: • dwellings and publicly accessible buildings where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or numerous detracting features are present;

	• recreational routes and locations where the changed aspect is an unimportant element in the view and / or where numerous detracting features are present; • roads and transport routes where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present; and • workplaces where the changed aspect is a less important element in the view and / or where some detracting features are present.

12.5.7.2. Landscape and Visual Magnitude

Magnitude of change concerns the extent to which the existing landscape character or view would be altered by the Proposed Development. Elements specific to the evaluation of magnitude of change for the differing assessments of landscape and visual amenity are detailed below:

- Landscape
  - The degree to which features or characteristics may be removed, altered or added within the landscape;
  - The geographical extent of proposed changes;
  - Whether changes would be direct or indirect; and
  - The potential duration and reversibility of proposed changes (taking into consideration proposed mitigation measures where relevant).
- Visual Amenity
  - The scale or extent of proposed changes within the view;
  - The location of proposed changes within the view, relevant to other existing features;
  - The extent to which this may alter the composition or focus of the view; and
  - The duration and reversibility of proposed changes (taking into consideration proposed mitigation measures where relevant).

Criteria for the evaluation of magnitude of change are presented in **Table 12.4**. In recognition of the differing changes that would occur over time, two ratings for magnitude of change have been included: during the construction of the Proposed Development, and approximately 10 years post construction once landscape / habitat reinstatement and any other mitigation has had time to establish.

Table 12.4: Landscape and Visual Magnitude of Change Criteria

Magnitude Rating	Landscape	Visual
High	Notable change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to a very intensive change over a more limited area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a very noticeable change in the existing view.

Medium	Perceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area ranging to notable change in a localised area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view.
Low	Virtually imperceptible change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area or perceptible change in a localised area.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view.
Negligible	No discernible change in any landscape characteristics or components.	Where the Proposed Development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view.

12.5.7.3. Assessment of Significance of Effects

Evaluation of the predicted significance of effect has been carried out through the analysis of the anticipated magnitude of change in relation to the landscape or visual sensitivity, taking into account any proposed mitigation measures, and is established using professional judgement.

In recognition of the potential for effects to vary over time, the assessment has been undertaken at two different stages: during the construction phase and during operation, once landscape / habitat reinstatement measures and any mitigation measures have been allowed to establish. This is assumed to be approximately 10 years after the completion of construction and reinstatement works.

The significance of effect for landscape and visual elements is considered as follows:

- Landscape Effects
  - The assessment takes into account identified effects upon existing landscape receptors and assesses the extent to which these would be lost or modified in the context of their importance in determining the existing baseline character.
- Visual Effects
  - The assessment takes into account likely changes to the visual composition, including the extent to which new features would distract or screen existing elements in the view or disrupt the scale, structure or focus of the existing view.

The assessment takes into consideration the potential for effects to be adverse, where changes such as the addition of new distracting features, or the removal of existing positive features, are anticipated to negatively affect the landscape or view; or beneficial, where changes, such as the removal of existing distracting features or the addition of mitigation measures are anticipated to positively influence the landscape or view.

Criteria used for the assessment of effects are presented in **Table 12.5**. For the purposes of the LVIA, effects with a rating of Moderate or greater are considered to be significant in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Table 12.5: Landscape and Visual Significance of Effect Criteria

Effect Significance	Landscape Effects	Visual Effects
Major Adverse	The Proposed Development is at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape and would be a dominant feature, resulting in considerable reduction in scenic quality and large-scale change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would become a prominent and very detracting feature and would result in a very noticeable deterioration to an existing highly valued and well composed view.
Moderate Adverse	The Proposed Development is out of scale with the landscape, or inconsistent with the local pattern and landform and may be locally dominant and / or result in a noticeable reduction in scenic quality and a degree of change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would introduce some detracting features to an existing highly valued view or would be more prominent within a pleasing or less well composed view, resulting in a noticeable deterioration of the quality of view.
Minor Adverse	The Proposed Development does not quite fit with the scale, landform or local pattern of the landscape and may be locally intrusive but would result in an inappreciable reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would form a perceptible but not detracting feature within a pleasing or valued view or would be a prominent feature within a poorly composed view of limited value, resulting in a small deterioration to the existing view.
Negligible	The Proposed Development sits well within the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and would not result in any discernible reduction in scenic quality or change to the intrinsic landscape character of the area.	The Proposed Development would form a barely perceptible feature within the existing view and would not result in any discernible deterioration or improvement to the view.
Minor Beneficial	The Proposed Development would add / remove landscape features or alter the composition of landscape components which would result in a small or localised improvement to the landscape characteristics and scenic quality of the landscape.	The Proposed Development would form a fairly attractive feature and / or remove a fairly detracting feature from an existing less well composed view, resulting in a small improvement to the attractiveness, composition and value of the existing view.
Moderate Beneficial	The Proposed Development would add / remove landscape features or alter the composition of landscape components which would result in a noticeable	The Proposed Development would become a new attractive feature within or result in the removal or partial removal of an existing detracting feature from, a

	improvement to the landscape characteristics and scenic quality of the landscape.	poorly composed or less well composed view leading to a noticeable improvement to the attractiveness, composition and value of the existing view.
Major Beneficial	The Proposed Development would add / remove landscape features or alter the composition of landscape components which would result in a very noticeable improvement to the landscape characteristics and scenic quality of the landscape.	The Proposed Development would form a prominent new attractive feature within or result in the removal of an existing very detracting feature from, a poorly composed view leading to a very noticeable improvement to the attractiveness, composition and value of the existing view.

12.5.8. ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The LVIA is subject to the following limitations and assumptions:

- The prominence of the Proposed Development in the landscape and views will vary according to the prevailing weather conditions. The LVIA has been carried out, as is best practice, by assuming the 'worst case' scenario i.e., on a clear, bright day in winter, when neither foreground deciduous foliage nor haze can interfere with the clarity of the view obtained.
- ZTVs are used to inform the landscape, visual and cumulative assessments. The limitations and technical specifications for production of ZTVs are included in **Section 12.3.4**.
- The field assessment of visual effects has been undertaken from public roads, footpaths or open spaces. For residential receptors, assumptions have been made about the types of rooms in buildings and about the types and importance of views from these rooms. For there to be a visual effect, there is the need for a viewer and therefore only buildings that are in use have been considered in the visual assessment.
- The assessment of effects on visual receptors occupying buildings such as residences and public buildings includes consideration of potential for views from exterior areas associated with the building including gardens where appropriate. These effects are referenced where relevant.
- The assessment reflects the baseline situation at the time of final site work (March/April 2024) and therefore does not take account of any changes to the landscape fabric which have taken place after this date.

12.6. Baseline: Landscape

12.6.1. CONTEXT

The Proposed Development would be situated on land adjacent to and around the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station, on the western bank of north Loch Lomond. This part of Loch Lomond comprises a linear, fjord-like loch, with steeply rising slopes to east and west, with the lower portion clad in a mix of oak and birch woodland, and occasional native and non-native conifers. Above the tree-line, the terrain rises into rugged and craggy mountain-tops, separated by occasional glens which cut down to the loch-shore. The main A82 trunk road winds along the western shore of the loch, connecting occasional scattered clusters of built development which occupy the few areas of available flatter ground, typically comprising delta areas at the mouths of the few side-glens which join the loch. This includes

Inveruglas, around the existing power station, and Ardvorlich to the north. The eastern side of the loch is more remote, with only a small cluster of properties and a hotel situated close to the loch shore, at the end of a long, single track road. As such, access to the eastern side of the loch is often taken by boat, rather than by road. The long distance West Highland Way walking route follows the eastern shore of the loch.

Loch Lomond area is popular with recreational users and visitors and has strong Scottish cultural associations. The landscape therefore evokes romantic connotations for many people, contributing to its value.

12.6.2. PROTECTED AND DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

Landscapes can be ascribed an international, national, regional or local designation that recognises the importance of the landscape for its scenic interest or attractiveness. Areas of landscape may also be protected by planning policy at either a national or regional level.

The following landscape designations are present within the study area (see **Volume 2, Figure 12.2**):

- National Context:
  - The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP);
  - The Loch Lomond National Scenic Area (NSA); and
  - Wild Land Area 7. Ben More – Ben Ledi (WLA 7).
- Local / Regional Context:
  - None.

12.6.2.1. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

National Park is a national, statutory designation allocated to landscapes of substantially high quality in which the primary objective is the conservation and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage. The Proposed Development and entire study area lie within the LLTNP.

Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of the LLTNP are outlined in the document, '*The Special Landscape Qualities of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park*' (SNH 2010(a)). SLQs are defined as being, *"…the characteristics that, individually or combined, give rise to an area's outstanding scenery*". SLQs are identified for different areas of the LLTNP, as well as a number of general qualities. General qualities, and those relevant to the Loch Lomond area are listed in **Table 12.6**.

Table 12.6: Special Landscape Qualities of the LLTNP – Loch Lomond Area

SLQs: General Qualities	SLQs: Loch Lomond
A world-renowned landscape famed for its rural beauty; Wild and rugged highlands contrasting with pastoral lowlands; Water in its many forms; The rich variety of woodlands; Settlements nestled within a vast natural backdrop;	Immensity of loch and landscape; Two lochs in one; A multitude of beautiful islands; Distinctive mountain groups; Ben Lomond, widely known, popularly frequented; Banks of broadleaved woodland; and Peaceful side glens.

Famous through-routes;

Tranquillity; and

The easily accessible landscape splendour.

