



The following sheets and visualisations illustrate the design process and justification behind the proposed forest design at this site.

This New Woodland Creation has been designed to comply with the Forests and Landscape Guidelines as part of the UK Forestry Standard. Its aim is not only to fit within the landscape, but to contribute to the character of the place.

### Landscape Review



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Ordnance Survey 100030835

[www.scottishwoodlands.co.uk](http://www.scottishwoodlands.co.uk)

Date of Review: 28 May 2024

Completed by: Megan Parker





# Location

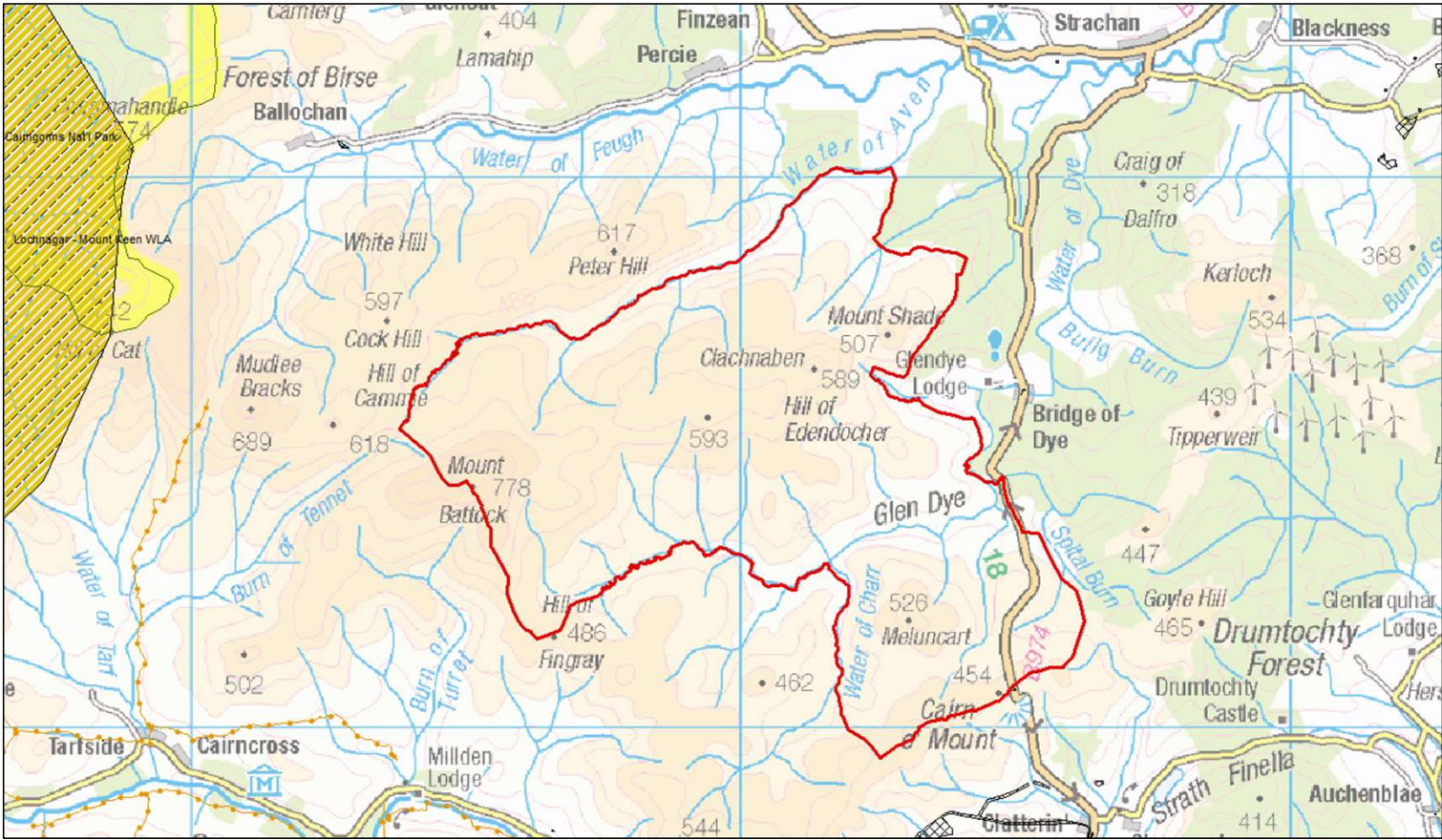
Central Grid Reference: NO 603 860

Nearest Town: Strachan

Region/Locality: Banchory, Glen Dye

The location map below shows the general setting of the site in the wider landscape. The proposal is outlined in red.

Designations/Special landscape considerations	
No	National Scenic Area
No	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
No	National/Regional/County Park
No	Register of Gardens & Designed Landscape
Yes	Other: The area is entirely covered by the Aberdeenshire Special Landscape Area of Clachnaben and Forest of Birse





# Scenic Designations

The proposal falls within an Aberdeenshire Council Special Landscape Area (SLA) details of this designation are noted below from guidance published by Aberdeenshire Council in 2016

## Statement of Importance: Clachnaben and Forest of Birse Special Landscape Area

### Designation Statement

The Forest of Birse is an open expanse of rolling upland hills which extends west into the Cairngorms National Park. Clachnaben is a distinctive craggy peak on the north side of Glen Dye, a valley running east-west through the SLA.

The land cover is predominantly heather moorland, with some extensive areas of forestry on the fringes, particularly in the north above the Dee Valley. The pine forest on the northern slopes of the Birse valley have the largest remnants of nature pine woodland found in Aberdeenshire. Burns running along the sheltered glens are tributaries of the River Dee. The ecological value of the river, its tributaries and its surroundings contributes to the landscape character, as well as being recognised as nationally and internationally important for nature conservation.

The Mounth provides opportunities for hill walking, and Clachnaben is a popular summit, with panoramic views including towards Bennachie to the north. The area is visible from the elevated B974 which runs along the eastern boundary. The area forms the backdrop to the Dee Valley to the north and also to the Howe of the Mearns to the south.

There is little habitation in the SLA, and many areas are inaccessible except on foot. The area has a strong sense of wildness, and tranquillity can be experienced in both the upland moorland hills and sheltered glens.

### Forces for Change

- Changes to landscape as a result of forest management and changes to agricultural practices in this area.
- Creation and maintenance of hill tracks associated with land management.
- Scattered and incremental development e.g. single houses cause negative impact on sense of place.
- Development of renewable energy technologies (e.g. on-shore wind turbines and associated infrastructure) affect views to and from the SLA.
- Changes in estate and moorland management practices.

The following aspects and features of this landscape are considered worthy of recognition through SLA designation:

- Strong, rolling relief of the upland landscape, including highly distinctive hill profiles the most recognisable of which is the crag of Clachnaben.
- Strong wildness qualities including a virtual absence of habitation, limited access and rugged terrain.
- Uninterrupted land cover of heather moorland across most of the area, with forestry on fringes.
- Forest of Birse includes a range of habitat types, including the community-owned Commonly Pinewoods, is an important habitat for bird life.
- A widely visible landscape, forming the backdrop to Deeside to the north, including views to Scolty Hill, and with the landmark of Clachnaben seen from miles around.
- The long minor road into Ballochran ends at the remote Forest of Birse Kirk, with historic links over The Fungle, an ancient way linking Deeside with Glen Tarf.
- Expansive area, the elevation, landform and land cover of which continues seamlessly westwards into the Glen Tanar Forest area in the Cairngorms National Park.
- Clachnaben is a popular hill summit, with views across the whole of this landscape and beyond. Remote Mount Battock is the most easterly of the Corbetts (hills over 2500 feet), and there are several hill ascents accessible from Ballochran.

### Management Recommendations

- The Clachnaben and Forest of Birse SLA is classed as an upland landscape type. As such emphasis should be on retaining their largely undeveloped and remote character. This means ensuring that any developments are located and designed to limit their wider visibility and protect open skylines and rugged summits.
- Development must respect the strong, rolling relief and sense of wildness of the upland landscape.
- Woodland management and further woodland creation in locations found to be suitable for such, is encouraged in this area.
- Development involving hill tracks should be undertaken in line with best practice guidance and should take account of landscape character and qualifying features of the SLA.
- Avoidance of development which erodes or interrupts the seamless relationship of this area to the Cairngorms.
- Use of good practice in forest design to maintain openness of upper plateau and hill summits and use of good practice track siting and design and footpath construction techniques.
- Avoidance of development which impacts upon the appreciations of Clachnaben and Mount Battock and their settings.





# Landscape Character Assessment

The proposal falls within the following Landscape Character Types, LCT(s) (from Scottish Natural Heritage Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019)

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions>



## SNH National Landscape Character Assessment

### Landscape Character Type 29

#### SUMMITS AND PLATEAUX - ABERDEENSHIRE

#### Key Characteristics

- An expansive upland plateau with a smooth rolling landform and rounded hill summits. Landform is more complex along the Highland Boundary Fault.
- Foreground to the Cairngorm massif and Cairngorms National Park.
- Backdrop in views from the north from Lower Deeside and the fringes of Aberdeen city.
- Extensive central and western ridges covered with expansive heather and grass moorland.
- Regionally prominent hills.
- Coniferous forested lower hills, particularly extensive in the north-east. Wind farm development also present in this area.
- A patchwork of green pasture extends high into narrow valleys on the fringes of these uplands.
- Unexpected pockets of farmland and isolated farms and estate buildings associated lower ground in part of the core of these uplands.
- Derelict grey stone cottages are occasional features amidst open moorland.
- Numerous old routeways popular with walkers and these, and the B974 Cairn o'Mount road, offer commanding views to the Howe of Mearns and the coast, and to Deeside.
- Wild character experienced in the less modified central and western parts of this landscape.
- Dramatic juxtaposition of the steep scarp slopes of these rugged uplands with the expansive low-lying farmed and settled Howe of the Mearns.





# Landscape Character

The following page describes the local landscape characteristics in terms of shape, scale, and diversity as well as the location and selection criteria for viewpoints.

Early stage consultation with Scottish Forestry (Nicholas Shepherd, Landscape Architect) highlighted the special qualities of this project's setting and recommendations for woodland design considerations, these are included below:

**Shapes** would best be informed by the underlying rolling landform

**Relative scale** informed by elevation; relatively large on the upper slopes descending to medium to small scale through the lower slopes and within the valleys and gullies.

**Diversity** informed by the relatively simple nature of the current vegetation patterns but with opportunities taken for enhanced diversity to the lower valley areas where ground conditions are appropriate.

**Unity** will be achieved where the woodland creation components are seen to respect and interlock with the rolling flow of the landform. Also, for the open hills and summits to be retained as the dominant visual elements in terms of both visibility and intervisibility from amenity vantage points and routes.



