

North Erradale



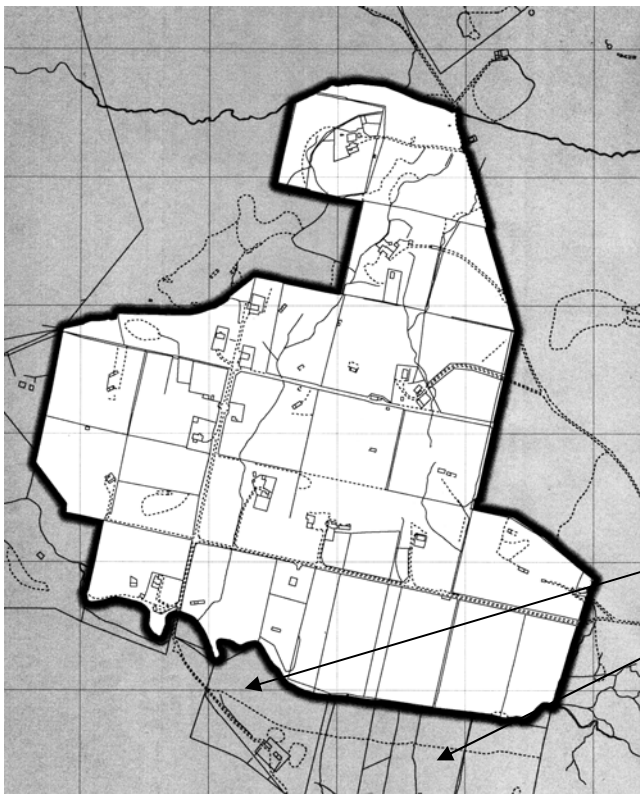
Chapter No:

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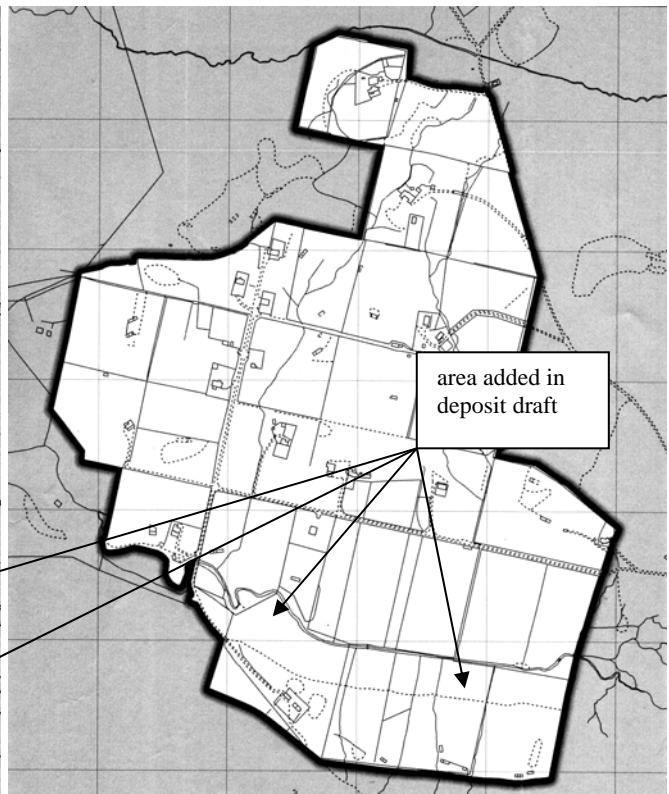
65 - Scottish Natural Heritage [Written Submissions]

BACKGROUND

1. North Erradale is a widely scattered area of crofts on the B8021 to the west of Gairloch. The land is generally level around the crofts, although it rises to form a ridge along the south. The Settlement Development Area as shown in the North Erradale Inset Map in the initial draft local plan was extended in the deposit draft version of the plan to include additional croft land on higher ground at the south end of the identified area. The inset map also confirms that the settlement lies within an area of medium sensitivity.



Extract from the initial draft local plan
Proposals Map North Erradale Inset



Extract from deposit draft local plan
Proposals Map North Erradale Inset

2. The **objector** pointed out that the Landscape Capacity Study had identified this higher land as an area where development should be avoided. Despite this, the objector stated that

development within this area would be acceptable so long as it was restricted to the area to the east of the existing property on the north-facing slope and extended no further up the slope than the property itself so that key views would be maintained and so that the definition of the settlement by the enclosing slopes would be retained. It was recommended that a note be included on the inset map to this effect.

3. The **council** responded that the southern boundary was the in-by limit and that it was not much higher than the house at the western end. As a result, it was not considered necessary to restrict the height of any new development there to the existing house rather than to the in-by wall/fence.

4. On this basis, the objector decided not to pursue the objection any further.



Photograph showing land at the south end of the Settlement Development Area, as referred to in the objection

CONCLUSIONS

5. There are a number of issues in this objection that are difficult to understand. The initial draft of the plan adhered to the advice from the Landscape Capacity Study and showed the boundary of the Settlement Development Area to exclude the raised land to the south. No reason has been given by either party as to why this line should have been re-drawn to include the land, where it was recommended specifically that development should be avoided.

6. Following the redrawing of the boundary contrary to the advice of the Landscape Capacity Study, understandably, the objection was lodged. However, the council's response is merely that the new line is drawn "not much higher than the house at the western end", as can be seen from paragraph 3 above. In my opinion this is irrelevant, when an area is involved where development should be avoided altogether. However, I consider it to be more curious still that the objector appears to have accepted this, particularly when the sensitivity level is medium, and if the designation is to mean anything, then it should also be taken into account.

7. As can be seen from the photograph above, the croft and its land referred to are well separated from the remainder of the crofts on the more level ground below (shown in photograph at the head of the chapter). The croft on the raised land does not appear visually to be part of the remainder of the group. By comparison, it is in an elevated position from the rest, prominent, and the impact of any development on the rise around them would be considerably greater than on the level areas to the north of them. As the Landscape Capacity Study was not produced, I assume that this was the reasoning behind the advice referred to by the objector. Whether it was or not, in these terms I consider that there would require to be sound reasons for revising the boundary of the Settlement Development Area specifically to include this land; there appear to me to be none.

RECOMMENDATION

8. Accordingly, I recommend that the land in question should be removed from the Settlement Development Area and the boundary restored to its position as shown in the initial draft of the plan. In addition, as the advice was that development should be avoided on this ground, it should be identified as a Policy 1D Area of Avoidance (as per Chapter 21) in the plan when adopted.