



**INVERLOCHY CASTLE**

*Hotel & Restaurant*

# TORLUNDY VILLAGE EXPANSION

**APRIL 2005**

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## 1. Introduction

The Highland Council is currently reviewing its Local Plan for the Lochaber district. A key challenge for the new plan is the identification of effective sites for the delivery of housing in the district. A number of important sites in the existing Local Plan have failed to bring forward new housing to meet acknowledged needs, on account of a number of factors related to their viability, and the current position in the District's housing land supply is now acute.

In recognition of the difficulties that have been encountered in delivering a range of quality homes in the area, the Inverloch Castle Estate has invested considerable time and effort over the past 18 months to establish whether parts of its landholding might be suitable for development purposes. A constructive meeting was held with members of Highland Council in March 2004, at which conceptual proposals for the estate were reviewed and commented on. Since that meeting a considerable amount of work has been carried out to investigate the feasibility and viability of the development proposals and the outcome of that work has led to the production of an indicative master plan for the village of Torlundy, and wider estate.

A further meeting was held with the Council in February 2005, at which the updated proposals were presented.

The purpose of this submission is to appraise the Council of the current position concerning the Estate's aspirations for their landholding and to initiate formal discussions on the most appropriate means by which the Estate's proposals may be incorporated into the new Local Plan.

### The Estate's advisors

The Estate has engaged the following consultants to advise on the viability and form of their proposals:

- Brodies LLP Solicitors      Planning and legal matters
- EDAW plc                      Master planning and landscape matters
- URS                              Engineering and transportation matters

This project team has a wide range of experience in realising sensitive development proposals, such as these, and has worked together closely during the development of the master plan. The project team has prepared this submission jointly.

### The nature of the proposals

The master plan (Figure 15) indicates the Estate's current aspirations for its land at Inverloch, and includes both residential and commercial development. The form and scale of the proposals has been realised from an analysis of the site's particular landscape and visual context, and physical characteristics, and has paid particular regard to the setting of Inverloch Hotel and its associated buildings, which are listed buildings. A prerequisite of the Estate's brief has been that the hotel operation should be able to continue and prosper within the master plan proposals.

The Estate is convinced that the diversification contained in its proposals will not adversely affect the hotel. Indeed the provision of a range of housing types in the vicinity of the hotel will be of benefit to its long term interests as the availability of good quality housing for staff is currently an issue for the business.

The commercial/tourism development proposed will also be entirely complimentary to the operation of the hotel.



Figure 1: Site location

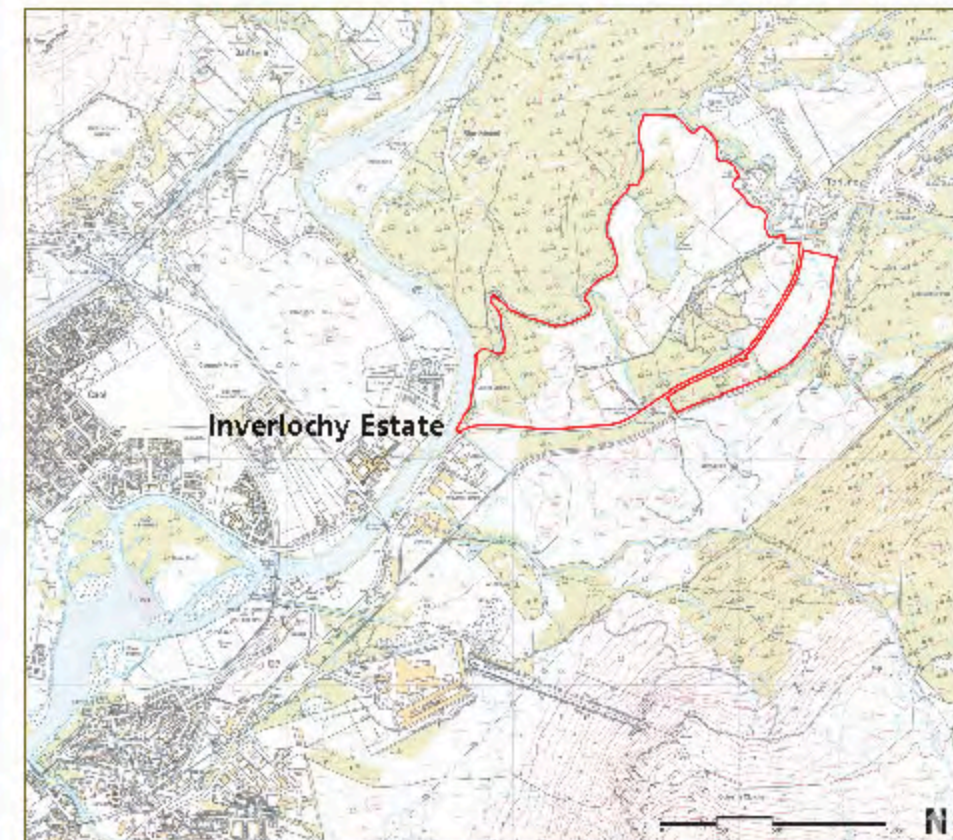


Figure 2: Land ownership

## The master plan

The master plan proposes a number of elements, which can be summarised as follows:

1. An extension to the settlement of Torlundy which will include a range of housing types and densities.
2. Community facilities, subject to consultation with the community and Highland Council.
3. Associated public open space and play areas.
4. Land for a footpath/ cycleway linking Torlundy to the edge of Fort William.
5. Adjustments to the A82 to facilitate safe access to the housing and commercial areas.
6. A high quality speciality shopping/tourist facility offering local/ West Coast arts & crafts and food.
7. Land for a visitor centre/ base for Mountain Rescue.
8. Landscape/ nature conservation enhancement and management plan, incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SUDS).

A more detailed explanation of these elements is set out later in this submission.

The master plan (Figures 4, 14 & 15) indicates the locations where these elements are sited. The locations have been determined through a process of site appraisal and desk-top technical evaluation. The findings have been subject to consultation with a number of statutory consultees and the Council. No public consultation has been undertaken as it was considered to be premature in advance of the Council's consideration of the proposals. The Estate is committed to undertaking a public consultation exercise when and if appropriate.

In March 2004, the project team met with members of Highland Council at Inverlochy Castle to discuss conceptual proposals for the Estate (Figure 3). Following this presentation, the Council invited the Estate to establish whether the proposals were viable and effective, taking into account particular development considerations which have constrained other housing sites in the existing Local Plan area. As a consequence the Estate commissioned a technical evaluation of its proposals with regard to the following potential constraints:

- Ground conditions/suitability
- Means of access
- Drainage/ servicing
- Flooding

In addition to the technical evaluation, a more detailed appraisal of the site's landscape capacity was undertaken. This analysis has informed the iterative design of the master plan throughout the process.



Figure 3: Conceptual Master Plan: March 2004



Figure 4: Refined Master Plan: March 2005  
(Refer to Figure 15 for enlarged version)

## 2. Technical Appraisal

The following sections of this submission summarise the findings of the technical and landscape studies, and go on to explain how these studies have informed the form and content of the proposed master plan.

