

# Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2016 – Developer Bids

- 1 Name of proposer: Bancon Developments Ltd.  
Date: 14/06/13  
Address: Banchory Business Centre, Burn O’Bennie Road, Banchory  
Postcode: AB31 5ZU  
Telephone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]
- 2 Name of landowner: Newpark Farms Ltd, c/o Bancon Developments Ltd.  
Address: As above.

## The site and your proposal

- 3 Site Name: Maiden Craig Business Park
- 4 Site Location map: The proposed development is on land immediately west of the Maiden Craig Masterplan, zoned for development in the 2012 Aberdeen Local Development Plan and the existing Dobbies Garden Centre.



Fig 1 – Existing land uses and zonings, with bid site marked in green.

- 5 National Grid reference of the site: NJ881068
- 6 Current Use of Site/Previous Development: Agriculture.
- 7 Proposed Use of the Site: During the detailed planning stage for the Maidencraig masterplan, Bancon have been approached by several businesses interested in sites for commercial and business development that cannot be comfortably be accommodated within the defined masterplan boundary. However, the land to the west and north of the Dobbies Garden Centre offers for further commercial opportunities.
- 8 Details of Housing Proposals: N/A
- 9 Provision of Affordable Housing: N/A
- 10 Business Land Proposals: The additional land promoted for development was supported by the Scottish Government Reporter in his report of the Local Plan inquiry in 2008. Aberdeen City Council, however, decided not to accept his recommendation on this occasion. Supported by a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Bancon submitted that development could be accommodated within the landscape up to the 145m contour line, or thereabouts, without risk of significant visual impact or risk of coalescence with Kingswells. This was specifically supported by the Reporter, who stated that the 145m contour line should mark the boundary of the zoning.
- Subsequently, the Dobbies Garden Centre has been built, but a significant area of land below the 145m contour, to the west and north of the garden centre, remains undeveloped. The land could provide up to 13 hectares of business land, including a substantial area around the periphery of the site which would be planted with trees to define the boundary of Aberdeen appropriately.
- 11 Other Proposed Land Uses: The land would be suitable for business and light industrial uses (class 4), and potentially for storage and distribution (class 6). Class 5 uses would be suitable only if they were compatible with the neighbouring garden centre and residential uses. Alternatives may include a car showroom, which does not fall into any specific use class.
- 12 Phasing: The development would be marketed on the basis of variable plot sizes, to maximise the potential for a variety of business developments.
- 13 Community Engagement: No specific community engagement has taken place with regard to employment use on this area of land.

#### **Sustainable Development and Design**

- 14 Sustainability Checklist:
- A) Exposure – the site is south facing, and protected by higher ground to the North.

- B) Aspect – The site is entirely south facing.
- C) Slope – No part of the site has a gradient of more than 1:20.
- D) Flooding – there is no risk of flooding on the site.
- E) Drainage – The site can be drained via mains sewer connections for foul water and using SUDS for surface water.
- F) Built and Cultural Heritage – development of the site would have no impact on buildings or sites of built and cultural heritage value.
- G) Nature conservation – an ecological survey was carried out in 2005, demonstrating limited ecological interest. This was updated in 2013 for the masterplan area to the east and south of the bid site, with a similar outcome. The bid site is agricultural land, and it is unlikely that anything of note has changed since the 2005 report.
- H) Landscape features – The development would not lead to the loss of any valuable landscape features, and the provision of a well landscaped development would be a positive addition to the area.
- I) Landscape fit – A landscape and visual impact assessment was prepared in support of the submissions to the 2008 Local Plan review. It was this report that led to the recommendation from the Scottish Government Reporter that the site be included in the plan for development up to the 145m contour. A copy of this assessment is appended to this bid.
- J) Relationship to existing settlements – The site forms a logical extension to the Maidencraig masterplan area, and with the support of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will produce a defensible western boundary, and define a suitable belt of open land between Aberdeen and Kingswells. The site is located directly on the main bus route between Aberdeen and Kingswells, and will be within a short walk of commercial services and facilities that will be delivered as part of the Maidencraig masterplan. The population generated within the Maidencraig masterplan and the Mastrick, Sheddocksley and Summerhill areas beyond will be within a reasonable walking distance of new employment opportunities on the site.
- K) Land use mix – The proposed business or industrial development will provide employment opportunities within a short walking distance of a large residential population, and increase the overall sustainability of the area.
- L) Accessibility – The site will be within 400m of a regular bus service on the A944, where the 40/41 service from Kingswells to Aberdeen runs, along with the close proximity of the

proposed extension of the local 23 service (12 minute service) that the Maidencraig masterplan development will deliver. Vehicular access to the site will be via the junctions proposed for the adjacent Maidencraig masterplan area, with an additional link where the existing bus gate is located. The bus gate will be incorporated into the design to ensure it remains in operation without detriment.