12.6.2.2. The Loch Lomond NSA

NSA is a national, statutory designation and comprises 40 areas of Scotland that have been designated as having outstanding scenic value in a national context. The Proposed Development and majority of the study area fall within the Loch Lomond NSA with the exception of a small area of upland glen and mountains side at the western extent of the study area. The Loch Lomond NSA is focussed around Loch Lomond and the immediately enclosing mountains slopes, and also includes the prominent peak of Ben Lomond. The document '*The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas*' (SNH, 2010(b)) identifies SLQs for the NSAs. However, there are no individual SLQs identified for the Loch Lomond NSA, because those identified for the LLTNP are considered to cover this. As such, the effects of the Proposed Development on the two designations are covered together within this LVIA.

12.6.2.3. WLA 7: Ben More – Ben Ledi

WLAs have been defined by NatureScot as those areas comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland. WLA 7 covers the hills on the eastern side of Loch Lomond, to the north of Inversnaid, lying within the north-easternmost part of the study area. Given the location of the Proposed Development adjacent to the existing power station, and in a part of the landscape where other development is clearly present, and in agreement with LLTNPA, a WLA Assessment of WLA 7 has been scoped out of the LVIA, as it is considered that effects on wildness and wild land within the WLA are very unlikely to be significant. However, the WLA description and wild land qualities have been given consideration in the broader landscape character assessment.

12.6.3. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

NatureScot has undertaken detailed review and classification of various landscape areas and types of Scotland (SNH, 2019 [online]). Three individual Landscape Character Types (National LCTs) are identified within the 2.5km study area for the Proposed Development as follows:

- LCT 251 – Highland Summits;
- LCT 252 – Upland Glens - Loch Lomond & the Trossachs; and
- LCT 254 – Straths and Glens with Lochs.

The study area is also covered by the more detailed, but now superseded Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Landscape Character Assessment (SNH, 2010) which identifies 15 Landscape Character Areas (LLTNP LCAs) within the study area as follows:

- Farmed Glen Side;
- Farmed Hill;
- Farmed Upland Glen;
- Forested Glen Side;
- Forested Hill;
- Forested Upland Glen;
- Loch Island;
- Loch Shore Fringe;

- Open Glen Side;
- Open Hill;
- Open Upland Glen;
- Strath and Glen Floor Loch;
- Wooded Glen Side;
- Wooded Hill; and
- Wooded Upland Glen.

The National LCTs and LLTNP LCAs are illustrated together on **Volume 2, Figure 12.3**.

Taking into consideration the very broad classification of the National LCTs, and the superseded status of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs LCAs, the published National LCTs and LLTNP LCAs have been used as a basis for the identification of seven Local Landscape Zones (LLZs) for the purposes of the LVIA, supported by site survey. These areas closely reflect the scale and character of the study area in relation to the Proposed Development at the current time. LLZs are shown on **Volume 2, Figure 12.4** and comprise the following:

- LLZ 1 – Upland Glen;
- LLZ 2 – Wooded Loch Shore;
- LLZ 3 – Rugged Upland Hills;
- LLZ 4 – Coniferous Forest;
- LLZ 5 – Settled Loch Shore;
- LLZ 6 – Settled Woodland Glen; and
- LLZ 7 – Linear Loch.

The ZTV indicates that there would be very little intervisibility of the Proposed Development with LLZ 1 (Upland Glen) with site survey suggesting that this would be further reduced by woodland cover. As such the potential for any significant effects to this area is considered very unlikely and it has been scoped out of further study.

The remaining LLZs are described in **Table 12.7** to **Table 12.12**:

Table 12.7: LLZ 2: Wooded Loch Shore (Baseline Description)

Description	This LLZ covers the steeply sloping and sometimes rocky enclosing slopes to the east and west of Loch Lomond which are dominated by a dense coverage of woodland. To the east of the loch this comprises a predominant coverage of mature oak woodland. These sections of loch shore have a relatively isolated feel, being generally accessible only by foot or by boat. The steep slopes and enclosure of woodland limits intervisibility and connection through the LLZ, with a closer association with the loch and far shore, with views often being framed by the trunks of trees. On the western shore, woodland is mostly of oak and birch but augmented by some planted areas of conifers and some areas of invasive rhododendron. The steep wooded slopes are typically separated from the loch by the A82 trunk road and contained on their upper side by the railway line. This gives a linear feel, with woodlands feeling smaller, and more influenced by the adjoining character types, with a less individual sense of place
Key Character-istics	• Steep, sometimes rocky slopes clothed in dense coverage of predominantly oak and birch woodland;

	• Distinct contrast between the eastern and western side of the loch, with a sense of isolation and inaccessibility to the eastern side, whilst the western side is more influenced by the busy A82 and railway line giving greater sense of linearity and containment; • Some areas of planted conifers and invasive rhododendron ponticum on the western side; • Containment by woodland and steep slopes leads to a greater visual association with the loch and far shore with views often framed by tree trunks; and • Sense of natural woodlands, combining with the surrounding rugged mountains and loch to contribute to the romanticised picture of the Highlands.
Landscape Value	This LLZ forms an important setting to Loch Lomond with the combinations of native, mature wooded slopes with the surrounding loch and mountains contributing to a valued romantic view of Loch Lomond which is a key element of the LLTNP. The oak woodlands also have important value as native habitats and feature areas of ancient woodland and veteran trees. Landscape value is therefore High.

Table 12.8: LLZ 3: Rugged Upland Hills (Baseline Description)

Description	This LLZ comprises the rugged, upland and mountainous areas above the tree line and glens to the east and west of Loch Lomond. This is an exposed and elevated landscape with a coverage of rough grasses, and with frequent bedrock and shattered boulders present. The hills and mountains have a complex knobbly terrain and are steep-sided with typically rounded but prominent summit ridges leading to a serrated skyline around the loch. Streams cut down the mountainsides through rocky clefts, sometimes lined with occasional fragments of riparian woodland. There are wide and expansive vistas obtained across Loch Lomond from the higher slopes with an expansive sense of space and exposure being experienced.
Key Character-istics	• Rugged upland hills and mountains with complex, knobbly terrain creating a serrated skyline of rounded but prominent summits; • Ground cover of rough grasses with frequent bedrock and shattered boulders giving colour palate of greens and soft browns through changing seasons; • Streams cutting down the mountainsides through rocky clefts, sometimes lined with occasional fragments of riparian woodland; • Wide expansive vistas across Loch Lomond from elevated areas; • Expansive landscape with sense of exposure; and • Undeveloped character in contrast to the lower lying loch shore, but limited sense of wildness due to the proximity of the more developed loch shore and glens which are usually visibly evident.

Landscape Value	The mountains are valued as a setting to Loch Lomond and for their recreational opportunities and comprise an important compositional element in the landscape of the LLTNP. Landscape value is therefore High.

Table 12.9: LLZ 4: Coniferous Forest (Baseline Description)

Description	This LLZ comprises extensive areas of coniferous forest plantation, predominantly spruce with areas of larch and occasional small areas of broadleaf trees which cover lower hills and some glen sides to the east and west of Loch Lomond. The single species planting leads to a generally uniform dark green colour with patches of yellow and brown in autumn and winter when the larch change colour. The uniformity of species and colour reinforces the commercial nature of this landscape. The forestry is generally dense, making access difficult beyond forestry tracks which tend to follow contours around the slopes and giving a dark and enclosing quality. However, the coniferous forest areas are often bordered by areas of native mixed and deciduous woodland which leads to increased diversity.
Key Character-istics	• Extensive areas of conifer plantation across low hills with uniformity of species and dark green colouring; • Patches of larch, and forest edge areas of mixed and deciduous planting leads to local diversity of colours and textures; • Density of planting leads to dark and enclosing quality and limited accessibility; and • Creates a dark wooded setting and larger scale pattern within the wider diverse landscapes of rugged hills and woodland surrounding Loch Lomond.
Landscape Value	The more functional and uniform pattern of the landscape with use of non-native species leads to this LLZ being less valued than other surrounding landscapes. However, it still maintains value due to its presence within the LLTNP and as a setting for Loch Lomond and the surrounding mountains. Landscape value is therefore Medium.

Table 12.10: LLZ 5: Settled Loch Shore (Baseline Description)

Description	This LLZ covers the areas of Inveruglas and Ardvorlich and comprises distinct areas of improved pasture, built and tourist development set on levelled delta areas on the western shore of Loch Lomond within a framework of mature woodland and specimen trees. There is some difference between the two areas, with Ardvorlich being more rural and residential, whilst Inveruglas has a greater presence of tourist development including a holiday park, car park and visitor centre, and also hosts the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station. However, there is also a consistency of character with buildings, woodland, open pastural

	fields and a flat, flooding shoreline linking up rocky peninsulas. The busy A82 also passes through these areas.
Key Character-istics	• District areas on the shore of the loch, characterised by mix of flat, pastoral fields, build residential and tourist development; • Generally wooded setting gives sense of containment, with small areas of mixed woodland and specimen trees throughout, and a wider backdrop of mixed and native woodland; • Existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station comprises a striking focal point; • Flat, flooding shoreline around the delta area links rocky, knoll-like woodland peninsulas which protrude into the loch; • Busy A82 corridor divides the areas, cutting some parts from the loch shore; • Taken in context, these areas create small, natural resting points, contrasting with the linearity of the remainder of the loch shore, particularly Inveruglas where a car park and tourist facilities are present; and • Open vistas across and down Loch Lomond within the surrounding setting of mountains.
Landscape Value	These locations are valued, particularly by tourists as rare rest points and developed areas along the loch shore, allowing appreciation of the wider landscape. They are important in the setting of Loch Lomond in the context of the LLTNP from a cultural and landscape perspective. Landscape value is therefore High.

