

**Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to
Peterhead 400 kV Project
Environmental Impact Assessment Report
Volume 5 | Appendices**

**Appendix 12.1.112 & 12.1.114: Woodland Report
Parcel 3032 & 2150, John Rennie & Sons**



APPENDIX 12.1.112 & 12.1.114: Woodland Report Parcel 3032 & 2150, John Rennie & Sons

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Appendix presents information relevant to the Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV Overhead Line (OHL) Project (the Proposed Development). It should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report, specifically **Chapter 12: Forestry**, for full details of the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.2 As part of the EIA, it has been identified that construction of the Proposed OHL Alignment and the associated access tracks would cross several woodland areas within private or publicly owned landholdings.
- 1.1.3 This woodland report assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on the Woodland, Parcels 3032 and 2150. It includes the requirements for woodland removal and management recommendations to mitigate the impact of the woodland removal. The report provides an overview of the characteristics of the affected woodland, including woodland composition, site conditions, soil conditions, exposure levels and existing felling approvals. The report also provides details of existing infrastructure, and potential constraints related to forestry operations. It aims to inform decision-making by identifying key environmental and logistical considerations associated with the Proposed Development. Additionally, it evaluates the feasibility of timber extraction and access whilst highlighting necessary mitigation measures to minimise disruption to the woodland ecosystem and surrounding landscape.
- 1.1.4 Field surveys of the woodland areas have been undertaken and have been used to determine the various woodland characteristics in order to identify the woodland removal required and recommended. This document also sets out the area quantity hectares (ha) to be compensatory planted to ensure no net loss of woodland is achieved.

2 Woodland Property

- 2.1.1 The landholding property boundaries are identified in **Figures 12.1.112a: Parcel 3032 Location Map and 12.1.114a: Parcel 2150 Location Map**. The woodlands owned by John Rennie & Sons are found 2.5 km south of Turriff on either side of the A947 at approximately NJ 733452 468865, NJ 739851 478446 and NJ 740881 479792, within the Aberdeenshire council region. The areas consist of a strip of broadleaves along the Burn of Gask, a strip of beech trees just north of the A947 and a strip of riparian woodland along the Burn of Turriff.

3 Development Requirements

3.1 400 kV Overhead Line Infrastructure Requirements

- 3.1.1 The Study Area for this assessment initially focussed on a 100 m width either side of the centreline of the Proposed OHL Alignment and ancillary infrastructure, where relevant, prior to the identification of an Operational Corridor (OC). The Applicant defines the OC as the area in which it has rights to remove woodland for the purposes of the safe construction, resilience and continued maintenance of OHLs, or protection of electrical plant as required by the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations (ESQCR) 2002¹ and The Electricity Act 1989². The OC is defined based on two different factors as follows:
- The first factor in which the OC is determined is with reference to the distance at which a tree could fall and cause damage to the OHL, resulting in a supply outage. As a result, the OC width would be based on the safety distance required to allow for a mature tree falling towards the OHL at the mid-point on an OHL span between two towers, taking account of topography and tree height at maturity. Standard falling distance for a mature conifer tree is considered to be a minimum of 45 m. Where the OC passes through areas of

¹ UK Gov (2002). The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002. Available at: [The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002](#)

² UK Gov (1989). Electricity Act 1989. Available at: [Electricity Act 1989](#)

broadleaved woodland, it is noted that the width of woodland removal is likely to be reduced, due to the general lower height and characteristics of the tree species present.

- The second factor that is considered is the maximum distance that the OHL conductors can blow out from the tower under a 1 in 50-year return period wind condition, plus the required electrical clearance distance. This is to ensure that the OHL conductors do not come into contact with, or come close enough to, any object that could result in an electrical clearance infringement. This conductor blowout distance varies between each tower dependent on span length and must therefore be considered on a span-by-span basis.