- M) Proximity to services and facilities –
  - Community facilities – Potentially 400-800m from the site within the Maidencraig masterplan area.
  - Local shops – 400-800m from the site within the Maidencraig masterplan area (plus the adjacent Dobbies Garden Centre).
  - Sports facilities – c. 800m from the site.
  - Public transport networks – Within 400m of the site
  - Primary schools – Within 2km of the site
- N) Footpath and cycle connections – The site offers excellent connections to surrounding footpaths and cycle paths, and to the wider countryside in general. The excerpt from the Council’s Core Paths Plan below demonstrates the range of formal routes that surround the site. Fig 2 below shows the extensive network of core paths and their close proximity to the site.

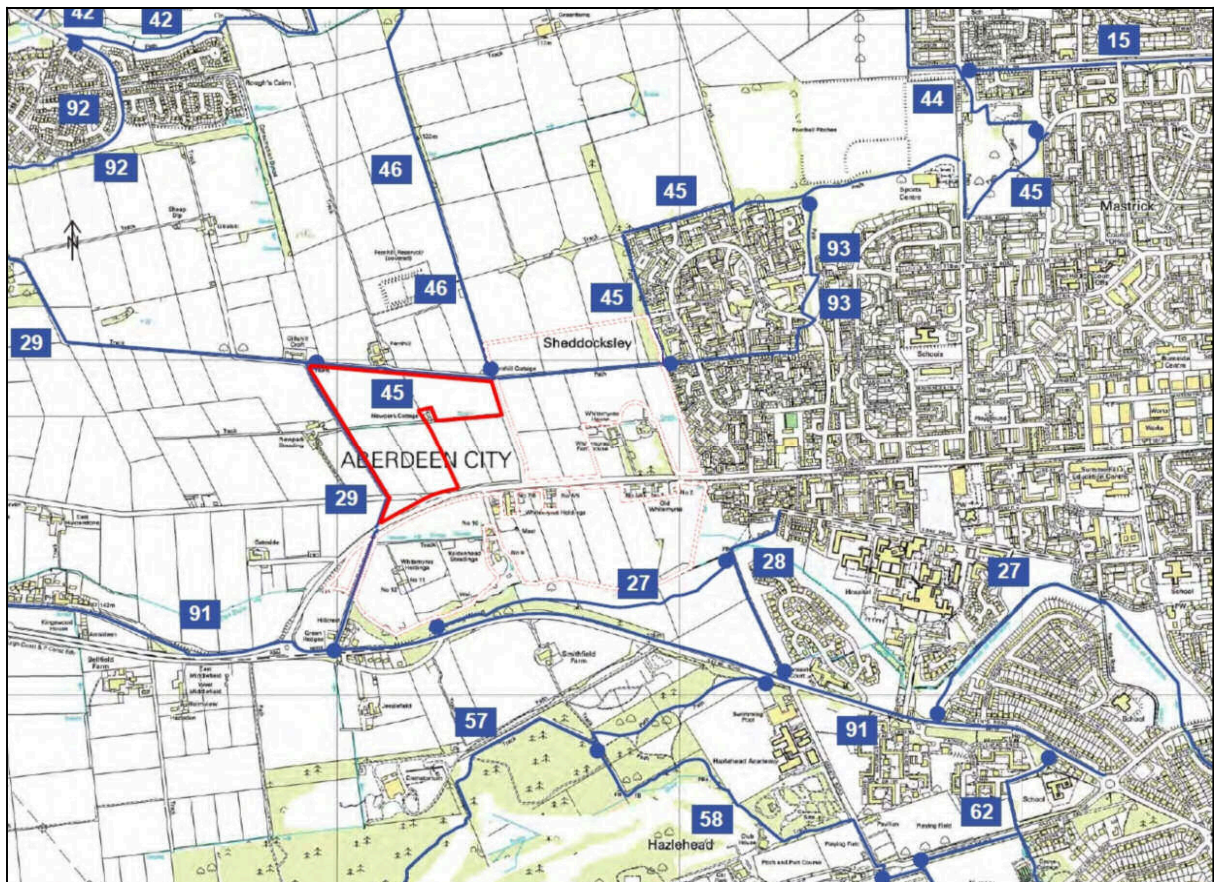


Fig 2 – Site location and core path network.

O) Proximity to employment opportunities –The development will deliver employment opportunities to both existing population in Mastrick, Sheddocksley and Summerhill, and also a new population base generated from the Maidenraig masterplan development.

P) Contamination – No constraints to development.

Q) Land use conflict – none anticipated, so no constraint to development.

R) Physical Infrastructure –

Electricity – available

Gas – available

Water and Sewage – capacity available

Secondary School Capacity – N/A

Primary Capacity – N/A

**15** Supporting Surveys: This bid is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Much of the work done in support of the masterplan for Maidenraig is relevant to this site too, and has also been appended to the bid.

**16** Community Benefits of the Proposed Development: The development will deliver employment opportunities to both existing population in Mastrick, Sheddocksley and Summerhill, and also a new population base generated from the Maidenraig masterplan development.

