

The Potential Effects of Built Development on Landscape Character: Keith South West

	River Valleys	Convex Ridge	Domed Ridges
Landscape Character	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These narrow valleys, which have a semi natural character, create a foil to the more developed, elevated land which extends between them • Steep slopes would make development difficult to accommodate without considerable earthmoving • The valley floors may be subject to flooding • The areas are popular for informal recreation use 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of this area is perceptually very detached from the settlement, reinforced by the orientation of the slopes away from the existing settlement • Steep slopes would make development difficult to accommodate without considerable earthmoving 	<p>Negative/Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of this area is perceptually very detached from the settlement, reinforced by the orientation of the slopes away from the existing settlement • The north east facing slopes which form part of the golf course are an exception to this
Settlement Form	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing settlement form relates strongly to the elevated ridges and with the exception of development within the settlement which relies on a source of water, the valleys are not highly built up 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development across these steep, exposed slopes would elongate the town away from its relationship with more gentle, north facing slopes 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development in this area would maintain the relationship between the settlement and the elevated slopes, although this connection is more tenuous on slopes orientated away from the existing settlement
Landscape Setting	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These narrow valleys, and their associated woodlands contribute to the visual setting of the town (particularly to sense of arrival), and are an informal recreation resource 	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area tentatively contains the town to the south and the steep slopes are relatively dramatic in character compared to the other, more gentle slopes in other character types 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area contributes less to landscape setting than other features, such as the river valleys and steeper, more dramatic slopes
Sense of Arrival	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enclosure provided by the steep slopes complemented by mature woodland along the A96 contributes a dramatic sense of 'gateway' when arriving at Keith which could be compromised by residential development 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development in this area would not affect sense of arrival 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing sense of arrival is emphasised by the descent towards the town from the B9014. This would not be compromised by modest development

Settlement Edge	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These narrow valleys only marginally contribute to settlement edge 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing settlement edge on the west facing slopes is not reinforced by other features, and alternatives could be created • The east facing slopes have several alternative settlement edge options, including mature trees 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the existing settlement edge is not particularly strongly emphasised, and other existing linear features could provide alternative boundary options
Views and Visual Features	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense residential development would quickly 'fill in' the valleys and would obscure the visual focus of the burn and the fine mature woodland 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of this area is highly visible, but development would not obscure any key visual features 	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the settlement edge is highly visible from a distance along the B9014, so visual containment has been slightly compromised, but could be re-established with planting

7.2 Keith South West: Landscape Opportunities and Constraints

7.2.1 Preferred Opportunities for Development

Opportunities to expand the settlement of Keith along the elevated ridges are limited by the orientation of the slopes away from the existing settlement. Some of the slopes are also exposed and steep, and the settlement is still – tenuously – contained by the highest summits, which at present help reinforce the relationship between the built development and the elevated, largely northerly orientated slopes.

There are some modest opportunities for development on relatively contained pieces of land which have good physical connections to the existing settlement, but they relate to releasing land which is currently used for recreation purposes. These opportunities should only be considered if alternative sites of equivalent or better quality for recreation can be identified, and are not preferred sites for immediate development.

Opportunities to extend the settlement along the river valleys are severely constrained from a landscape and visual perspective, as their enclosed but relatively dramatic character, including the sense of naturalness created by the dominating presence of the rivers, and their value as a major informal recreation resource for the town, would all be compromised by development.

At the request of the Council, careful consideration was given to the appropriateness of this study area to high quality business use developments. Such buildings, if well designed and sited within generous landscaped grounds may be appropriate as 'gateway' buildings to the town.

The very edge of the settlement at the A96 is too detached from the town to be appropriate for residential use, and dense small scale development would be inappropriate. However, a prestigious building with well designed associated landscape works may well be appropriate on either or both sides of the A96, with the proviso that they are set in wooded landscape grounds which reflects the mature broadleaved woodland characteristic of the area.


Locating the larger building along the base of the river valleys, within wooded settings, follows the existing pattern of distilleries and other buildings being located within the town in similar settings, a pattern which with advance planting could be extended for quality business development along the Denwell road.

7.2.2 Long Term Options


No long term options for settlement expansion were identified within this study area.

INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO
THE MORAY LANDSCAPE
Keith South West
OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS
Scale 1:10 000

Landscape Opportunities for Development


 Any opportunities for development are limited to contained and sheltered sites which are well related to the existing settlement but are already occupied by recreational facilities. Nevertheless, they are identified in case alternative sites for the recreational facilities can be identified.

Landscape Constraints on Development

 Development here is constrained by the orientation of these slopes way from the settlement.