Table 12.11: LLZ 6: Settled Woodland Glen (Baseline Description)

Description	This LLZ comprises the narrow, wooded glen leading down to the eastern shore of Loch Lomond at Inversnaid. A steep narrow road winds down through the glen to a large hotel at the loch-edge with various properties set at intervals along it. There is a general sense of enclosure to the glen, due to its narrow form and the predominantly oak woodland which clothes its lower reaches. This contrasts with open views of the loch which are experienced through the trees as the steep, winding road descends to the loch. The sense of enclosure reduces on higher ground where the terrain becomes more gentle and the glen broadens, and woodland also thins out to less extensive areas of birch with wider areas of rough grazing land. A sizeable watercourse reflects the transition in terrain between the upper and lower glen, changing from a wider and slower burn on the higher ground, to a rushing stream, enclosed within a rocky gorge before finally dropping over a waterfall to reach the loch shore.
Key Character-istics	• Narrow glen colonised by mature oak woodland in its lower reaches and scattered birch woodland interspersed with rough grazing land in the upper glen; • Broad, shallow watercourse transitions into faster flowing burn as it passes down the glen through areas of rocky gorge and waterfall to the loch edge;

	• Steep narrow road winding down through glen, connecting occasional properties and terminating at a large hotel on the loch shore; • Filtered elevated views across Loch Lomond through the trees as the road descends the steep glen contrast with the enclosure of the terrain and woodland; • More open views across the loch from the mouth of the glen adjacent to the shore; and • Perceptions of rural remoteness and a sense of separation from the busier areas on the opposite shore of the loch, due to the area being reached only by foot, by boat, or by a long, winding single-track dead-end road.
Landscape Value	This is a valued location relating to the setting of Loch Lomond within the LLTNP, particularly in relation to its more remote eastern shore, and also as a destination for tourists and visitors with individual features of interest such as the waterfall at Inversnaid. Landscape value is therefore High.

Table 12.12: LLZ 7: Linear Loch (Baseline Description)

Description	This LLZ encompasses the fjord-like northern section of Loch Lomond within the study area. This section comprise a narrow, linear loch enclosed by steep, predominantly woodland slopes with an intricate shoreline of rocky outcrops, boulders, shallow bays and islands and a backdrop of high rugged mountains. The character of the loch is inextricably linked with the surrounding setting of hills and mountains, but the open waters give a contrasting expansiveness and sense of exposure, with the landform funnelling long views across the water to the north and particularly to the south where notable mountains, including Ben Lomond, form distinct focal points. The character of the loch changes with weather conditions whereby the vast scale of the waterbody can result in stormy waves in windy conditions or contrastingly, still, fine conditions can lead to mirror-like calm with the surrounding hills and mountains reflecting and further emphasising the linearity and enclosure of the valley.
Key Character-istics	• Long, fjord-like waterbody, enclosed by steep, wooded slopes and backdrop of mountains emphasises a strong linear form; • An intricate shoreline of rocky outcrops, and boulders and shallow bays contrasts with the open waters of the deeper loch; • Sense of expansiveness and exposure is in contrast to the enclosed wooded landscapes which surround the loch; • Enclosing wooded and undeveloped shoreline creates a sense of remoteness for the majority of the loch area, with the exception of some formalised road edges, jetties and small developed pockets; • Long funnelled views, in which the surrounding rocky peninsulas and rugged hills create an appearance of many layers and notable mountains such as Ben Lomond form distinct focal points; and

	• Varying character with weather conditions from choppy waves to still and mirror-like calm which reflects the surrounding landscape and further emphasises the linearity.
Landscape Value	Loch Lomond comprises a key element of the LLTNP and therefore the loch within its setting is considered to be of considerable landscape value. It is also a popular resource for recreational activities. Landscape value is therefore High.

12.7. Baseline: Visual Amenity

12.7.1. INTERPRETATION OF THE ZTV

The ZTV indicates that the majority of visibility for the Proposed Development would occur on the eastern side of the Loch with landform on the western side focussing the likely range of visibility in a fan shape across the loch. On the western side, theoretical visibility of the proposed building is shown along the A82 corridor for approximately 2 – 3km to the south of the Proposed Development, and generally around the Inveruglas area. Landform would limit potential visibility to the north. On the opposite side of the loch, potential visibility is indicated around 1.5km to the north and over 5km to the south, but in reality, at this distance the potential for the Proposed Development to be perceptible is unlikely as it would appear very distant and small. More perceptible potential for visibility is therefore anticipated within an approximate 3km stretch of shore.

The ZTV is based on a bare ground model and site survey suggests that it is likely to have substantially over-estimated the visual envelope of the Proposed Development due to the extent of woodland surrounding the Proposed Development, and generally within the study area to either side of Loch Lomond.

12.7.2. VISUAL RECEPTORS

Visual receptors within the study area comprise residents or others present in and around buildings and settlement areas and those using routes (including transport and recreational routes) through the study area.

12.7.2.1. Building-based Receptors

Building-based receptors include residents, workers and visitors to businesses and tourist facilities. Within the study area, building-based receptor locations can be broadly divided into four area-specific groups as follows (see **Volume 2, Figure 12.5**):

- Inversnaid
- Inveruglas;
- Ardvorlich; and
- Corriegrogain.

<u>Inversnaid</u>

Receptors Locations B1 – B4 comprise a variety of residential properties and a large hotel at Inversnaid, close to the eastern shore of Loch Lomond, and Garrison, within the glen above. Views are

predominantly out across the loch, being open from Receptor Location B1 (Inversnaid Hotel) and filtered by trees from nearby properties within the lower glen (Receptor Locations B2 (Lomond View and Corriebruach), B3 (Inversnaid Lodge). Views from Receptor Location B4 (Garrison / Inversnaid Bunkhouse) are more contained by the landform and woodland within the upper valley.

Inveruglas

Receptor Locations B5 – B8 comprises a range of residential, tourist and farm properties around Inveruglas. Views from these properties are of mixed orientation, sometimes filtered, with general southerly views over Loch Lomond from Receptor Location B5 (Inveruglas visitor centre, car park and café), easterly views across the A82 and the loch from Receptor B6 (a cottage at the entrance to Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station) and mixed views southeast and northwest from two properties at Receptor Location B7 (Inveruglas Farm). Views from Receptor Location B8 (Loch Lomond Holiday Park) are mostly orientated across Loch Lomond. The existing power station forms a partial focal point within some views from Receptor Location B5, although is filtered by vegetation in most views.

Ardvorlich

Receptor Location B9 comprises a small group of residential properties near the shore of Loch Lomond around 1.6km to the north of the Proposed Development. Views are typically filtered by trees and easterly towards the Loch and hills beyond.

Coiregrogain

Receptor Location B10 is a farm property in an elevated position within the valley of Inveruglas Water. Views are framed down the valley to the east.

12.7.2.2. Route-based Receptors

Potential route-based visual receptors within the study area include those using public roads and recreational users of paths, tracks and other established walking routes. Views from the following routes have been identified as potentially being affected by the Proposed Development within the study area (see **Volume 2, Figure 12.5**).

- Public Roads and Transport Routes:
  - **Route 1** (A82) – Trunk road following west side of Loch Lomond, often enclosed with filtered views across the loch and notable views of Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station in passing;
  - **Route 2** (Inversnaid Minor Road) – Narrow, winding route leading down to Inversnaid Hotel on eastern side of Loch Lomond with some filtered elevated views across the loch from its lower reaches;
  - **Route 3** (West Highland Railway Line) – Travelling between Arrochar and Ardlui, elevated along the western side of Loch Lomond with views across the loch, typically filtered or contained by trees and landform; and
  - **Route 4** (Inveruglas – Inversnaid Passenger Ferry) – Cruise boats crossing the loch with wide and expansive views of the surrounding shorelines and hills. The existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station is a notable feature when approaching Inveruglas.
- Paths and Walking Routes:
  - **Route R5** (West Highland Way) – Long distance walking route following eastern shore of Loch Lomond, with mostly filtered views across the loch to the opposite shore;
  - **Route R6** (Three Lochs Way / Loch Lomond and Cowal Way) – Long distance walking route which follows footpath from Inveruglas car park alongside A82 and up private road alongside Inveruglas

Water. Views feature the Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station and A82, before the route moves up the glen; and

– **Route R7** (Great Trossachs Path) – Long distance walking route leading westwards from Inversnaid to Callander with filtered elevated views across Loch Lomond for a short section rising from Inversnaid.

12.7.2.3. Outdoor Recreational Locations

Outdoor recreational locations considered include locations not otherwise covered by the assessment of building and route-based receptors where visual amenity is one of the principal purposes of being at the location. Three locations have been identified for inclusion within the assessment as follows:

- **Receptor Location O1** (Inveruglas Recreational Areas) – An area of small footpaths, beach and camping management zone to the rear of the Inveruglas Visitor Centre, including the An Ceann pyramid viewpoint structure, featuring filtered views mostly towards the surrounding loch, and focussed southerly views from the viewpoint structure;
- **Receptor Location O2** (Loch Lomond (Boat Users)) – Including recreational users of Loch Lomond who obtain wide 360° views of the loch and surrounding hills and mountains; and
- **Receptor Location O3** (Rob Roy's View) – A car park and formal viewpoint location with plaque to the rear of Inversnaid with westerly views towards the mountains, mostly contained by trees. It is likely that woodland has grown up around the viewpoint since its establishment in the 1960s.

12.8. Assessment of Potential Effects: Landscape

This section of the LVIA provides an assessment of the effects that the Proposed Development would have on the landscape character within the study area during construction, and at two stages during the operational phase, in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in **Section 12.5**.

Assessment of potential effects on each identified LLZ (see **Volume 2, Figure 12.4**) are presented in **Table 12.13** to **Table 12.17**, followed by an assessment of how these effects would affect the Special Landscape Qualities of the LLTNP.