The project team's work in preparation of this document recognises the need to demonstrate the deliverability and viability of the proposals, particularly in relation to elements of infrastructure, servicing and hydrological impact. The technical appraisal has been undertaken in tandem with the master plan development such that both strands of the study are co-ordinated.

Four key areas of study are discussed in this section:

- **Ground Conditions.**

Identifying the suitability of ground conditions for viable residential development.

- **Access.**

Establishing the principle of suitable forms of access on the A82.

- **Drainage and Servicing**

Establishing what measures should be allowed for in adequately draining the site, to the satisfaction of Scottish Water, and an assessment of the physical and capacity constraints likely to be encountered by existing public utility provision.

- **Flood Risk**

Assessing the impact of the appropriate level of flood risk of the viability of the proposals and their deliverability in planning terms.

Under each of the above elements, the consultants have engaged in discussion with the appropriate bodies – SEPA, Scottish Executive, Scottish Water – in order to secure appropriate confidence in the advice being given to the Estate. There remain matters to be discussed and designed in detail, but the work to date has been sufficiently detailed to determine whether development, in principle, is capable of being delivered on the site.

Each of the above potential constraints is now considered in turn.

### Ground conditions (Figure 5)

The following site assessment has been prepared from an examination of in house information held by URS Corporation Ltd.

Published geological information indicates the superficial deposits beneath the site to comprise alluvium on the western boundary and northern portion, along the River Lundy and within the area of the small tributary burn through the centre of the site. This is underlain by glacial sand and gravel on the northern portion.

The entire site is in turn underlain by morainic drift, typically comprising silty or sandy till commonly interbedded with varying proportions of gravel, sand and silt. However, small areas of basin and hill peat are shown in the eastern corner of the site and on the southern boundary. Additionally, bedrock is shown at or near the surface on the southern boundary of the site. No made-ground deposits are noted within the site area. The thickness of the superficial deposits is currently unknown. It should also be noted that the geological plan shows a glacial drainage channel within the southern portion of the site, in a northwestern direction.

The underlying bedrock at the site comprises dominantly quartz-schist with subordinate bands of quartz mica schist. The Great Glen Fault is also noted approximately 800 metres to the northwest of the site, with associated shattered rock to the immediate west of the River Lundy to the west of the site.

Geological plans indicate morainic till to be present at surface across the majority of the site. Therefore based on available information it is considered that appropriately designed shallow foundations e.g. reinforced strip foundations or trench fill construction techniques, may be used to carry foundation loads onto the till.

Where peat deposits are locally present it may be necessary to remove and replace the peat with an engineered fill material or adopt a piled foundation solution. Furthermore, within areas underlain by weak alluvial deposits special foundation techniques, such as piling, ground treatment or rafts, may be required.

The master plan has been designed to generally avoid areas of peat and alluvial deposits. Consequently it is anticipated that ground conditions will be generally favourable, and therefore viable, to development.

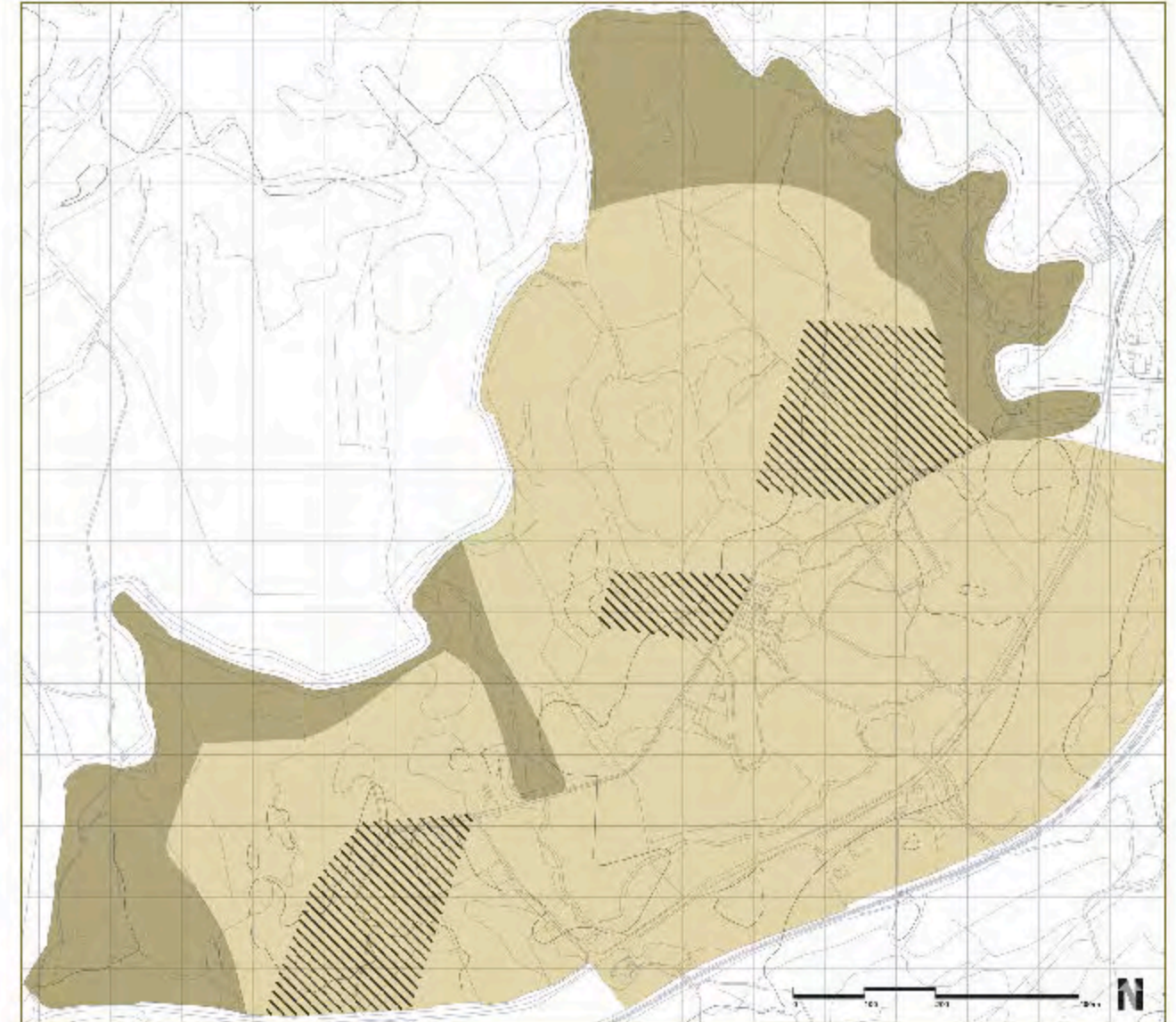


Figure 5: Existing ground conditions

#### Key

##### Existing Ground Conditions

	Alluvium
	Rock Near Surface
	Moraine

Note: Boundaries are indicative only and subject to detailed site investigation.