**17** Masterplan/Framework: No detailed plans have been developed for the site at this point in time.

# Aberdeen City Local Development Plan 2016 – Developer Bids

## Introduction and Background

The Local Development Plan (LDP) bid form provided by Aberdeen City Council (ACC) suggests that there is no requirement for the submission of bids for development of additional greenfield sites within the City. The form indicates that this is because 'the 2012 LDP identified a significant number of greenfield sites to accommodate these [Strategic Development Plan] requirements'. Bancon believes that this position is at best premature, for a number of reasons, and as a result considers it both sensible and prudent to submit bids for the development of additional greenfield sites. The reasons are: -

- 1) The requests for LDP bids is based upon the proposed Strategic Development Plan, published in February 2013. It is Bancon's view that the proposed SDP is woefully under allocating land for development. There are significant contradictions between the vision, aims and actual requirements and allowances in the plan. More importantly its growth projections are significantly below those predicted by the Scottish Government. It will surely be rejected by Scottish Ministers.  
It is submitted therefore that the LDPs should be planned to accommodate this likelihood. Considering the SDP and subsequent LDPs will be unlikely to be adopted until 2016, Bancon calculate that there will be considerable additional housing land allocations required in the 2017-2026 and 2027-2035 periods to accommodate the growth that the Scottish Government predicts, and indeed the North East will already be experiencing.
- 2) Bancon submit that the 2012 LDP fails to provide a 5 year supply of effective housing land, as identified in the latest Housing Land Audit figures. The reliance of the 2012 LDP on a small number of large development sites also fails to provide opportunities for 2<sup>nd</sup> phase sites to be drawn down early, because these are primarily the same sites as are failing to become effective in phase 1. The current Housing Land Audit identifies a 4.4 year supply, and while the draft 2013 audit suggests an improved situation, there is considerable doubt about some of the projected delivery rates for large sites. Prudence therefore suggests that there is a requirement to identify more small sites for development as soon as possible to address the shortfall.
- 3) There are several large sites identified in the 2012 LDP that are proving difficult to develop, or slower to develop than anticipated. While it is tempting to point the finger of blame at the economic conditions, this does not bear close scrutiny. The North East has performed better than most of the UK (only London and the South East being the exceptions), and the population growth since 2006, when the last strategic Development Plan review began, has exceeded even the Scottish Government's high migration forecasts. The 2009 Structure Plan aimed to increase the City Region's population to 480,000 by 2030, and current trends suggest that we have already exceeded that number in 2013. The provision of a range of effective housing sites, bolstered by new allocations, is essential to accommodate the rapidly expanding population.

This Local Development Plan bid is therefore necessary to address any one, two or all of the above. The bid itself will concentrate on the proposed development, and the deliverability of that development. The requirement for the land will be established through the proposed SDP consultation, 2013 Housing Land Audit and progress on large 2012 LDP sites in the interim. Seeking to predict these three variables at this stage in the process is impossible.

- 1 Name of proposer: Bancon Developments Ltd.  
Date: 14/06/13  
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Postcode: AB31 5ZU  
Telephone: 01330 824900  
Email: [ben.freeman@bancon.co.uk](mailto:ben.freeman@bancon.co.uk)
- 2 Name of landowner: Newpark Farm Ltd, c/o Bancon Developments Ltd.  
Address: As above.

### The site and your proposal

- 3 Site Name: Maidencraig
- 4 Site Location map: The proposed development is on land immediately west of the Maidencraig Masterplan area which was zoned for development in the 2012 Aberdeen Local Development Plan and the existing Dobbies Garden Centre.



Fig 1 – Existing land uses and zonings, with bid site marked in green.

- 5 National Grid reference of the site: NJ881068

- 6** Current Use of Site/Previous Development: Agriculture/horticulture.
- 7** Proposed Use of the Site: Based upon the agreed Masterplan development schedule, development of the housing at Maidencraig will be complete by around 2018-2020. Bancon believe the site is highly sustainable and will be popular with the market. Its further development should therefore be encouraged. Bancon are therefore keen to promote additional development land through this LDP review to ensure that the full potential of the site is realised without interruption. With the new LDP providing allocations from 2017-26 an allocation between 2017 and 2023 would be appropriate.
- 8** Details of Housing Proposals: The additional land promoted for development was supported by the Scottish Government Reporter in his report of the Local Plan inquiry in 2008. Aberdeen City Council, however, decided not to accept his recommendation on this occasion. Supported by a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Bancon submitted that development could be accommodated within the landscape up to the 145m contour line, or thereabouts, without risk of significant visual impact or risk of coalescence with Kingswells. This was specifically supported by the Reporter, who stated that the 145m contour line should mark the boundary of the zoning.
- Subsequently, the Dobbies Garden Centre has been built, but a significant area of land below the 145m contour, to the west and north of the garden centre, remains undeveloped. The land is suitable for around 200 dwellinghouses.
- 9** Provision of Affordable Housing: In accordance with the Maidencraig masterplan area, affordable housing will be provided at a rate of 25%.
- 10** Business Land Proposals: N/A
- 11** Other Proposed Land Uses: N/A
- 12** Phasing: The development is likely to be split into phases of up to 50 houses.
- 13** Community Engagement: Through the LDP review process, the additional land to the west and north of the garden centre was promoted, and has been subject to public scrutiny. Extensive community consultation was carried out as part of the Maidecraig masterplan, which has now been adopted as Supplementary Guidance to the 2012 LDP. A further public consultation exercise would be carried out with regard to the proposed addition.