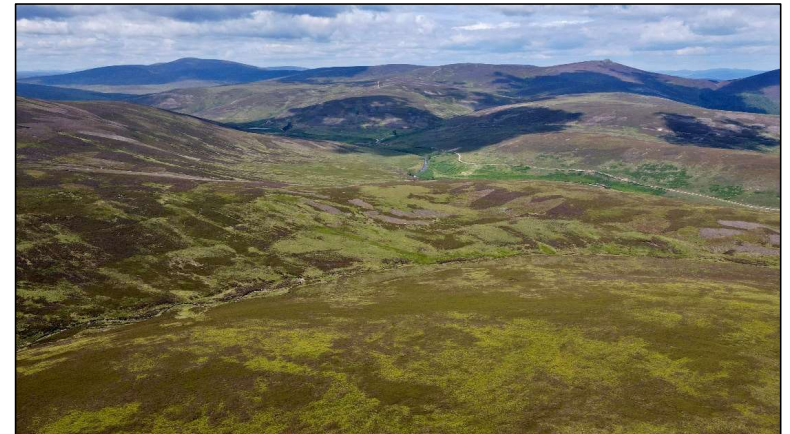
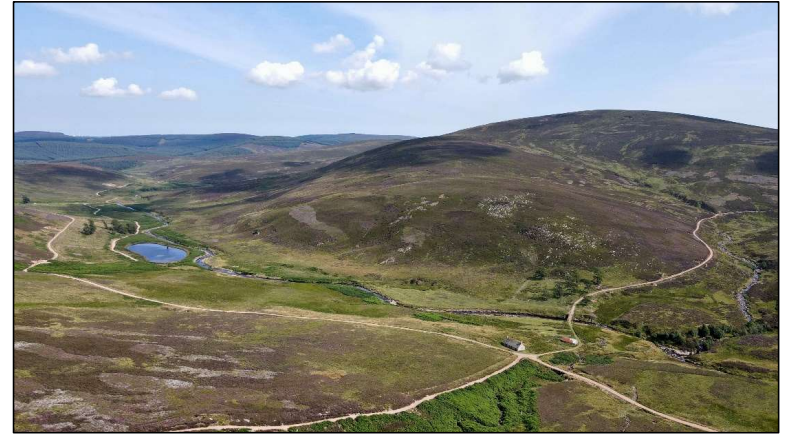


## Shape

Landforms are dominated by smooth rounded hills. Rivers run up steep sided glens with only limited sinuosity as most are confirmed to relatively straight routes. Vegetation generally follows landforms with bracken and grasslands following valley floors quickly transitioning to heaths which run up to summits with some variation visible from previous decades of muir burning. Neighbouring conifer forests have sharp edges though some are relatively curved and irregular when viewed from a distance. Some geometric elements remain in the adjacent forests. There is no discernible settlement pattern though historic farmsteads along the River Dye are noted with sequences of enclosures on flat to gently sloping ground at the base of hills. Hill tracks remain a dominant feature with long curving paths up and down hillsides and long ridges.

## Scale

A large scale landscape in general due to the level of openness. On lower slopes with more diversity this begins to shrink to a moderate scale with watercourses, tracks and vegetation patterns pulling this into a small scale at the lowest elevations.



## Visual Diversity

Historic muir burning patterns are still visible in areas of heath creating a broken and diverse vegetation pattern on the hillsides, this will naturally fade over time into a fairly uniform wash of seasonal colour changes. Riverside and tracks with occasional ponds, building, and ruins increase the diversity at lower elevations.

## Sensitivities

Clachnaben is an iconic landform and has been used for navigation at a significant scale both from the air and by land. The setting and visibility of this granitic tor is locally important and sensitive to change.





# Viewpoints

Old Military Road – local public viewpoint, long distance view from public road, panoramic (near NO63855 93261) (363855,793261)

Peter Hill – design view, panoramic, revealed (near NO 577 885)

Airy Muir – internal medium scale view (near NO 604 874)

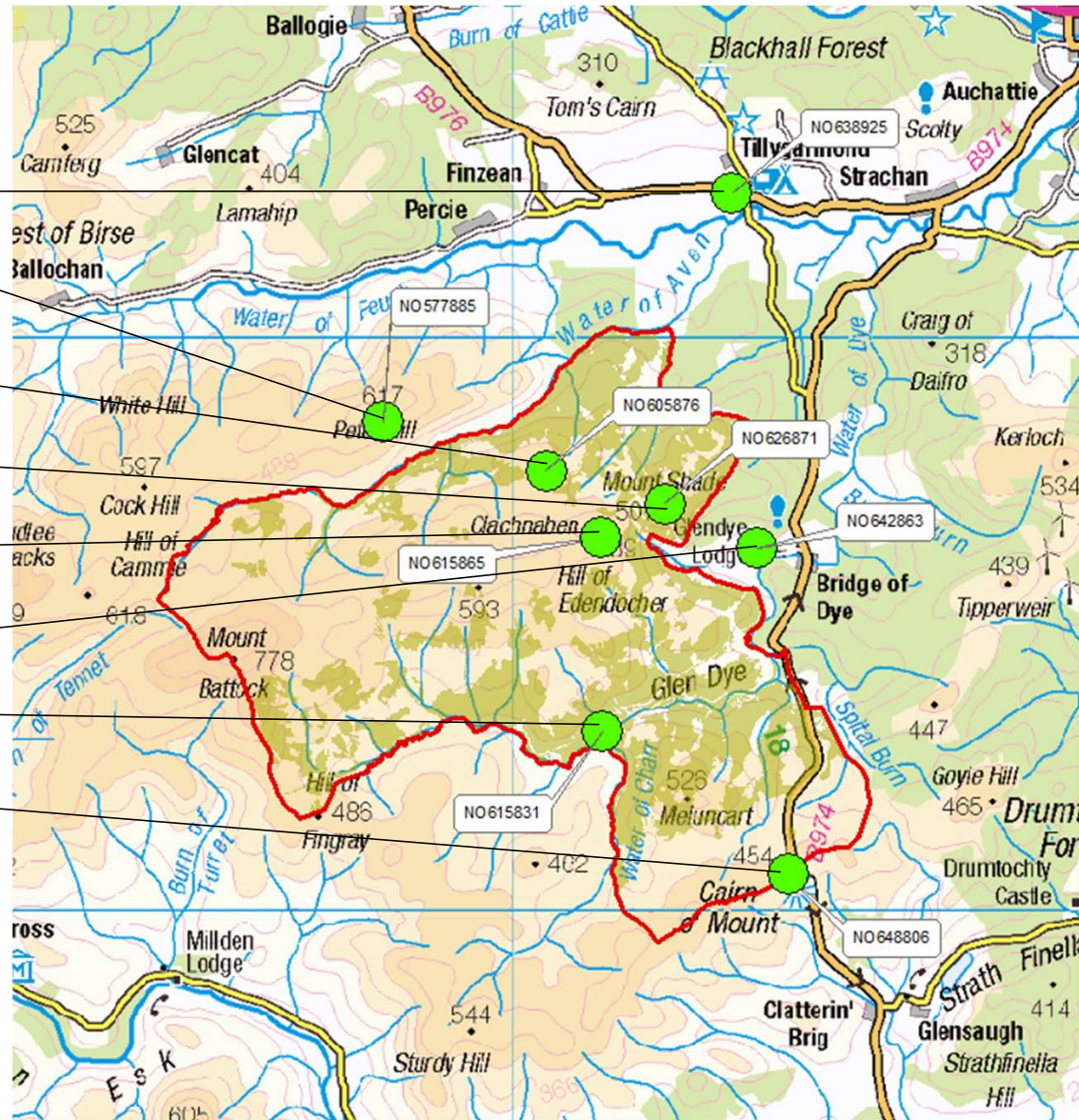
Mount Shade – internal view from summit (near NO 626 870)

Clachnaben – iconic/landmark view, focal point (NO 615 865)

Glendye Lodge – visitor viewpoint, glimpse (near NO 644 863)

Charr Bothy- internal small scale view (near NO 615 831)

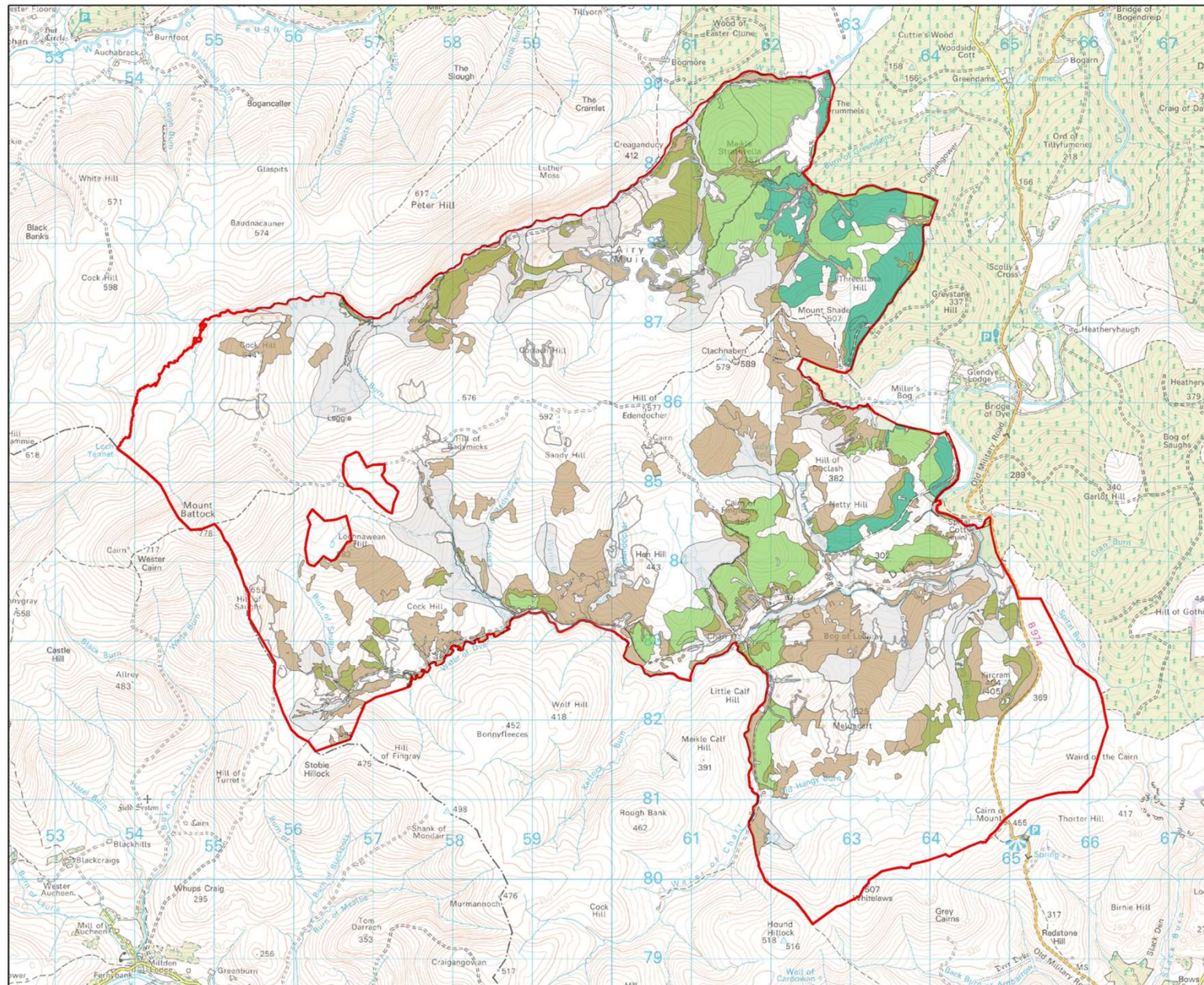
Cairn o'Mount – iconic/landmark viewpoint (near NO 648 806)