- 3.1.2 The typical OC required within areas of commercial conifer forestry for a 400 kV OHL is 90 m (i.e. 45 m either side of the centre line). Where the OC passes through areas of broadleaved woodland, it is proposed that the extent of woodland removal is likely to be reduced due to the lower height of the tree species present. The OC for the Proposed OHL Alignment through areas of broadleaved woodland has been reduced to 70 m (i.e. 35 m either side of the centre line of the OHL). This has been based on the likely height of the woodland at maturity. Where any woodland removal within the OC is proposed to be reduced from the 45 m either side of the line, a site-specific assessment must be carried out to confirm that the conductor blowout does not exceed the OC width. If the conductor blowout exceeds the OC, then the width of the OC must be increased to meet the requirements of the blowout assessment as a minimum. This will ensure compliance with ESQCR requirements and that the required safety clearances are maintained.
- 3.1.3 A resilient OC of 70 m in width is required throughout the broadleaved woodland within Woodland Parcels 3032 and 2150, taking into account the requirements of the conductor blowout assessment. The OC is illustrated in **Figure 12.1.112b: Parcel 3032 Proposed Felling Requirement and 12.1.114b: Parcel 2150 Proposed Felling Requirement**.

3.2 Access Track Route Design

- 3.2.1 The majority of the proposed access tracks in this section are located within the OC; however, another temporary track will also be created across agricultural ground to facilitate access.

4 Woodland Characteristics

4.1 Woodland Composition and Site Conditions

- 4.1.1 Woodland parcels 3032 and 2150 were surveyed in November 2024. Along the Burn of Gask the area in the OC is dominated by several large Beech (BE) trees and furthermore contains a variety of species such as Lime (LI), Sycamore (SYC), and Horse Chestnut (HC). On the north side of the A947 the OC intersects with several mature beech trees and a birch tree. On the banks of the Burn of Gask tree cover consists of low growing species such as Willow (WL).
- 4.1.2 The woodland sits within a landscape characterised by farmed and wooded river valleys. The surrounding land use is agricultural.
- 4.1.3 The woodlands are sheltered as a result of the terrain. The Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring (DAMS) score for the areas is 10³.
- 4.1.4 The National Soil Map of Scotland⁴ indicates the dominant soil types within the site are humus-iron podsol soils.

³ Forest Research (2025). Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

The Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring (DAMS) is a system used to assess wind exposure in forestry and land management. It provides a numerical score that quantifies the level of exposure a site experiences based on factors such as elevation, topography, and aspect (the direction a slope faces). The DAMS score helps foresters predict wind risk, which is crucial for understanding tree stability, growth potential, and the likelihood of windthrow (trees being uprooted or broken by wind). The scoring system ranges from 0 to 24, with higher scores indicating more exposure to wind.

⁴ Scottish Government (2024). Available at: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/soil-maps/national-soil-map-of-scotland/>

- 4.15 The Ecological Site Classification (ESC)⁵ identifies the site as having a warm, sheltered, and moist climate. The soils have a slightly dry moisture status and very poor nutrient status.
- 4.16 No environmental designations apply to this parcel.
- 4.17 The proposed section of OHL consists of a section of OC between towers BN5-15 and BN5-21. Another ownership is found between parcels 3032 and 2150 between towers BN5-19 and BN5-20. The proposed tracks within this section are either within the OC or out with woodland cover. Considering the landform the track at the Burn of Gask is in an unlikely location and access to the towers on either side of the burn could potentially be taken from either end.
- 4.18 There is no forest road infrastructure in the woodland. However, considering the quantity and type of trees hand felling and removal with small machinery, chipping, or leaving material on site would likely be most practical. The closest forest road suitable for haulage within the ownership is the A947 to the east of woodland parcel 2150. This is classed as an Agreed⁶ Route by the Timber Transport Forum⁷.

4.2 Photo Record – Operational Corridor Assessment

- 4.2.1 The following photographs provide a visual record of key locations along the OC. Each image illustrates existing vegetation types, land use, and notable landscape features relevant to the planning and management of the OC. Particular attention has been given to areas of mature woodland, natural regeneration, and locations where proposed works may intersect with ecologically or visually sensitive habitats. The photos are intended to support site assessments and inform mitigation strategies.

⁵ Ecological Site Classification. Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

⁶ Roads which can be used for timber haulage without restriction other than as regulated by the Road Traffic Act 1988. "A" roads (e.g. the A9) are classified as Agreed Routes by default unless covered by one of the other categories (e.g. Consultation Route).

