

The Potential Effects of Built Development on Landscape Character: Elgin South

	Wooded Estate	South Facing Slopes	Level Plain
Landscape Character	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This area is already well developed, with several distinct groups of buildings Scope for new development is therefore limited largely to the potential replacement of existing buildings (although still to check Dunkinty grounds) Wooded policies create a sense of enclosure and define settings for existing development Access to the policies of Dunkinty house was restricted, therefore analysis was limited 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building would benefit from south facing slopes and distant views Landscape is relatively featureless The area is visually separate from central Elgin and orientated away from the settlement, therefore development here would have a limited relationship to the settlement core. However, recent development already significantly breaches the ridgeline separating this area from Elgin 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development in this area would be perceptually detached and physically distant from the main settlement core. This is in part compounded the distinct, open character of the plain and the separation provided by the wooded burn of Linkwood The openness of the plain makes it difficult to identify existing features which could provide structure or visual containment
Settlement Form	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While scope for new development is limited due to lack of space, replacement of existing farm buildings , retaining the fine façade, with a development requiring a policy woodland setting would not change the existing settlement form 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settlement form would extend even more over the existing ridgeline, drawing the settlement well away from its association with the River Lossie 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settlement form would extend much further away from its association with the River Lossie or even New Elgin
Landscape Setting	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woodland character and the enclosure would not be affected by replacing existing development Access to the policies of Dunkinty house was restricted, therefore analysis of effects on designed landscape was limited 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These south facing slopes are of limited value to the setting of the town as the peri urban character is not of a high scenic quality. They are however, highly visible. 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area provides a level plinth at the base of the South Facing Slopes . Should these be developed the plain will form a more important contribution to the setting of the town.
Sense of Arrival	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing sense of arrival is well defined, and would not be affected by replacement development 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing sense of arrival is unlikely to be affected by development across these slopes, as already the edge of the settlement is visible 	<p>Neutral/Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area only contributes marginally to sense of arrival at present, as it does not lie adjacent to the settlement edge, but if the

		from a great distance	south facing slopes are developed then the sense of arrival will be made more explicit by the change of gradient between the plain and the slopes
Settlement Edge	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A robust and well defined settlement edge is created by the woodland which would not be affected by replacement development 	<p>Neutral/Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing settlement edge simply relates to a road • There is a more robust alternative, which is at the base of the slope, emphasised by gradient change, a watercourse and associated planting 	<p>Neutral/Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no settlement edge at present located on the level plain • The openness of the plain and lack of distinct landform feature makes it difficult to identify existing features which could be used to define settlement edge, particularly to the south
Views and Visual Features	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area is visually very self contained , and development would be visually contained by land form and woodland • The woodland at Dunkinty is prominent, and should be maintained and enhanced within any development proposal 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area is highly visible from the south, but the highest points have already been developed. 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area is highly visible from the approach to Elgin from the south: its visual sensitivity is increased by the openness of the plain

9.2 Elgin South: Landscape Opportunities and Constraints

9.2.1 Preferred Opportunities for Development

The main landscape opportunity for development in this area lies across the South Facing Slopes which extend out from New Elgin. While this area is orientated away from the main town, it does have the advantage of south facing slopes and views. The ridge which would have provided containment for the southern edge of the settlement has already been breached by recent housing spilling over onto the south facing aspect.

Importantly, there is also an opportunity for a new, well defined settlement edge at the change in gradient at the base of these slopes, which is further reinforced by the woodland associated with the Burn of Linkwood and Glasgreen. This area of land, if developed, will be highly visible from a distance, and the approach will be characterised by a long lead in, which should culminate in a strong sense of arrival provided by the layout and design of any future development. Good pedestrian and other access routes between this area and the Main Street of New Elgin, as well as the school and other facilities should help to reduce the sense of distance between this area and the core of the settlement, but there will always be some sense of detachment.

There is no opportunity for development onto the Level Plain which lies south of the Burn of Linkwood. While the quality of the landscape character is relatively low, it is in a strategically significant area in landscape terms. The area also forms a natural plinth to the South Facing Slopes, and will become more significant as a setting to the southern edge of the town should these slopes be developed.

Expansion onto the Level Plain would extend development onto uncontained land with few features to create a robust settlement edge. It would also have the disadvantages of a pronounced sense of detachment from the core of the settlement, emphasised by distance as well as the change in landscape character from the south facing slopes to the level plain. This plain has the potential to be an undeveloped plinth of land from which the settlement rises. This will create an enhanced and more coherent setting for the town from this approach.

Opportunities to extend the settlement into the grounds of Dunkinty Estate could not be assessed due to lack of access, however it was noted that the woodland provides a robust settlement edge of some quality, particularly in association with the nearby knolls and mature woodland of Maggot Wood. Redevelopment of the farm opposite the distillery could be a good location for a prestigious commercial building in a generous wooded setting, which would complement the scale and quality of other nearby buildings, including the distillery, as well as reinforce the sense of arrival at the settlement edge.

9.2.2 Long Term Options

There were no opportunities for long term development identified within this study area.

INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO THE MORAY LANDSCAPE

Elgin South

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Scale 1:10 000

 Land already under development

Landscape Opportunities for Development

 Development across these south facing slopes will be detached from the main settlement, due to its orientation away from the settlement core and lack of visual links. However, its proximity to the High Street and other facilities offers opportunities to reinforce physical links to the town, and there is an opportunity to create a robust settlement edge associated with the burn of Linkwood which also has the potential to enhance sense of arrival

 Opportunities within this area are limited to the possible replacement of the farm steading with perhaps a prestigious building within a generous wooded setting, which would reflect and consolidate the high quality characteristics of this area.