## Drainage & Services (Figure 6)

### Surface Water

Surface water drainage from the development will adopt fully the requirements of SEPA which are generally outlined in CIRIA publication C521. "Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, Design Manual for Scotland and Northern Ireland."

The master plan has space to embrace techniques such as wetland or detention ponds which can provide both adequate treatment of surface run-off and amenity value.

### Foul Drainage

An outline of the proposals and the site area was issued to Scottish Water for their initial comments in relation to draining the site. The nearest public treatment works is at Torlundy, which is just outwith the north boundary of the site. This is a relatively small treatment works serving Torlundy, Happy Valley and other chalets and the like to the north of the site.

Scottish Water advise that the Torlundy works are presently at capacity, and that no drainage connection could be made via these works as they stand.

Subsequently, three options were examined to facilitate foul drainage :

- Expansion of the existing Torlundy works to accommodate the proposed development.
- Construction of a treatment works within the Inverlochy estate.
- Connecting to the sewage works in Fort William, some 3km from the site. This is unlikely to be possible without intermediate pumping. Furthermore, the Fort William works are operated under a PPI agreement, and Inverlochy Estate falls outwith the area which the Concessionaire is required to drain.

Common to all three options will be the need for the developer to fund the works, whether establishing new or augmenting the existing public system.

Increasing the capacity at Torlundy treatment works was identified as the most likely way to achieve foul drainage connections. The Torlundy plant takes the form of initial settlement tanks and bio-disc treatment of effluent prior to discharge to the adjacent burn.

The consultants understand that the works currently serve 300 housing units. Consequently, it has been assumed that the works will require to be increased by one-third, which would appear to be technically possible. Ultimately the discharge standards are set by SEPA and will shape the design process. It is considered that current technology will be capable of achieving an acceptable solution.

The commercial development site will be detached from the housing areas and will not benefit from a location adjacent to the Torlundy works. Allowance has been made within the project costs for a pumping installation, but there remains a possibility that a septic tank would be accepted in this location for wastewater.

It is considered that a viable solution for waste water management can be achieved for the master plan proposals.

### Utilities

Water mains and telecommunications plant are indicated along the A82 corridor. Both are likely to require some form of protection to accommodate the new access proposals. Notably, the water main that runs under the landform discussed in relation to the South Access will require more extensive diversion/ lowering works.

Power cables exist across the area but are not likely to be affected by the proposed road improvements.

Transco confirmed that there is no plant in the area.

A limited assessment has been made to ascertain the viability of supply and what wider network improvements would be required to serve development. At this point, gas supply may be potentially problematic due to the lack of network in the immediate area.

It is considered that utility provision is unlikely to present unsurmountable constraints to development.

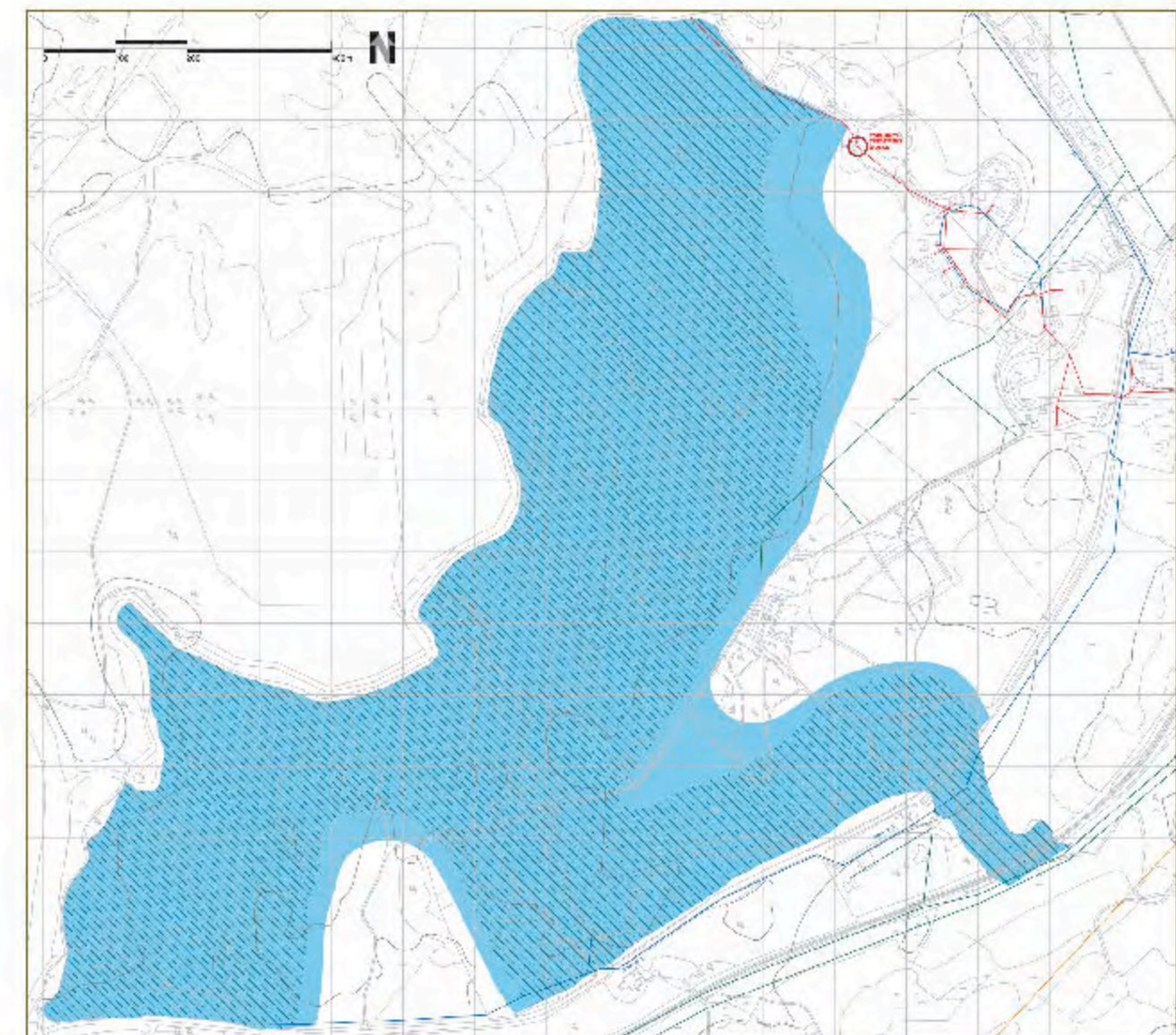
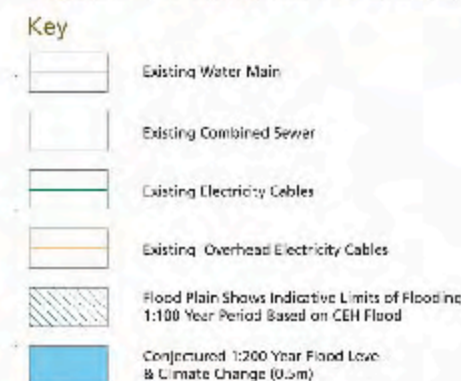


Figure 6: Evaluation of utilities and flooding



## Means of access

From preliminary discussions with the Scottish Executive, based on the March 2004 conceptual master plan, access layout options were developed based on a series of ghost island and simple junctions, in preference to a roundabout based solution. The layout is generally supported by the Executive.