# Maps

Draft Woodland Design Map showing areas of proposed planting, subject to change



Glen Dye Moor

Species Map

Created On: 28 May 2024

- Diverse Conifer
- Mixed Sitka Spruce
- Mixed Scots Pine
- Native Scots Pine
- Upland Birch Mix
- Open Canopy Upland Birch
- Montane Willow Scrub
- Natural Regeneration
- Fruit Orchard
- Existing Riparian Woodland
- Existing Larch
- Existing Mixed Woodland
- Existing Mixed Conifer
- Project Boundary

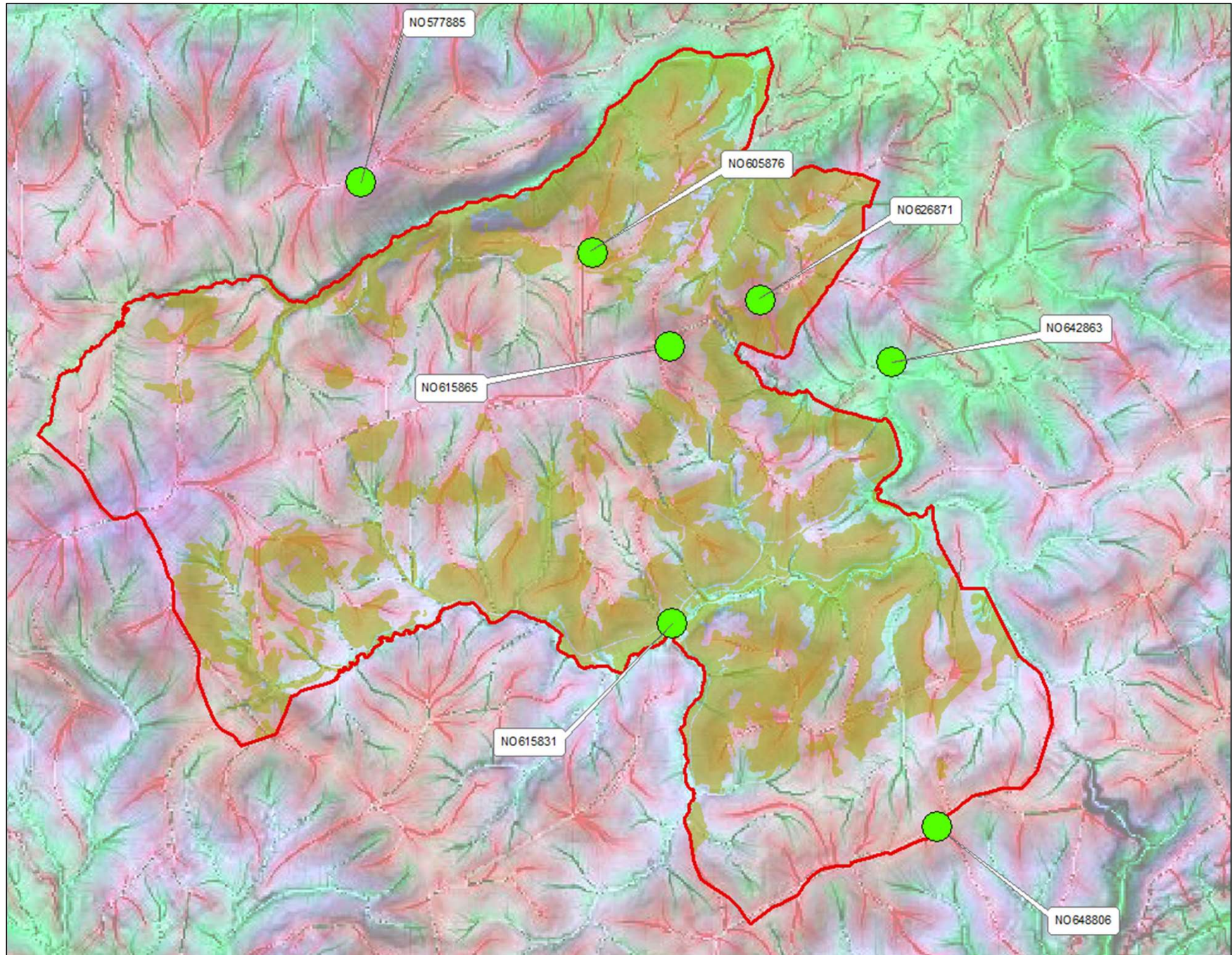
1:45,000  
Scale Correct at A3





# Maps

Lines of force with a shaded proposed planting area. Green lines are landforms drawing the viewers eyes upward, red lines are landforms drawing the viewers eye downwards.





# Forest Design

The description below focuses on forest design and how forest management impacts, maintains or enhances the local landscape setting as per UKFS guidelines.

Shape- Organic edges and shapes have been created through planting, though there is a desire to have margins reflect smooth gently curving landforms, environmental conditions restrict planting in places and overly complicated edges are created where planting cannot follow a smooth line. Commercial forest shapes have been interlocked where possible into existing forestry edges of neighbouring woodland.

Landform- Woodlands have been drawn up valleys where ground conditions allow and roll across saddles and ridges at lower elevations. Clachnaben has been provided a wide buffer from planting to ensure it is open and visible while Mount Shade has also been left open with a good line of sight to and from Clachnaben.

Pattern of enclosure- Within the historic farmstead setting and around Charr Bothy, these features are highlighted in a mosaic of open ground and native planting to ensure the historic setting is reflected in the design.

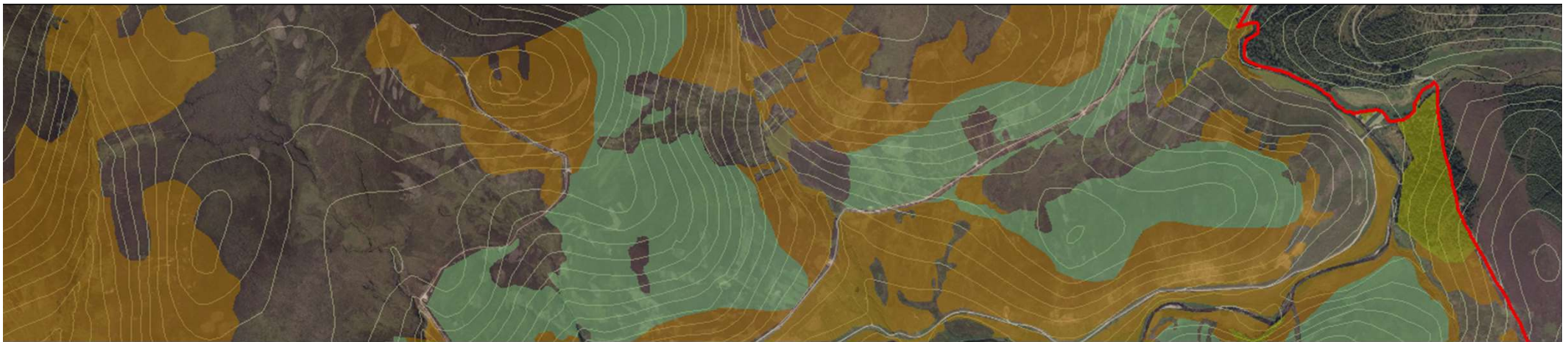
Scale- Although there was a desire to have large contiguous stretches of woodland to reflect the large scale at upper elevations, environmental conditions restricted planting in some locations creating a smaller scale pattern of woodland with isolated blocks at high altitude. To mitigate this, montane willow scrub will be used in the most isolated high altitude planting to better suit the setting. A feathered edge will also be created along upper margins to provide a greater sense of scale in the transition from open hill to woodland. At lower elevations intimate mixtures of open ground and woodland will compliment the smaller scale of the landscape here.

Visual Diversity- Throughout the design, visual diversity is limited to environmental conditions and opportunities are taken to create montane woodland at high altitude or open woodland mosaics along lower glen floors. Areas of Natural Regeneration will also increase visual diversity where seed sources exist currently.

Unity- Conifer woodlands have been planned in areas which interlock into existing neighbouring plantations and are drawn up main glens linking into the existing track networks which favour the topography. Species choice for commercial conifer also transitions into native pine woodland and then upland birch along the Water of Aven. There is opportunity to improve species mixture of native woodland further to provide better unity and transition through the rolling landscape.

Spirit of Place- Glen Dye Moor has been described as vast, open, and wild. Transition from an open habitat to a wooded one will be a significant change however utilisation of predominantly native species, and interlocking commercial woodlands will maintain the existing spirit of place during the transition to woodland. Ensuring fencing is kept to the perimeter will also greatly reduce impact from new human artifacts.

- Shape
- Landform
- Pattern of enclosure
- Scale, proportion
- Visual diversity
- Unity
- Spirit of place.





# Visualisations

Included in Part 2 of this Landscape Review: visualisations of what the design may look like at each of the viewpoints identified previously.

- Old Military Road – local public viewpoint, long distance view from public road, panoramic (near NO63855 93261) (363855,793261)
- Peter Hill – design view, panoramic, revealed (near NO 577 885)
- Airy Muir – internal medium scale view (near NO 604 874)
- Mount Shade – internal view from summit (near NO 626 870)
- Clachnaben – iconic/landmark view, focal point (NO 615 865)
- Glendye Lodge – visitor viewpoint, glimpse (near NO 644 863)
- Charr Bothy- internal small scale view (near NO 615 831)
- Cairn o'Mount – iconic/landmark viewpoint (near NO 648 806)
- Additional visualisations are included to indicate other key features where appropriate