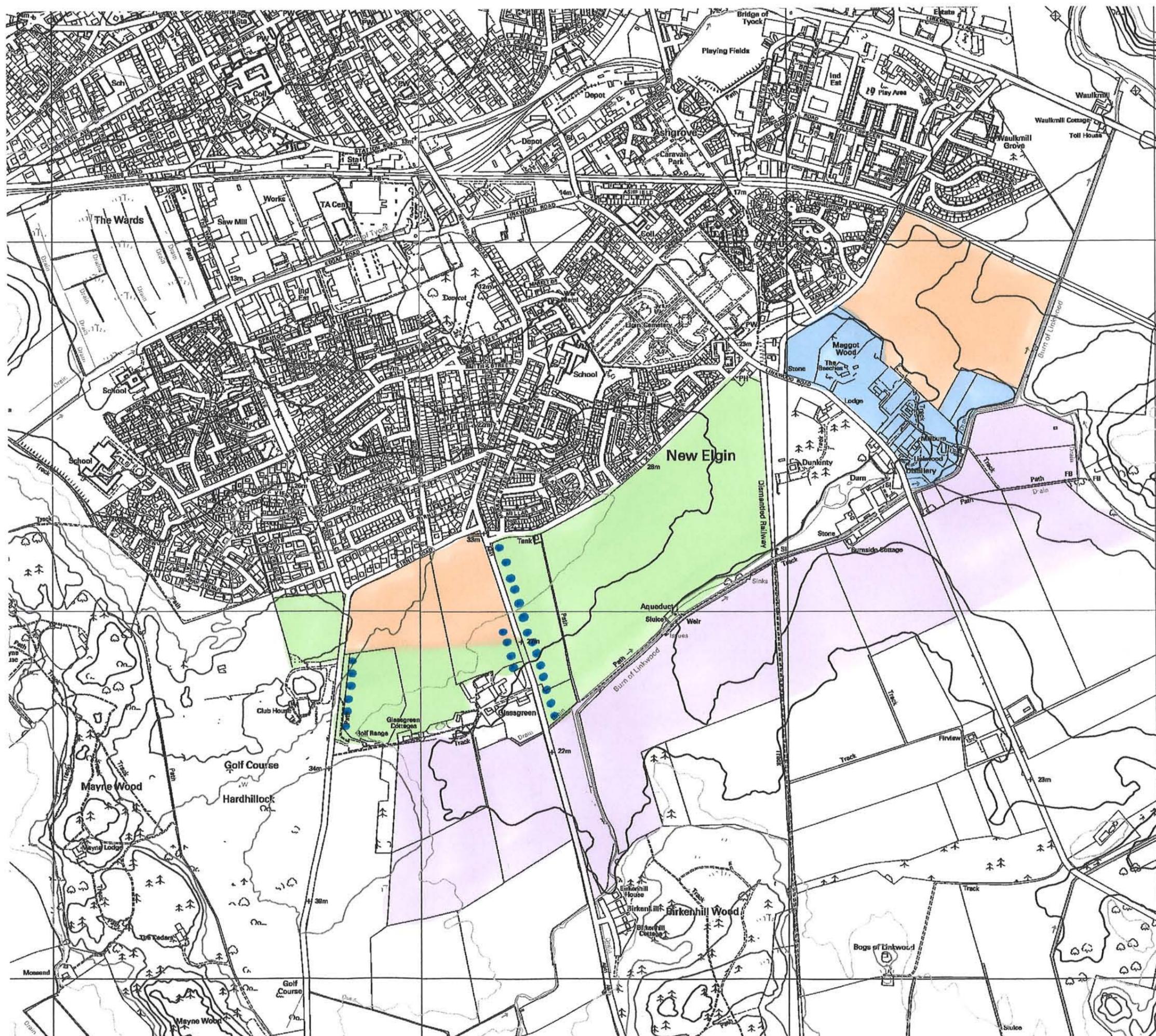
Landscape Constraints on Development

 Development is constrained by the lack of features and the pronounced sense of detachment from the settlement core across this level plain. The sense of detachment is reinforced by the distance from town, and perhaps even more by the clear change in character from slopes and ridgelines to flat plain.

This plain will also play an even more important role in the setting of the town should the south facing slopes be developed. The plain will then form an undeveloped 'plinth' of simple open character, which will contrast with the settlement. Care should be taken not to fragment the simplicity of this character.

Other Opportunities

 Expansion of the settlement should offer opportunities to create a much higher quality sense of arrival along this road.



9.3 Elgin South: Development Site Recommendations

Development bids associated with the expansion of development onto the south facing slopes have few landscape constraints, but it was noted that development will be visible. High quality development, with generous planting proposals and good pedestrian and cycle access back into the settlement should be provided. Development here also offers the opportunity to enhance the sense of arrival at the town, particularly where the Burn of Linkwood meets the A94.

There are also opportunities to redevelop the farm at Milburn and Dunkinty with a prestigious building which would ensure that the policy woodland character and setting of this localised but diverse area of landscape would be maintained. However, the potential effects of development on Dunkinty House and its immediate setting could not be assessed as access is restricted.

There are significant landscape and visual constraints which limit opportunities for development across the Level Plain, which is also likely to be an area which increases in landscape and visual sensitivity if development goes ahead across the south facing slopes.