Compared with the land take required to build a roundabout, the land required to construct ghost island junctions is moderate. Improvements to visibility splays, inherent to junction improvements, are a little more onerous, particularly at the south junction but nonetheless considered in overall terms to offer a better solution.

Importantly, it should be noted that all improvements can be incorporated in land in the control of the Estate which means that they can be delivered.

The improvements essentially take the form of three junctions, as follows:

### North Access (Figure 7)

A staggered ghost-island junction serving both east and west sides of the A82. This will be the main junction for residential development. There is a degree of flexibility in the location of the junctions, but the separation between junctions should be regarded as a minimum.

The new access will require the existing access to the Factor's House Bar and Happy Valley settlement to be stopped up. The alternative link to these areas is shown indicatively on the master plan.

### Mid-junction (Figure 8)

This is intended to formalise the existing access to the residences to the east of the A82 and to provide access to new housing. Consideration has been given to closing one of the accesses and making a moderate amount of improvements to the retained junction, including providing the required visibility splays. No works are required on the A82 itself and the improvements can be implemented on land within the ownership of the Estate.

### South Access (Figure 9)

A staggered, ghost-island, junction is proposed serving the Golf Club and the new commercial development to the west of the A82. All widening to accommodate the junction would take place to the west on land within the ownership of the Estate.

The existing access to Inverloch Farm would be abandoned in favour of a new west access further south, to provide the required separation between junctions. This along with the necessary visibility splay would require removal of the part of the landform to the south of the access. This will improve forward visibility along this stretch of the A82.

In the wider context, a ghost island junction is provided for the Aonach Mor access a little to the north. This would suggest that adopting similar junction arrangements is not only appropriate but also represents consistency on the network. When considered collectively, the proposals rationalise the existing level of access along the section of A82 and improve the junction provision to a level appropriate to the proposed use.

The consultants understand that the principle of the proposals is acceptable to the Scottish Executive.

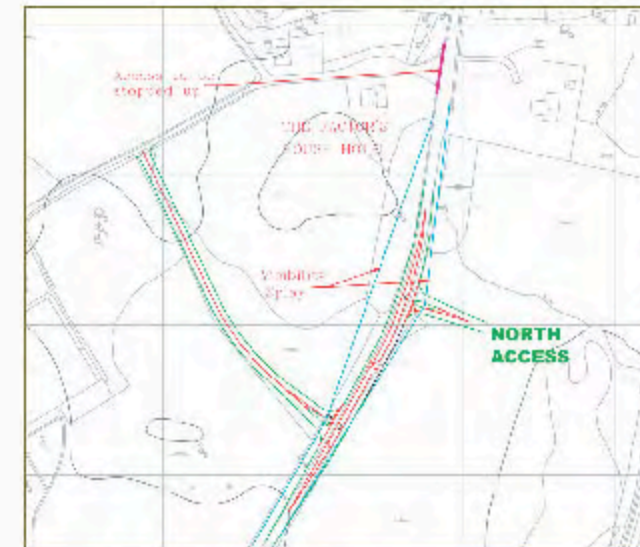


Figure 7: North access

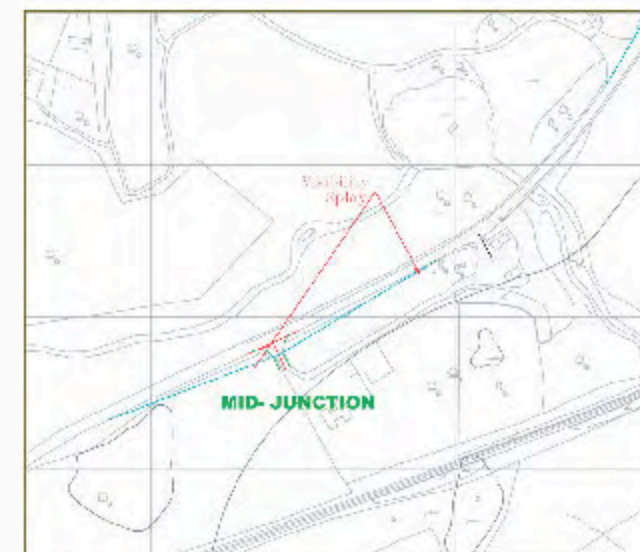


Figure 8: Mid-junction

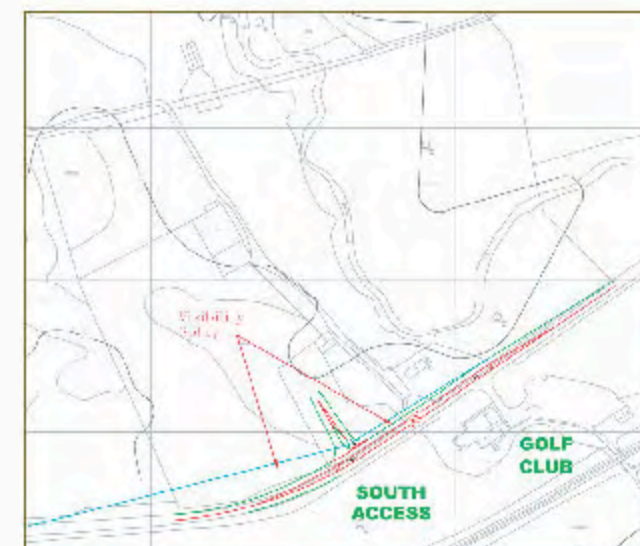


Figure 9: South access

### Flood risk (Figure 10)

The potential for flooding to constrain the master plan proposals was recognised at an early stage. Dr David Cameron of SEPA has provided assistance to the project team in evaluating the potential flood risk impact.

Anticipating that any planning proposals of a detailed nature will require a flood risk assessment, the consultants have attempted to demonstrate that the proposed development will be protected from the 1 in 200 year flood level, plus an allowance for freeboard and climate change. This has been done at a preliminary level, within the limits of readily available information from SEPA, among other sources.

The base information adopted indicative flood maps held by SEPA which use a generalised technique for plotting areas at flood risk in a 1 in 100 year storm event. As a result, the extent of the area adopted to develop flood risk is a 'best endeavour' at reproduction of the information viewed, but sufficient to give an impression of the potential impact on the site.