#### **Sustainable Development and Design**

- 14** Sustainability Checklist:
- A) Exposure – the site is south facing, and protected by higher ground to the North.
- B) Aspect – The site is entirely south facing.



- C) Slope – No part of the site has a gradient of more than 1:20.
- D) Flooding – there is no risk of flooding on the site.
- E) Drainage – The site can be drained via mains sewer connections for foul water and using SUDS for surface water.
- F) Built and Cultural Heritage – development of the site would have no impact on buildings or sites of built and cultural heritage value. A detailed archaeological study has been carried out on the masterplan site, with no significant findings. It is reasonable to assume that the same would apply to the bid site (subject to further survey work as part of the planning process).
- G) Nature conservation – an ecological survey was carried out in 2005, demonstrating limited ecological interest. This was updated in 2013 for the masterplan area to the east and south of the bid site, with a similar outcome. The bid site is agricultural land, and it is unlikely that anything of note has changed since the 2005 report.
- H) Landscape features – The development would not lead to the loss of any valuable landscape features, and the provision of a well landscaped development would be a positive addition to the area.
- I) Landscape fit – A landscape and visual impact assessment was prepared in support of the submissions to the 2008 Local Plan review. It was this report that led to the recommendation from the Scottish Government Reporter that the site be included in the plan for development up to the 145m contour. A copy of this assessment is appended to this bid.
- J) Relationship to existing settlements – The site forms a logical extension to the Maidencraig masterplan area, and with the support of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will produce a defensible western boundary, and define a suitable belt of open land between Aberdeen and Kingswells. The site is located directly on the main bus route between Aberdeen and Kingswells, and will be within a short walk of commercial services and facilities that will be delivered as part of the Maidencraig masterplan.
- K) Land use mix – The additional housing will increase the marketability and the viability of services that we are seeking to incorporate into the Maidencraig masterplan area. The intention is that the development would therefore be residential.
- L) Accessibility – The site will be within 400m of a regular bus service on the A944, where the 40/41 service from Kingswells to Aberdeen runs, along with the close proximity of the proposed extension of the local 23 service (12 minute service) that the Maidencraig masterplan development will deliver. Vehicular access to the site will be via the junctions

proposed for the adjacent Maidencraig masterplan area, with an additional link where the existing bus gate is located. The bus gate will be incorporated into the design to ensure it remains in operation without detriment.

M) Proximity to services and facilities –

Community facilities – Potentially 400-800m from the site within the Maidencraig masterplan area, as well as the adjacent Dobbies Garden Centre.

Local shops – 400-800m from the site within the Maidencraig masterplan area.

Sports facilities – c. 800m from the site.

Public transport networks – Within 400m of the site

Primary schools – Within 2km of the site

N) Footpath and cycle connections – The site offers excellent connections to surrounding footpaths and cycle paths, and to the wider countryside in general. The excerpt from the Council's Core Paths Plan below demonstrates the range of formal routes that surround the site. Fig 2 below shows the extensive network of core paths and their close proximity to the site.