12.8.1. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON LOCAL LANDSCAPE ZONES

Table 12.13: LLZ 2: Wooded Loch Shore (Assessment)

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Dense coverage of predominantly oak and birch woodland; • Greater association with the loch, and far shore, with views often framed by tree trunks; and • Sense of natural woodlands combining with surrounding rugged mountains and loch contributed to romanticised picture of the Highlands.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued LLZ due to its role in the setting of Loch Lomond. It is somewhat susceptible to change where loss of tree cover would occur and due to its steep slopes, although the generally wooded and enclosed characteristics give it the ability to accommodate small scale change without noticeable alteration to key characteristics.

	Sensitivity is Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • Potential tree loss could interrupt the uniformity of the densely tree-clad slopes; and • The Proposed Development during construction or operation could form a distraction within views across the loch and affect the romanticised image of a highland landscape.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	There would be no direct change to this LLZ with the tree felling works proposed occurring within the neighbouring LLZ 5 (Settled Loch Shore). However, this would lead to some indirect change where the felling and working areas would be seen within the context of the adjacent wooded shore, particularly from areas on the eastern shore of the loch. In the longer term, when woodland would be re-established in these areas, there would be little perceived change. Magnitude of change would be Low during construction, and at year 1 of operation and Negligible after 10 years.
Significance of Effect	The construction phase of the Proposed Development would lead to an area of felling adjacent to this LLZ, mostly of non-native conifers and mixed deciduous woodland affected by invasive rhododendron. Once felled, this area of activity would be seen in relation to, and may be perceived to be directly affecting, the LLZ when seen from some areas across the loch. There would be some potential for this to be distracting within views towards the Arrochar Alps which may affect wider appreciation of the landscape setting. However, this would be a very localised area of activity seen within the context of other extensive woodland slopes and there would be very few if any locations where it would be perceived in association with the LLZ around the near side of the loch. After completion of construction and spoil storage activities, the area would be replanted with similar native species to those within the LLZ and over time, would appear to seamlessly transition into the adjacent birch and oak woodland areas in comparison to the existing, mostly non-native conifer species. The effect would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and within year 1 of operation when the felled and reprofiled area would still appear as a noticeable gap in woodland cover but would be **Negligible** after 10 years.

Table 12.14: LLZ 3: Rugged Upland Hills (Assessment)

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Wide expansive vistas across Loch Lomond from elevated areas.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued LLZ with largely undeveloped qualities and an open and exposed character, susceptible to change of the type proposed although the

	presence of some hydro structures in localised areas could give some precedent for limited, well-placed development. Sensitivity is Medium – High.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • The appearance of the Proposed Development during construction or operation could form a distraction within the expansive vistas of Loch Lomond.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	There would be no direct change to this LLZ. The ZTV illustrates that there would be potential intervisibility of the Proposed Development with some parts of the open slopes which contain Loch Lomond leading to potential indirect change to open vistas. However, these areas are relatively scattered and intermittent, affecting areas where development around the loch is already perceived, and the greater majority of the LLZ would not be changed. Magnitude of change would be Low during construction, and Negligible during operation after 1 year and after 10 years.
Significance of Effect	Construction associated with the Proposed Development would be seen within a localised area of the loch-side within elevated views, affecting an area where a focus of development is already present, including a holiday park, car-parking and often boats at Inveruglas, the A82 and railway line, and the Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station including the four large penstocks which cut down the hillside. Within this context, the removal of an area of trees and construction activities, particularly those associated with spoil storage which may be perceived as a visible scar, would create an increased area of activity and development which would likely create a greater degree of distraction within the wider context of the wooded lochshore. However, this would be a localised area of change within the wide context of the loch and would affect only very small parts of the LLZ, mostly steep slopes which already have a close association with the loch and lochside development, the key characteristics of elevated, open exposure and long views would continue to be present and valued. Once construction activities had ceased, there would be less noticeable distraction and with the re-growth of vegetation over time, the area of change would become barely perceptible in the context after 10 years, with the permanent building being unremarkable in a setting where other buildings are already present. The effect on landscape character is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction, and **Negligible** during the first year and after 10 years of operation.

Table 12.14: LLZ 4: Coniferous Forest (Assessment)

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise:

	• Dark wooded setting within the wider diverse landscapes of rugged hills and woodland surrounding Loch Lomond.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a less valued LLZ with forested and enclosing qualities. These qualities give some opportunity to accommodate some development, although the uniformity of the forest is susceptible to requirements for felling which could introduce potentially distracting scarring or lead to further wind-blow. Sensitivity is Low – Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • Potential intervisibility with the Proposed Development may form a distraction within the setting of Loch Lomond.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	There would be no direct change to this LLZ. Although intervisibility is indicated by the ZTV, this would be limited by the dense forested character of the LLZ which reduces potential for visibility with surrounding character areas to only a few edge areas and potentially clearings on high ground. Magnitude of change would be Negligible at all stages of the Proposed Development.
Significance of Effect	There would be potential limited appearance of construction activities from a few edge or clearing areas but this would be extremely limited. Within the surrounding enclosing forest context, it is unlikely that any of these activities would lead to any noticeable effect on the key characteristics of this LLZ. This potential would be further limited during operational phases due to the smaller footprint of the Proposed Development and overall, any effects on the character of this LLZ are therefore unlikely. The effect is predicted to be **Negligible** during construction and during operation within the first year and after 10 years.

Table 12.15: LLZ 5: Settled Loch Shore (Assessment)

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Landscape make-up of mixed flat pastoral fields, built residential and tourist development and woodland; • Sense of containment due to generally wooded setting of mixed woodland and specimen trees; • Striking focal point of the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station; and • Open loch vistas within the surrounding setting of mountains.
Landscape Sensitivity	This LLZ is highly valued, particularly by tourists as it gives opportunity for the appreciation of the wider landscape around Loch Lomond. The developed setting gives opportunity to accommodate further strategically placed

	development, although the wooded setting and balance of open, and enclosed areas is susceptible to change of the type proposed. Sensitivity is Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • Construction or development activities may alter the balance of land cover and use activities leading to a change in intrinsic qualities; • Tree removal may alter the wooded context and affect the sense of containment; • The Proposed Development during construction and / or operation may alter or affect the availability of views of the existing power station and affect its role as a focal point; and • The Proposed Development could affect or distract from the availability of views towards the loch or other features.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	The entirety of the Proposed Development would be located within the Inveruglas part of this LLZ. During construction this would lead to a noticeable increase in activities and movement within a localised part of the LLZ with evidence of works on both sides of the A82 including excavation and construction activities, tree removal, spoil transportation and storage, associated working, welfare, storage and delivery areas. Although this is already a busy area, the change to a more construction-based range of activities would be very noticeable, although largely confined to a relatively localised part of the LLZ, due to the existing woodland and local landform. In the longer term, the majority of disturbed areas would be re-established to similar conditions as existing. The new building and other surrounding changes within the power station site would be noticeable as new features, but relatively reflective of existing features already present within the LLZ. Magnitude of change would be Medium during construction. This would reduce to Low during year 1 of operation and after 10 years.
Significance of Effect	During construction the noticeably increased levels of activity within a localised part of the LLZ would affect the way in which the Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station and Inveruglas car park area would be perceived, likely leading to more of an industrial, rather than recreational character. However, the surrounding wooded character would restrict intervisibility to areas close to the Proposed Development in the northern part of the Inveruglas LLZ area. The removal of trees within the PDA would have some influence on the enclosure within this area in the short term, but surrounding trees would be retained and the overall wooded character would be likely to be generally preserved. In the longer term, the new landform created by the stored spoil would be in proportion and character with existing knolly landform in the area and would be virtually indiscernible with the re-establishment of woodland over time. Other areas including the overflow car park would be restored to reflect their existing conditions and with replacement tree planting, would be reflective of existing conditions.

	In the longer term, the existing power station building would be fully or partly hidden in some existing views, including most parts of the Inveruglas peninsula, by the new building which may become the more notable landscape focus within these views. However, it is anticipated that a high standard of design for the new building would lead to it forming a positive new feature within the setting which would complement the existing building. There would nevertheless be some change in character to the setting of the existing power station from a focal point building situated within a mature amenity parkland-type setting, to a more built and operational context, and this would, to some extent, increase the sense of enclosure and alter the balance between the built and soft landscapes within this localised part of the LLZ. The effect is predicted to be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) during construction but would reduce to **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during year 1 of operation. The continued growth of re-established vegetation and woodland would further reduce the level of effect over time, but this is predicted to continue to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) after 10 years due to the change to a more built character.

Table 12.16: LLZ 6: Settled Woodland Glen (Assessment)

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Filtered, elevated views across Loch Lomond through trees and more open views from the mouth of the glen adjacent to the shore; • Perception of rural remoteness and sense of separation from the busier areas on the opposite shore of the loch.
Landscape Sensitivity	This LLZ is highly valued, particularly in relation to its more remote location on the eastern shore. Its already somewhat developed character gives it some opportunity to accommodate well designed development, but the wooded character, steep slopes and rural remote character are susceptible to more intensive types of development. Sensitivity is Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • Appearance of Proposed Development during construction or operation on the opposite side of the loch may form a distraction within elevated, filtered views, and/or more open views from loch-side. • Construction activities on the opposite side of the loch could increase or decrease the sense of rural remoteness or connection to the opposite shore through increased noise or focus.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	There would be no direct change to this LLZ. Indirect change would potentially occur through intervisibility with the Proposed Development across the loch. This would mostly be experienced from the open shore area at the mouth of the glen where the Proposed Development would be seen within the wide context of

	views across the loch. From upper areas, it may also be a perceptible feature within glimpsed views as part of this wider context. In the longer term there would be less notable perceptibility, particularly with the re-growth of vegetation. Magnitude of change would be Low during construction. This would reduce to Negligible during year 1 of operation and after 10 years.
Significance of Effect	During construction the works would form a perceptible feature within the context to this LLZ and would be potentially distracting within the more open views across the loch from the mouth of the glen and within key framed or filtered views from higher elevation. However, this would be seen as part of the existing wide context and would not affect the more immediate qualities which characterise the LLZ or change the sense of remoteness and separation with the more developed loch side. During operation, without the added movement and activities of construction, the Proposed Development would form a part of the wider context and would be unlikely to lead to any discernible change to this LLZ. The effect is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and **Negligible** during both year 1 and after 10 years of operation.