Planning in relation to flood risk requires proposals to demonstrate that development is not at risk from the effects of flooding during a 1 in 200 year return period, climate change, and a freeboard allowance. The area of constraint shown on Figure 10 adopts an estimated level of 21m AOD to represent this level. While there are limitations as to the direct applicability of the information which SEPA hold, in planning terms much of the site may be regarded as unsuitable for development. Importantly, the master plan works with this constraint and proposed residential development lies outwith the area of planning concern.

There may be options to address flood risk, land-raising being the most acceptable in terms of SPP7. By raising areas of land to a level above the 1:200 year flood risk level, development can then take place. We are confident that land is available to enable us to demonstrate that there is a neutral effect elsewhere, by providing compensatory storage as necessary.

Similar to all preceding headings, the assessment of flood risk will require further more detailed analysis. The assumptions made in relation to flood risk are based on broadly defined criteria, but contain a sufficiently comfortable margin of safety to ensure that a workable and viable development solution can be achieved.

### Summary of the technical appraisal

This technical evaluation supports our submission by demonstrating the deliverability and viability of the geological, engineering and hydrological elements of the proposals.

Ground conditions are generally favourable in the areas of built development to support efficient foundation solutions.

Access and egress to and from the A82 has been the subject of discussion with the Scottish Executive, and we have received generally supportive comment from them based on our layout proposals. It is considered that the proposals contribute to an appropriate and inherently safer method of accessing existing and proposed development.

The incorporation of sustainable urban drainage systems within the master plan layouts demonstrates the holistic thinking which has been applied.

The requirements of network improvements to facilitate wastewater flows from the development recognise the investment required to address existing capacity constraints.

Finally, expert guidance has been sought both within the project team and from statutory agencies in ascertaining an appropriate flood risk on which to develop the master plan. The key areas of built development are anticipated to be outwith the estimated 'planning' flood level of a 1 in 200 year storm event, or are capable of being raised in an appropriate and sustainable manner.

Collectively, the technical principles of the proposals are well considered, based on sound consultations and demonstrably deliverable.

The following section of this submission considers how the technical studies have been harnessed to produce a master plan which responds to the specific characteristics of the site.

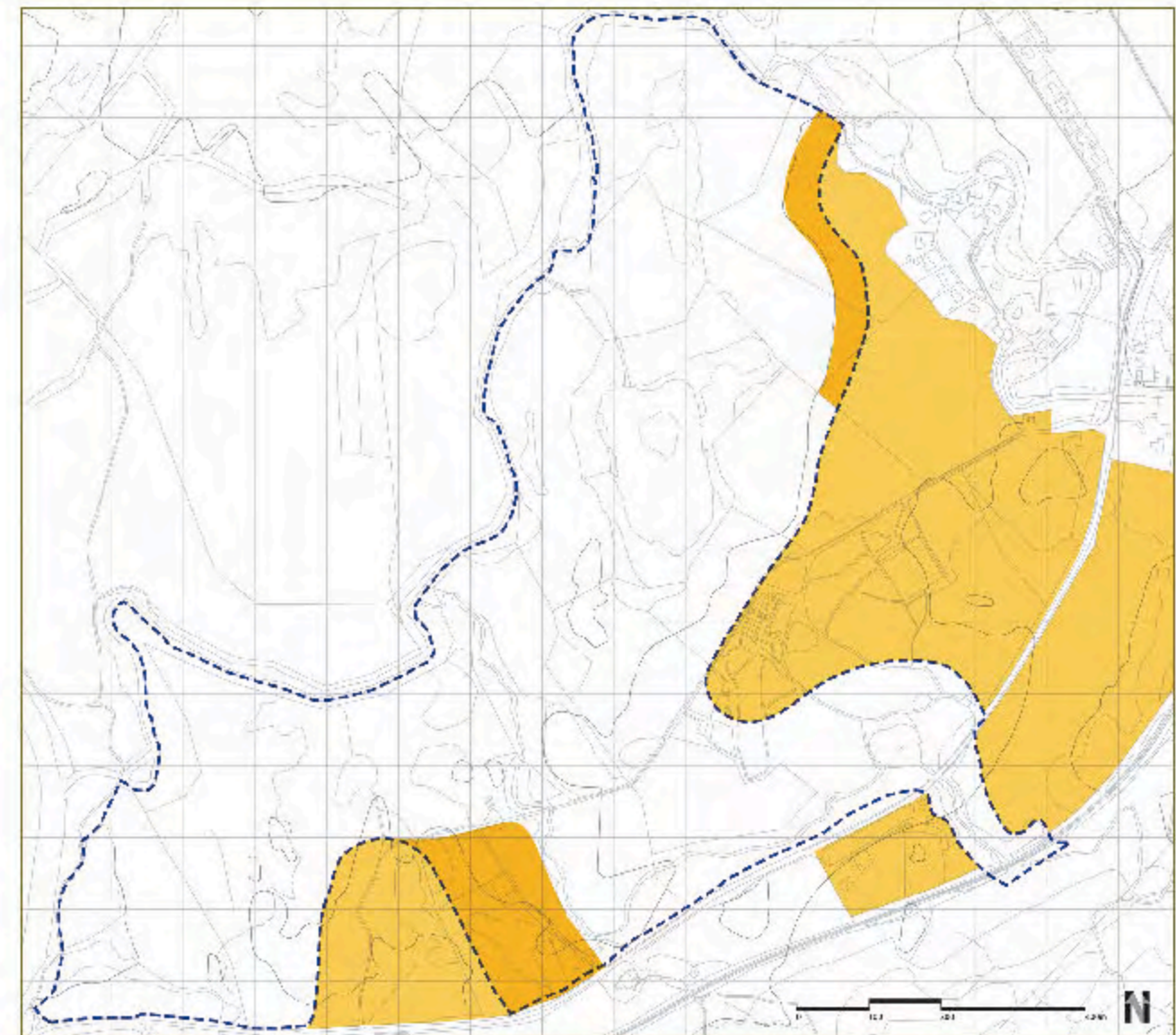
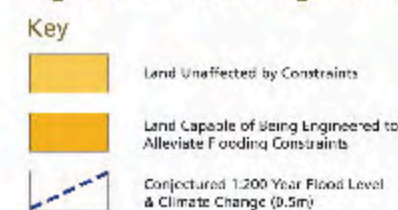


Figure 10: Flooding - constraints and opportunities





## Landscape Appraisal

In tandem with the technical studies a more detailed landscape appraisal of the site has been carried out. The purpose of this part of the study was to determine the relative sensitivities to change of different parts of the Estate, and to gain a thorough understanding of the site's inherent capacity to accommodate new development. The appraisal considered the wider context of the site as well as its specific features and characteristics. A summary of the findings of the landscape appraisal is set out below.

### Designations (Figure 11)

Figure 11 shows the range of landscape designations in the Fort William area. These include statutory designations such as National Scenic Areas and SSSI's as well as non-statutory designations including Gardens and Designed Landscapes and Areas of Great Landscape Value. The map also shows areas which are protected under European Legislation by way of Directives and includes Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. It is evident that much of the landscape around Fort William is protected by landscape and/or environmental policies.