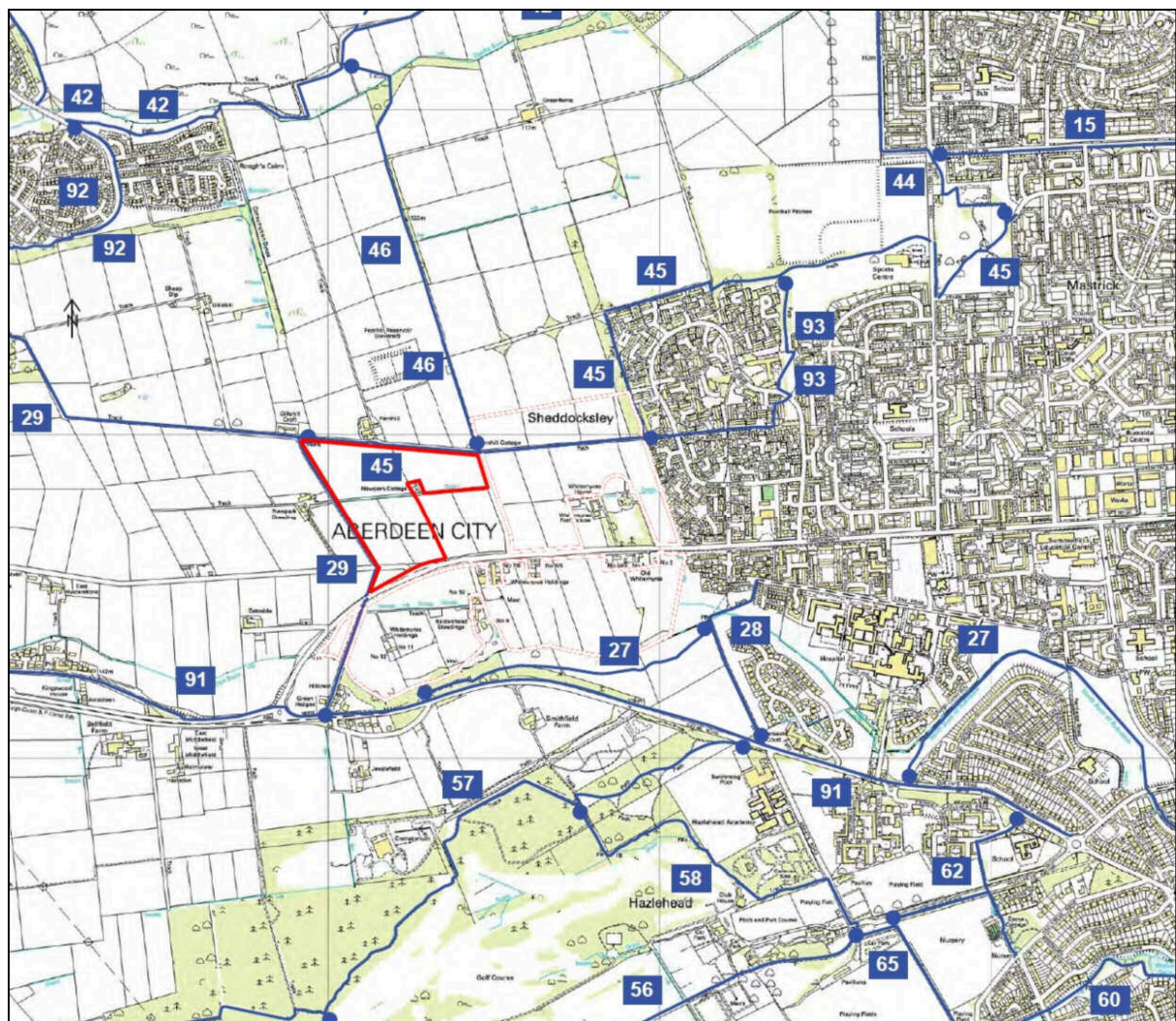


Fig 2 – Site location and core path network.

O) Proximity to employment opportunities –There will be employment opportunities created through the development of the Maidenraig masterplan area, as well as nearby employment hubs, primarily at Kingswells.

P) Contamination – No constraints to development.

Q) Land use conflict – constraints to development.

R) Physical Infrastructure –

Electricity – available

Gas – available

Water and Sewage – capacity available

Secondary School Capacity – current forecasts indicate capacity at Hazlehead Academy

Primary Capacity – Capacity is available at Kingsford Primary School.

**15** Supporting Surveys: This bid is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Much of the work done in support of the masterplan for Maidenraig is relevant to this site too, and has also been appended to the bid.

**16** Community Benefits of the Proposed Development: The proposed development will offer a greater number of houses at Maidenraig, including affordable homes. The increased numbers will help to attract investment in the commercial areas of the Maidenraig masterplan, and increase the viability of delivering additional services to the site.

**17** Masterplan/Framework: A detailed masterplan has been prepared and adopted for the adjacent Maidenraig site. The proposed development site is a logical addition to that plan, as shown overleaf. It should be noted that the proposed development area requires to be drawn up in more detail to accord with the design of the masterplan area. The indicative plan is useful to demonstrate the potential of the site, however.