⁷ The Timber Transport Forum. Introduction to Agreed Routes Map. Available at: <https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/agreed-routes-map/introduction-to-agreed-routes-map/>

Photo 1: Gully from adjacent agricultural land showing BE and other broadleaves (NJ 733641 468272, looking southwest)



Photo 2: SYC, LI, HC and other broadleaved trees and shrubs (NJ 733431 469061, looking south)



Photo 3: Large BE trees in western section of OC (NJ 733201 468816, looking southwest)



Photo 4: Large BE trees on the north side of the A947 (NJ 740582 477781, looking northwest)



Photo 5: BE tree strip along A947 from the north (NJ 740331 478433, looking west)



Photo 6: Strip of native riparian broadleaves along Burn of Turriff (NJ 740422 478902, looking northeast)



5 Windblow Risk

- 5.1.1 It is acknowledged that the creation of the OC would result in wider potential indirect effects on the surrounding woodland areas. These areas would be subject to potential increased risk of damage (windblow). Each woodland report identifies further areas of felling to a windfirm edge, defined as 'Management Felling' (categorised as an indirect secondary impact). This is covered in more detail in the Forestry Chapter in **Section 12.4**. Any felling undertaken out with the OC would be solely under the control of the relevant landowner (and not the Applicant). It is the intention of the Applicant to encourage the landowners to follow this good practice in terms of redesign of their current Long-Term Forest Plans, which in-turn would aim to follow UK Forestry Scheme UKFS⁸ for the implementation of the works required.
- 5.1.2 Considering the open grown nature of the trees and the sheltered nature of the site there is little risk of windblow as a result of the felling of the trees in the OC.

6 Woodland Management Impact

- 6.1.1 While tree felling within the OC will result in a slight reduction in the total area of woodland, this loss is marginal and should not significantly affect overall forest management or access at a larger scale.
- 6.1.2 The infrastructure built for this section of the OHL could provide a minor benefit to the landowner for future access to the trees. However, considering the woodland use, the adjacent agricultural use, and the terrain this is unlikely to be of significant value to the landowner. As part of construction works, dedicated crossing points and long-term access opportunities should be discussed with the landowner.
- 6.1.3 The Proposed OHL Alignment furthermore introduces an electrical hazard, but the constraint associated with the electrical hazard will be reduced by regular maintenance of the OC which will avoid the incidences of "Red Zone" trees (reference Forest Industry Safety Accord, FISA 804 "Electricity at Work: Forestry"⁹).
- 6.1.4 The total loss of broadleaved woodland resulting from the proposed alignment is 1.17 ha although non-native broadleaves are found within this area.

7 Mitigation Opportunities

7.1 Woodland Mitigation Measures

- 7.1.1 The OC has been reduced to 70m to minimise the impact on the woodland.

7.2 Restructuring

- 7.2.1 Considering the felling consists of a woodland of mixed age and species composition there will be limited impact on woodland structure.
- 7.2.2 The felling of the OC for the development will create new green edges to which the landowner can work to in the future. For this property this is unlikely to benefit the landowner.

7.3 Restocking

- 7.3.1 No management felling is proposed and therefore there will be no restock obligation on the landowner.

⁸ Scottish Forestry (2024). Available online at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/sustainable-forestry/uk-forestry-standard-ukfs> (accessed 01/05/2025)

⁹ Forest Industry Safety Accord (2020), FISA 804 Electricity at Work: Forestry. Available at: <https://ukfisa.com/Safety/Safety-Guides/fisa-804>

8 Net Effect / Summary

- 8.1.1 **Tables 8.1 to 8.4** outline the operational requirements for forestry management within the OC between towers BN5-15 and BN5-16 within this parcel. They detail the areas designated for clear felling, within the OC and forest design considerations.

Table 8.1: Woodland removal for Infrastructure, within OC.

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Operational corridor felling	Broadleaved Woodland (70 m)	1.17
Total area		1.17

Table 8.2: Compensatory Planting

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Compensatory Planting Area	Broadleaved Woodland	1.17
Total area		1.17

Table 8.3: Woodland Removal Impact of Infrastructure

Item	Area (ha)
Total Loss of Woodland Area	1.17
Total Compensatory Planting Area	1.17
Total Net Loss of Woodland Area	0.0

Table 8.4: Woodland removal for Management Felling, outwith OC.