None of the land within the Inverlochy Estate is protected at a national or regional level for its landscape quality or environmental sensitivity. Parts of it are, however, subject to a number of other designations which are included within the existing Local Plan. These are indicated in Figure 13 and include the following:

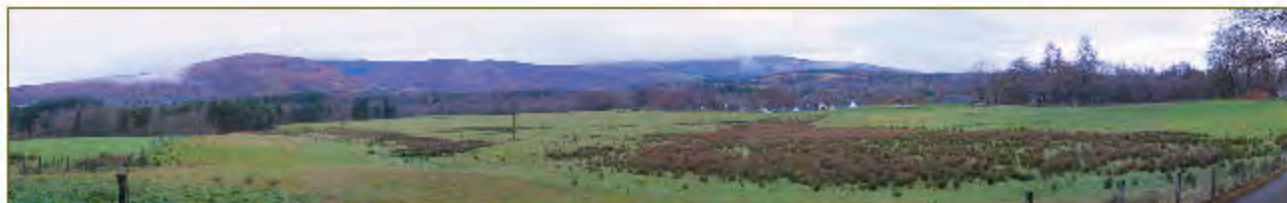
- Areas of ancient woodland and nature conservation;
- 4 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including a section of General Roy's Military Road;
- 4 Listed Buildings, including Inverlochy Castle (B), stables (B), walled garden (B), lodge and gatepiers (C);
- Protection of the landscape setting of Inverlochy Castle (Hotel).

It is also relevant to note that part of the Estate has been identified in the existing Local Plan as being suitable for housing development, to the south east of the A82.

None of the landscape or nature conservation designations applicable to the Estate would be adversely affected by the proposed development.



View from A82 across Estate towards south east.



View of land adjoining Torlundy village to north of A82.



Figure 11: Landscape and ecological designations



## Landscape Character (Figure 12)

In 1998 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) commissioned an appraisal of the landscape character of Lochaber (Review No. 97) and this document provides helpful guidance on the character of the region and its capacity to accommodate change. The Estate is located within the **Broad Forested Strath** landscape character type. One of the key characteristics of this landscape is stated as being:

- *A comparatively densely settled landscape with villages, houses and sporadic commercial development.*

The type is also described as being ‘a particular mix of land uses superimposed on gently undulating landform’ and ‘settlement has developed a linear pattern, concentrated along roads through the strath. Croft houses form loose patterns of settlement, while occasional pockets of closely spaced new housing sometimes occur where crofts have been subdivided. Larger villages, such as Spean Bridge, Roybridge and Strontian, sit in open areas surrounded by the forests’.

The report also considers the development pressures and sensitivities affecting each character type and notes with regard to the **Broad Forested Strath** that, while pressure for landscape change, including new housing, is high, the sensitivity to change is low due to its generally robust landscape. It sets down specific guidance for landscape management in the area and notes that ‘conserving the diverse mix of landuses is key to the area’s character’.

The landscape character of the area has a good capacity to absorb change when compared with other surrounding areas. It is considered that the expansion of Torlundy, as proposed by the Estate, is entirely compatible with this character type.

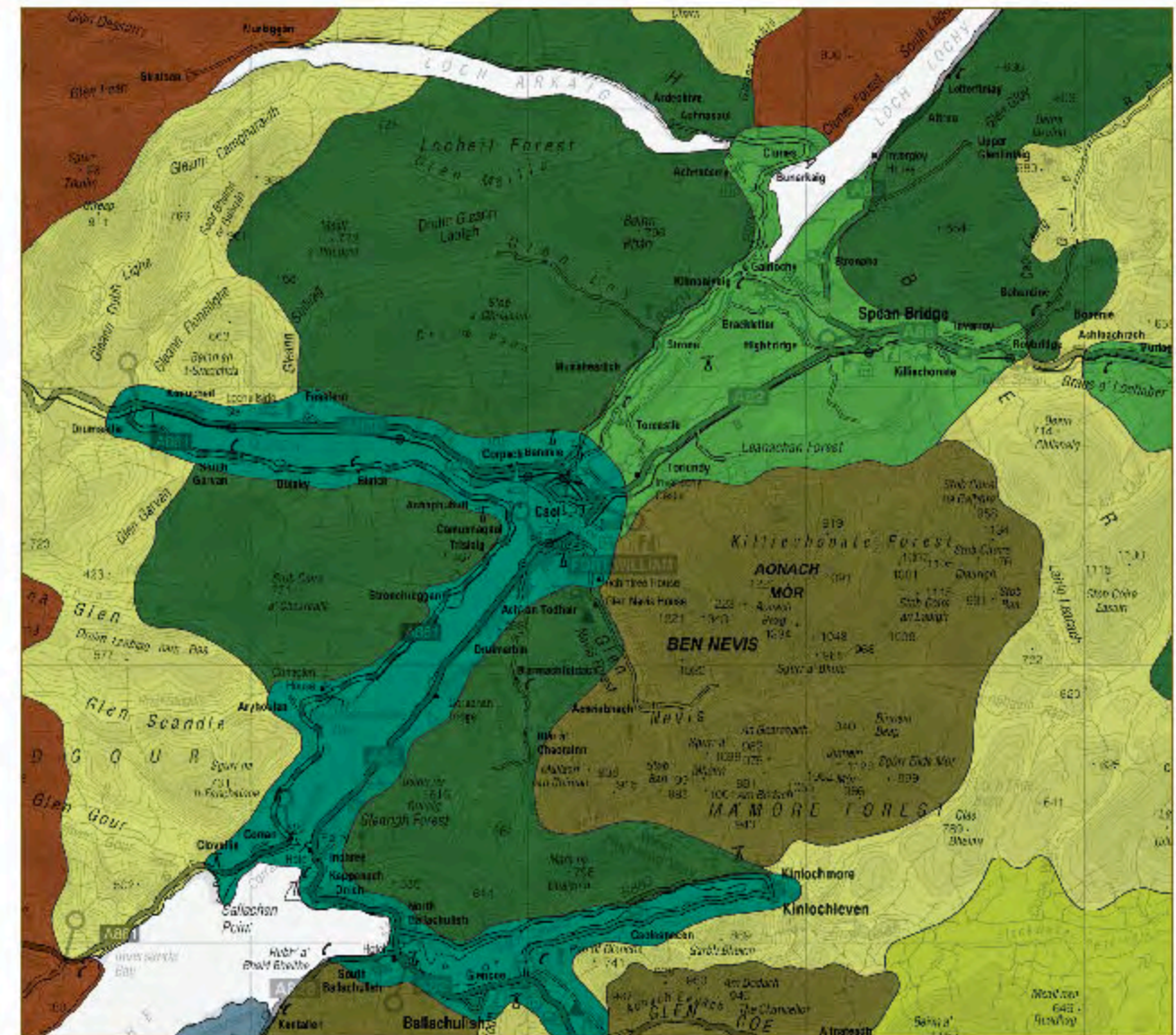


Figure 12: Landscape character types



View of loch and Inverlochry Castle Hotel.



View of Inverlochry Home Farm to west of A82.

## Landscape capacity

The Estate has a diverse range of features which include rivers, lochans, woodland, pasture, formal gardens and buildings/ built heritage. Despite its proximity to the A82 it remains generally private because of the substantial screening afforded by its woodland cover. Beyond the boundaries of the Estate itself the landscape is characterised by extensive woodland and forestry cover which, as noted above, tends to produce a good degree of enclosure in the wider setting, and enhances its capacity to accommodate change. Where woodland cover gives way to more open parcels of land there is the potential for long range views across the strath and up to Ben Nevis.

The master plan has been guided by an assessment of the physical and visual sensitivities of the Estate, as well as its inherent 'capacity', from a landscape perspective. Development has not been sited where it would have an adverse effect on the setting of Listed Buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Instead it takes advantage of open areas of land in less sensitive locations, where these abut the existing village edge. It is considered important that new development on the scale intended appears to be a natural extension of the settlement rather than an entirely new settlement in its own right. Landscape capacity is concerned with the context of a development site as well as its physical enclosure, and the sites chosen are considered to have a good relationship with the existing settlement pattern of Torlundy.

No areas of woodland will require to be felled to achieve the master plan, although substantial new tree belts will be provided to enhance the character and provide a backdrop and boundary for new development. New development will not be hidden by trees though and great weight requires to be attached to the design of the development in order to achieve appropriate integration into the landscape around the village.

Land to the east of the A82 is more open in character when compared to the ground to the west of the road. This area is however strongly contained in physical terms by the mainline railway which provides a logical defensible boundary for the expanded village, with appropriate landscaping. Existing development is present to the east of the road, and part of the Estate's landholding in this area is allocated for small scale development in the existing local plan. However, it has not been viable to realise this allocation because of the costs involved in providing an appropriate access onto the A82 for such a scale of development.

Land to the northwest of the A82 is substantially screened from the road by vegetation and landform in the vicinity of the Factor's House inn. Although it abuts Happy Valley, views out from the existing housing are contained by higher ground along the boundary with Inverlochy Estate. This area is visible from the environs of the Hotel, although it lies outwith the sensitive landscape area identified in the Local Plan. Landscape structure planting will be required to provide a strong defensible boundary along the south of this area to protect the long term integrity of the listed building.

In terms of the impact of new housing on users of the A82 it is considered that the effects will be limited to a short stretch of the road immediately south of Torlundy, and in the context of the route passing through a diverse landscape this will not be significant.

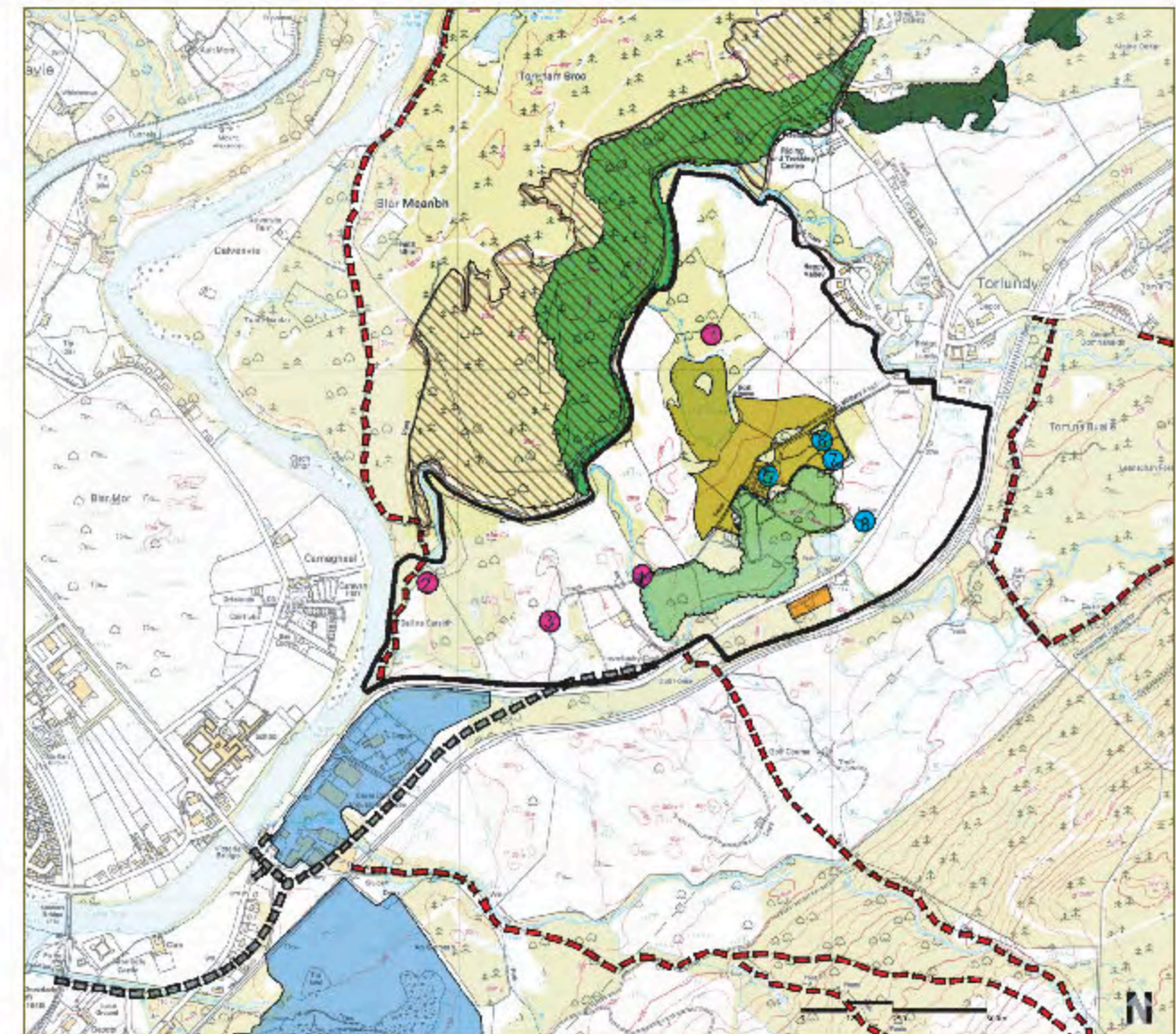


Figure 13: Site analysis

### Key

Site Boundary	<b>Listed Buildings (also included in the SMR)</b>
Rights of Way	Mansion (category B)
<b>Ancient Woodland Inventory</b>	Stables (category B)
Ancient (pre-1850 origin)	Walled Garden (category B)
Long-established (plantation origin)	Gatepiers & Lodge (category C)
Oak (Tree map)	<b>Local Plan Allocated Land</b>
<b>Archaeological Sites &amp; Monuments Record (SMR)</b>	Business / industry (next to site)
Draining	Infill housing (within site)
Hcard	Proposed Trunk Road Alignment
Milliey Road	<b>Local Plan Designations</b>
Road Bridge	Landscape Conservation: other features
	Nature Conservation non-statutory area

## Preferred Master Plan

The preferred master plan for Inverlochy Estate (Figures 4, 14 & 15) has been determined through a process of analysis and evaluation, in which a number of development options have been tested and refined. The various constraints and opportunities described in this submission have been overlaid to identify areas of coincidence to identify those parts of the site which are most constrained. Consequently, development has been sited to avoid these areas while also taking advantage of the most appropriate locations in landscape and visual terms.