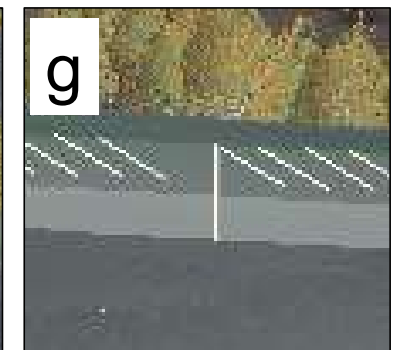
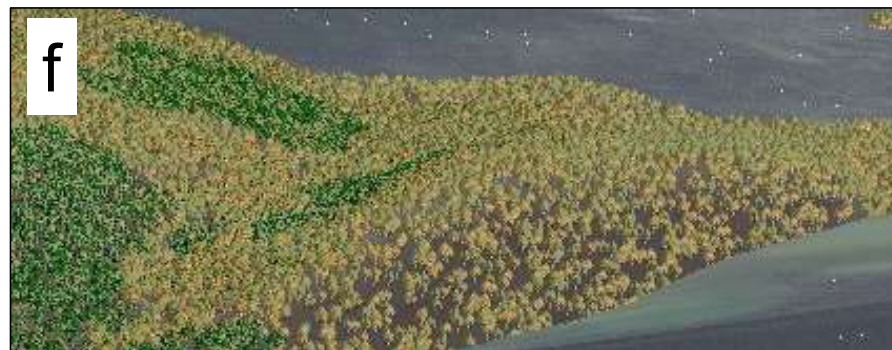
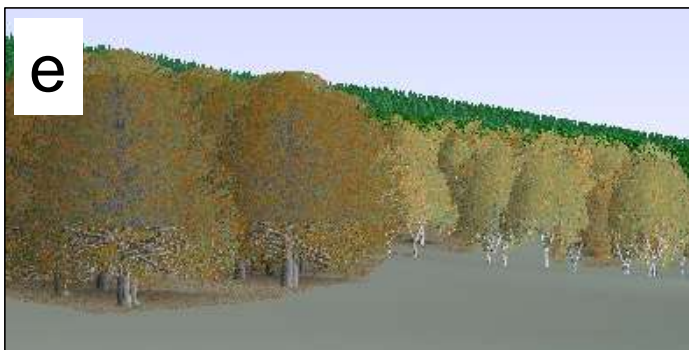
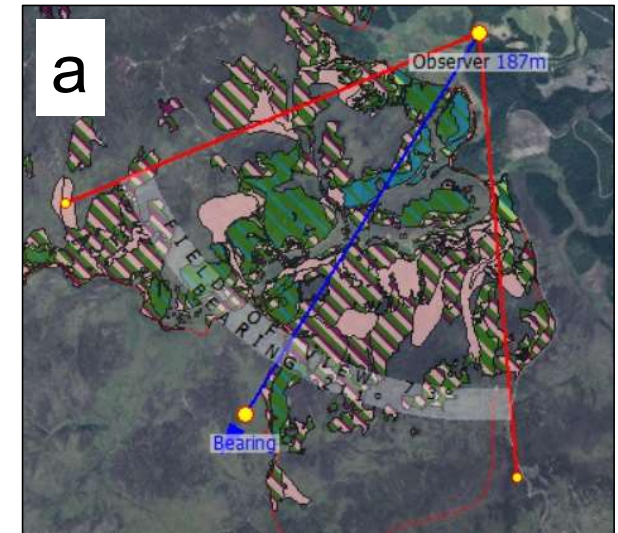
# Visualisations

The pages that follow include visualisations of what the design may look like at each of the viewpoints. Visualisations are produced using 3D models and shown with autumnal colouring to better differentiate conifer and broadleaf woodland areas. Where photographs have been taken, these are also included for reference. The visualisations are meant to show indicative woodland design so that viewers can:

- understand the scale and significance of change,
- appreciate where the design is planned to sit sympathetically within the local setting and,
- assess the level of potential impacts on the landscape character and special qualities.

Annotations are included to aid in interpreting the design where needed and some guidance is provided here for reference.

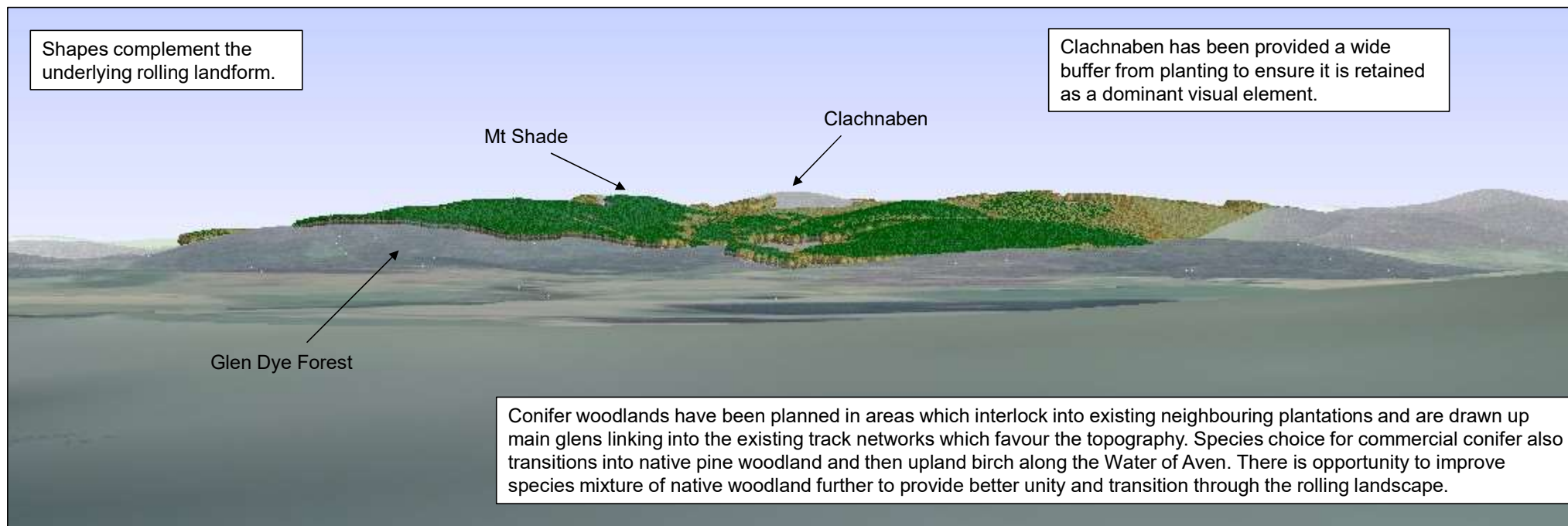
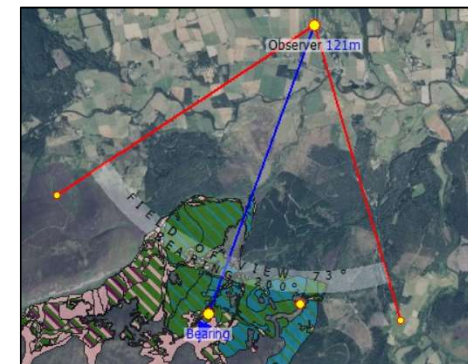
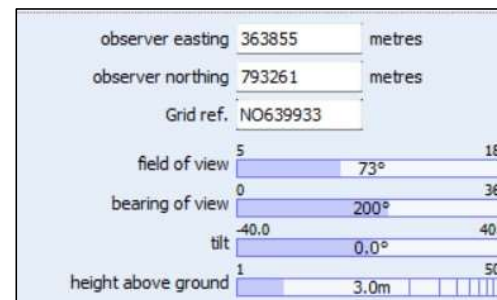
- Each viewpoint includes an inset map showing the direction and width of view
- Conifer trees are shown as dark green, this is a mixed conifer with two different conifer species
- Larch is shown in its autumn orange foliage, here it is surrounded by smaller broadleaf trees in the foreground
- Mixed native pinewoods are shown with Scots pine with a mixed understory of broadleaf trees visible in places
- Different types of broadleaf woodland have varying brown and yellow colouring to indicate a change in species
- Areas of low-density planting and natural regeneration are shown with wider spacing of trees
- Deer fences are shown with rabbit netting and marking, this is to improve visibility of the fence line, though only some segments of the fence will be netted/marked





# Visualisations

Old Military Road – local public viewpoint, long distance view from public road, panoramic (near NO63855 93261)



Above, Looking toward Clachnaben from the old military road above Strachan. Below, photo taken from similar vantage point above Finzean

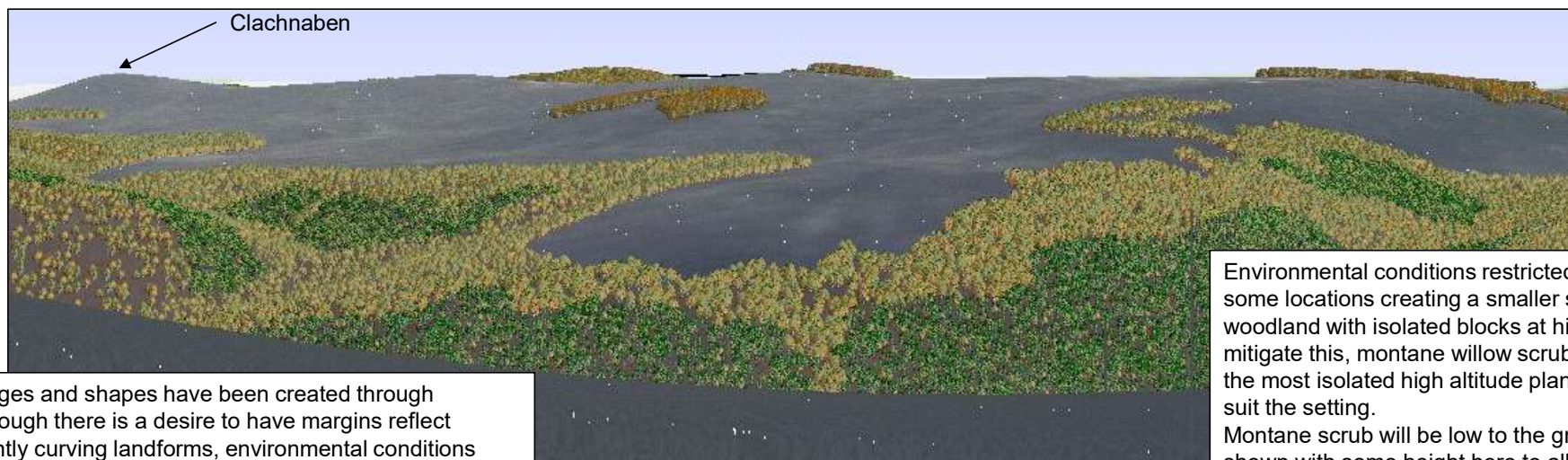
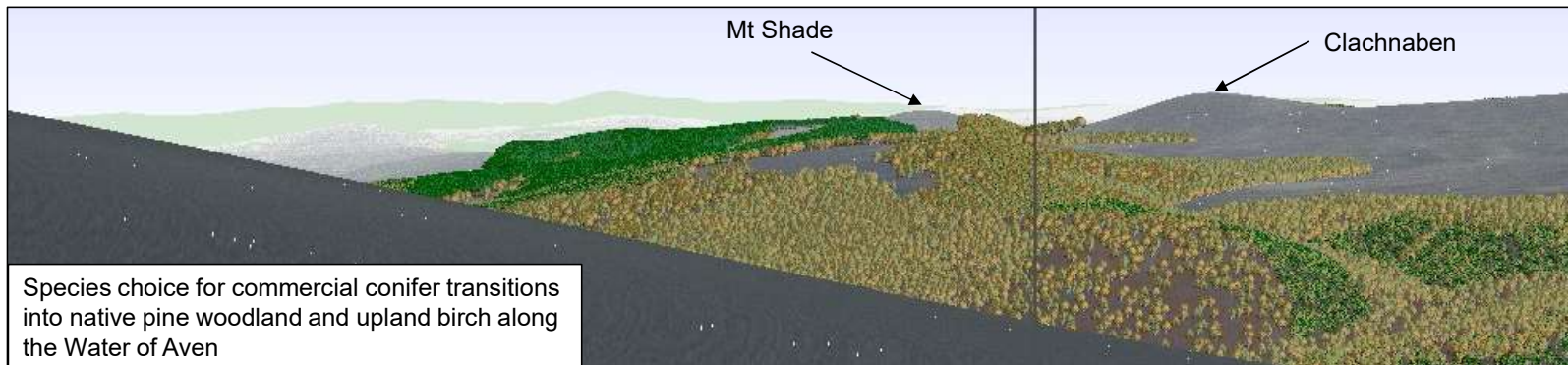