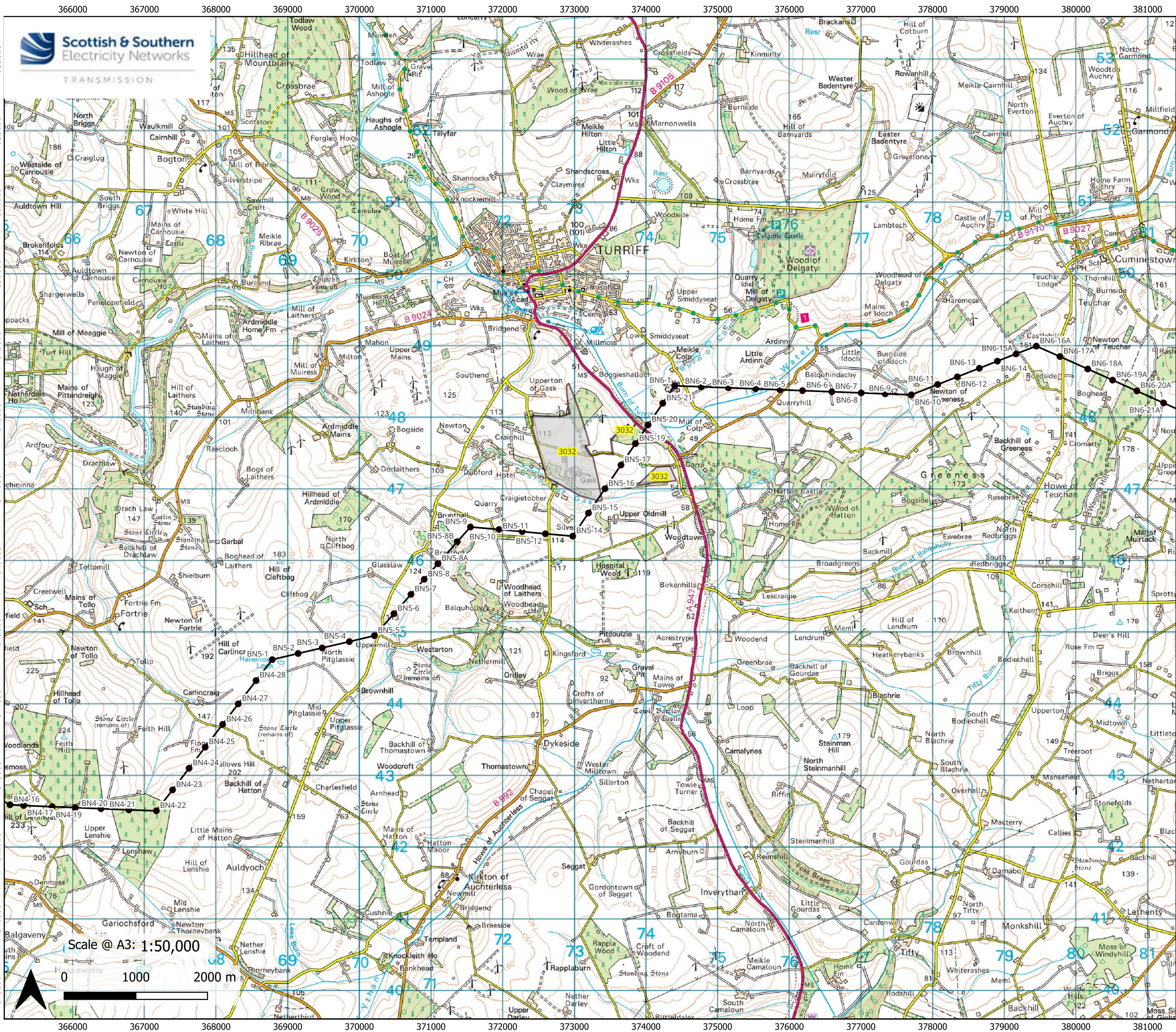
Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Management Felling		0.00
Replanting / Restocking Opportunities		0.00
Net Loss of Woodland Area		0.0