Table 12.17: LLZ 7: Linear Loch (Assessment)

Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Enclosing wooded and undeveloped shoreline for the majority of the loch which gives a sense of remoteness; • Long funnelled views, in which the surrounding rocky peninsulas and rugged hills create an appearance of many layers and notable mountains, such as Ben Lomond, form distinct focal points
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued LLZ forming a key part of the LLTNP. The largely undeveloped shoreline is susceptible to development, although the vast scale of the loch and presence of existing pockets of development tempers this to some degree. Sensitivity is Medium.
Potential Effects	Potential effects to landscape receptors may include: • Felling and other works and permanent features may increase the impression of a developed shoreline; • The Proposed Development during construction or operation may form a new focal point within linear views.
Nature and Magnitude of Effect	The Proposed Development would be located close to the shore with temporary works within the overflow car park area adjacent to the shore but there is no intention to fell any shoreline trees and the Inveruglas peninsula would create a

	buffer between the majority of the works and the loch. The works would be seen from some parts of the loch, generally likely to be to the south-east due to the enclosing nature of the landform and woodland. The Proposed Development would be adjacent to the existing power station and other features at Inveruglas and would be a small change within the wide context of the loch. It is likely that some tree felling would be seen but intervisibility of the spoil storage areas with the loch is likely to be limited due to the low vantage and landform on the eastern side. The permanent new building would be located adjacent to the existing building in an area of existing development and would be very small in the context of the loch. Magnitude of change would be Low during construction. This would reduce to Negligible during year 1 of operation and after 10 years.
Significance of Effect	The construction of the Proposed Development may form a visibly distracting feature within a very localised part of the loch shore at Inveruglas. However, the extent of works likely to be seen would be limited by surrounding landform and woodland and this would be a very small feature within the wide context of the surrounding loch shore in an area where buildings, boats and road traffic already form a perceptible area of development. Some felling may create a perceptible gap with the surrounding wooded slopes but would not affect any shoreline woodland so the tree-lined character of this section of loch would be retained at all times. Over time, regrowth of woodland would reverse this localised effect. The permanent building within an already developed section of shoreline would be a small feature in the context of the wide expansive loch, unlikely to lead to any perceptible change in the character. There would be limited perceptibility of the Proposed Development within linear views during either construction or operation and within the expansive panoramic context this unlikely to form any discernible adverse effects to the character of Loch Lomond. The effect is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and **Negligible** during both year 1 and after 10 years of operation.

12.8.1.1. Summary of Effects on Landscape Character

Effects on each of the LLZs at all stages of the Proposed Development are summarised in **Table 12.18** below. Significant effects are identified in **bold**:

Table 12.18: Summary of Effects on Local Landscape Zones (LLZs)

LLZ	Operation	Construction Yr 1	Construction Yr 10
LLZ 1 – Upland Glen	Scoped out	Scoped out	Scoped out
LLZ 2 – Wooded Loch Shore	Minor Adverse	Negligible	Negligible
LLZ 3 – Rugged Upland Hills	Minor Adverse	Negligible	Negligible
LLZ 4 – Coniferous Forest	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

LLZ 5 – Settled Loch Shore	**Moderate Adverse**	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
LLZ 6 – Settled Woodland Glen	Minor Adverse	Negligible	Negligible
LLZ 7 – Linear Loch.	Minor Adverse	Negligible	Negligible

As illustrated by the summary table, the majority of landscape effects arising from the Proposed Development within the study area are predicted to be not significant and temporary, being Minor Adverse (not significant) during the construction phase for LLZ 2 (Wooded Loch Shore), LLZ 3 (Rugged Upland Hills), LLZ 6 (Settled Woodland Glen) and LLZ 7 (Linear Loch) where construction works would be perceived as a potential minor distraction within the wider context only. Once construction works were completed, the effect on all these LLZs would reduce to Negligible, because the Proposed Development would be seen within a wide context, adjacent to existing similar development and therefore unlikely to appear out of place.

A temporary significant Moderate Adverse effect is predicted to only one LLZ during construction, LLZ 5 (Settled Loch Shore) within which the Proposed Development would be located. Within a localised part of this area, around Inveruglas, the extent of works occurring is predicted to lead to a noticeable change from a landscape generally derived by a recreational character, to one more characterised by construction activities. This effect would be largely reversed following completion of the construction works, restoration of areas used for construction activities and the reinstatement of boundary walls and gates. However, there would continue to be a perceptible change to the setting around the existing power station, where the current situation of the building within a mature amenity, parkland type setting would be changed to one more characterised by built development. This is predicted to result in a Minor Adverse (not significant) effect during operation within the first year and after 10 years, although the effect would be slightly reduced over time with the re-growth of woodland around the site. Nevertheless, the high standard of design is predicted to lead to the building being a generally positive addition within the wider setting.

12.8.2. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ON THE LOCH LOMOND AND THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

12.8.2.1. Landscape Character

The landscape of the LLTNP is represented within the study area by the seven LLZs which have been identified and assessed. As such, the effects on the landscape character of the LLTNP can be summarised through a summation of these effects.

The landscape character assessment has identified that significant effects would occur to the landscape character of one LLZ during construction, affecting an area around Inveruglas. This is a very localised area in the context of the LLTNP overall, although it is recognised that it comprises a valued landscape type and recreational resource in the context of Loch Lomond. Nevertheless, the temporary significant effect on this LCZ would relate primarily to the appreciation and setting of the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station and would not affect the relationship of this LLZ with the loch. There is some potential for wider indirect landscape effects on surrounding areas due to the appearance of the construction activities within the wider landscape, in the context of the wooded slopes which surround Loch Lomond. However, these effects are not predicted to be significant.

These effects are all predicted to be short term with the effect on landscape character during operation, once construction and reinstatement was complete reducing to be not significant and largely Negligible. Within the closer vicinity of the site, changes to the landscape character around the existing power station would lead to small, not significant longer term effects which would be very localised in the context of the LLTNP.

Overall, when considering the predicted effects on landscape character in relation to the scale and landscapes of the LLTNP overall, and particularly the very localised nature of the predicted significant effects, the effect on the landscape character of the LLTNP as a whole is predicted to be not significant during both construction and operation.

12.8.2.2. Special Landscape Qualities

The Scoping Report identified four SLQs with the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development as follows:

- General Qualities:
  - The rich variety of woodlands; and
  - Famous through routes.
- Loch Lomond SLQs
  - Immensity of the loch and landscape; and
  - Banks of broad leaved woodland.

Four further SLQs were requested for inclusion by LLTNPA and these have therefore also been included in the assessment:

- General Qualities:
  - The easily accessible landscape splendour.
- Loch Lomond Area SLQs:
  - Two lochs in one - The Highland Loch;
  - Distinctive mountain groups; and
  - Ben Lomond.

These SLQs can be classified into four common themes which are relevant to the potential effects of the Proposed Development, as follows:

- Effects on woodlands;
- Effects on Loch Lomond;
- Effects on mountain landscapes; and
- Effects on routes and access.

<u>Effects on Woodlands</u>

This relates to the SLQs:

- The rich variety of woodlands; and
- Banks of broad leaved woodland.

The effects of the Proposed Development on woodlands are covered in the assessment of LLZ 2 (Wooded Loch Shore) (see **Table 12.7**) with indirect effects also considered through the assessment of other neighbouring LLZs, notably LLZ 5 (Settled Loch Shore (see **Table 12.10**), and LLZ 7 (Linear Loch) (see **Table 12.17**) which considers the setting of Loch Lomond including its tree-lined banks. Within the

context of the wider landscape and woodlands, a very small area of woodland would be removed to make way for the construction compound / site establishment and spoil storage. This small area would be replanted and the opportunity taken to improve the quality of woodland by removal of non-native species and particularly control of invasive *Rhododendron ponticum* (see **Section 12.11**). There would be no removal of woodland on the loch shore and little perceptibility of felled areas from the loch. Overall this would have very little effect on the wooded qualities of the study area and no significant effects are predicted to the appreciation of these SLQs during either construction or operation.

Effects on Loch Lomond

This relates to the SLQs:

- Immensity of the loch and landscape; and
- Two lochs in one - The Highland Loch.

The effects of the Proposed Development on Loch Lomond are covered in the assessment of LLZ 7 (Linear Loch) (see **Table 12.17**), including its linearity and wide expanse in contrast to the tree-lined shores. The importance of the loch and notably, views across the loch is also considered in the assessment of all the other LLZs. The Proposed Development would be a relatively small feature within the giant scale of the loch and surroundings. The construction activities may form a somewhat increased focus on a small part of its shore within the short term. However, this would affect a part of the loch where other existing features are already present and already form a focus to some extent. The treeline around the loch would remain intact and the wooded Inveruglas peninsula and Inveruglas Isle both provide a buffer between the wider loch and the majority of works. The published description for the SLQ *'Immensity of the loch and landscape'* states,

"*When man-made features are clearly seen, as at Inveruglas where the Sloy power station with the hydro-electric pipeline descends the steep slopes, the overwhelming broadness of the hill slopes can make such a large-scale engineering installation appear modest in scale."* (SNH 2010(a) p25).