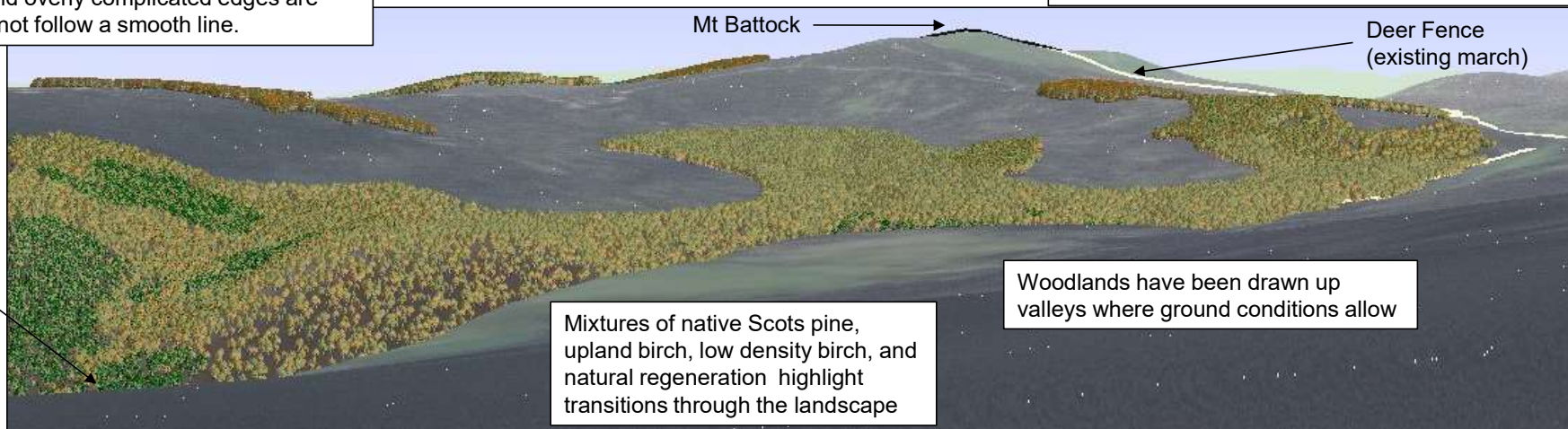
# Visualisations

Peter Hill – design view, panoramic, revealed  
(near NO 577 885)

Three views from Peterhill looking east  
(Top), southeast (middle), and southwest  
(bottom).



Organic edges and shapes have been created through planting, though there is a desire to have margins reflect smooth gently curving landforms, environmental conditions restrict planting in places and overly complicated edges are created where planting cannot follow a smooth line.





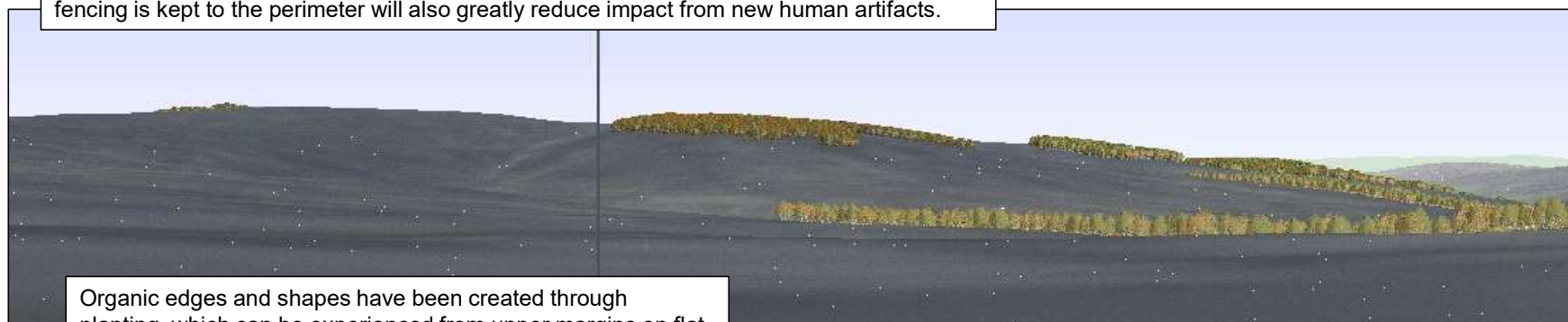
# Visualisations

Airy Muir – internal medium scale view  
(near NO 604 874)

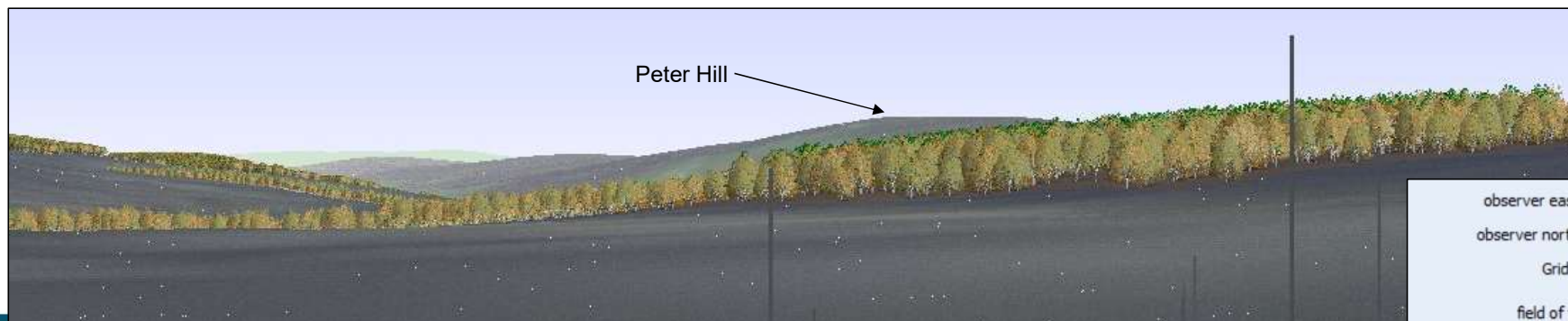
Three views from Airy Muir looking  
southeast (Top) to Clachnaben, southwest  
(middle) toward Mt Battock [not visible],  
and northwest (bottom) toward Peter Hill.



Glen Dye Moor has been described as vast, open, and wild. Transition from an open habitat to a wooded one will be a significant change however utilisation of predominantly native species will maintain the existing spirit of place during the transition to woodland. Ensuring fencing is kept to the perimeter will also greatly reduce impact from new human artifacts.



Organic edges and shapes have been created through planting, which can be experienced from upper margins on flat ground



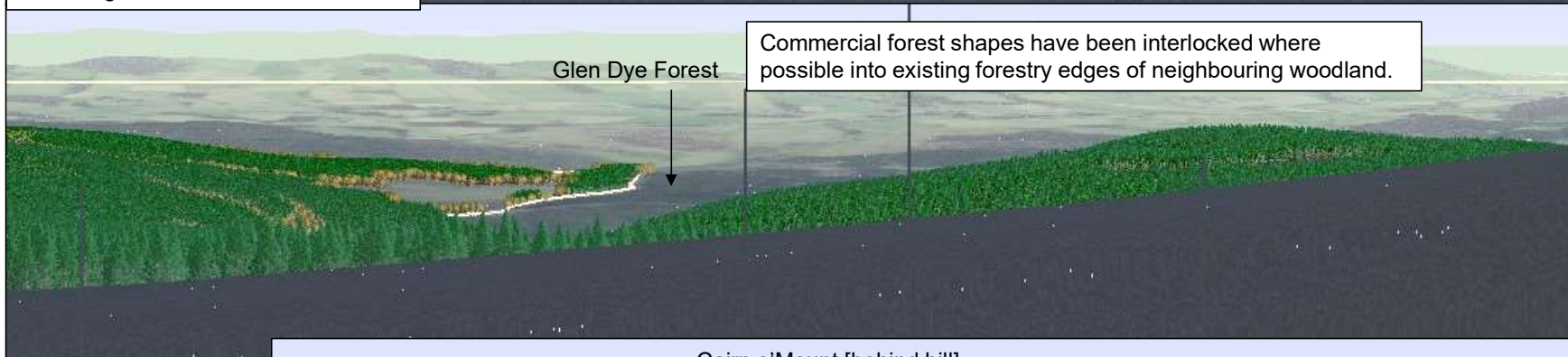
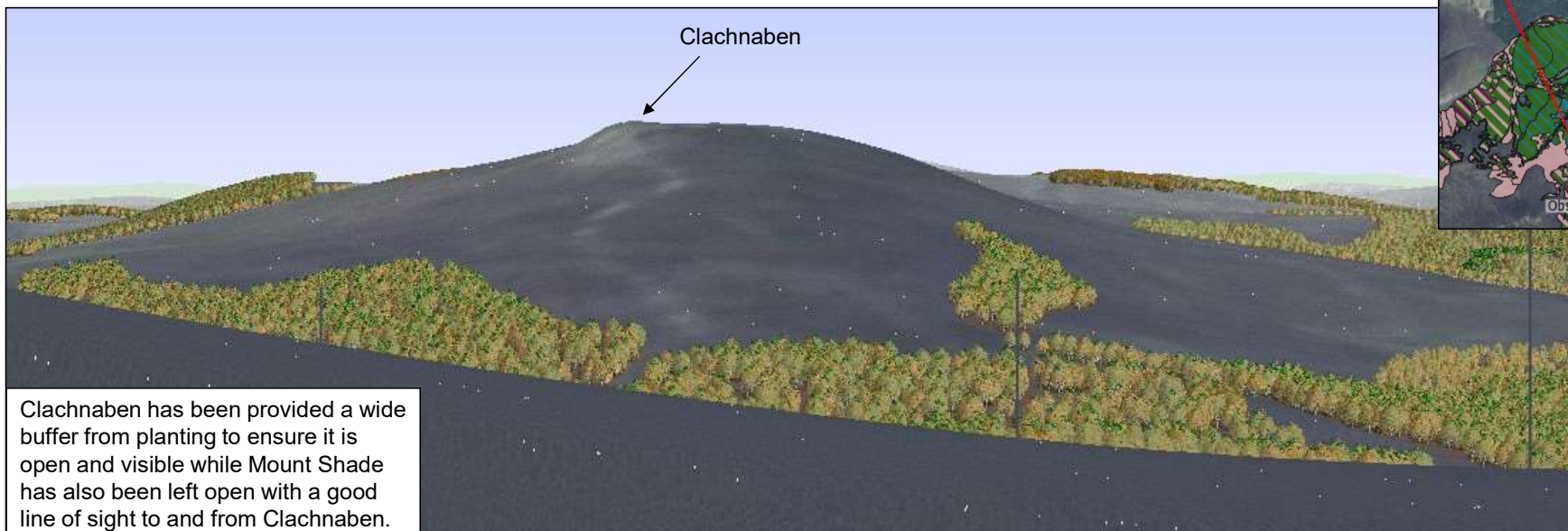
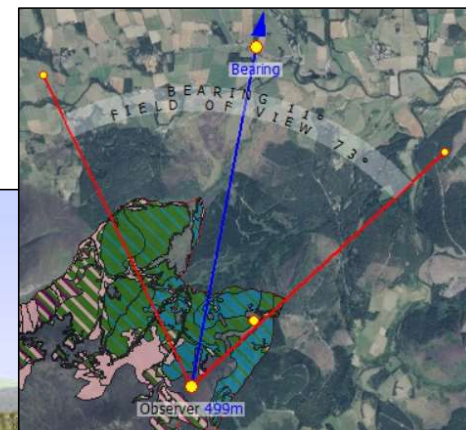
observer easting	360400	metres
observer northing	787400	metres
Grid ref.	NO604874	
field of view	73°	180
bearing of view	289°	360
tilt	0.1°	40.0
height above ground	3.0m	500



# Visualisations

Mount Shade – internal view from summit (near NO 626 870)

Three views from Mt Shade looking southwest (Top) to Clachnaben, north (middle) toward Finzean and Strachan, and south (bottom) toward Cairn o'Mount.