9 Compensatory Planting

- 9.1.1 Only areas directly impacted by the OC will be included in the compensatory planting total, in accordance with the Control of Woodland Removal Policy (CoWRP)¹⁰. This policy ensures that woodland loss due to development is mitigated by appropriate replanting or regeneration efforts, but it specifically applies to areas where tree removal is necessary for the project. See **Appendix 12.3 Compensatory Planting Management Strategy**.
- 9.1.2 Any additional felling outside the OC, such as areas cleared for windthrow management or forest design improvements, falls under the responsibility of the landowner, and is not included in the compensatory planting requirements. Instead, these areas may be replanted under a forest plan revision or felling license at the landowner's discretion. This approach aligns with national forestry guidelines, balancing infrastructure development with sustainable woodland management.
- 9.1.3 The total amount of net felling requiring compensation under the CoWRP is 1.17 ha.

¹⁰ Forestry Commission Scotland (2009). Control of Woodland Removal Policy. Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/285-the-scottish-government-s-policy-on-control-of-woodland-removal/viewdocument/285>

- 9.1.4 In order to provide a greater balance limiting long-term impacts on forestry interests it is proposed that the majority of this woodland loss is compensated via offsite compensatory planting within the same local authority area. It is proposed that full details of the areas subject to this offsite compensatory planting is notified to Scottish Forestry prior to energising the OHL.



Legend

- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- ▭ Landownership Boundary/Parcel

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Project:
Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title:
Figure 12.1.112a Parcel 3032 Location Map

Drawn by: LA



Legend

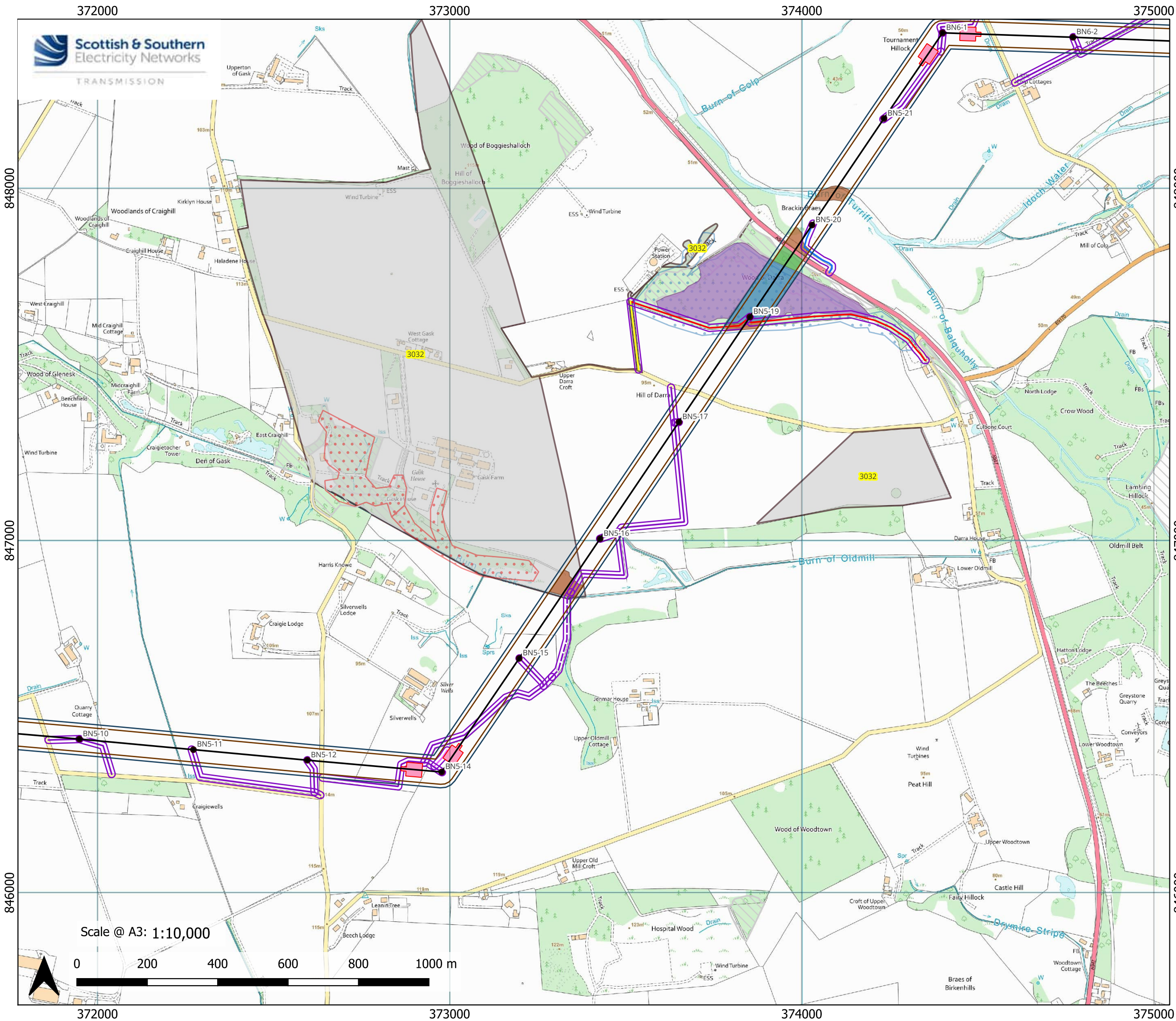
- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- ▭ Landownership Boundary/Parcel