Although the Proposed Development would somewhat add to this existing feature, it would appear similarly small in comparison to the wider surrounding landscape and would form a barely perceptible change during operation. The effect on these SLQs is predicted to be not significant during either construction or operation.

Effects on Mountain Landscapes

This relates to the SLQs:

- Distinctive mountain groups; and
- Ben Lomond.

The summits of surrounding mountains all lie beyond the edge of the study area but the mountains maintain a role within the study area due to the influence they have on the setting. This is taken into account within the assessment of LLZs.

The effects on more mountainous areas within the study area are covered in the assessment of LLZ 3 (Rugged Upland Hills) (see **Table 12.14**). There would be no direct changes to any mountain landscapes with effects being limited to the potential for the works to form a distraction within elevated panoramas from the mountains or within the setting of mountains experienced from other landscapes. The assessment of LLZ 3 has identified that there would be a limited, temporary and not significant effect from mountain areas where the works may form a very localised distraction within elevated views. Similarly, there is some potential for these activities to be locally distracting in views towards the Arrochar Alps from the eastern loch shore. However, the works would form a very localised feature in an area where other development and movement is already experienced, and these views would be experienced from

relatively few locations. The effect would be temporary, with the permanent development unlikely to appear out of place within the setting which already forms a pocket of loch-side development.

From summits outwith the study area, including Ben Lomond which lies over 8.2km from the PDA, the Proposed Development would be distant and would appear very small, unlikely to be distracting within the very wide context experienced.

The effect on these SLQs would not be significant during either construction or operation.

Effects on routes and access

This relates to the SLQs:

- Famous through routes; and
- The easily accessible landscape splendour.

These SLQs relate partially to visual effects from routes which are discussed in **Section 12.9.2** below, and the experience of travelling through the LLTNP. There are several routes through the study area that create accessibility to different degrees and give varying visual experiences of the surrounding landscape (see **Volume 2, Figure 12.5**) including the A82, West Highland Railway Line, West Highland Way, Three Lochs Way / Loch Lomond and Cowal Way and Great Trossachs Path (see **Section 12.7**). Travel by boat on Loch Lomond also allows sequential views whilst moving through the LLTNP and is covered in the visual assessment through assessment of the Inveruglas – Inversnaid Passenger Ferry and Loch Lomond Boat Users.

Temporary significant visual effects were identified for one of these routes during the construction of the Proposed Development: Route R6 (Three Lochs Way / Loch Lomond and Cowal Way) (see **Section 12.9.2.2**) due to the effects on the appreciation of the Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station when passing alongside the A82 (due to the higher sensitivity of walkers compared to vehicular travellers). This would be very localised and temporary effect on a long route and would not affect the wider appreciation of the LLTNP.

There would be a similar temporary significant effect on visitors to the Inveruglas Visitor Centre which is a noted destination / stopping point for travellers. Visual effects on the other routes through this part of the LLTNP are not predicted to be significant due to the very localised nature of the Proposed Development within the wider context of the surrounding landscape. Overall, the impact on those travelling through the park would be very localised and largely temporary, as the operational development would not appear inconsistent with the existing development and land use patterns. Visitors would still have the opportunity to experience the surrounding landscape and there would be very little effect on this experience. As such, there would be no significant effect on these SLQs during either construction or operation.

12.8.3. CONCLUSIONS

No significant effects are predicted to any of the LLTNP SLQs. Whilst some temporary significant effects to landscape character and visual receptors are predicted during construction, these would occur within a very localised area around the Proposed Development and are not likely to affect the wider appreciation of the surrounding landscape and presence of SLQs. The effect on the LLTNP within the study area is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) during construction and **Negligible** during operation within the first year and after 10 years due to the very localised nature of change but this is predicted to be a **Negligible** effect within the context of the LLTNP as a whole. In the longer term, the Proposed Development would be reflective of the existing development pattern and a high standard of design is expected to lead to it having a generally positive influence for the LLTNP.

12.9. Assessment of Potential Effects: Visual Amenity

This Section of the LVIA discusses the findings of the detailed visual assessment undertaken for the Proposed Development. It evaluates and describes the likely changes to existing views from buildings, routes and other popular destinations during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development and the extent to which these changes would affect the visual amenity of residents, visitors and other users of the landscape in accordance with the effects criteria outlined in **Section 12.5**.

12.9.1. BUILDING-BASED VISUAL RECEPTORS

Ten building-based receptor locations were included in the assessment as described, separated into four locational groups, as outlined in **Section 12.7.2.1** (see **Volume 2, Figure 12.5**). Visual effects for receptors at these locations are summarised as follows:

12.9.1.1. Inversnaid

No significant effects were identified for any of the visual receptors in this area.

During construction, there would be a **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) visual effect for receptors at Receptor Location B1 (Inversnaid Hotel) where construction activities, including tree felling would form a temporary focus, slightly oblique to the main view. Similar views would be obtained by receptors at Receptor Locations B2 (Lomond View and Corriebruach) and B3 (Inversnaid Lodge), but these would be more filtered by vegetation, particularly during the summer months, and the effect during construction is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant)

During operation, the reduced size and lack of movement of the operational development compared to construction would lead to this appearing less noticeable within views from this area (see **Volume 3, Figure 4.8a-c: Visualisation Location 4 - View from Inversnaid Hotel Car Park**). This is unlikely to lead to any discernibly adverse effects on visual amenity, given the context where existing similar features can already be seen. The operational effect would therefore be **Negligible** during the first year and after 10 years of operation for Receptor Locations B1, B2 and B3.

There would be **No View** from Receptor Location B4 (Garrison / Inversnaid Bunkhouse) during either construction or operation due to landform screening.

12.9.1.2. Inveruglas

A temporary significant effect during construction is predicted for receptors at one building location in this area: Receptor Location B5 (Inveruglas visitor centre and café). This would relate largely to the views obtained from associated outside areas including the café terrace and car park area from which construction activities including potential filtered views of tree felling and felled areas, would be seen at close proximity to the west and would interrupt filtered views towards the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station, and the secondary construction compound / site establishment area within the overflow car park would be seen at close proximity to the north. Although likely to be very noticeable, these activities would not affect the main, valued views to the south, down Loch Lomond, and would be seen in the context of the busy road and car park area, potentially filtered by some trees. The effect during construction is predicted to be **Moderate Adverse** (significant), but temporary.

During operation, most areas would be restored to their original use and would therefore not appear perceptibly different to the existing situation. The existing power station would be part hidden from some areas by the new building (see **Volume 3, Figure 4.5a-c: Visualisation Location 1 - View from Inveruglas Car Park Footpath**) reducing its role as a focal point. However, the high quality of design associated with the new building is predicted to lead to the effect of the building itself on these views

being perceived as not adverse. The operational effect is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) in the first year but would reduce with the continued establishment of mitigation vegetation on the slope to the west and around the re-established overflow car park, to lead to a **Negligible** effect after 10 years.

Elsewhere around Inveruglas, effects are predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) for receptors at Locations B6 (Cottage at entrance to Sloy Power Station) and B7 (Inveruglas Farm) where filtered views of activities would be potentially experienced but would not be prominent. Although Receptor Location B6 lies very close to the site, it is separated by dense vegetation and landform which would limit available views to garden areas, at the front and side of the property. Effects would reduce to **Negligible** for both locations at year 1 and after 10 years because there would only be very filtered views of the permanent features of the Proposed Development and the more main views would be unaffected.

There would be **No View** from Receptor Location B8 (Loch Lomond Holiday Park) during both construction and operation, due to screening by intervening woodland.

12.9.1.3. Ardvorlich and Coiregrogain

There would be **No View** from either Receptor Location B9 (Ardvorlich) or B10 (Coiregrogain) during either construction or operation due to intervening landform and vegetation.

12.9.2. ROUTE-BASED RECEPTORS

12.9.2.1. Public Roads and Transport Routes

Four roads and other transport routes were identified for inclusion in the assessment, where potential views of the Proposed Development may be obtained by visual receptors, as described in **Section 12.7.2.2** (see **Volume 2, Figure 12.5**). No significant effects were identified for any of these routes.

A **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant) effect is predicted for travellers on Route R1 (A82) during construction who would obtain close passing views of works on both sides of the road for approximately 650m, particularly when travelling north and slowing for the Inveruglas junction.

Receptors travelling on Routes R2 (Inversnaid Minor Road), R3 (West Highland Railway Line) and R4 (Inveruglas – Inversnaid Passenger Ferry) are all predicted to received **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects during construction, where views would be obtained but would be unlikely to affect the wider appreciation of visual amenity: for Routes R2 and R4, because the works would be relatively small within a wider appreciation of Loch Lomond, and for Route R3, because the works would be limited in passing, and very brief from a moving train.

The visual effect for travellers on Routes R1, R2 and R4 would reduce to **Negligible** during operation within year 1 and after 10 years because the permanent features of the Proposed Development are likely to be barely perceptible within the view. A short term **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect is predicted during the first year of operation for travellers on Route R3 (West Highland railway line) where there would continue to be views of the reinstated spoil storage area, but this would reduce over time with the growth of planting and would be **Negligible** after 10 years.