Settlement expansion would also spill over the brows of the ridges, breaching the high points and extending the settlement away from its existing orientation

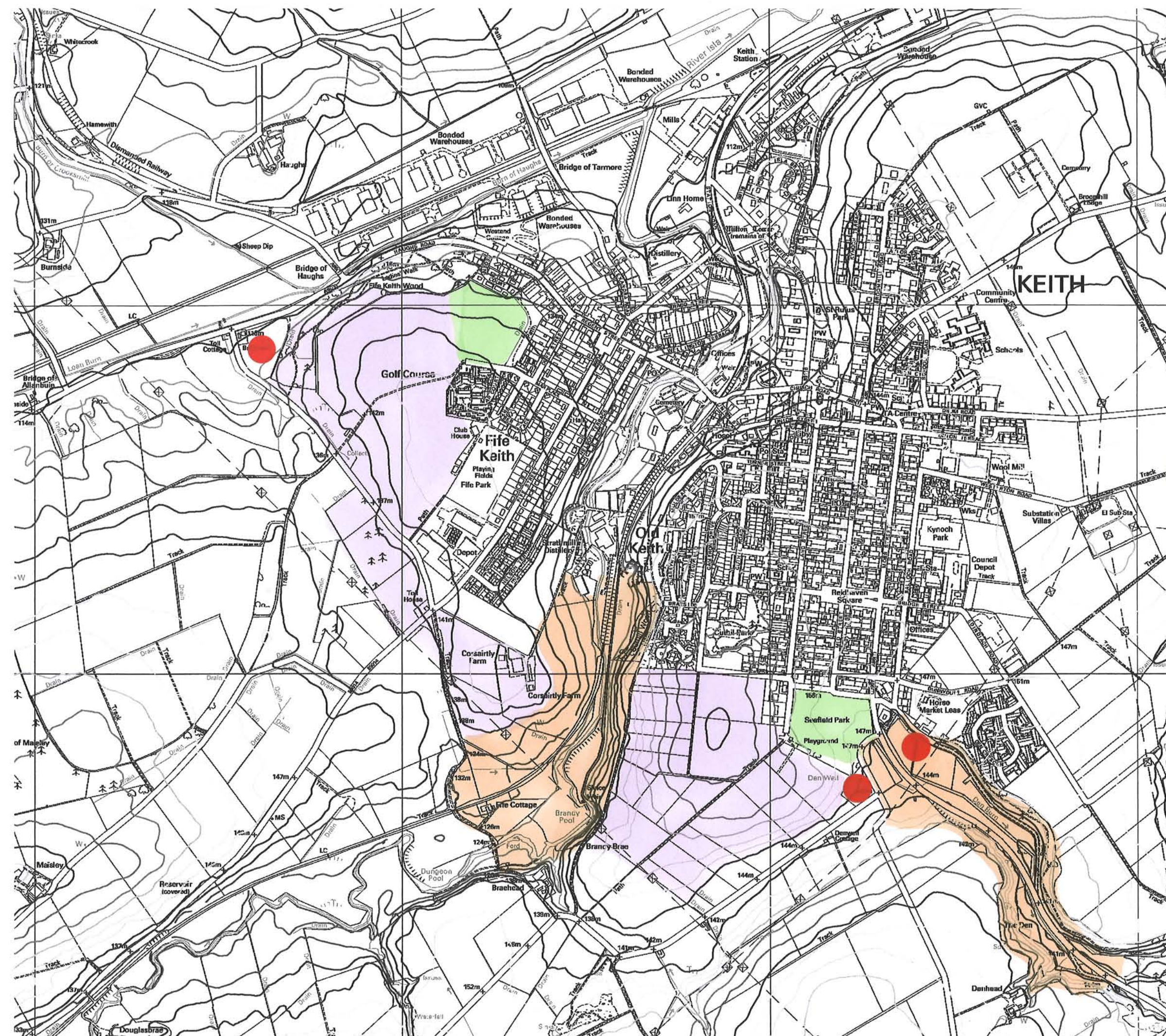
Some slopes are also very steep and would require considerable earthmoving to accommodate development

 Development here is constrained by the enclosed and relatively dramatic character. Development in these river valleys would break with the characteristic and distinct relationship between residential settlement and elevated landforms.

The steep slopes would require considerable earthmoving to accommodate development

Other Opportunities

 These locations offer some potential for high quality business use development. While the sites are inappropriate for housing due to their detachment from the town, this constraint is less relevant for locating a business use site. Any such development would require to be a high quality building established within generous landscaped grounds, reflecting the sensitivity and status of the location as a gateway to Keith



7.3 Keith South West: Development Site Recommendations

There are significant landscape and visual constraints on the development bids located within this study area, although three small sites were indicated as having potential for high quality business development sites within generous wooded settings.