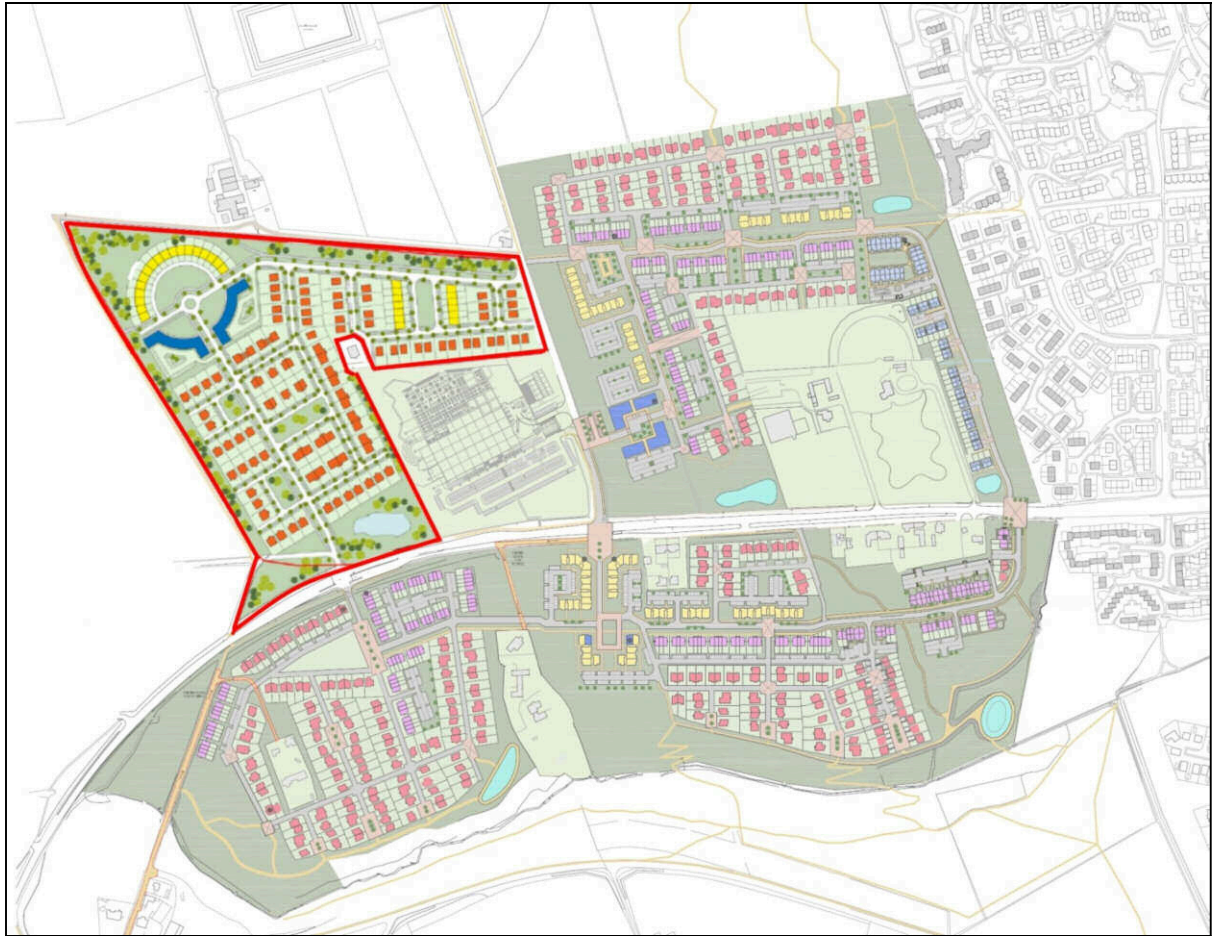


Fig 3 – indicative plan and interface with the adopted Maiden Craig masterplan area.



## MAIDENCRAIG EAST, ABERDEEN

### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

On behalf of BANCON DEVELOPMENTS.

Oct 2007

## DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES landscape architects



Landscape Design



Landscape Ecology



Environmental Analysis



Project Management

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**MAIDENCRAIG EAST, ABERDEEN**

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
UNDERTAKEN ON BEHALF OF  
BANCON DEVELOPMENTS**

**October 2007**

**DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES  
landscape architects**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bancon Developments wish to develop the site at Maidencraig East, on the western boundary of Aberdeen, for housing. Prior to the Public Inquiry into the Aberdeen Local Plan, the site was assessed as an alternative to the sites allocated in the Aberdeen Local Plan, and reviewed at the Local Plan Public Inquiry. During this process a study was carried out as a comparative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment between the sites at Greenferns, Kingswell North and The Maidencraig East and West sites. This comparison was then used as a method of demonstrating the relative suitability of each site for housing and the level of impact that each would have.
- 1.2 After the Local Plan Inquiry the reporter recommended that the site at Kingswell North be deleted from the Local Plan and the allocation of housing at Greenferns be reduced in number. He also recommended that the potential development area at Maidencraig East be extended. As a result it is deemed prudent to now look in more detail at the housing options for the area.
- 1.3 The following document, Prepared by David Wilson Associates, is a further study where the expanded Maidencraig East site will be looked at to assess the specific impacts upon the landscape and surrounding area that development of the site would have.
- 1.4 The assessment will look at how an indicative framework can be developed so that the impact of building on the site can be minimised. This will be presented as a Recommendations drawing.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 This study will assess the impact of implementing a mixed use residential development on the Maidencraig East site. It will begin by considering the current location and context of the site and its relationship with the wider landscape of Aberdeenshire and the City of Aberdeen with particular attention to the landscape character of the area and the visual impact upon it.
- 2.2 The study will begin with a review of the planning issues related to the site and the findings of the Reporter on the Local Plan Inquiry. The consequences of these findings will then be considered in the scoping of the remainder of the study.
- 2.3 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will commence by considering the wider context of Aberdeenshire and how the site relates to the fabric of the City and adjoining countryside. Elements such as transport links, landscape designations, Tree Preservation Orders, archaeological features are examined in this section and relevant conclusions drawn.
- 2.4 The Landscape Character of the site and surroundings are then examined in relation to Scottish Natural Heritage Review no 80, Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen, 1996. This document sets out the officially accepted description of the character of the site. It contains guidelines for development, within this landscape character type, and these are taken into consideration.
- 2.5 Scottish Planning Policy document SPP3: "Planning for Housing" sets out the general principles for locating good quality residential developments in the best locations. It refers in particular to Planning Advice Notes 44, "Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape" and 52, "Planning and Small Towns". The specific recommendations in these documents have served to guide the methodology used in the preparation of this report. The same document also refers to a number of other Planning Advice Notes and National Planning Policy Guidance documents. The range, within that document, has been considered and the relevant ones discussed.
- 2.6 Following this, the physical conditions of the site itself are addressed through study of the topography, vegetation and built forms. This is followed up with a photographic study of the site, illustrating the conditions and features that exist.