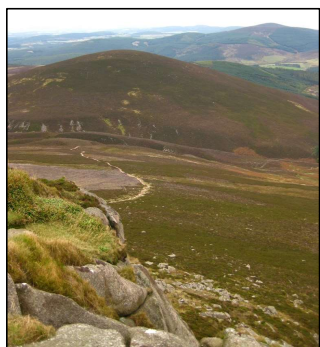
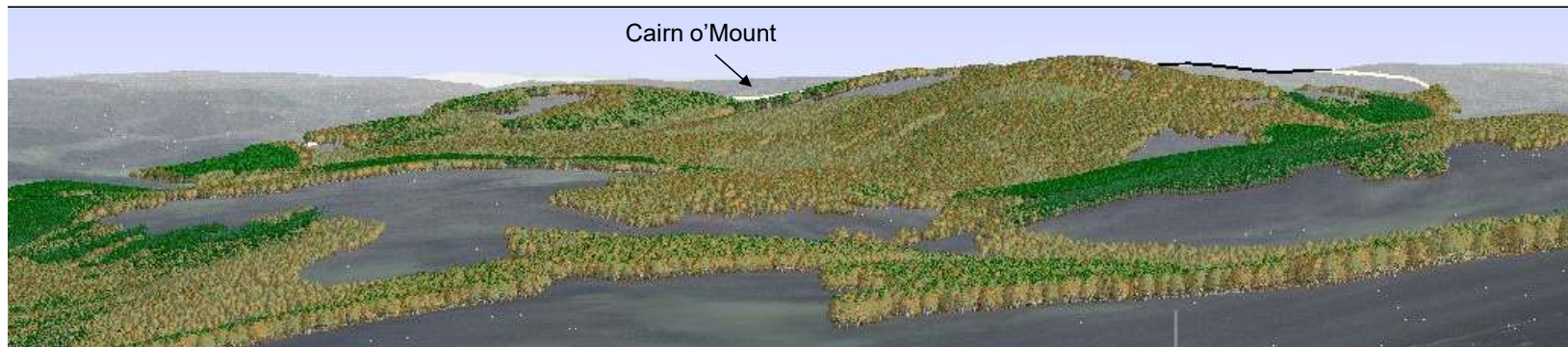




# Visualisations

Clachnaben – iconic/landmark view, focal point (NO 615 865)

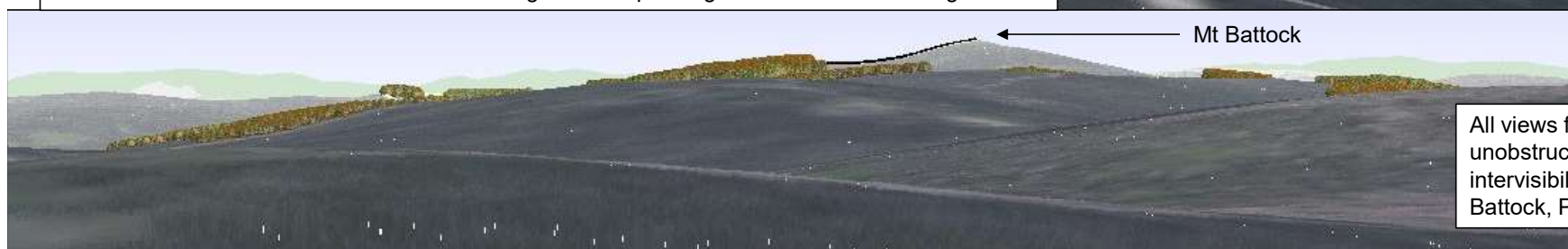
Four views from Clachnaben looking southeast (Top) to Cairn o'Mount, northeast (second from the top) toward Mt Shade, northwest (third from the top) toward Peter Hill, and southwest (bottom) toward Mt Battock.



Woodlands have been drawn up valleys where ground conditions allow and roll across saddles and ridges at lower elevations.



Although there was a desire to have large contiguous stretches of woodland to reflect the large scale at upper elevations, environmental conditions restricted planting in some locations creating a smaller scale pattern of woodland with isolated blocks at high altitude. To mitigate this, montane willow scrub will be used in the most isolated high altitude planting to better suit the setting.



All views from Clachnaben are unobstructed by planting and there is intervisibility between Mt Shade, Mt Battock, Peter Hill, and Cairn o'Mount



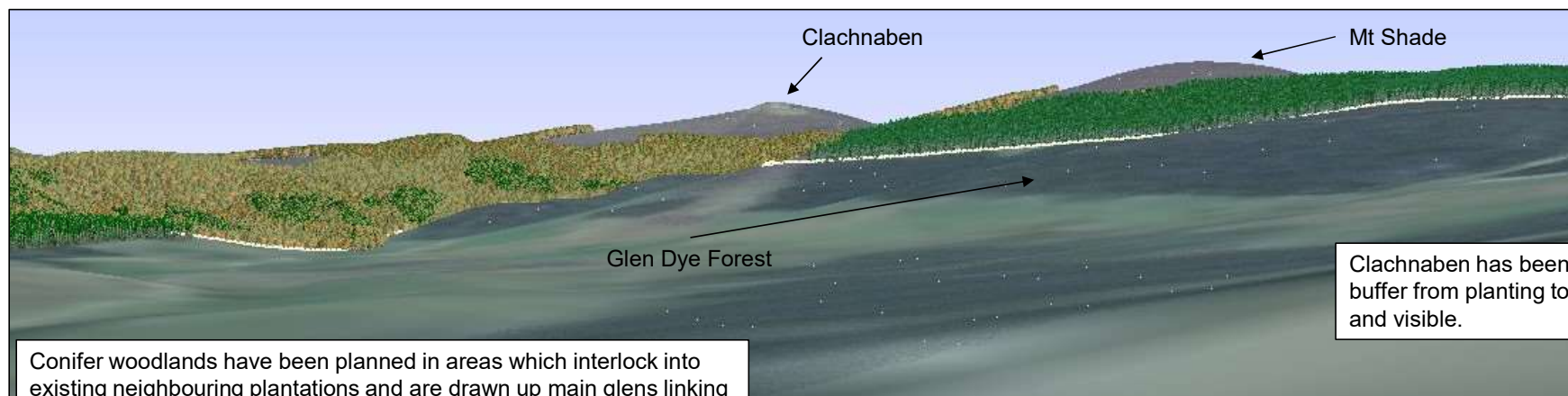
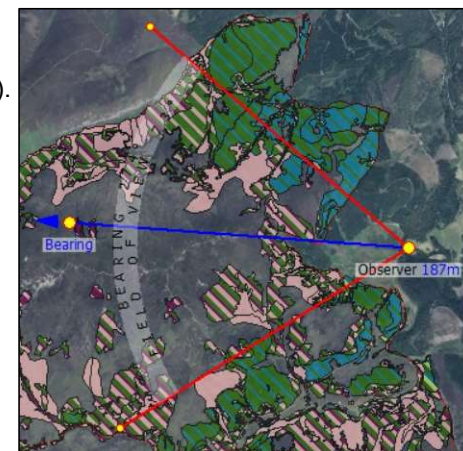
# Visualisations

Glendye Lodge – visitor viewpoint, glimpse (near NO 644 863)

Two views from Glendye Lodge looking west (Top) to Cairn o'Mount, and southwest (bottom).



observer easting	364400	metres
observer northing	786300	metres
Grid ref.	NO644863	
field of view	5	180
	73°	
bearing of view	0	360
	274°	
tilt	-40.0	40.0
	-0.3°	
height above ground	1	500
	3.1m	



Conifer woodlands have been planned in areas which interlock into existing neighbouring plantations and are drawn up main glens linking into the existing track networks which favour the topography. Species choice for commercial conifer also transitions into native pine woodland and then upland birch.

Clachnaben has been provided a wide buffer from planting to ensure it is open and visible.



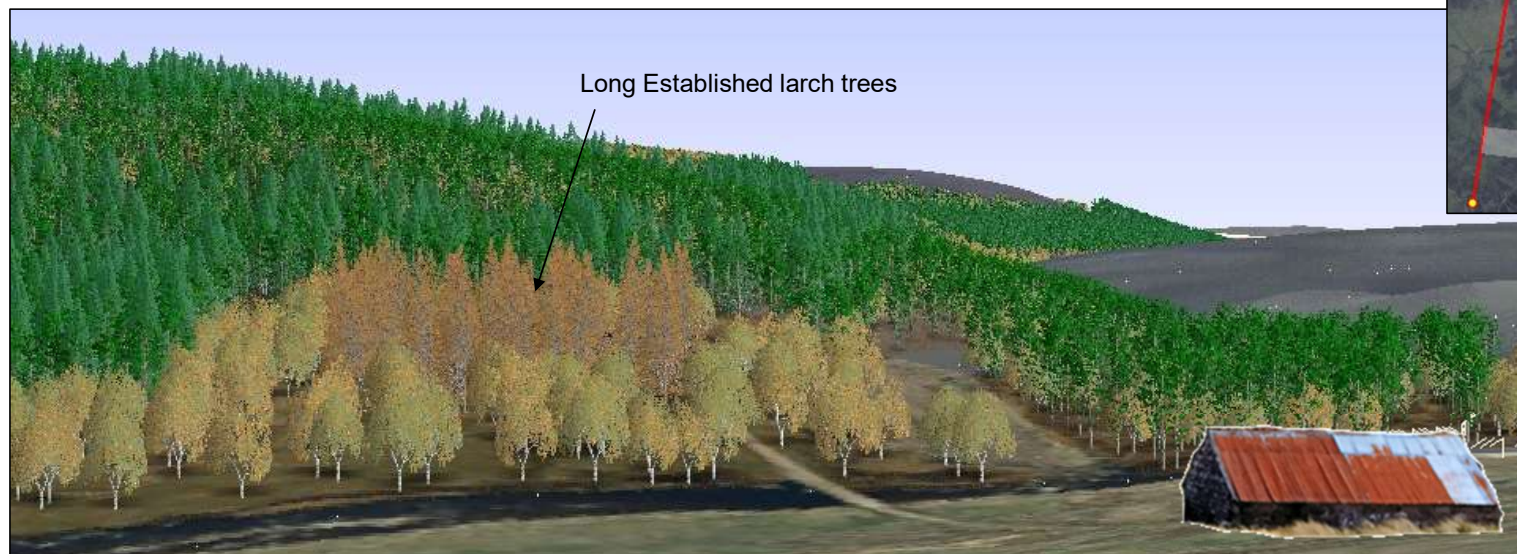
Most views are obscured by trees within the existing mature Glendye forest from this vantage point.



