

## **Appendix A13.2: Special Qualities of the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 This appendix provides an assessment of the impacts of the proposed scheme upon the Special Qualities (SQs) of the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area (NSA) and has informed the development of appropriate mitigation proposals during the landscape and visual impact assessment at Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 3.
- 1.1.2 The SQs have been identified through review of Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH) Commissioned Report No.374 (Scottish Natural Heritage (2010), The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas: SNH Commissioned Report No.374). This document defines the SQs of each NSA in Scotland and expands upon each one. These NSA SQs are presented by SNH to clarify "*what needs to be safeguarded to maintain its outstanding scenery*" and to provide a "*basis for future consultation and policy development, particularly in relation to managing development and land use change within NSAs*".
- 1.1.3 Loch Tummel NSA covers the landscape surrounding Loch Tummel and the Tummel valley to the west and the Pass of Killiecrankie to the east. It is characterised by beautiful woodland and a fertile, lowland strath whilst on the higher slopes there is a wilder landscape of rocky crags and bare, heather-clad summits.
- 1.1.4 The River Garry, existing A9 and the Highland Main Line Railway all run broadly parallel in a north-south direction through the NSA, along the Pass of Killiecrankie, with the northern boundary of the NSA lying adjacent to the southern periphery of the Cairngorms National Park.
- 1.1.5 One Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCA) which lies partially within the Loch Tummel NSA would be directly impacted upon by the construction of the proposed scheme, the Pass of Killiecrankie LLCA.
- 1.1.6 The SQs of the Loch Tummel NSA are listed in SNH's Commissioned Report as being:
- a breathtakingly beautiful landscape, both lowland and highland;
  - Loch Tummel, the heart of the NSA;
  - rich and varied woodlands;
  - peacefulness and tranquillity;
  - the celebrated Queen's view;
  - spectacular and famous mountain gorge – the Pass of Killiecrankie; and
  - the picturesque Linn of Tummel.

### **2 Assessment of Impacts on the Special Qualities of the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area**

- 2.1.1 For the assessment, relevant SQs for the relevant character areas have been identified. Locations where the landscape characteristics underpin these SQs have been identified and assessed, mitigation measures which are proposed are outlined and an assessment made as to whether these impacts would present a significant risk to the defining qualities of the SQs.
- 2.1.2 The table below provide assessments of the SQs of the single LLCA which would be directly impacted upon by the proposed scheme.

**Table 1: Assessment of Direct Impacts on the Special Qualities of the Pass of Killiecrankie LLCA**

<b>Pass of Killiecrankie LLCA</b>				
<b>Relevant and Related SQs</b>	<b>Locations where Landscape Characteristics underpin SQ</b>	<b>Assessment of Impacts of the Proposed Scheme on SQs</b>	<b>Proposed Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Significant Risk to SQ post Mitigation?</b>
A breathtakingly beautiful landscape, both lowland and highland	<p>The Tummel valley is a breathtakingly beautiful landscape with the river and stunning loch forming key features. The confluence of the rivers Tummel and Garry and Loch Faskally are located in the centre of the LLCA.</p> <p>The eastern part of Loch Tummel NSA lies within the LLCA, with the route of proposed scheme falling within the NSA from approx. ch5400 to ch6500.</p>	<p>The proposed scheme would not compromise the contrast of lowland and highland landscapes or settlement and wilder slopes and summits.</p> <p>Existing woodland is expected to screen views to the proposed scheme and cutting between Creag na Ciche and Craigower (ch5200 and ch5900), although they would be visible within the landscape from nearby elevated, open locations, particularly western slopes and from Loch Tummel, south of Faskally Caravan Park.</p>	<p>Earthworks between Creag na Ciche and Craigower would be sensitively graded and mixed woodland reinstated along this section and the northbound carriageway to improve integration with the surrounding landform and replacement of woodland lost.</p> <p><b>(Mitigation Items P04-LV8, P04-LV13 and P04-LV20)</b></p>	<p>No</p> <p>Following the grading out of embankments, and establishment and maturation of the proposed woodland planting there would not be any significant impact on the SQ.</p>
Rich and varied woodlands	<p>Extensive Ancient Woodland Inventory mixed woodland along the Pass of Killiecrankie and forming part of the Tay Forest Park at Craigower adds an unusual richness and variety of species and gives changing colour and texture throughout the seasons. Ancient oakwoods frame the western flanks of the Pass of Killiecrankie.</p>	<p>From Creag na Ciche to Faskally Caravan Park (ch5400 to ch6000) a large area of woodland, much of it designated as AWI, would be felled to accommodate the proposed scheme and in particular to the proposed cutting on the western flank of Craigower, to the east of the route.</p> <p>The loss of AWI between ch5400 and ch6000 would include that of long established woodland, although this loss would not compromise the richness and variety of species or seasonal changes within the area and would have a minor impact on this SQ of the NSA.</p>	<p>The retention and protection of existing woodland would be undertaken as far as practicable.</p> <p>Much of the AWI woodland within the NSA, which would be lost to make way for the proposed scheme, is coniferous plantation and of not as great a value as other woodlands within the NSA.</p> <p>The reinstatement of lost mixed woodland with a similar varied species composition would ensure that the qualities of the SQ are preserved.</p> <p><b>(Mitigation Items P04-LV12, P04-LV13 and P04-LV18)</b></p>	<p>No</p> <p>Following establishment and maturation of the proposed mixed woodland planting utilising an appropriate species mix there would not be any significant impact on the SQ.</p>
Peacefulness and tranquillity	<p>In locations away from the main road, on hill slopes and peaks and on sheltered paths and tracks natural sounds predominate, with the roar of the rapids, birdsong in the woods or the sound of</p>	<p>The perceived peacefulness and tranquillity of the eastern end of the NSA would be temporarily impacted upon during construction of the proposed scheme however these</p>	<p>Reinstatement of mixed woodland would help noise reduction close to the road.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Establishment and maturation of the proposed mixed woodland</p>

