

## **Appendix A13.6: Landscape Objectives**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 The proposed scheme presents significant opportunities to contribute to, and enhance, the environmental quality of the existing A9 road corridor in order to deliver a high quality, integrated, biodiverse, adaptable and sustainable transport corridor. At the broadest level these landscape opportunities have been identified with a view to meeting the four key aims of Fitting Landscapes: Securing more Sustainable Landscapes policy (Transport Scotland, 2014), which are to:
- ensure high quality of design and place;
  - enhance and protect natural heritage;
  - use resources wisely; and
  - build in adaptability to change.
- 1.1.2 The vision of the Fitting Landscapes policy is to promote the more sustainable design, implementation, maintenance and management of the transport estate and ensure that the landscapes that are created and managed are of a high quality, well integrated, bio-diverse and adaptable, and deliver a meaningful contribution to national sustainability targets. In addition to meeting the above four key aims, the policy requires Landscape Objectives to be set to inform the planning, design, implementation and management of new transport infrastructure.
- 1.1.3 The following project-specific Landscape Objectives have been developed in accordance with the policy to help achieve the above four key aims. The process of setting the objectives has been informed through: engagement with statutory consultees; review of findings from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process including the Environmental Design Principles, and collaborative design working of the landscape architects with engineers and other technical and design disciplines such as ecology, cultural heritage, noise, hydrology, land use, community and private assets and architecture.

### **2 Landscape Objectives**

- 2.1.1 The Landscape Objectives for the proposed scheme are as follows:
- Avoid detracting from the dramatic surrounding landscape and take opportunities to provide enhancements where practicable.
  - Maintain the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) of the CNP and Special Qualities (SQs) for the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area.
  - Maintain the essential qualities of Blair Castle Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL).
  - Design to take advantage of spectacular views from the road.
  - Consider opportunities to develop the design of the proposed junction at Aldclune as an attractive 'gateway' to local communities and facilities within the CNP.
  - Consider opportunities to develop the design of the proposed junction at Bruar as an attractive 'gateway' to local communities and facilities within the CNP.
  - Enhance the sense of arrival at the entrance to CNP.
  - Take opportunities to promote better understanding and historic interpretation of Killiecrankie Battlefield.
  - Consider opportunities to use SuDS features to enhance visual amenity and provide wildlife habitat.
  - Enhance the A9 traveller's experience of transition between LCAs, most notably between the Glen Garry Mid – Glen and more rugged upland landscape of the Glen Garry - Upper Glen LCA.

- Integrate embankments between Killiecrankie and Aldclune Junction and North of Calvine with the varied valley topography.
- Integrate the proposed large rock cuttings required on the lower slopes of Creag Odhar and Tulach Hill between Shierglas Quarry and Black Island with the natural landform.
- Consider opportunities to create spaces at underpasses to enhance the recreational value along the NMU paths (e.g. in Calvine, Bruar, south of Blair Atholl and in Killiecrankie on either side of Allt Girnaig).

### **3 Application of Landscape Objectives**

3.1.1 The Landscape Objectives are intended to guide the planning, design, implementation and management of the proposed scheme. It is recognised that they will not always be fully achievable. A range of factors need to be taken into account, including engineering feasibility; road safety; effects on landowners; and constrained locations where effects on multiple environmental sensitivities need to be balanced and the optimum solution may be a compromise.

3.1.2 Details on how the Landscape Objectives set out in Section 2 above would be tailored to the receiving landscape are outlined below:

#### **Avoid detracting from the dramatic surrounding landscape and take opportunities to provide enhancements where practicable**

- through limited / low key interventions;
- through careful control of views of the surrounding landscape; and
- through use of planting and seeding to reflect and integrate with surrounding vegetation patterns.

#### **Maintain the SLQs of the CNP and SQs for the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area**

- by identification of the specific features or characteristics of the SLQs and SQs affected by the proposed scheme, through systematic assessment;
- through protection of natural assets and/or the features which contribute to the SLQs and SQs; and
- through identification of specific design measures to mitigate impacts on the SLQs and SQs.