Figure 14: Refined Master Plan: March 2005

## Land for housing

The Estate's vision for its landholding is to provide a new standard of rural development in Lochaber. It is a prerequisite of the Estate that the form and design of new development is to the highest standards in order to enhance the local area rather than to blight it. The Estate's commitment to quality can be seen in their recent development of the Factor's House Inn at Torlundy.

The master plan identifies 8 housing areas (Areas A-H inclusive) located around the southern edge of Torlundy village, which together amount to around 12.5 hectares (31 acres). The housing areas are separated by significant structural landscape belts to create a series of small compartments. It is considered that the landscape structure will be installed from an early stage in the development process to provide clearly defined framework within which the village can grow. This is to allow sensitive, phased development to take place within manageable sized plots. The generous landscape structure will also allow for the routing of footpath and cycleways linking housing areas with surrounding open spaces, the village and wider area.

The Estate currently envisages a low density of development, in recognition of the rural setting. The aim is to provide a mix of housing densities which best meet market demands. The high quality of the surrounding area suggests that a good proportion of houses will be suitable for executive housing market. However, it is also proposed that a proportion of the development land would be directed at the mid range as well as some land for affordable housing. Assuming a range of densities from 4 per acre to 8 per acre it is considered that the site has capacity to provide around 200 houses.

The Estate wishes to engage in further discussions with the Council about how it can best meet the specific requirements of the emerging housing strategy in the new Local Plan, and as such is flexible about the mix of types and tenures proposed.

It is beyond doubt that this scale of development would represent significant growth of the village, but if it is implemented to the high standard that the Estate requires then it is reasonable to expect that it can make a positive contribution to the physical form and pattern of the settlement. The detailed layout and design of housing areas is capable of being safeguarded through a master plan led approach which is supported with appropriate design guidance. Furthermore, the scale of development envisaged may permit additional amenities to be provided within the village which it otherwise may not have the critical mass to sustain.

In contrast with the lack of housing provision experienced throughout the life of the existing Local Plan, the Inverlochy Estate proposals offer a viable and effective opportunity for the new Local Plan to address housing needs in Lochaber.



A high quality of housing and place design will be required.

### **Commercial development**

The Estate believes that there is a significant opportunity to open a high quality speciality shopping outlet on its land at Inverlochry Farm, adjoining the A82 (Area I). The purpose of the venture is to exhibit and sell products and produce that is indigenous to the West Coast of Scotland and Lochaber district. The venue will also be used to display local arts and crafts and for temporary exhibitions by local artists. The facility will create employment opportunities and generate tourism in an important tourist corridor.

The venture will be modelled along similar lines as the House of Menzies (Aberfeldy), Loch Fyne Oyster Bar and House of Bruar but will have a unique identity and presence and be of a smaller scale than the latter example. It is anticipated that the development will have a positive economic benefit in the local area.

### **Public benefits**

The Estate's proposals will bring a number of benefits to the local community and area in general. Perhaps of greatest importance is the fact that they will bring a real choice to potential house purchasers who currently are hindered by limited availability in the local housing market. The Estate has experienced first hand the difficulties that employees have in finding suitable houses to rent or buy.

Housing development also brings opportunities in terms of employment and it is estimated that the development will generate significant local opportunities for work. The proposed commercial development will also generate a variety of jobs.

Additional homes in and around Torlundy will potentially enable the village to sustain a greater range of local amenities than currently exists. The Estate is willing to engage with the local community to discuss potential benefits that the development might enable for the village. Specifically the master plan indicates provision of new play facilities and land for a footpath/ cycleway to be provided linking the village with the edge of Fort William (insofar as it falls within the Estate's landholding).

Further benefit will derive to the creation of a new linear park linking the village to the river, encompassing new SUDS facilities. Coupled with extensive new structure planting these facilities will provide significant nature conservation enhancement opportunities too.

## **5. Summary and Conclusions**

It is considered by the Estate and its advisors that this proposal complies with Scottish Planning Policy, in particular SPP3 Planning for housing and SPP15 Planning for rural development. It also complies with the Highland Structure Plan (approved in March 2001) which requires adequate provision of housing to be found in the structure plan area and promotes retail business and tourist related development.

The adopted Lochaber Local Plan (February 1999) has failed to deliver adequate provision of housing in the Fort William area, primarily on account of the poor viability of sites that were allocated within the plan. The present Local Plan review presents a new opportunity for proposals which will deliver housing in the Fort William area and the Estate wants to work with Highland Council to bring about necessary housing development in an appropriate and realistic way.

The illustrative master plan for the Inverlochry Estate is still at an early stage in its development. It is acknowledged that a significant amount of work still requires to be done to develop the design and content of the proposals and the Estate wishes to engage fully with the Council and consultees in bringing the aspirations to fruition. Despite the illustrative nature of the plan at this stage, a considerable amount of work has been carried out to establish the effectiveness of the site to deliver development.

The technical studies undertaken to date underpin the credibility of this submission and will, hopefully, give the Council sufficient confidence to support the principle of development in the locations proposed. The Estate and its advisors are committed to working closely with officers of the Council to confirm the precise form and nature of proposals in order to secure a positive allocation in the new Local Plan.

The master plan proposals offer an unparalleled opportunity to deliver a very high quality solution to meet part of the region's housing supply requirements, while securing obvious benefits to the economy of the local area.

The Estate looks forward to a constructive dialogue with the Council in the preparation of its Plan and would welcome the opportunity to review the contents of this submission at the earliest opportunity.



**Key**

-  AREAS A-H  
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
-  AREA I  
PROPOSED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT
-  PROPOSED PLAY AREA AND CAR PARK
-  1:100 FLOOD LINE  
1:200 FLOOD LINE
-  EXISTING WOODLAND
-  PROPOSED WOODLAND STRUCTURE PLANTING
-  PROPOSED SUDS POND AND NATURE CONSERVATION AREAS
-  EXISTING PONDS/LOCHANS
-  POTENTIAL FOOTPATH / CYCLEWAY LINK  
BETWEEN TORLUNDY AND FORT WILLIAM

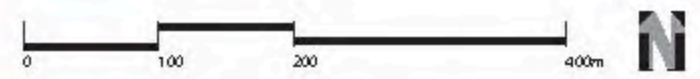


Figure 15: Preferred Master Plan: March 2005



# INVERLOCHY CASTLE

*Hotel & Restaurant*