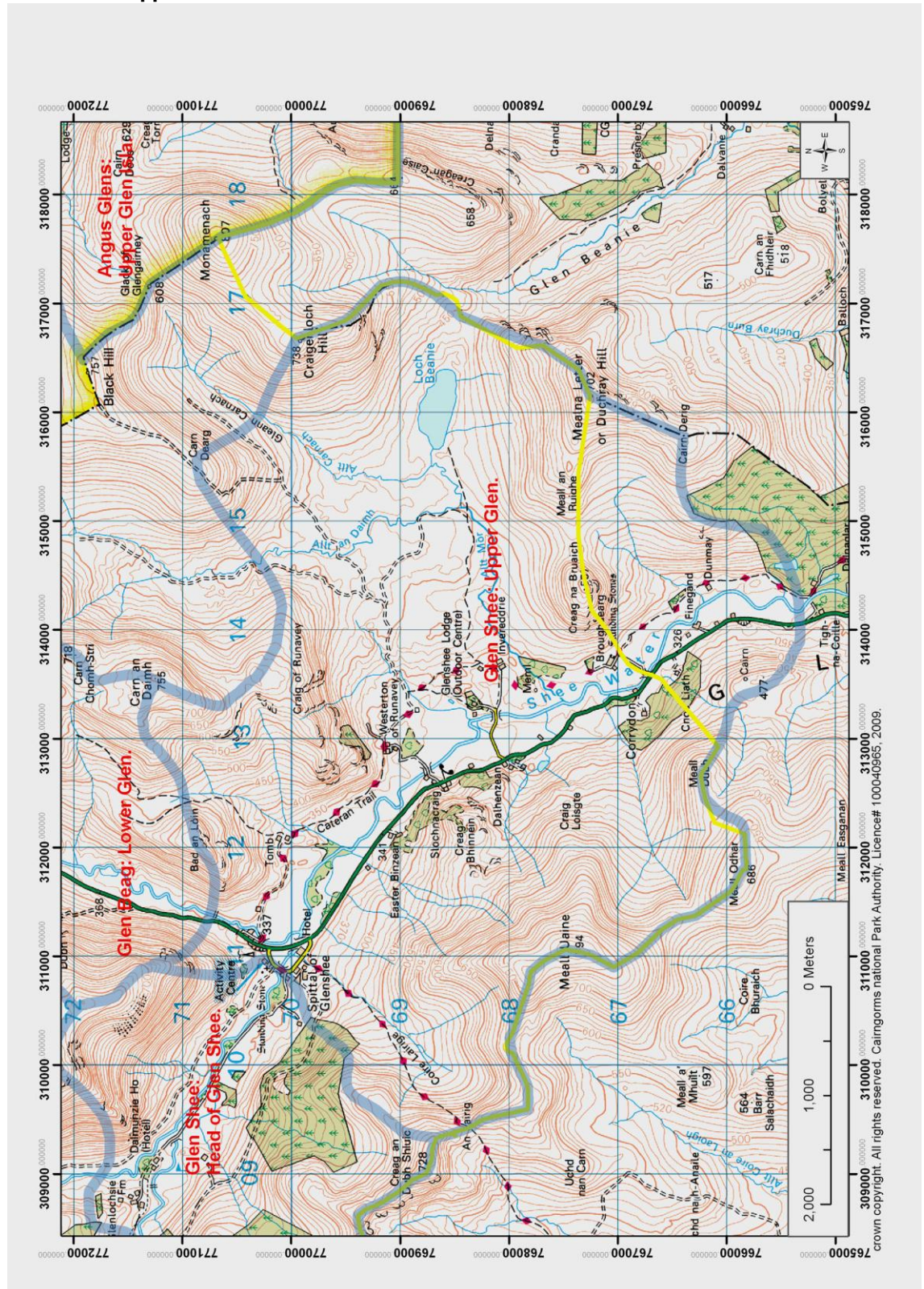


Glen Shee: Upper Glen



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

Steep sided upper slopes, often with rocky outcrops with forms that reflect the changing lithology and structure of the bedrock, rise to distinct summits

Lower slopes are typified by more complex terrain of varied gradients, terraces, hummocks and subtle ridges where glacial deposits often mask the bedrock

Level stretches of floodplain alternate with well drained gravelly hummocks, ridges and terraces in glacial-fluvial deposits which extend along the edges of the wide glen floor

The Shee Water meanders in wide loops across the width of the glen floor, sometimes through extensive areas of rushy wetland

The upper slopes are covered with actively burned heather moor

18th/19th century improved fields, now containing improved grassland, are shaped to fit around the steep-sided hummocks where unimproved grassland and occasional mature birch woodland provide a textural contrast

The glen is diversely wooded, including riparian woodland, 'wood pasture' on hummocks, birch along the lower side slopes and occasional conifer woodland associated with individual settlements or established as shelter woods

The fields, some of which are walled, extend onto more accessible, gentle gradients up the sides of the glen, to a 'head dyke' which largely follows the boundary between glacial deposit and revealed bedrock

There is evidence that this area has been continuously settled for millennia and there are extensive remains of former, pre-improvement buildings and fields particularly along the lower slopes above the improved glen floor, although they are not widely visible

Evenly and frequently distributed 18th/19th century farmsteads, located on the drier ground at the very edge of the glen floor, appear to be located on the sites of long-established settlements

The Spittal of Glenshee is a focal settlement, located at the conjunction of three glens, with diverse architectural styles in part reflecting its role as a seasonal skiing base

The road sits on higher ground, hugging the break in slope and following the dips and crests of the terrain along the western edge of the glen

While there are several tracks – possibly used largely for sporting access – into the hills, the main public access is the Cateran Trail, a long distance walk which extends along the length of the glen

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

The glen appears to be well wooded, as from many viewpoints the individual areas of woods and mature trees visually merge to create a continuous mass of trees

The wide glen floor, subdivided by small scale hummocks, woodland and fields, contrasts with the larger scale of the hills

From the elevated road, there are good views across the glen floor, and the side slopes frame views to the prominent summit of Ben Gulabin when travelling north

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

The glen is largely self-contained, with little inter-relationship with other areas, although the Spittal forms a threshold settlement to the Head of Glen Shee and Glen Beag.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

The complex topography, varied woodland and small fields on the glen floor contrasts with the rugged, heather clad mountain slopes and summits. The settlement pattern appears to be little changed from the early 19th century farmstead distribution and architecture.



Small 19th century farms against the edges of the glen floor



A ridge of glacial-fluvial deposit with associated 'wood pasture' type grazing



Riparian woodland, and the faint outline of turf dykes



A variety of woodland – from open stands of birch to commercial conifer woodland