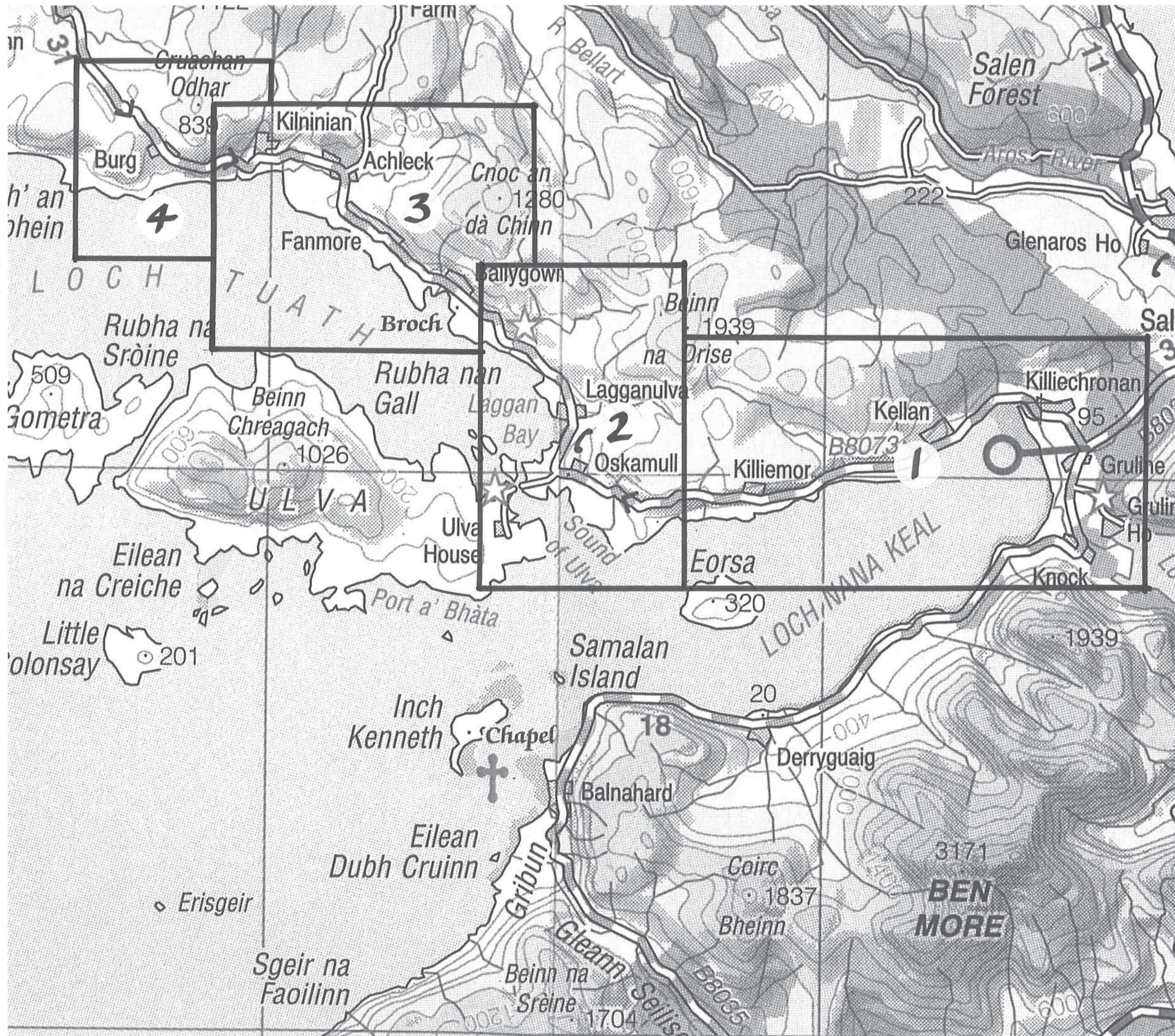


5 Loch na Keal NSA: Identifying Study Areas

Four main study areas were identified for Loch na Keal NSA:

- Inner Loch na Keal, which focuses on the inland reaches of the loch, where steep slopes give way to level land created by alluvial deposits
- Outer Loch na Keal, which focuses on the settlements overlooking Ulva and the scattered islands and skerries at the mouth of the loch
- Inner Loch Tuath, which focuses on the settlements along the inner northern shore of the loch
- Outer Loch Tuath, which focuses on the largely linear sporadic settlement at the very western end of the loch



Island of Mull
Loch na Keal NSA Study Areas

- 1** Inner Loch na Keal
- 2** Outer Loch na Keal
- 3** Inner Loch Tuath
- 4** Outer Loch Tuath

8 Inner Loch Tuach

This area extends northwards from the lowlying green headland of Kilbrennan to the wooded policies of Torloisk House.

The road loosely links the settlements, following the well defined change in gradient between the more level, lower lying and accessible land adjacent to the loch and the rugged slopes of the steeper land which enclose the loch to the north east. The land form alternates between alluvial deposit which has spilled out from the larger watercourses, rocky knolls and headlands and steep slopes punctuated by crags, steep ridges and terraces.

The vegetation reflects the landform, with some improved grassland located on more level and accessible land, while field boundaries on the more rugged terrain have generally fallen into disrepair. These more rugged slopes are dominated by semi natural vegetation, with sporadic drifts of native woodland extending across widespread grazing land and wetland.

Views from the road are consistently of high quality, experienced as a sequence of panoramas revealed at each crest and corner of its route. Extensive, spectacular views along the coast to the Treshnish Isles to the west, or to Ulva and Ben More to the south east dominate. Even when the road turns inland, the low lying relief of the land on the seaward side ensures that views of the sea are maintained.

Settlement is sporadic and broadly linear, very clearly related to those parts of the landscape which are both accessible and relatively cultivatable. While there is evidence of previous extensive enclosure within the landscape, possibly accompanied by greater inhabitation, housing is now generally limited to sheltered locations, set into woodland or back against rising ground.

Three strategic areas were identified in this area. The survey information and the opportunities and constraints for which have been mapped at 1: 25 000 scale on the following pages.

In addition, the settlement around Achleck was assessed at a more detailed level and the survey maps and opportunity and constraint maps have therefore been undertaken at 1:10 000 scale.

8.1 Inner Loch Tuath Strategy Areas

Three strategy areas were identified associated with Inner Loch Tuath. Each has its own distinctive landscape and visual character, and the settlement opportunities and constraints have been identified to maintain and enhance the existing character. The three areas are indicated on the survey map which follows and are called:

- Headlands and Bay
- Settled Slopes
- Gentle Wooded Slopes

8.1.1 Headlands and Bay

This less elevated and more sheltered stretch of road travels through managed and enclosed fields, particularly on the seaward side which extend over gently undulating terrain with only the occasional rocky outcrop. These more accessible land forms contrast with the steep slopes which rise evenly on the landward side of the road.

The improved grazing is enclosed by recent fencing which replaces dykes which have fallen into disrepair. Remnants of native woodland are associated with the watercourses, steeper slopes and wetter land.

Fine views from the road along the coast are rarely interrupted by the low lying landform, even where the extensive headlands occupy much of the foreground.

The association between settlement pattern and landscape structure is very clearly articulated, with the farm of Kilbrennan (also the site of a chapel) set within its most accessible fields, and the houses within the sporadic linear settlement at Lip na Cloiche located above the road and adjacent to a series of watercourses.

8.1.2 Settled Slopes

Rugged, undulating and terraced terrain on the landward side of the road contrasts with more gentle slopes extending down to the sea.

Rough grazing, bracken and scattered woodland dominate the vegetation but occasional small fields occupy more accessible, level terraces.

Extensive views from the road westwards along the coast offer fine panoramas to the distant Treshnish Isles and Tiree, providing an opportunity to appreciate the magnificent complexity of the seascape.

Settlement occupies the land ward side of the road, allowing uninterrupted views to be appreciated from the road. Houses are tucked back against rocky outcrops, often elevated above the road and hidden from immediate view by rising ground. They are located at the very edge of accessible fields and often sheltered from the north west by local landform and some woodland.

8.1.3 Gentle Wooded Slopes

The road curves significantly inland within this character area, reflecting the breadth of the substantial headland and more gentle slopes around Torloisk House.

On the seaward side of the road, occasional rocky outcrops and a prominent knoll break through lowlying undulating land, much of which is under unimproved grazing land and wetland. Inland from the road there is extensive woodland, some semi natural, but also fine policy woodland which, surrounded by stone walls, reinforces the distinctly managed character of this landscape.


Despite the relatively inland location of the road, the low lying relief still allows extensive views out to the distant sea. The focus within the landscape is however, largely on the detailed diversity of woodland, small grass fields, unimproved grassland and built features, which contribute to the overall unity provided by the 'estate policies' character.


Existing settlement occupies two distinct sites: the estate houses and buildings within the sheltered woodland and contained by the stone walls, and the community of Achleck, located at the junction between the B8073 and the minor road to Diabeg.

Achleck is the focus of a more detailed study at 1: 10 000 scale.

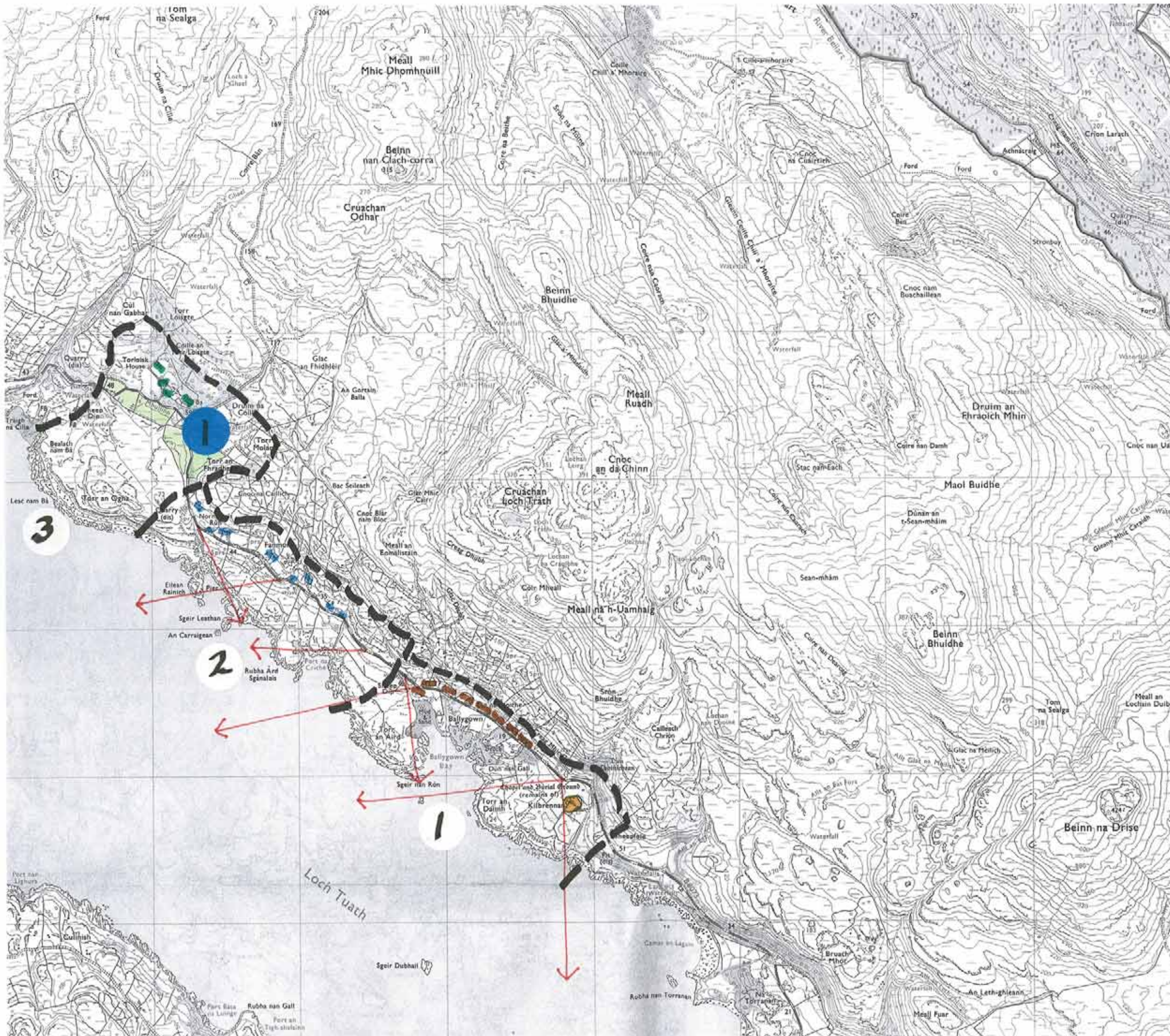
Island of Mull
Inner Loch Tuath Strategy Areas
Site Analysis and Observations

- Strategy Areas:**
- 1** Headlands and Bay
 -  Kilbrennan
 -  Sporadic linear settlement
 - 2** Settled Slopes
 -  Existing broadly linear settlement pattern of houses set back against rocky outcrops
 - 3** Gentle Wooded Slopes
 -  Buildings discreetly hidden in sheltered woodlands
 -  Small grass fields adjacent to the road

- Key Views from Public Road**
-  Panoramic views across the NSA from the crests and corners along this winding road

-  Areas assessed in detail and included in this report at 1:10 000 scale

1 Achleck



Island of Mull
Inner Loch Tuath Strategy Areas
Landscape Opportunities and Constraints

 Strategy Areas

 Headlands and Bay

Development opportunities are limited to carefully sited houses on the level platforms located on the landward side of the road, which would reinforce the existing broadly linear settlement pattern. New building should respect the scale of existing buildings, to maintain the unity of the settlement

Individual garden areas should be defined by post and wire fencing, with traditional stone walls along the roadside frontage.

There may be additional opportunities to build on the focal point created by the farm at Kilbrennan. New building here should retain the strong relationship between the existing buildings and the rocky knoll.

No development should be located on the seaward side of the road, to retain the uninterrupted views and maintain the integrity of the improved pastureland.

2 Settled Slopes

Occasional opportunities for new development are located on level ground along the higher terraces, where buildings could be sited back against the rocky outcrops and to the north of small grass fields, where they would be largely invisible from the road but gain fine views.

No development should be located on the seaward side of the road, to retain the uninterrupted views and maintain the integrity of the improved pastureland.

3 Gentle Wooded Slopes

There may be opportunities for further development within the woodland associated with Torloisk, but no detailed assessment of the woodland was made on this site visit

No development should be located on the seaward side of the road, to retain the uninterrupted views and maintain the integrity of the improved pastureland.

The settlement around Achleck is analysed at 1: 10 000 scale.



8.2 Achleck

This loose cluster of buildings is generally associated with the junction between the B7083 and the minor road to Diabeg.

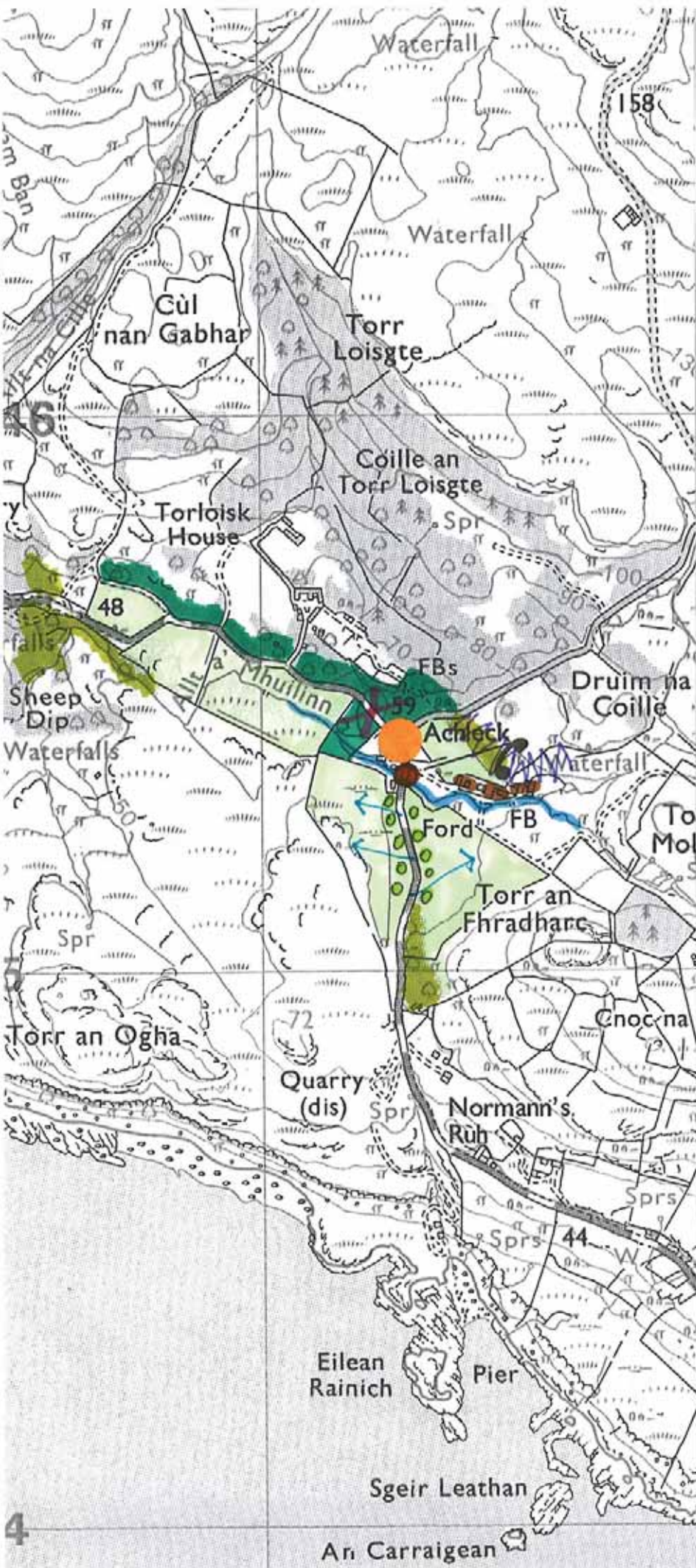
Key Characteristics

- The junction provides a focal point for settlement
- The woodland to the west of the junction, which is surrounded by a high stone wall, provides a clear sense of gateway to the west
- On approach from the south and east along the B7083, the bridge over the watercourse creates a sense of arrival
- The existing buildings are loosely scattered, taking advantage of the shelter of the woodlands and level terrain
- The settlement is surrounded by well grazed and enclosed fields on level land, and woodland associated with steeper slopes and watercourses

General Guidance



- The key aim should be to consolidate the association between new development and sheltered sites associated with the junction
- New building should avoid extending into surrounding woodland, which forms clearly defined boundaries for the settlement, reinforcing the sense of arrival on approach
- The settlement should not extend south of the bridge and watercourse associated with the B7083, nor north of the distinctive wooded slope of land adjacent to the minor road, nor west into the policy woodland which creates a sense of 'gateway' on arrival from the west.
- New building should be orientated southwards, taking advantage of solar gain
- Development should avoid more exposed locations, and take advantage of sheltered sites

- Land associated with new housing should allow space for outbuildings, which are commonplace features creating clusters of buildings associated with each site
- Boundaries should be of stone or post and wire fencing: urban style detailing should be avoided




Island of Mull
Achleck
Site Analysis and Observations




Settlement Pattern

-  The junction provides a focal point for the settlement
-  Linear pattern of several buildings associated with the watercourse




Land Use

-  Improved grassland fields
-  Semi natural woodland
-  Policy woodland associated with nearby Torloisk House and grounds

Landscape Survey

-  Watercourse
-  Bridge
-  Steeper slopes provide containment to the north

Views/Approach

-  Views across the fields and open land contrast with the enclosed and sheltered character of the immediate surroundings of the settlement
-  Avenue of trees reinforces approach which culminates in crossing the bridge
-  Sense of 'gateway' created by the policy woodland and associated stone walls

Island of Mull
Achleck

Landscape Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities



Opportunity for development within these enclosed fields, which are relatively sheltered and well contained and will reinforce the sense of settlement and its location at the road junction.

Housing sites should be generous, to avoid buildings being crammed onto small plots ensure generous southerly aspects, and to allow for possible clusters of outbuildings, which are typical of many of the houses in this area

Stone walls should be established along the roadside, to help unify the settlement

Constraints



Development here is constrained by the fine character of the woodland, and its role as a 'gateway' to the settlement, which would be compromised if development was located in the woodland



Development should not extend south of this watercourse, as the bridge creates a clear sense of arrival, and the watercourse offers a robust settlement edge



Development should not extend north of the steep wooded slope which forms a robust and well defined potential settlement edge to the north: any development north of this will appear detached from the main settlement focus

