

The Potential Effects of Built Development on Landscape Character: Forres North East

	Level Plain	Rolling Ridges
Landscape Character	<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, separated from the settlement by the A 96 and in part by the railway • At least part of the area is subject to flooding • The open, level character of the plain also contrasts with the more enclosed, wooded, higher land associated with the settlement • The plain is relatively exposed and un sheltered • Noise from the elevated A96 and smell from the sewage works would affect any settlement extension • Effects associated with detachment and noise are less significant for industrial development 	<p>Negative/neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of these ridges provide visual and physical containment from the north east, and extending the settlement across these more exposed slopes would breach these ridges • Steeper slopes would make development difficult to accommodate without considerable earthmoving • However, there are discreet, enclosed areas of low lying land which could be developed without affecting this containment to the south east of the existing settlement
Settlement Form	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement form would extend onto low lying land, away from the existing relationship with the higher ground and shelter of the hills • The A96 and the railway create physical barriers making it difficult to fully integrate these low lying areas of land into the town • Effects associated with physical separation are less significant for industrial development 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The settlement could become excessively elongated • Settlement would extend away from the strong relationship which it has with the existing wooded knolls, and extend over ridges and knolls which currently contain the settlement to the east
Landscape Setting	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of this landscape may not be high, as it is generally relatively featureless, but it creates a 	<p>Negative/neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most prominent ridges and knolls contribute to the setting and definition of the town to the east

	level plinth from which the town rises and contributes to the setting because of the contrast in character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are other more hidden areas make less of a contribution
Sense of Arrival	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development would extend across the A96, altering the sense of arrival to Forres, which currently occurs when you turn off the main road into the settlement • The distinct strip of mature trees at Cassieford could contribute to a gateway 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing sense of arrival is heightened by the visual containment of the existing settlement, which appears from behind prominent knolls and ridges
Settlement Edge	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the A96 and the railway create a very robust settlement edge, there are some alternative settlement edges which could be used, including existing tree lines and watercourses 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing settlement edge relates to rising ground and is contained by prominent knolls and ridges to the east
Views and Visual Features	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area is very open and building would be highly visible • Development would also affect views from the town across the coastal plain 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the area is highly visible, but in turn has good views across the coastal plain • Some areas are more sheltered and visually self contained

5.2 Forres North East: Opportunities and Constraints for Development

5.2.1 Preferred Opportunities for Development

Opportunities to extend the settlement across the A96 onto more lowlying land are severely constrained by the barrier created by the fast road and the railway and the sense of detachment from the existing settlement which characterises this area. Development here would also extend the settlement away from its association with land which lies in the lee of the prominent hills and would at least in part be affected by noise from the A96 (particularly where it is elevated).

These constraints are less relevant when considering the appropriateness of industrial development to these areas. Industrial development is less constrained by the perception of detachment, the physical separation and to a certain extent the noise associated with this area. A site for potential industrial development has therefore been identified on the nursery, where development can be screened from the A96 and take advantage of mature woodland to the north.

Preferred areas for development were identified within discreet, enclosed areas of low lying ground within the Rolling Ridges character type, to the south east of the current settlement. Development here should avoid visually breaching the higher ridges, which could alternatively be planted to reflect the pattern of woodland on upper slopes which characterises this landscape.

An additional preferred opportunity for development was also identified adjacent to the cemetery. The type of development appropriate for this small site is limited: Edgehill Road is currently the focus for a number of individual, large houses in generous settings. It would be appropriate to reflect this pattern in the site adjacent to the cemetery, which would limit development to one or two houses in generous wooded settings.

5.2.2 Long Term Options

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

5.3 Forres North East: Development Site Recommendations

Some of the development bids do fall within areas where opportunities for development which maintained the existing character of the town were identified, and these are noted on the map opposite.

There are significant landscape and visual constraints on the development bids located within other parts of this study area.