<b>Pass of Killiecrankie LLCA</b>				
<b>Relevant and Related SQs</b>	<b>Locations where Landscape Characteristics underpin SQ</b>	<b>Assessment of Impacts of the Proposed Scheme on SQs</b>	<b>Proposed Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Significant Risk to SQ post Mitigation?</b>
	<p>the wind in the trees.</p> <p>Core paths are located within the Tay Forest Park at Craigower and along the rivers Tummel and Tay. The existing A9 is generally screened from views by intervening woodland although traffic on it can be heard.</p>	<p>impacts would reduce once activities are completed and the road is in operation.</p> <p>There would be a slight increase in traffic together with night time lighting from headlights which would result in a minor impact upon tranquillity in areas close to the A9. Due to the shielding nature of the steep sided landform this increase would not be felt in the areas where natural sounds currently predominate, such as at the Linn of Tummel, or impact on the qualities of the SQ.</p>	<b>(Mitigation Items P04-LV13 and P04-LV18)</b>	planting would reintegrate the proposed scheme and ensure that there would not be any significant impact on the SQ over and above the impacts currently associated with the existing A9.
Spectacular and famous mountain gorge – the Pass of Killiecrankie	<p>The renowned Pass of Killiecrankie (or Coille Creitheannich, the Aspen Wood) is one of the main routes between the Highlands and the Lowlands. Within the pass, the River Garry flows through a spectacular, steeply-sided wooded gorge with deep pools and the narrow Soldier's Leap.</p> <p>From Craigower Hill, there are stunning panoramic views over the NSA to the west as well as to the north along the narrow pass and existing A9, which presents a grand vista to the Vale of Atholl, a 'Gateway to the Highlands'.</p>	<p>The historical landscape would be unaffected by the development, with views to the gorge from the LLCA kept intact.</p> <p>The realigned route passes through the southern extents of the Pass of Killiecrankie and views to the gorge from the route will generally be limited by woodland.</p> <p>A very small section of AWI woodland within the Pass of Killiecrankie would be lost to enable signage on approach to the junctions on the lower slopes of Creag na Ciche. The section of woodland lost, beyond the northerly extents of the proposed scheme and north of Garry Bridge would have limited impacts on this SQ of the NSA.</p>	<p>The retention and protection of existing woodland would be undertaken as far as practicable.</p> <p>The reinstatement of lost mixed woodland with a similar species composition would ensure that the qualities of the SQ are preserved.</p> <p>Use of aspen to reflect the passes' historical name "the Aspen Wood" would be incorporated.</p> <p><b>(Mitigation Items P04-LV12, P04-LV13 and P04-LV18)</b></p>	<p>No</p> <p>Establishment and maturation of the proposed woodland planting would reintegrate the proposed scheme into the Pass of Killiecrankie and ensure that there would not be any significant impact on the SQ.</p>
The picturesque Linn of Tummel	The picturesque rapids of the Linn of Tummel provide an exciting spectacle of sound and vision, contrasting with the peacefulness of Loch Tummel above and Loch Faskally below.	There would be no impact on this SQ.	None required	<p>No</p> <p>There would be no impact on the SQ.</p>

### **3 References**

Scottish Natural Heritage (2010) Commissioned Report No.374. The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas.