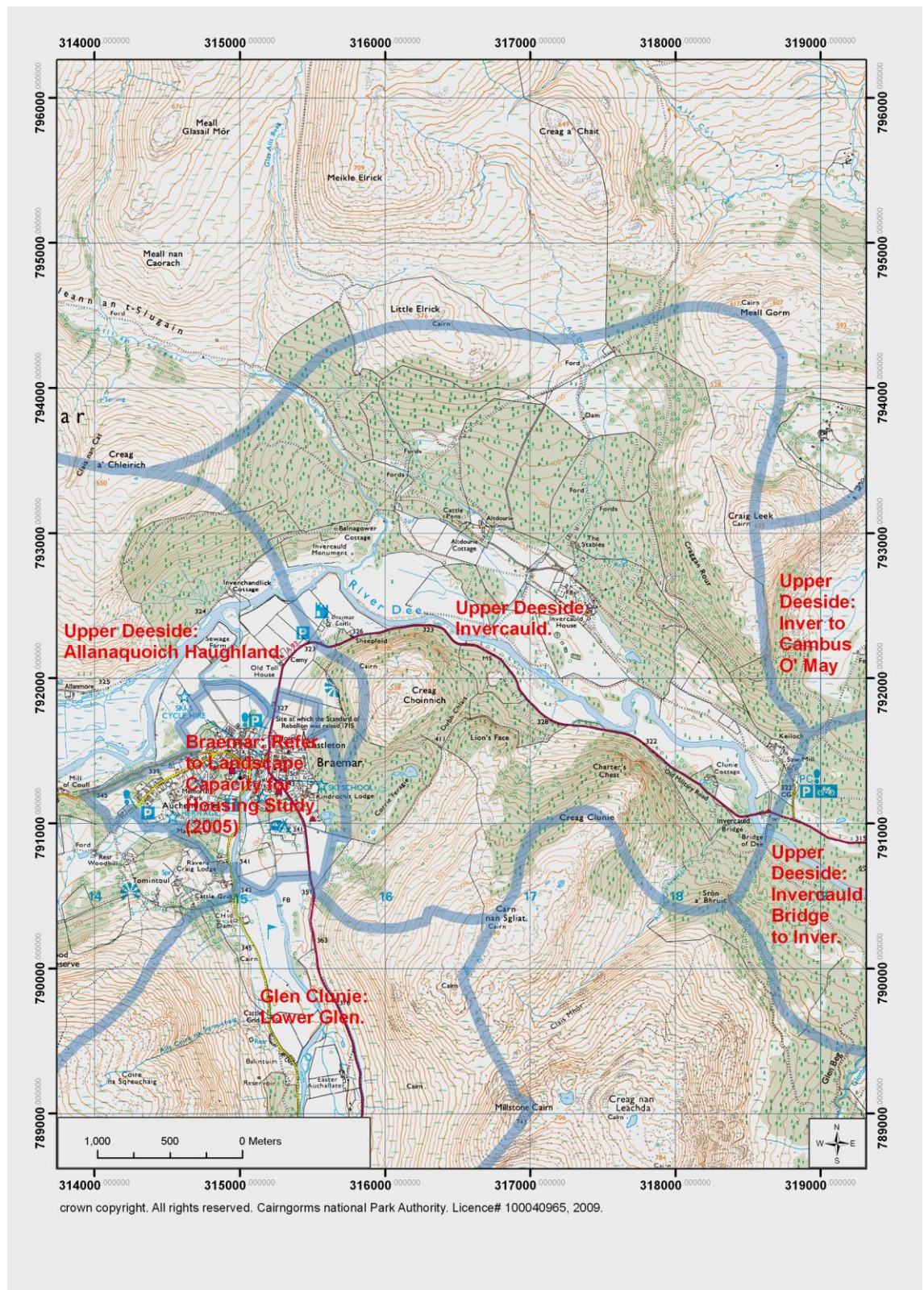


I.1 Upper Deeside: Invercauld



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

The valley of the Dee swings round the small, craggy-topped conical quartzite hill of Creag Choinnich, a prominent feature at the junction between Glen Clunie and Deeside, to orientate northwest/south east

Upper hillsides of exposed rock, particularly on the south side where there are large truncated spurs, were steepened and roughened by glacier activity

Glaciers moving down Glen Clunie and converging with those along the Dee crowded towards the 'pinch point' of erosion through a resistant rock bar near Invercauld bridge. This resulted in major glacial erosion, forming cliffs and crags and the Dubh Clais mlt water channel in the granite on the southern flank of the valley

These steep rock slopes contain the wide valley, with extensive glacial-fluvial deposits along the edges of the floodplain and forming a strong pattern of hummocks and terraces on the valley floor

The River Dee meanders sluggishly across the gently undulating broad floodplain and is edged by snaking gravel banks

This is an extensively forested area with a mix of managed conifer woodland and more naturalistic native pine woodland on the hill sides

18th century Invercauld House, refashioned in the Victorian period, is set on a broad terrace above the Dee

The house is a key focus in the extensive designed landscape, developed after the Jacobite rising. It overlooks parkland of informal clump and roundel plantings of larch, beech and occasional specimen trees, generally planted on small knolls and terraces

A number of follies and monuments form part of this designed landscape. Natural features such as the 'Lion's Face', a craggy rock face to the south of the A93, have been accentuated by planting of larch and pine to form an 'eyecatcher' in views

The largely 17th century Braemar Castle is sited on a knoll close to the A93 and enclosed by trees. Its medieval site is located at the focal point between Glen Clunie and Deeside

The A93 hugs the foot of steep hill slopes south of the Dee. Its sinuous route passes through an alternating sequence of woodland and open space, revealing views of Invercauld House and its designed landscape

An extensive network of estate tracks provides access for walkers and cyclists in this area

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

From the A93, there are views of Invercauld House seen across a foreground of extensive parkland and contained by a backdrop of native and managed pinewood

The openness of this landscape character area contrasts with the narrowing of the valley and dense woodland to the east

Invercauld bridge, where the valley narrows to a 'pinch point', is a well defined threshold between two character areas along the Dee

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This area is fairly self-contained although some inter-visibility occurs with the settlement of Braemar and the Allanaquoich Haughlands where the landscape is more open in the west.

The openness of this area contrasts with dense woodland to the east, and the parkland contrasts with the more naturalistic wetlands to the west.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

Invercauld House and its policies make a highly visible contribution to the wider character of Upper Deeside where designed landscape and late Victorian architecture is a distinctive feature. Here, the rich combination of parkland and built features is enhanced by the backdrop of native and managed pinewoods on hill slopes which contain the valley.



Invercauld policies seen from Creag Choinnich



Parkland backed by the sheer wooded craggy hills which enclose the designed landscape to the south



The floodplain with planting on glacial-fluvial hummocks in the middle ground of this photograph



Invercauld House and its designed landscape are prominent in views from the A93