- 2.7 The visual impact of any development of the site is then looked at in more detail by the determination of the visual envelopes of the site. That is to say the envelopes of land from which any development on it will be seen. This will be carried out using Key Terra Firma ground modelling software to anticipate the visual range of the development. An assessment of the more sensitive visual receptors within the area is then undertaken and any issues highlighted.
- 2.8 From the conclusions drawn from analysis of the site, a set of constraints to development and any necessary mitigation is compiled. From these, recommendations are made for the development of the site so as to secure the least degree of impact and any appropriate mitigation.
- 2.9 Over the course of the study, cognisance will be taken of the North East Scotland Together Structure Plan (2001-2016) produced by Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City and the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan (2004) by Aberdeen City Council, along with any associated guidance provided within these documents.
- 2.10 In applying the above methodology, careful regard has been made to National Planning Policy on development on previously unbuild land, the assimilation of development into the landscape, and the expansion of small towns. Particular regard has been made to the principles of Planning Advice Note 44, "Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape.
- 2.11 The overall methodology has been undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment" published by the Landscape Institute in conjunction with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

### 3. PLANNING CONTEXT

#### Structure Plan

- 3.1 The Structure Plan, referred to as NEST (North East Scotland Together), which covers this area, sets out a range of core strategies. In reference to the location of new housing, core strategic Objective 7 aims:
- "To secure a choice of location for a viable supply and adequate variety of land for housing (including affordable housing), employment, services and open space, which:*
- relates development to each settlement's ability to accommodate it without loss of amenity or identity;*
  - ensures that the particular use or uses proposed for each site will maximise the overall sustainability of the community;*
  - gives preference to the use and re-use of sites within existing settlements;*
  - avoids development in areas liable to flood, or near other major hazards;*
  - relates the density of development, when considered with adjoining land uses, to its proximity to services and the transport network;*
  - will help to regenerate poorer communities and areas."*
- 3.2 In relation to the environment as a whole the Structure Plan states the core strategic objectives as:
- "Objective 9 - To confirm the function and role of Aberdeen's Green Belt.**
- Objective 10 - To protect the countryside from development other than what is needed for the rural economy and settlement strategy.**
- Objective 11- To give special protection to international, national and locally designated sites of environmental importance, but also to foster the natural and built environment as a whole."**
- 3.3 The Structure Plan then addresses the issues relating to housing land allocation more specifically. It states;
- ..... housing is to be located within settlements which are accessible to services and facilities and support economic development. National planning*

*guidelines for housing highlight two important matters that give encouragement to the reuse of brownfield land and give greater heed to the relationship between land use and transport. ....*

- 3.4 This states two key aims, firstly to use Brownfield sites where possible – this does not apply to any of the study site but it is recognized that the amount of Brownfield sites will not meet demand. The second point refers to issues of sustainability namely the location of new residential development in areas serviced by sufficient transport corridors so that the areas can be serviced using existing infrastructure and reduce the necessity of using cars and creation of large amounts of services.

#### Emerging Local Plan

- 3.5 These strategies are developed further, and in respect to specific sites, in the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan-Green Spaces New Places. In regard to the green space network within Aberdeen it states:
- "The green structure is based on some of Aberdeen's prime assets (e.g. the river valleys, wildlife sites and woodlands) whilst the development corridors are based on sustainable transportation routes into the city. The green fingers are also connected by a series of orbital 'greenways' around Aberdeen thereby creating the Green Space Network."*
- "Benefits generated from adjacent developments will be directed to these areas to make landscape improvements, plant woodland, create wildlife corridors and implement the core path network - thereby increasing access opportunities for all. They are afforded protection from development so that nothing should harm their recreational or wildlife integrity."*
- 3.6 It further sets out a number of Policies for the development of the landscape of Aberdeen. The following policies are ones which are relevant to the development of the study area. It also describes specific criteria for the development of the sites.