# Visualisations

Charr Bothy- internal small scale view (near NO 615 831)

Views from Charr Bothy looking southeast to the Water of Charr, 3D model (top) set against photograph (bottom) from the same vantage point



Species choice for commercial conifer transitions into native pine woodland and then upland birch

At lower elevations intimate mixtures of open ground and woodland will complement the smaller scale of the landscape here.

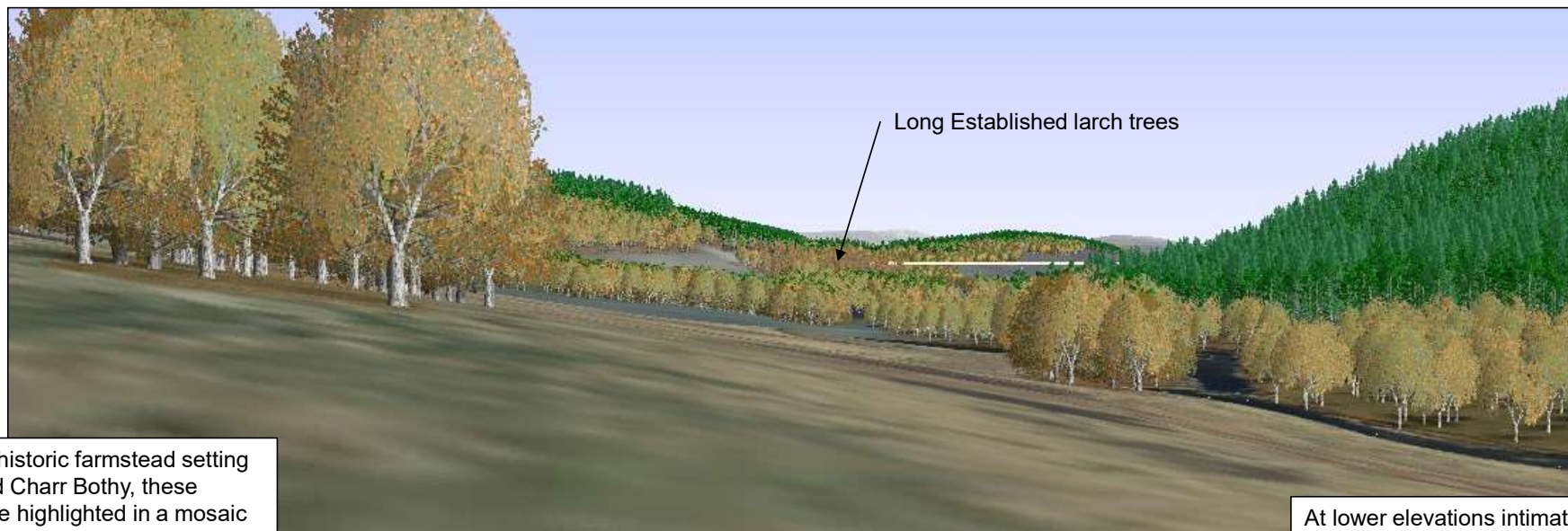




# Visualisations

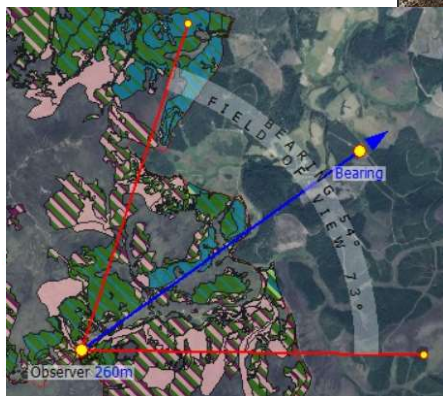
Charr Bothy- internal small scale view (near NO 615 831)

Views from Charr Bothy looking northeast along the Water of Dye, 3D model (top) set against photograph (bottom) from the same vantage point



Within the historic farmstead setting and around Charr Bothy, these features are highlighted in a mosaic of open ground and native planting to ensure the historic setting is reflected in the design.

At lower elevations intimate mixtures of open ground and woodland will complement the smaller scale of the landscape here.







Organic edges and shapes have been created through planting

Throughout the design, visual diversity is limited to environmental conditions and opportunities are taken to create open woodland mosaics along lower glen floors. Areas of Natural Regeneration will also increase visual diversity where seed sources exist currently.

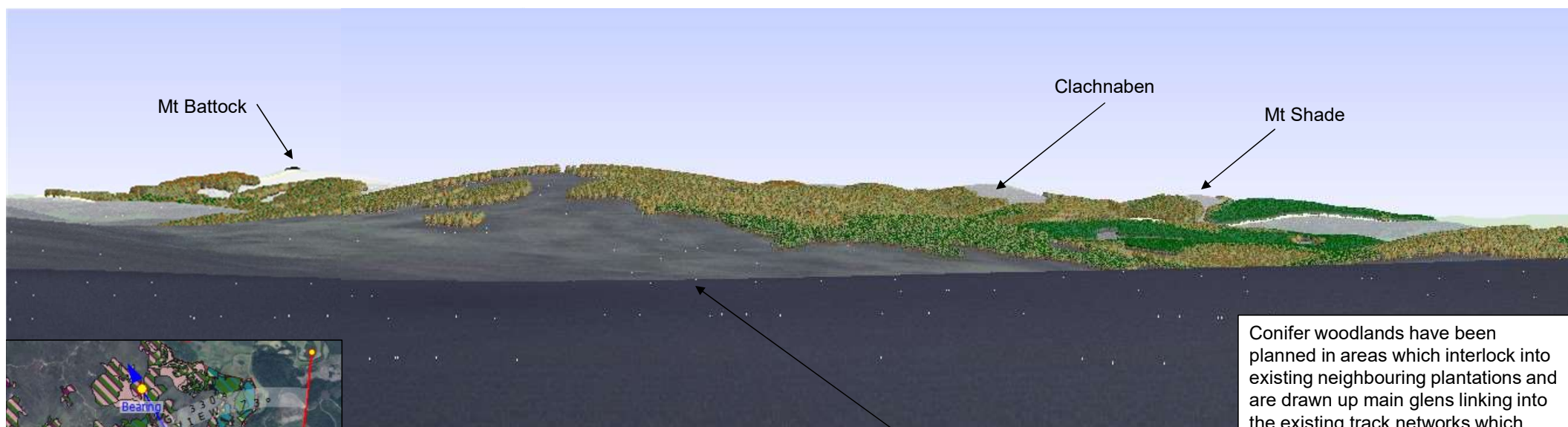
Glen Dye Moor has been described as vast, open, and wild. Transition from an open habitat to a wooded one will be a significant change however utilisation of predominantly native species, and incorporating natural regeneration will maintain the existing spirit of place during the transition to woodland. Ensuring fencing is kept to the perimeter will also greatly reduce impact from new human artifacts.



Charr Bothy







Organic edges and shapes have been created through planting, though there is a desire to have margins reflect smooth gently curving landforms, environmental conditions restrict planting in places and overly complicated edges are created where planting cannot follow a smooth line

Deer Fence (moved down hill to avoid visibility)

Conifer woodlands have been planned in areas which interlock into existing neighbouring plantations and are drawn up main glens linking into the existing track networks which favour the topography. Species choice for commercial conifer also transitions into native pine woodland and then upland birch



# Visualisations

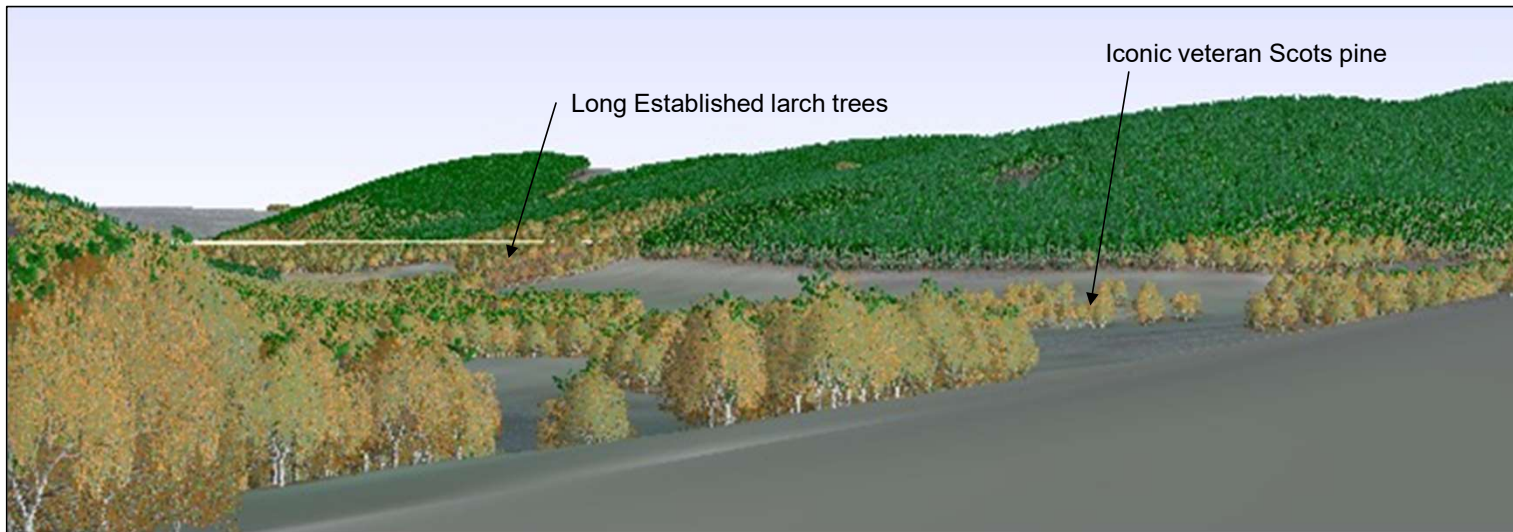
Additional visualisations from well visited locations

This view is taken along the track leading from Spittal Car Park to the Charr Bothy near the start of the main township location. It is a notable long view up the glen with cultural significance



Cultural Heritage areas around townships will be retained as open ground

Water of Dye will be planted with bankside riparian woodlands



Productive conifer planting will be predominantly Scots pine and will transition along edges to native Scots pine and upland birch

Natural Regeneration is planned around veteran trees and long-established plantations