12.9.2.2. Paths and Walking routes

Three walking routes were included in the assessment, as detailed in **Section 12.7.2.2**. A temporary significant visual effect is predicted during construction for users of one of these routes: Route R6 (Three Loch Way / Loch Lomond and Cowal Way). This route passes directly adjacent to the Proposed Development, leading to likely very noticeable views of construction activities which would affect passersby's ability to appreciate the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station which is a focal point at the

beginning of the route. However, this comprises a very short section of the route overall where walkers are already walking alongside the busy A82. The construction period effect is predicted to be **Moderate Adverse** (significant). During operation, the new building and reinstated boundary walls and gates would mostly conceal views towards the reinstated spoil storage area and would also partly conceal the existing power station at the beginning of the route. However, a high standard of design is expected to lead to this being a positive visual feature and on balance, this is considered unlikely to lead to an adverse effect on the visual amenity of this route and operational effects during year 1 and after 10 years would therefore be **Negligible** (see **Volume 3, Figure 4.6a-c: Visualisation Location 2 - View from the A82, south of Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station**).

The construction period effect for both Routes R5 (West Highland Way) and R7 (Great Trossachs Path) is predicted to be **Minor – Moderate Adverse** (not significant). There would be intermittent views of the Proposed Development from parts of both routes, likely to appear noticeable on the opposite shore and eye catching in key views which are occasionally obtained. During operation, this effect would reduce. A **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effect is predicted for users of Route R7 during the first year, where the view is more elevated but would reduce to **Negligible** after 10 years. The effect would be **Negligible** at both year 1 and year 10 for Route R5 where there would be less visibility of the felled spoil storage area.

12.9.3. OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL LOCATIONS

Three outdoor recreational locations were considered in the assessment. No significant visual effects were identified for visual receptors using these locations.

During construction, a **Minor Adverse** (not significant) visual effect has been identified for Outdoor Locations O1 (Inveruglas Recreational Areas) and O2 (Loch Lomond) because views of the Proposed Development would be typically filtered and secondary, with the wider expanse of Loch Lomond being the greater focus of views. These effects would reduce to **Negligible** during operation, both within the first year and after 10 years because the Proposed Development would be unlikely to adversely affect the view.

The effect on views from Outdoor Location O3 (Rob Roy's View) would be **Negligible** during all phases, because the view is heavily filtered / screened by trees.

12.9.4. SUMMARY OF VISUAL EFFECTS

A summary of the effects on building-based, route-based and outdoor recreational visual receptors during construction and operation is provided in **Table 12.19**. Significant effects are those identified as being Moderate or greater.

Table 12.19: Summary of Visual Effects

Visual Receptor Type	Effects during Construction*						Effects during Operation*						
	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor - Moderate	Minor	Negligible / No View	Stage	Major	Moderate - Major	Moderate	Minor - Moderate	Minor	Negligible / No View
Building-based Receptors	-	-	**1**	1	4	4	Yr 1	-	-	-	-	1	9
							Yr 10	-	-	-	-	0	10
Route-based Receptors	-	-	**1**	3	3	-	Yr 1	-	-	-	-	2	5
							Yr 10	-	-	-	-	-	7
Outdoor Recreational Receptors	-	-	-	-	2	1	Yr 1	-	-	-	-	1	2
							Yr 10	-	-	-	-	-	3
Totals	-	-	**2**	4	9	5	Yr 1	-	-	-	-	4	16
							Yr 10	-	-	-	-	-	20

* All effects are adverse.

12.10. Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

The assessment has considered the potential for cumulative effects to occur as a result of the Proposed Development during construction and operation. This has considered the potential for the Proposed Development to lead to increased effects within the study area when considered in addition to any other proposed developments which are not included in the baseline for the standard assessment.

12.10.1. CUMULATIVE BASELINE

The following proposed developments have been identified with the potential to affect the landscape character or visual amenity of the study area and are shown on **Volume 2, Figure 12.6**.

- Sloy Transformer Replacement Project (pre-application phase)
  - Replacement of the four power station transformers currently located at the rear of the existing power station with a new substation approximately 300m to the south-southeast.

- Cruach Tairbeirt Forestry Works
  - Extensive felling and track construction works over a 5-year period (2022 – 2027) to tackle *Phytothorum ramorum* in larch.

LLTNP also requested consideration of two further projects within the cumulative assessment. These were considered for inclusion as part of the cumulative baseline, but discounted for the following reasons:

- A82 upgrade works. There is no projected timescale for these works to take place and this is therefore not included due to uncertainty as to what it would involve.
- VISTA project access tracks. These works around Sloy have been completed and temporary tracks have already been reinstated.

Given the very localised nature of effects relating to the Proposed Development during operation, the potential for any significant cumulative effects is considered to be highly unlikely. Therefore, the cumulative assessment has focussed on the effects during the construction phase only.

Receptors which have been assessed as having a **Negligible** effect as a result of the Proposed Development alone have been scoped out of the cumulative assessment, because it is considered that a **Negligible** effect could not contribute to a significant cumulative effect.

Cumulative effects are assessed from a baseline where the Proposed Development forms an addition to the other cumulative developments.

12.10.2. CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

The cumulative baseline developments would lead to an extensive degree of construction and activities occurring within the landscape areas to the south of the Proposed Development. This would directly affect the Local Landscape Zones LLZ 4 (Coniferous Forest) and LLZ 5 (Settled Loch Shore).

The Sloy Transformer Replacement Project would be located within LLZ 5, and would lead to the removal of some small areas of mature woodland and trees to the south of the Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station, and creation of a large platform area occupied by substation-type development within a slightly elevated area between the A82 and railway line.

The Cruach Tairbeirt forest works would involve extensive felling of coniferous forest areas within LLZ 4 and long-term replacement with predominantly oak woodland. This would lead to some changes within this LLZ where the enclosed qualities of the coniferous forest would give way to an open character of clearfell, likely to appear as extensive scarring in the shorter term, but more representative of LLZ 2 (Wooded Loch Shore) in the longer term.

The addition of the Proposed Development to a baseline featuring both these developments would lead to a slightly increased area of construction disturbance, further up the western shore of the loch. This would be less noticeable on the near side of the loch. If the Proposed Development were to be constructed at the same time as the Sloy Transformer Replacement Project in particular, this would lead to construction activities being experienced more widely throughout the Inveruglas area of LLZ 5 and a less localised experience. It is likely that the two developments would be perceived as a single more extensive development with the Proposed Development having a greater effect on the recreational areas. This is likely to lead to a relatively noticeable cumulative effect which may be significant in the short term.

The combination of all three developments would most likely be experienced in relation to landscapes on the opposite shore of Loch Lomond. The Cruach Tairbeirt felling activities would be likely to be very noticeable within this wider context with the Sloy Transformer Replacement Project likely to extend the appearance of activity to some degree. Although the Proposed Development would increase this extent slightly further, the other works would be likely to form a much greater distraction, and the effect of the

Proposed Development would be only a small addition to this. With activities already ongoing along the western shore of the loch, the addition of the Proposed Development would be a less noticeable change. All the activities would be associated with the already more developed side of the Loch Lomond, and the separation created by the loch would maintain the contrast in character.

Predicted cumulative effects on LLZs are summarised in **Table 12.20**.

Table 12.20: Cumulative Effects on LLZs

LLZ	Cumulative Effects (assessed during construction only)
LLZ 1 – Upland Glen	Scoped out
LLZ 2 – Wooded Loch Shore	Minor Adverse (not significant)
LLZ 3 – Rugged Upland Hills	Negligible
LLZ 4 – Coniferous Forest	Negligible
LLZ 5 – Settled Loch Shore	**Moderate Adverse** (significant)
LLZ 6 – Settled Woodland Glen	Negligible
LLZ 7 – Linear Loch.	Minor Adverse

12.10.2.1. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

The cumulative effects identified for LLZs would be reflective of effects occurring to the part of the LLTNP within the study area. The combination of all three developments within this part of the LLTNP would lead to a noticeable degree of work being undertaken over an extensive area, with the Cruach Tairbeirt activities likely to be most noticeable and the Proposed Development likely to be perceived in connection with the construction works for the Sloy Transformer Replacement Project. The increase in works would be noticeable in the local context, but less noticeable when considered as part of the wider range of activities taking place within the study area. Nevertheless, it is noted that the Inveruglas area is of some individual importance in relation to the LLTNP, due to its recreational popularity. However, whilst this may result in a locally significant effect to landscape character, it is considered unlikely to be significant in the context of the LLTNP as a whole. Particularly when considering the degree to which the baseline would already be affected by the other cumulative developments.

With regards to the SLQs, no significant cumulative effects are predicted as follows:

- **Effects on Woodland**: Felling associated with the Cruach Tairbeirt and Sloy Transformers would already affect the SLQs relating to woodland to some degree but the addition of the small area of felling for the Proposed Development would be small in comparison and would have little additional effect on overall wooded character.
- **Effects on Loch Lomond**: The more extensive Cruach Tairbeirt forest works would create a much greater impact on the setting of Loch Lomond and the very small additional effect of the Proposed Development would be unlikely to be significant in this context;

- **Effects on Mountain Landscapes**: The Proposed Development would slightly increase the perceived area of construction and felling around the western loch when seen from this context but would be a very small addition within the context of the other works, unlikely to be significant;
- **Effects on Routes and Access**: There would be a slightly increased experience of associated construction and activity along a longer length of routes extending to the north side of Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station. This may have a small effect on the setting perceived from the A82, West Highland Railway Line and West Highland Way in particular where a greater extent of the western loch-side would be seen to be under some type of construction or management activity. However, this would be a small addition given the wide extent of the other works and would be unlikely to be significant within this context.

12.10.3. CUMULATIVE VISUAL EFFECTS

Taking into account the parameters discussed in **Section 12.10.1**, cumulative visual effects would be potentially experienced from the following receptor locations:

- Building-based receptors:
  - B1 – Inversnaid Hotel;
  - B2 – Lomond View and Corriebruach;
  - B3 – Inversnaid Lodge;
  - B5 – Inveruglas visitor centre and café;
  - B6 – Cottage at entrance to Sloy Power Station; and
  - B7 – Inveruglas Farm.
- Routes:
  - R1 A82;
  - R2 Inversnaid Minor Road;
  - R3 West Highland Railway Line;
  - R4 Inveruglas – Inversnaid Passenger Ferry;
  - R5 West Highland Way;
  - R6 Three Lochs Way / Loch Lomond and Cowal Way; and
  - R7 Great Trossachs Path.
- Outdoor Recreational Locations:
  - O1 Inveruglas Recreational Areas; and
  - O2 Loch Lomond.

Inversnaid and East Loch Lomond

From properties and routes on the eastern side of the loch (Receptor Locations B1 – B3 and Routes R2, R4 and R7), the cumulative baseline developments, particularly the forestry works at Cruach Tairbeirt, would be seen extensively along the western side of the loch, either in combination within open views or sequentially when moving along routes with intermittent views (such as the West Highland Way). The Proposed Development would add to the visual extent of work, increasing the area of disturbance slightly further north along the shore, beyond the existing focal point of the Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station. This would be a perceptible increase and although the other developments would already create a precedent for construction type activities within these views, is predicted to lead an increased visual effect. However, given the level of distraction which would already be taking place in the view, this is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) for all receptor locations in this area.

Inveruglas and West Loch Lomond

Within the Inveruglas area, the Proposed Development would be likely to be perceived as connected to the Sloy Transformer Replacement Project, leading to the impression of one larger development. However, this would be more likely to be experienced sequentially by those using routes, including R1 (A82), R2 (R2 (West Highland Railway Line) and R6 (Three Lochs Way / Loch Lomond and Cowal Way), with most location-based receptors likely to see only one of the two developments. From Routes R1 and R2, this would be fleeting view, unlikely to be noticeably greater. There would be a more noticeable increase in development for users of R6 due to the slower pace of walkers as a greater extent of the route would be more noticeably affected, particularly at its start, around Inveruglas. From the Inveruglas visitor centre area, the Cruach Tairbeirt felling works would be very noticeable within the backdrop of southerly views. The Proposed Development would affect the westerly view and bring an impression of activities being closer, more extensive and more surrounding in the view.

The cumulative effect during construction is predicted to be **Moderate Adverse** (significant) for the receptors most likely to experience an increased effect: those at Receptor Location B5 (Inveruglas visitor centre and café) and Route R6 (Three Lochs Way / Loch Lomond and Cowal Way). The cumulative visual effect for all other visual receptors using this area is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) with the exception of Receptor Location R6 for which the effect would be **Negligible**, because it is unlikely there would be any view of either of the cumulative baseline developments.

Loch Lomond

The Cruach Tairbeirt felling works would be likely to be noticeable in views from most parts of Loch Lomond within the study area, affecting receptors using Route R4 (Inveruglas – Inversnaid Passenger Ferry) and Outdoor Recreational Location O2 (Loch Lomond). The Sloy Transformer Replacement Project would be likely to be less noticeable, being set back from the loch edge and largely surrounded by trees and other development. The Proposed Development would form an additional feature within the same broad area, although may extend the impression of ongoing activities slightly, particularly on the ferry due to its trajectory towards the site. However, it would usually be seen filtered by loch-side trees from other parts of the loch. This may create a slightly increased distraction and visual effect, which is predicted to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) and temporary.

12.11. Mitigation

There are no long-term significant effects predicted for the Proposed Development and therefore no specific additional mitigation measures are proposed. However, implementation of the high standard of design that is intended would be important in ensuring that effects occurring reflect those identified within this LVIA.

12.11.1. MITIGATION THROUGH DESIGN

The minimising of landscape and visual effects and long-term aim to present a positive development within the context of the LLTNP and popular Inveruglas area has been a key consideration throughout the design process. The following key elements of mitigation would be implemented as part of the design and are considered within the LVIA in the assessment of effects after 10 years (refer to **Volume 2, Figure 12.7**):

Landmark Building Design

A high standard of architectural design proposed for the proposed pump house, using quality materials, is one of the key elements of mitigation through design. It is intended that this building would form a new prominent and positive addition to the Inveruglas area which would complement the existing hydroelectric

power station which already forms a notable landmark within the setting of Loch Lomond and in passing from adjacent routes. This high standard and attention to detail would mitigate the potential for negative longer term effects with the intention that the Proposed Development would be perceived as having a positive contribution to the landscape and visual setting and LLTNP. Further details of the building design are included within **Volume 4, Appendix 4.1: Design Statement**.

Setting of Buildings

Following the completion of construction, the boundary walls and gates would be restored which would return elements of the character of the Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station setting and grounds. The extended hardstanding area and new transformer compound would be largely hidden from public areas by these features and by the new building. Detailing within the power station grounds would be considered in order to retain the existing character of the setting as far as possible. This would include grassing over of the proposed crane pad and access route, replacing the small trees removed on the south side of the existing power station, and careful consideration of materials used for ground retention on the north-side to reflect the existing standard of detailing and proposed detailing of the new building. This may include the use of similar stone to the Proposed Building plinth to finish retaining walls and / or a vegetation based ground retention system that would allow grass and wildflower growth on steep cut slopes.

Retention of Existing Trees

Where possible existing trees which provide landscape and visual value would be retained. This would include trees in the following areas:

- Retention of a fringe of woodland edge trees, mainly birch, located above the cutting of the A82 which would help filter views towards the larger felled area of mainly coniferous trees behind from the Inveruglas visitor centre and car park area.
- Two large oak trees on the southern side of the tailrace would be retained and their root zone protected throughout construction. Smaller, more recently planted trees around these would be retained where possible, although it is likely that at least two of these smaller trees would need to be removed to enable construction access for the crane pad. These would be compensated for by newly planted trees within this area, following completion of construction works.

Restoration of Spoil Storage Area

Once works were complete, the stored materials would be reprofiled, to form a new mounded area which would reflect and tie in with the landform of adjacent areas (see **Volume 2, Figure 4.2**). This would then be spread with a suitable locally sourced soil and established with a mix of woodland planting and seeding. Natural regeneration would also be encouraged to help develop an age diverse and biodiverse woodland habitat. It is predicted that, by 10 years post construction, this landform is unlikely to be identifiable as artificial within the context.

Replanting of Felled Woodland Areas

It is proposed that areas of mainly conifer woodland to be felled to the east and northeast of the Primary Site Establishment and Spoil Management Area would be replanted early in the construction phase, with a mix of native woodland species to reflect adjacent areas and habitats. This would include a mix of oak and Scots pine with other native understory and woodland edge species. Early planting would assist in this area establishing faster, which would help to soften views towards the spoil storage area which would take longer to establish.

Re-establishment of Overflow Car Park Area

Once no longer required as a site establishment area, the overflow car park area would be restored to its original use, with the existing woodland character being re-established as far as possible. The vegetated island would be reinstated in the centre of the hard-stand area and planted with native woodland species, and parking areas would be established suitable for use by a mix of cars and motorhomes.

12.11.2. SECONDARY MITIGATION

Maintenance and Management Regime

A programme of on-going maintenance and management would be put in place for all woodland areas within the PDA. This would be primarily focussed on the removal of invasive species including *Rhododendron ponticum* with a focus on establishing native woodland habitats which would enhance both the landscape setting and biodiversity of the site. There would be a commitment to continued management to ensure that these and other invasive species do not become re-established.

During construction, a deer fence would be erected around all areas not required for construction works, including the felled areas to the east and northeast of the site establishment area, to encourage regeneration of native woodland species in existing woodland areas, and to help protect planting from grazing animals. This would be extended around the full woodland area once construction works were complete to also protect planting and regeneration within the re-landscaped spoil storage area.

Monitoring of all planting would take place to ensure that successful establishment.

12.12. Residual Effects

The assessment of effects after 10 years takes into consideration the proposals for mitigation through design and in particular the establishment of planting and seeding which forms part of the Proposed Development.

12.13. Summary And Conclusion

The LVIA has identified a small number of short term, significant landscape, visual and cumulative landscape and visual effects predicted as a result of the Proposed Development within a small area around Inveruglas. These would affect the local character of the settled loch shore area, and visual receptors including tourists at the Inveruglas visitor centre and car park area, and walkers following the start of the Loch Lomond and Cowal Way and Three Lochs Way past the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station. Whilst other landscape and visual effects would occur within surrounding parts of the study area, these are not predicted to be significant, largely due to the scale of the Proposed Development within the context of the surrounding landform and presence of existing, surrounding woodland, including woodland in the Inveruglas Peninsula, which would filter or conceal all or parts of the Proposed Development.

Following completion of construction works, these landscape and visual effects would all reduce to levels which are predicted to be not significant and would further reduce over time with the establishment and growth of proposed planting and seeding around the site. The high standard of design proposed for the new building is expected to lead to this becoming a largely positive feature within the context of Loch Lomond, and when seen by visitors, residents and recreational users in the surrounding landscape. By 10 years post construction, all landscape and visual effects are predicted to be negligible, with the exception of a small area around the existing Sloy Hydroelectric Power Station where a limited and localised, not significant landscape effect is predicted. In this area the addition of the new building and associated

hardstanding areas would change the setting of the existing power station from one featuring a focal point building within a mature amenity parkland-type setting, to one more characterised by built development. However, this would be a very localised effect and would be seen in the context of a high quality of design and implementation.

When considered as a whole, the significant effects identified within a very localised area are not predicted to lead to any significant effect on the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and no significant effects are predicted to any of the Special Landscape Qualities of the National Park.

12.14. References

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