

5.25 MAP SHEET NB 30 49/NB 35 53, ARNOL TO BARVAS

5.25.1 Overview of cultural heritage

5.25.1.1 Number of monuments

Scheduled	- 0	
Recorded in the NMRS	- 7	[NB35SW 12, NB35SW 09, NB35SW 11, NB35SW 05, NB35SW 06, NB35SW 04, NB35SW 03]
Others	- 82	
Total	- 89	

5.25.1.2 Number of site state occurrences

Eroding (A)	- 47
Eroding/stable (B)	- 3
Stable (C)	- 39

5.25.1.3 Number of response occurrences

Nil	- 30
Monitor, (Baseline survey)	- 58
Detailed survey	- 31
Sample	- 3
Excavate	- 29

5.25.2 Description of cultural heritage

This map sheet covers the townships of Arnol, Bru and Barvas and is characterised by beaches with shingle banks, and the machair system to the west of Barvas. The majority of the sites are believed to be prehistoric in origin and are found in the Barvas Machair. While most of this machair system falls outwith the remit of this survey not being on the eroding edge or within 150 metres of the eroding edge, it suffers heavy aeolian erosion.

In general the monuments in this machair area can be split into two areas separated by the Handay River. On the north facing slopes of Cnoc Mor to the south of the river is a complex field system with rectilinear fields that overly the fragments of a curvilinear field system. At the centre of this field system is a rectilinear structure. It has been suggested that this settlement may date to the Norse period (pers. comm. M McLoed 1996) but equally it may date to the medieval or post-medieval period.

To the north of Handay River are more fragmentary and confused remains appearing in irregular sand blows. On the basis of artefacts recovered several of these features may be Bronze Age in date. Sites in this system include cellular complexes (NB 3500 5162), stone alignments that form field

systems (NB 3502 5174 and NB 3503 5185) and burials in the form of cairns (NB 3500 5162 and NB 3496 5168) and cists (NB 3491 5171 and NB35SW 04). Aceramic shell middens (NB 3488 5170, NB 3503 5185 and NB 3491 5188) have also been noted at lower levels in the machair but the dates of these deposits are not clear. The detailed survey and sampling of this complex of monuments would vastly improve our understanding these sites. At present it is believed that this group of monuments represents one of the largest conglomerations of prehistoric sites on the Isle of Lewis.

Other sites of interest on this map sheet include the man made island in Loch Arnol (NB 3014 4902) and the settlement of old Arnol (NB 3026 4937). A promontory enclosure (NB 3124 5005) of between 1 and 2 hectares at Geodha Mhaoir lies immediately to the north of Arnol alongside prehistoric cairns (NB 3134 5025 and NB 3134 5034). Two possible CARHs have also been recorded, the first immediately north of Arnol (NB 3138 5031) is barely visible above ground level, and is a circular stone enclosure of monumental construction measuring *circa* 10.0 metres in diameter. The configuration of the remains suggest that this site could be a CARH or a large Bronze Age cellular site of similar form to those seen at Guinnerso. The second CARH is recorded as being a possible cairn. It is located to the north of Bru (NB 3378 5085) on the shingle bar between Loch Mor Barvas and the sea and without more detailed survey and stone removal it would be impossible to say what the exact form of the site is.

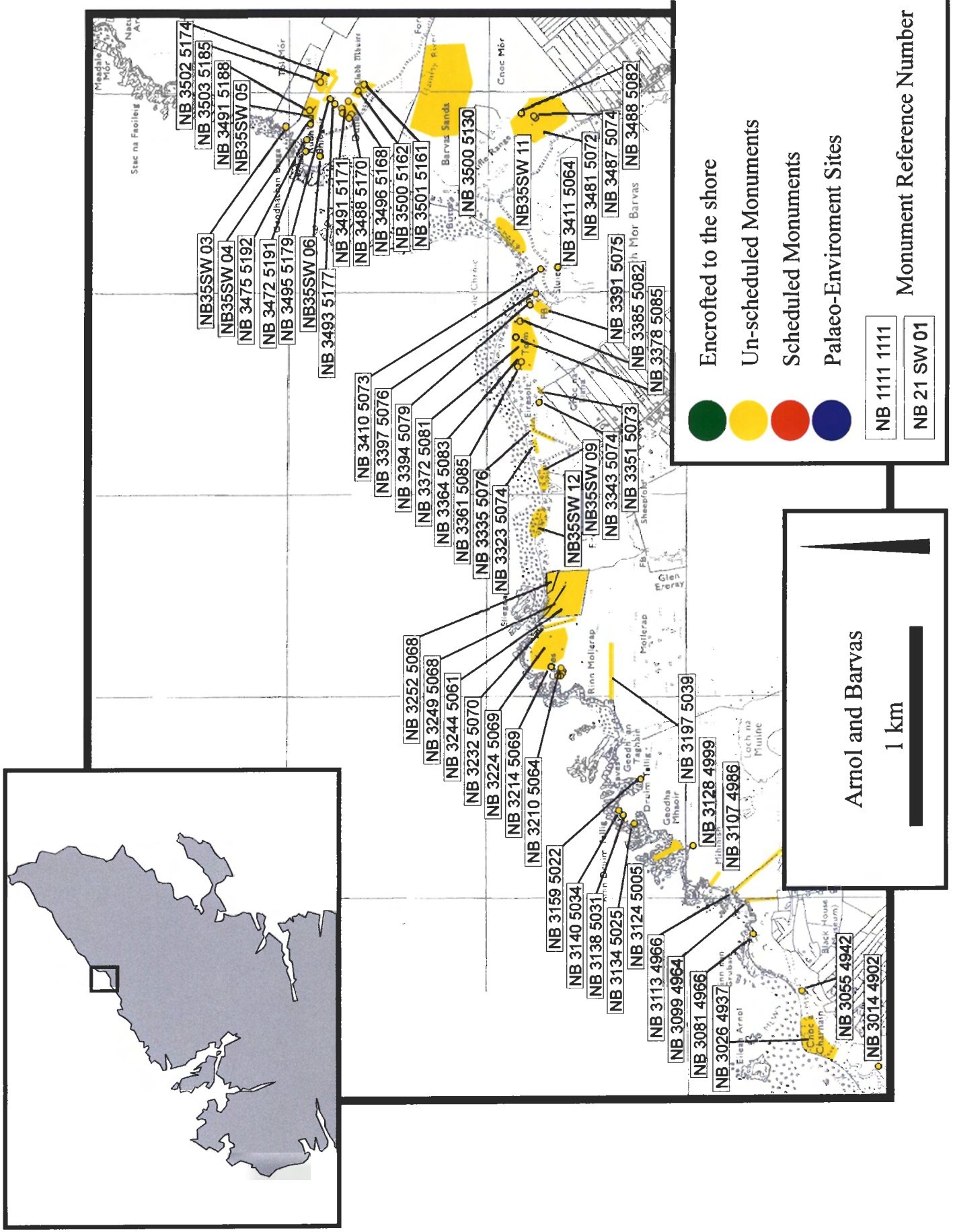
Finally two cellular complexes can be seen on the cliffs to the north-west of Bru (NB 3210 5064 and NB 3214 5069) at present both of these complexes are stable such that no erosional damage is occurring and no dating evidence (in the form of artefacts) has been gathered. As with any other monument of this type, elsewhere on the island, little or no information is known about the dating of such sites and only a programme of sampling and research will start to help alleviate this problem.

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5.25.3 Gazetteer of cultural heritage

Label	Locale	Structural elements	Artefact Elements	Matrix State	Site State	Period	Recommended action
NB 3014 4902	Loch Arnol	Man made island		C	C	Prehistoric	Monitor (?)
NB 3026 4937	Arnol	Settlement (old Arnol)	Midden, Kitchen	A	A	Multi-phase	Monitor, sample (?)
NB 3055 4942	Arnol	Enclosure, Habitational, Curvilinear, Turf and stone		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3081 4966	Arnol	Enclosure, Habitational, Curvilinear, Drystone		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3099 4964	Arnol	Dyke, Stone and Turf		C	C	Post Medieval	Nil
4NB 3113 4966	Arnol	Dyke, Stone and Turf		C	C	Post Medieval	Nil
NB 3107 4986	Arnol	Dyke		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3128 4999	Arnol	Dyke, Stone and Turf		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3124 5005	Arnol	Promontory Enclosure		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey
NB 3134 5025	Arnol	Cairn		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor
NB 3138 5031	Arnol	CARH (possible)		A	C	Iron age	Monitor
NB 3140 5034	Arnol	Cairn		A	C	Prehistoric	Monitor
NB 3159 5022	Arnol	Dyke, Turf		A	A	Unknown	Monitor
NB 3197 5039	Bru	Dyke, Turf, promontory enclosure		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor
NB 3210 5064a	Bru	Cairn		A	C	Unknown	Monitor
NB 3210 5064b	Bru	Cairn		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3210 5064c	Bru	Cairn		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3210 5064d	Bru	Cairn		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3210 5064e	Bru	Cairn		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3210 5064f	Bru	Cellular Complex		C	C	Prehistoric	Monitor
NB 3214 5069	Bru	Cellular Complex		A	C	Unknown	Monitor
NB 3224 5069	Bru	Cultivation, Rigging		A	A	Pre Clearance	Monitor
NB 3232 5070	Bru	Dyke, Stone and Turf		A	A	Unknown	Monitor
NB 3244 5061	Bru	Cultivation, Rigging		A	A	Pre Clearance	Monitor
NB 3249 5068	Bru	Dyke, Turf		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor
NB 3252 5068	Bru	Dyke, Stone and Turf		A	A	Post Medieval	Monitor
NB35SW 12	Bru	Enclosure		A	A	Unknown	Monitor
NB35SW 09	Bru	Farm Stead		A	A	Post Medieval	Monitor
NB 3323 5074	Bru	Dyke, Stone and Turf		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3335 5076	Bru	Path/Road		C	C	Post Medieval	Nil
NB 3343 5074	Bru	Stone Alignment		C	C	Pre Clearance	Nil
NB 3351 5073	Bru	Dyke, Drystone		C	C	Post Medieval	Nil
NB 3361 5085	Bru	Cairn, rectangular		C	C	Unknown	Nil

**COASTAL EROSION ASSESSMENT (LEWIS)
MAP SHEET NB 30 49/NB 35 53**



COASTAL EROSION ASSESSMENT (LEWIS)

NB 3364 5083	Bru	Enclosure, Rectilinear, Stone and earth core		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3372 5081	Bru	Cultivation, Rigging		C	C	Pre Clearance	Nil
NB 3378 5085	Bru	Cairn, possible CARH		C	C	Prehistoric	Monitor
NB 3385 5082a	Bru	Enclosure, Curvilinear, Turf and stone		C	C	Prehistoric	Monitor
NB 3385 5082b	Bru	Dyke, Stone and Turf		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3391 5075a	Bru	Dyke, Stone and Turf		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3391 5075b	Bru	Enclosure, Curvilinear, Drystone		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3394 5079a	Bru	Cairn		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3394 5079b	Bru	Enclosure, Habitational, Rectilinear, Turf and stone		C	C	Unknown	Monitor
NB 3397 5076	Bru	Marine industry features		C	C	Modern	Nil
NB 3410 5073	Bru	Marine industry features		C	C	Modern	Nil
NB35SW 11	Bru	Field System		A	A	Unknown	Monitor, survey
NB 3411 5064	Bru	Cairn		A	A	Unknown	Monitor
NB 3488 5082	Barvas	Enclosure, Rectilinear, Drystone		A	A	Unknown	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3487 5074a	Barvas	Enclosure, Habitational, Rectilinear, Drystone		A	A	Medieval	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3487 5074b	Barvas	Cairn		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, excavate (?)
NB 3500 5130	Barvas	Field system		A	A	Norse?	Monitor, survey, Excavate (?)
NB 3481 5072	Barvas	Cultivation, Rigging		A	A	Pre Clearance	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3501 5161	Barvas	Enclosure, Habitational, Rectilinear, Drystone		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3500 5162a	Barvas	Cellular Complex		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3500 5162b	Barvas	Burial Cairn		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3496 5168	Barvas	Burial Cairn		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3491 5171a	Barvas	Burial Cist	Stone (Chipped)	A	A	Neolithic	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3491 5171b	Barvas		Stone (Chipped)	A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)

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NB 3488 5170a	Barvas		Midden, Shell	A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3488 5170b	Barvas	Stone Alignment		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3488 5170c	Barvas	Settlement Mound	Midden, Shell	A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3502 5174a	Barvas	Stone Alignment		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3502 5174b	Barvas	Stone Alignment		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3503 5185a	Barvas	Enclosure, Rectilinear, Drystone		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3503 5185b	Barvas	Stone Alignment		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3503 5185c	Barvas		Midden, Shell	A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3503 5185d	Barvas	Enclosure, Rectilinear, Drystone		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3493 5177	Barvas	Stone Alignment		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3491 5188a	Barvas	Enclosure, Habitational, Curvilinear, Drystone		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3491 5188b	Barvas	Stone Alignment		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3491 5188c	Barvas	Stone Alignment		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3491 5188d	Barvas	Enclosure, Rectilinear, Drystone		A	A	Unknown	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB35SW 05	Barvas		Slag, Chipped stone (arrowheads, scrapers)	A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, sample
NB 3491 5188e	Barvas		Midden, Shell	A	A	Unknown	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3491 5188f	Barvas	Cellular Complex		A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB35SW 06	Barvas	Burial	Bone, Human	A	A	Unknown	Monitor
NB 3472 5191	Barvas	Stone Alignment	Midden, Shell	A	A	Unknown	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB 3475 5192	Barvas	Enclosure, Rectilinear, Drystone		A	A	Unknown	Monitor, survey, excavate (?)
NB35SW 04	Barvas	Burial Cist	Bone, Human	A	A	Bronze Age	Monitor

COASTAL EROSION ASSESSMENT (LEWIS)

NB35SW 03	Barvas		Midden, Kitchen	F	B	Unknown	Monitor, sample
NB 3492 5230a	Geodhachan Beaga	Dyke, Turf		B	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3492 5230b	Geodhachan Beaga	Stone Alignment		C	C	Unknown	Nil
NB 3500 5248	Geodhachan Beaga	Cellular Complex	Midden	A	A	Prehistoric	Monitor, survey (?)
NB 3506 5263	Geodhachan Beaga	Cairn, clearance		B	C	Post Medieval	Nil
NB 3524 5287	Meadale Mor	Field system		B	C	Post Medieval	Nil
NB 3512 5273	Meadale Mor	Cairn, burial (possible)		B	B	Unknown	Monitor (?)
NB 3519 5282	Meadale Mor	Cairn, clearance		B	B	Unknown	Nil
NB 3536 5291a	Meadale Mor	Enclosure, Rectilinear, Drystone		C	C	Post Medieval	Nil
NB 3536 5291b	Meadale Mor	Enclosure, Habitational, Rectilinear, Drystone		C	C	Post Medieval	Nil

5.25.4 Overview of erosion

This section can be split into four zones of general erosion zones including;

- the eroding north-eastern half of Port Arnol sand and shingle beach (NB 193)
- the generally eroding incised cliff line from Arnol to Loch Ereray (NB 194 to NB 195)
- the eroding machair of Barvas (NB 196 to NB 199)
- the eroding/stable incised cliff from Barvas to Meadale Mor (NB 200)

The first zone represents the continuation of Port Arnol (see description in section 4.2.16). The second zone returns to incised cliff which at the time of inspection seemed to not display as many signs of active erosion as the incised cliff lines from the preceding map sheets in the linear stretch of cliffs of north-west Lewis. However, the resulting stacks and promontories have again been used for past settlement, in the form of a few promontory enclosures (e.g. NB 3124 5005), which deserve regular monitoring.

The next zone represents the sand and machair extent of Barvas. This is the largest expanse of machair in Lewis, and has been the subject of past erosion assessment with work by the University of Aberdeen (Ritchie and Mather 1970, Harris and Ritchie 1989), assessment and excavations by Cowie (Cowie 1994, Cowie et al. forth.) and the recent survey by Ramsay and Brampton (1995). All the assessments noted two erosion regimes; the sand and shingle ridge at the coast experiencing some erosion and overwash (especially at Loch Eresay) but in general relatively stable, and the severely eroding machair and dune system behind the coastal edge. This erosion is not caused by direct marine action, but instead stems from severe wind deflation which has produced extensive and widespread blowouts which contain many archaeological sites of prehistoric and unknown age. The wind deflation itself is exacerbated, and in some places initiated, by the land use in the machair, including sand extraction in the dune systems to the north, heavy rabbit and sheep grazing and cultivation practises in certain areas (e.g. to the north of Lower Barvas). Hence, Barvas machair not only deserves regular monitoring but also seems to deserve a more direct management strategy, involving not only the detailed recording and characterisation of the archaeology but also the development of a more long term environmental strategy to attempt to halt, or at least attempt to control the erosion. However, as Harris and Ritchie highlighted (1989, p6) this will be very expensive and difficult to achieve.

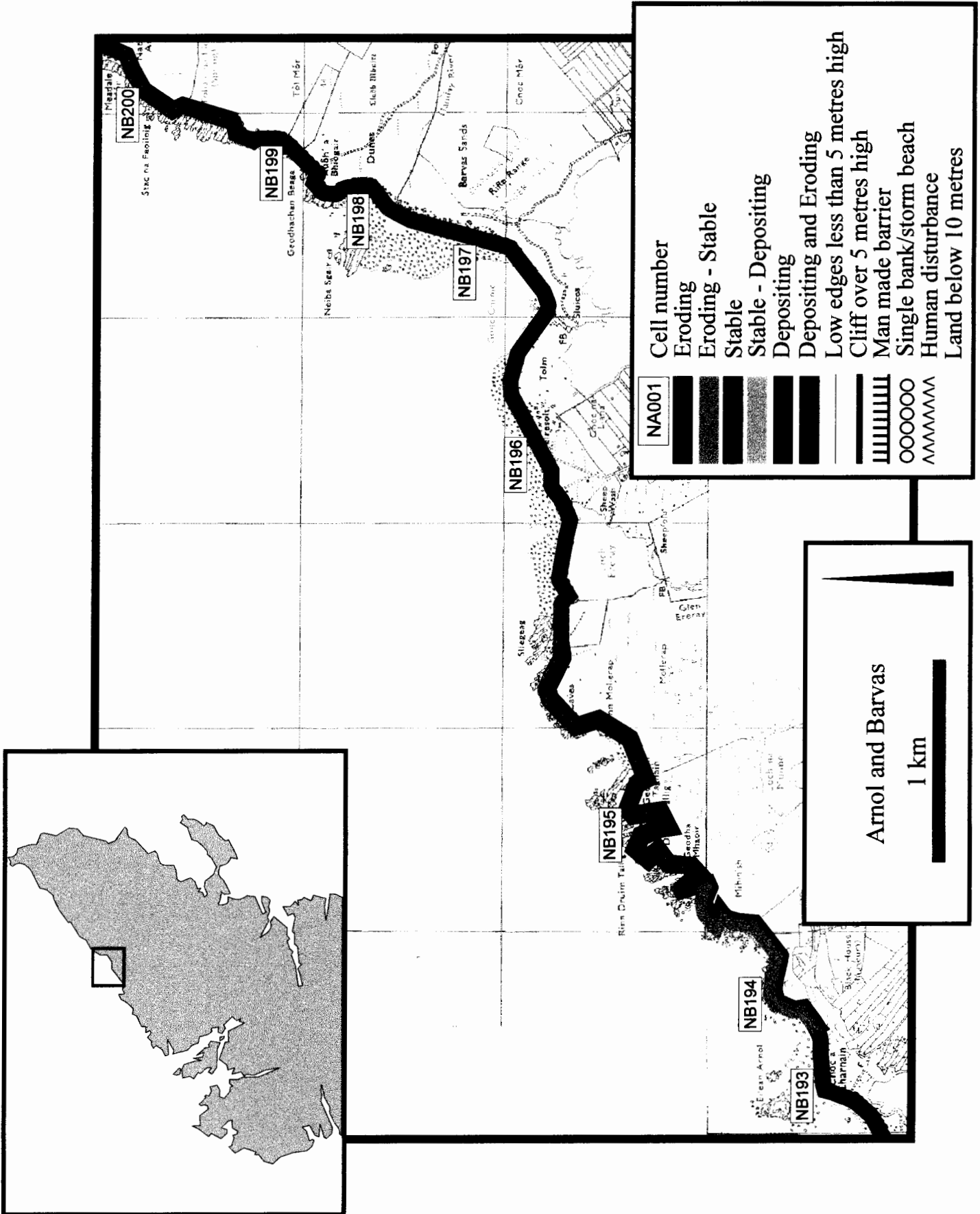
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The final zone consists of low rock platform capped by a depth of some 2-3 m. of glacial sands and gravels which are experiencing active marine erosion.

5.25.5 Gazetteer of geomorphic cells

Label	NGR	Erosion class	Locale	Foreshore Geomorphology	Hinterland geomorphology	Geology	Length meters	Geomorphic modifier
NB 193	NB 302 493	A-Eroding	Cnoc a Charnain	Mainly Sand	Wind Blown Sand	Gneiss	683.472	Storm / shingle bank
NB 194	NB 309 498	B-Eroding/ Stable	Mihinish	Mainly Rock Platform	Drift, Boulder clay over visible rock	Gneiss	1155.241	Cliff over 5 m.
NB 195	NB 316 504	A-Eroding	Bru	Mainly Rock Platform	Drift, Boulder clay over visible rock	Gneiss	2721.290	Cliff over 5 m.
NB 196	NB 332 507	A-Eroding	Bru	Mainly Rock Platform	Wind Blown Sand	Gneiss	1850.747	Storm / shingle ridge
NB 197	NB 344 513	A-Eroding	Barvas	Mainly Sand	Wind Blown Sand	Gneiss	1291.598	Storm / shingle ridge
NB 198	NB 347 519	A-Eroding	Barvas	Mainly Rock Platform	Wind Blown Sand	Gneiss	453.366	Low edge < 5 m.
NB 199	NB 349 523	B-Eroding/ Stable	Geodhachan Beaga	Mainly Rock Platform	Wind Blown Sand	Gneiss	681.754	Shingle / storm bank
NB 200	NB 351 527	B-Eroding/ Stable	Stac na Faileig	Mainly Rock Platform	Glacial sand and Gravel	Gneiss	352.432	Low edge < 5m.

**COASTAL EROSION ASSESSMENT (LEWIS)
MAP SHEET NB 30 49/NB 35 53**



5.25.6 *Overview of coastal geomorphology*

The descriptions of the geomorphology will follow the breakdown of the section into the general erosion zones above. The first zone marks the continuation of Port Arnol sand and shingle beach and is described in section 5.25.4.

The second zone reverts to incised cliff of basement Lewisian Gneiss capped by widespread substrate of glacially derived material and *in situ* weathered material.

The third zone of Barvas machair occupies a small embayment with a shingle ridge, the core of which is said to have had a glacial origin (Harris and Ritchie 1989, p1), enclosing the dune system of the north and the machair plain of the central and southern areas as well as the water bodies of Loch Mor Barvas and Loch Eresay to the south. The dune system has been greatly truncated by sand extraction and is deeply unstable, with large erosion scars and blow outs. This is also true of the machair plain which exhibits severe signs of aeolian erosion and in some places sand accretion, such as the south-east of Cnoc Mor. Much of the area is underlain by till judging by some sand exhausted blowouts which expose the drift geology.

The final zone returns to low rock platform of basement Lewisian Gneiss capped by glacially derived material and *in situ* weathered material, identical in character to that underlying Barvas machair.

**COASTAL EROSION ASSESSMENT (LEWIS)
MAP SHEET NB 30 49/NB 35 53**