# Visualisations

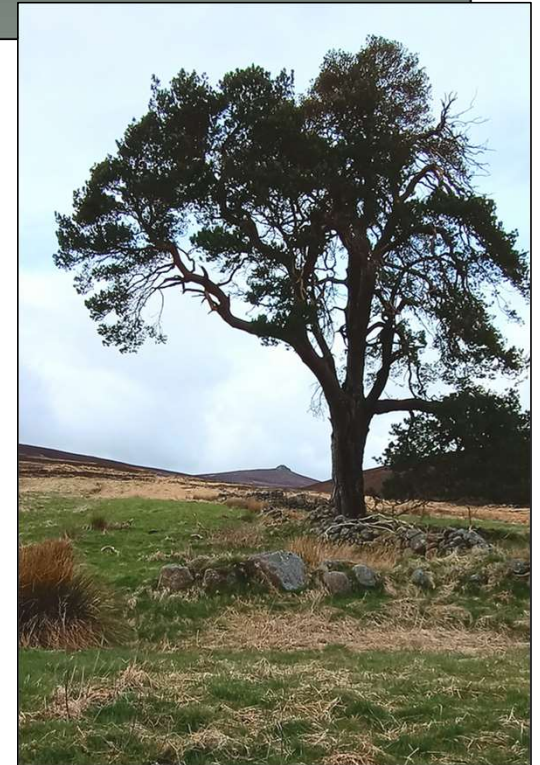
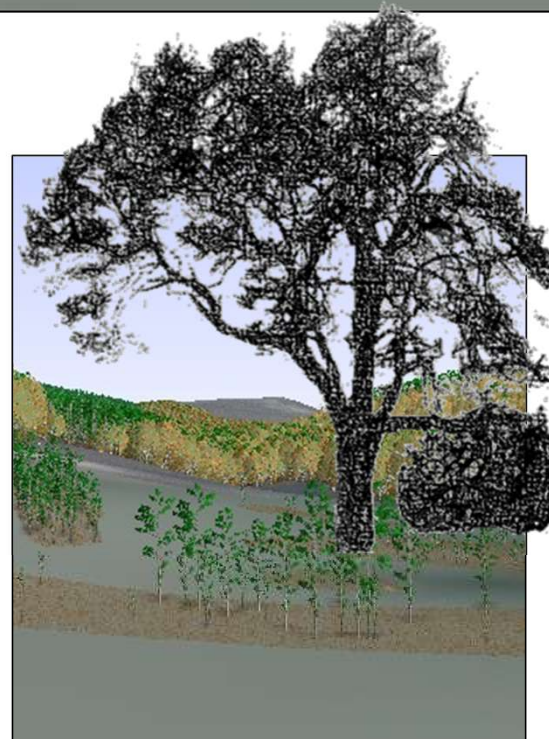
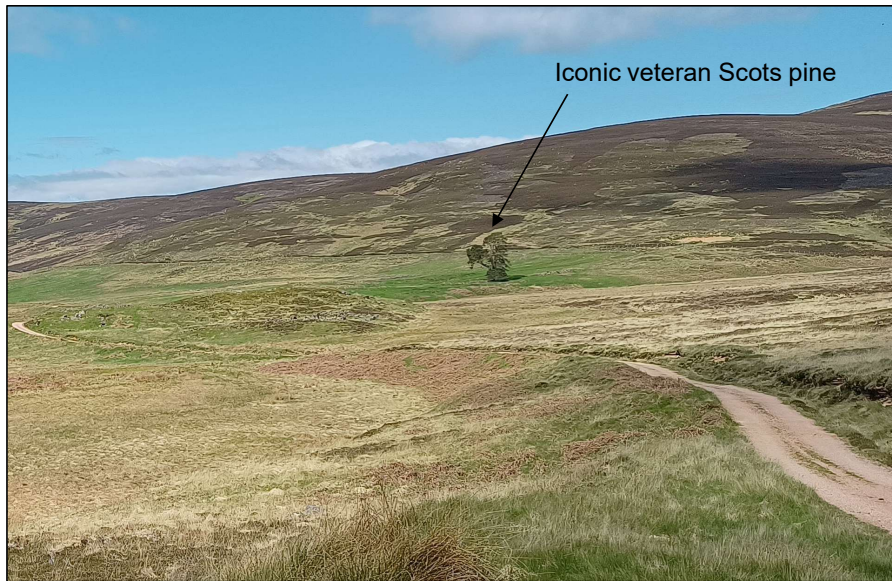
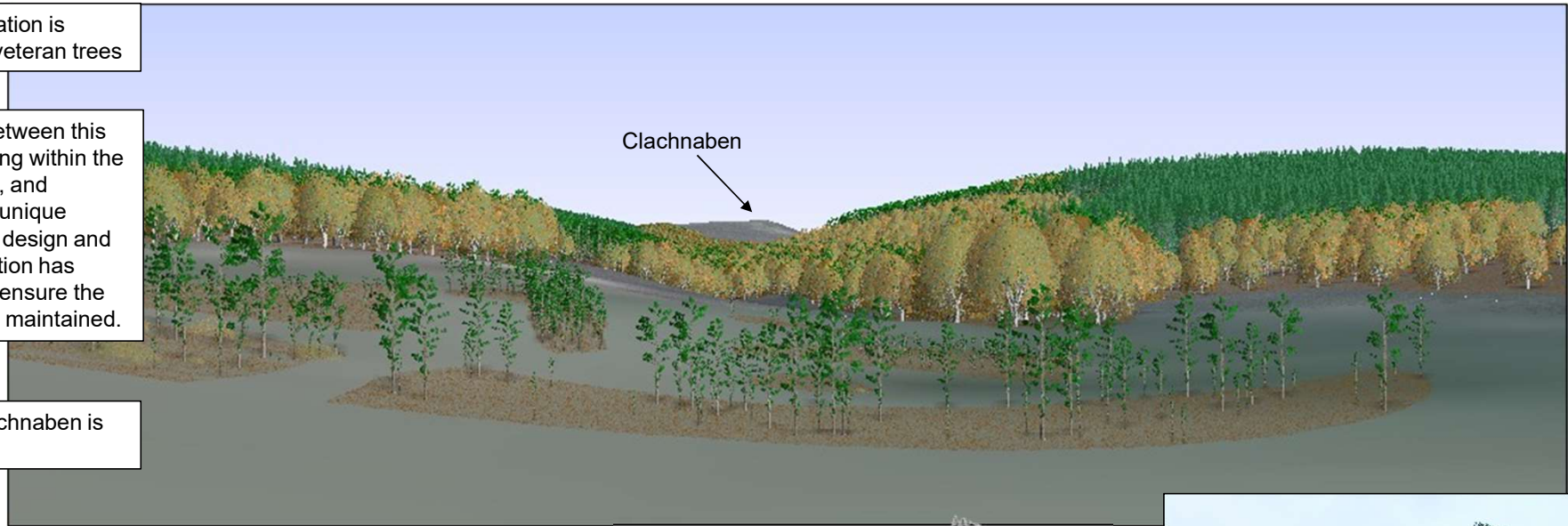
Additional visualisations from well visited locations

View showing alignment between veteran pine and Clachnaben looking north, 3D model (top). This model is shown with the superimposed trees (bottom middle) set against photograph (bottom right) from a similar vantage point. Photograph (bottom left) indicates the general setting of the veteran tree.

Natural Regeneration is planned around veteran trees

The alignment between this veteran tree, sitting within the historic township, and Clachnaben is a unique feature. Planting design and natural regeneration has been planned to ensure the sense of place is maintained.

Long view to Clachnaben is retained.



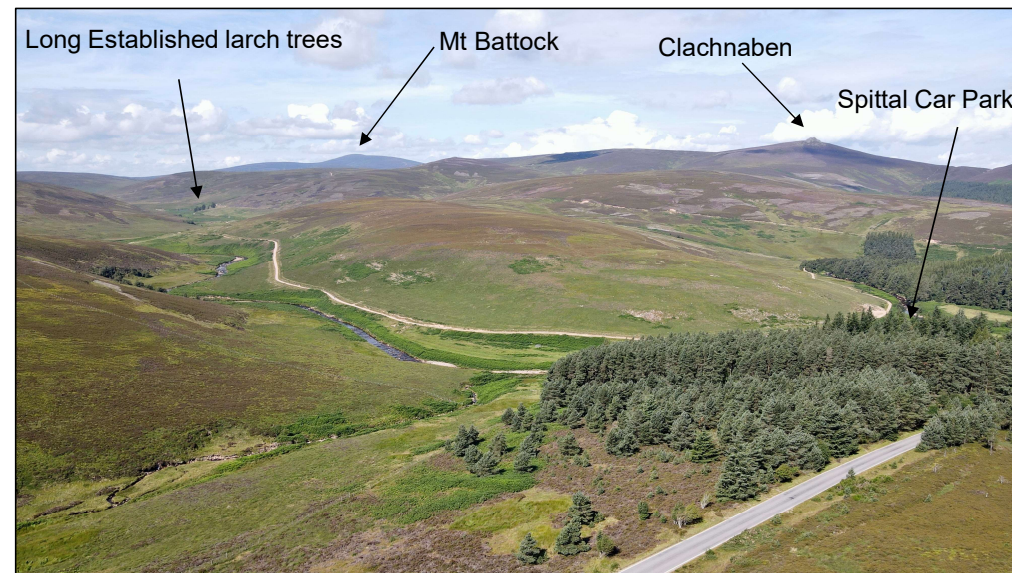


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## Additional visualisations

This view was taken by drone sitting atop the Glendye forest looking across the public road into the proposal area. The photograph (top right) is set against a 3D model of the site (bottom) to demonstrate the scale and diversity of the proposals.

Although there was a desire to have large contiguous stretches of woodland to reflect the large scale at upper elevations, environmental conditions restricted planting in some locations creating a smaller scale pattern of woodland with isolated blocks at high altitude. To mitigate this, montane willow scrub will be used in the most isolated high altitude planting to better suit the setting. A feathered edge will also be created along upper margins to provide a greater sense of scale in the transition from open hill to woodland. At lower elevations intimate mixtures of open ground and woodland will compliment the smaller scale of the landscape here.



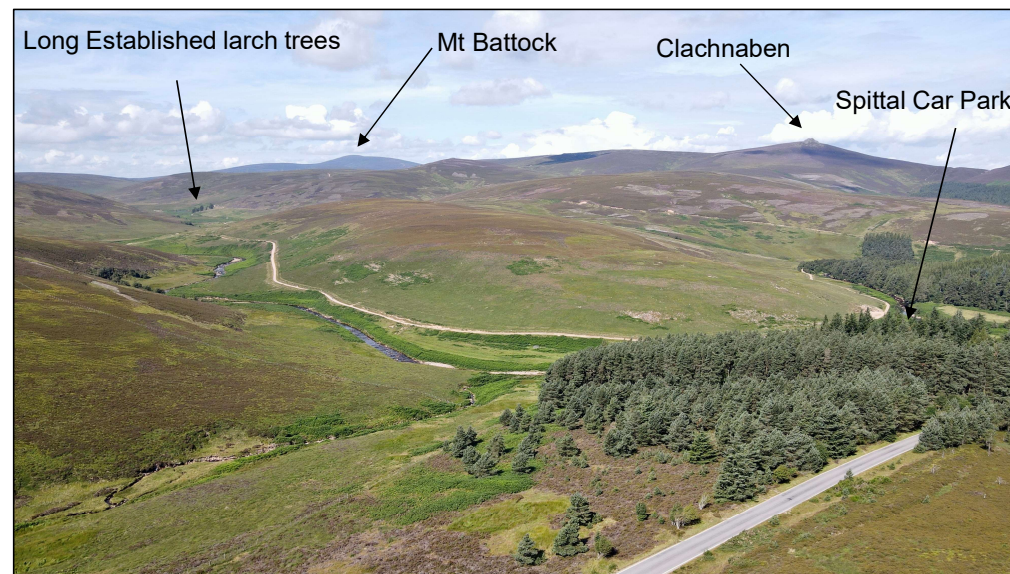


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This internal viewpoint illustrates the setback provided around Clachnaben as well as the intervisibility between Mt Shade and Clachnaben and the interlinkage of conifer planting with neighbouring Glendye forest