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Project:
Beauly to Blackhilllock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title:
Figure 12.1.114a Parcel 2150 Location Map

Drawn by: LA



Legend

- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- Proposed Conductor Pulling Area (EPZ)
- 70m Operational Corridor - Broadleaved Woodland
- 90m Operational Corridor - Commercial Woodland
- Access Track 20m Buffer

Proposed Access Tracks

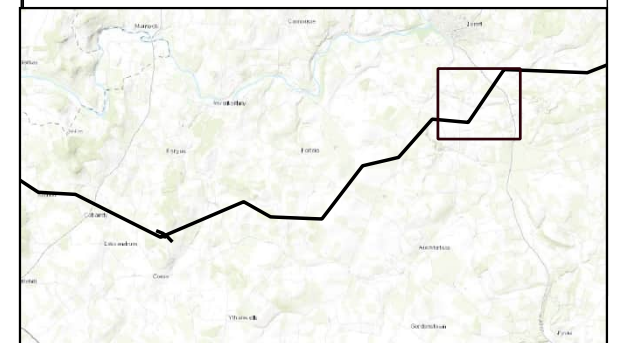
- Existing Access - Upgrade - Good/Fair Condition
- Existing Access - Upgrade - Very Poor Condition
- Proposed Access - ATV or Temporary Trackway
- Proposed Access - Permanent
- Proposed Access - Temporary
- Proposed Access - Temporary Floated

Proposed Felling Requirements

- Broadleaved Woodland Operational Corridor Felling
- Native Woodland Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Management Felling
- Native Woodland Survey Scotland (NWSS)

Ancient Woodland Inventory

- Ancient (of semi-natural origin)
- Long-Established (of plantation origin)
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel

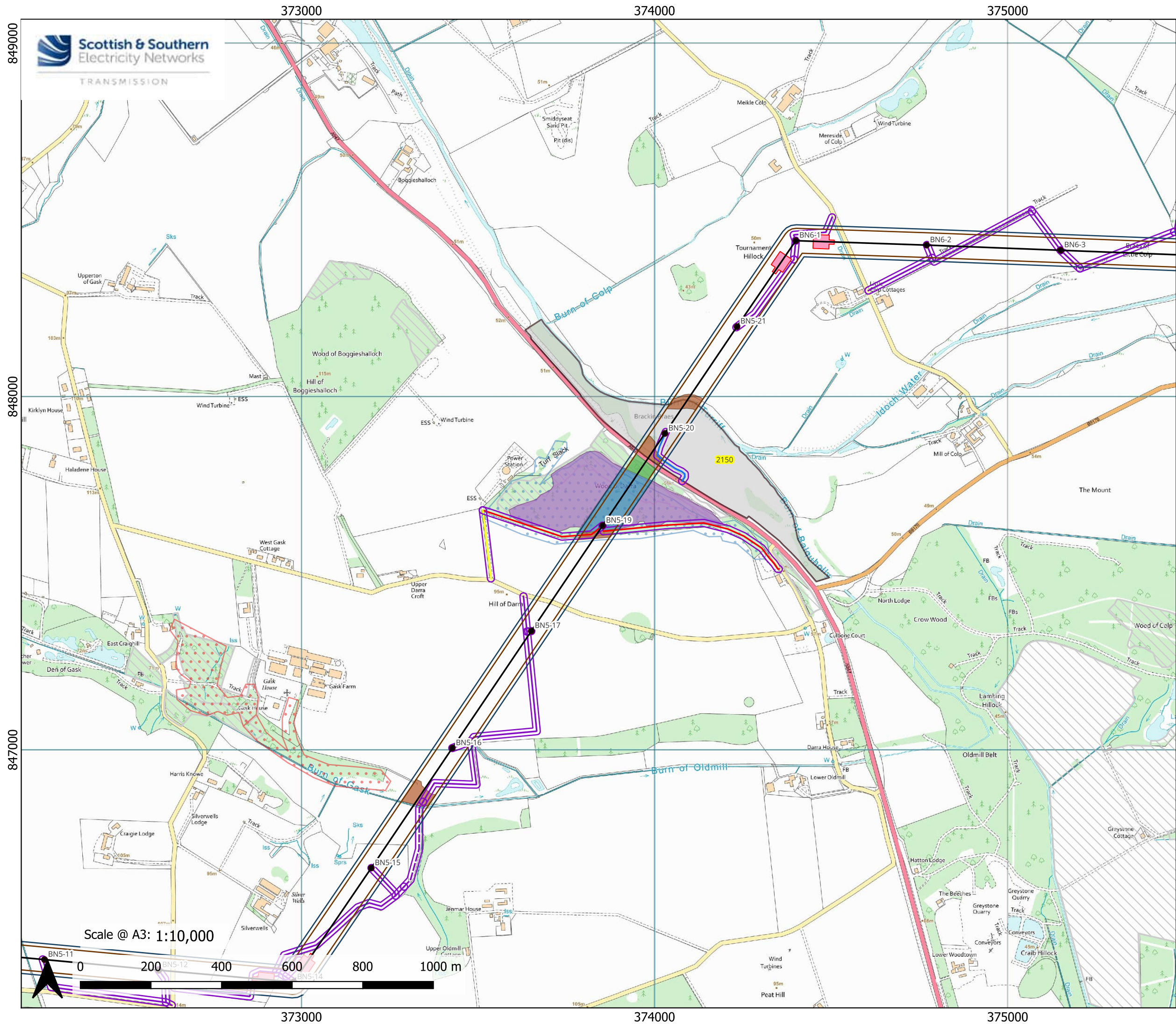


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Project:
Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title: **Figure 12.1.112b** Parcel 3032 Proposed
Felling Requirements

Drawn by: LA



Legend

- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- Proposed Conductor Pulling Area (EPZ)
- 70m Operational Corridor - Broadleaved Woodland
- 90m Operational Corridor - Commercial Woodland
- Access Track 20m Buffer

Proposed Access Tracks

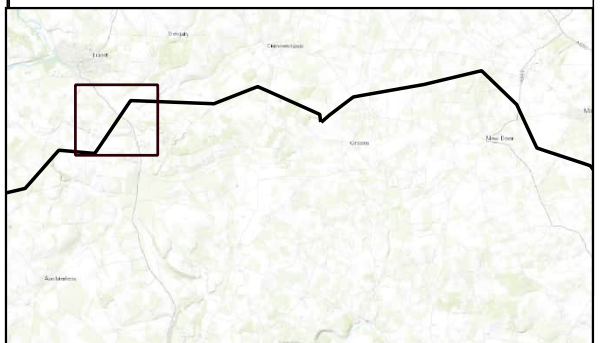
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- Existing Access - Upgrade - Very Poor Condition
- Proposed Access - ATV or Temporary Trackway
- Proposed Access - Permanent
- Proposed Access - Temporary
- Proposed Access - Temporary Floated

Proposed Felling Requirements

- Broadleaved Woodland Operational Corridor Felling
- Native Woodland Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Management Felling
- Native Woodland Survey Scotland (NWSS)

Ancient Woodland Inventory

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Project:
Beauy to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title: **Figure 12.1.114b** Parcel 2150 Proposed
Felling Requirements

Drawn by: LA