#### **Maintain the essential qualities of Blair Castle GDL**

- by identification of the specific features or characteristics of the GDL affected by the proposed scheme, through systematic assessment; and
- through identification of specific design measures to mitigate potential impacts in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland.

#### **Design to take advantage of spectacular views from the road including, but not limited to:**

- views across the valley to Craig Fonvuick and along the valley in both directions from the route between Killiecrankie and Aldclune Junction;
- views southeast from Essangal Bridge along the river glen towards Craig Fonvuick;
- views of Blair Castle to the north;
- views along Glen Garry and Glen Errochty from around Bruar Junction;
  - by controlled use of planting; and
  - by provision of laybys at locations with good views.

#### **Consider opportunities to develop the design of the proposed junction at Aldclune as an attractive 'gateway' to local communities and facilities within the CNP**

- by grading out to varied earthwork slopes that integrate with the local hummocky terrain;

- by rounding / slackening of cutting slopes to 'feather' into the adjoining landform, whilst taking advantage of the screening they provide; and
- by using woodland planting to compensate for loss of Ancient Woodland Inventory woodland and integrate the junction with the valley landscape.

**Consider opportunities to develop the design of the proposed Bruar/Calvine junction as an attractive 'gateway' to local communities and facilities within the CNP**

- by grading out to varied earthworks slopes to integrate with the local terrain, feathered into the adjoining landform, facilitating return of land to agricultural use where practicable; and
- by maintaining the open character of views, with limited use of planting.

**Enhance the sense of arrival at the entrance to CNP**

- by taking advantage of potential views along the valley to showcase the scenery, with controlled use of planting and selectively retaining open views where woodland is removed for construction of the proposed scheme; and
- by taking opportunities to provide varied and visually interesting mixes of woodland species alongside the road.

**Take opportunities to promote better understanding and historic interpretation of Killiecrankie Battlefield**

- with controlled use of planting to allow for open views across the battlefield; and
- by making provision for a layby within the battlefield area, subject to further consultation.

**Consider opportunities to use SuDS to enhance visual amenity and provide wildlife habitat**

- by using wet retention ponds, where practicable, in areas that would be most visible. For example, close to areas which are accessible on local footpaths;
- by using wet retention ponds to provide potential habitat 'stepping stones' for species e.g. Northern Damselflies; and
- by designing SuDS to fit with the natural landform with shapes to reflect the local landscape characteristics.

**Enhance the A9 traveller's experience of transition between LCAs, most notably between the Glen Garry Mid – Glen and more rugged upland landscape of the Glen Garry - Upper Glen LCA**

- through design of rock cuttings north of Calvine to exploit the natural character of the rock; and
- through taking opportunities to create new rock exposures at the Glen Garry geological SSSI and Geological Conservation Review Sites giving due consideration to the outcome of consultations with Scottish Natural Heritage and British Geological Society.

**Integrate embankments between Killiecrankie and Aldclune Junction and North of Calvine with the varied valley topography**

- through grading out of embankment slopes, where practicable, to tie in with adjoining landform;
- through varying side slope gradients to reflect the natural variations in slope; and
- through facilitating opportunities for land to be returned to agricultural use.

**Integrate the proposed large rock cuttings required on the lower slopes of Creag Odhar and Tulach Hill between Shierglas Quarry and Black Island with the natural landform**

- through grading out of slopes, where practicable, to tie in with adjoining landform; and
- through localised steepening of slopes and/or introduction of small scale retaining structures to avoid excessive 'chasing' of cutting slopes up the hillside and or loss of valuable woodland.

**Consider opportunities to create spaces at numerous underpasses to enhance the recreational value along the Non-Motorised User paths (e.g. in Calvine, Bruar, south of Blair Atholl and in Killiecrankie on either side of Allt Girnaig)**

- by applying innovative design solutions/materials/lighting, where appropriate.

#### **4 References**

Transport Scotland (2014). Fitting Landscapes: Securing more Sustainable Landscapes