## 4. Local Plan Inquiry – Reporter’s Findings

- 4.1 As stated previously the site in question has been the subject of a Local Plan Inquiry during which it was described as Issue 59. Although the report contained much information the key conclusions on the suitability of the site are stated below:

### Conclusions

*“With regard to landscape setting and coalescence one part of the issue 59 area stands out least. This is the part that is bounded to the west by Fairley Road, to the south by the Den Burn, to the north by the old Lang Stracht, and to the north-east and east by the cluster of buildings at East Huxterstone and a length of track leading from it to the burn. It would appear to have a capacity of the order of 80 family houses. This area can be regarded as having rather good access to public transport. There is the possibility that it has a historic or archaeological interest.*

*The larger part of the FNC (Future New Communities) does not respect the landform or the value of this stretch of pleasant open landscape to the setting and identity of Kingswells and to the wider landscape setting of the city as a whole. Much of the FNC has a very poor landscape fit indeed.*

*It seems very doubtful that the level of development being put forward would justify a new school or local shops.*

*East of the embanked crossing of the A944 over the Den Burn landscape considerations are very different. The approach to the city gives an impression of urban dominance.*

*The area which appears to lend itself for possible development is broadly definable as: to the south and east of the A944 (including Maidencraig and the Whitemyres Holdings) and limited to the south by the steeper slopes of the Den of Maidencraig, and a much larger area north of the A944 and a short stretch of the old Lang Stracht, bounded by the existing built-up area to the east, to the north extending roughly to the 145m contour as far west as Fernhill farm steading, and with a western edge running south to the old Lang Stracht one field to the west of the junction with the A944, where there is an existing track. The area north of A944 is not defined by strong existing landscape features. Consideration would*

*also have to be given to ensuring continued viability of farm holdings. The relevant green belt purposes under policy 27 in the structure plan, in not letting development extend further than the foregoing limits, would be prevention of coalescence, protection of the landscape setting and identity of urban areas, and protection of prime landscape and recreational assets. The area would be large enough to accommodate a primary school if required. For cycling the area has exceptional potential.*

*The suggested development for ‘Maidencraig East’ in the ‘Master Plan Proposed Zonings’ (document BAN2) would not make full use of the foregoing potential development area.”*

### Recommendations

- 4.2 The reporter therefore concludes that not only is the site at Maidencraig East the best location for new housing in the area but it is in fact limited in its original scope. The reporter feels that there is opportunity to develop a larger area of land around the Maidencraig East site by extending its boundaries westwards into the envelope created by the A944 as it curves round to the roundabout. This would present opportunities to create a community with its own facilities rather than just a simpler housing development.
- 4.3 The reporter recorded his formal recommendations in the section of the report entitled Chapter 11 – Assessment of Greenfield Housing Sites;
- (a) *The Old Skene Road site (site A under issue 61) should be safeguarded for housing in terms of structure plan policy 9, with a capacity for 25 dwellings.*
  - (b) *Two parts of Kingswells South should be identified as strategic housing land reserve, with a capacity for 100 units:*
    - (i) *the part that is bounded to the west by Fairley Road, to the south by the Den Burn, to the north by the old Lang Stracht, and to the north-east and east by the cluster of buildings at East Huxterstone and a length of track leading from it to the burn; and*

- (ii) *the area that lies to the west of Fairley Road.*
- (c) *All other parts of Kingswells South Future New Community should be deleted from the local plan and the proposals map and should be designated green belt and Green Space Network.*
- d) *Land at Maidencraig immediately west of south Shedlocksley and lying between the A944 and the Den Burn valley should be identified as strategic housing land reserve with a nominal capacity for 200 dwellings.*
- (e) *No other change to the finalised local plan should be made in response to this group of objections.*

4.4 The detailed study in the remainder of this report will therefore look at the landscape and Visual Impacts of developing this extended area.

## 5. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 5.1 In this section the general location of the study area is considered and the various natural and built features which give it its distinct character. The site sits on the western boundary of the City of Aberdeen, which is in the North East of Scotland at the estuaries of the Dee and Don Rivers. Aberdeen has traditionally been a maritime city but its character and prosperity was transformed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the discovery and production of North Sea Oil. This has made it a thriving City with a high demand for housing and new residences. This is understandably concentrated at the western boundary of the city as the eastern side is coastal. There is also pressure for development to the north and south, however the landform and river boundary make this more difficult to the south and the north is more industrial in nature.
- 5.2 Aberdeen is known as the Granite City owing to the extensive use of the stone in the construction of the buildings, particularly in the older parts of the centre. This theme is generally continued throughout the rest of the city to some degree and gives it a distinctive character which is fairly unique. Whilst Aberdeen is a sizable city its close proximity to the open countryside and generally minimal urban sprawl give it a rural feel at much of the outlying fringes with many open spaces, river valley and woodland cover.
- 5.3 This is particularly true of the western side of Aberdeen as the cityscape becomes more fragmented by topography and landuse. Here it dissipates into smaller pockets of communities which are more like joined up villages and has resulted in an uneven boundary line of settlements and small villages which exist around this perimeter.

### Topography













- 5.4 The landscape of Aberdeen is fairly undulating and gradually falls eastward towards the sea. The land rises and falls to varying degrees but with relatively few extremes. An exception to this is Brimmond Hill to the north of Kingswells which has commanding views across the landscape of the city and makes it a popular viewing point.

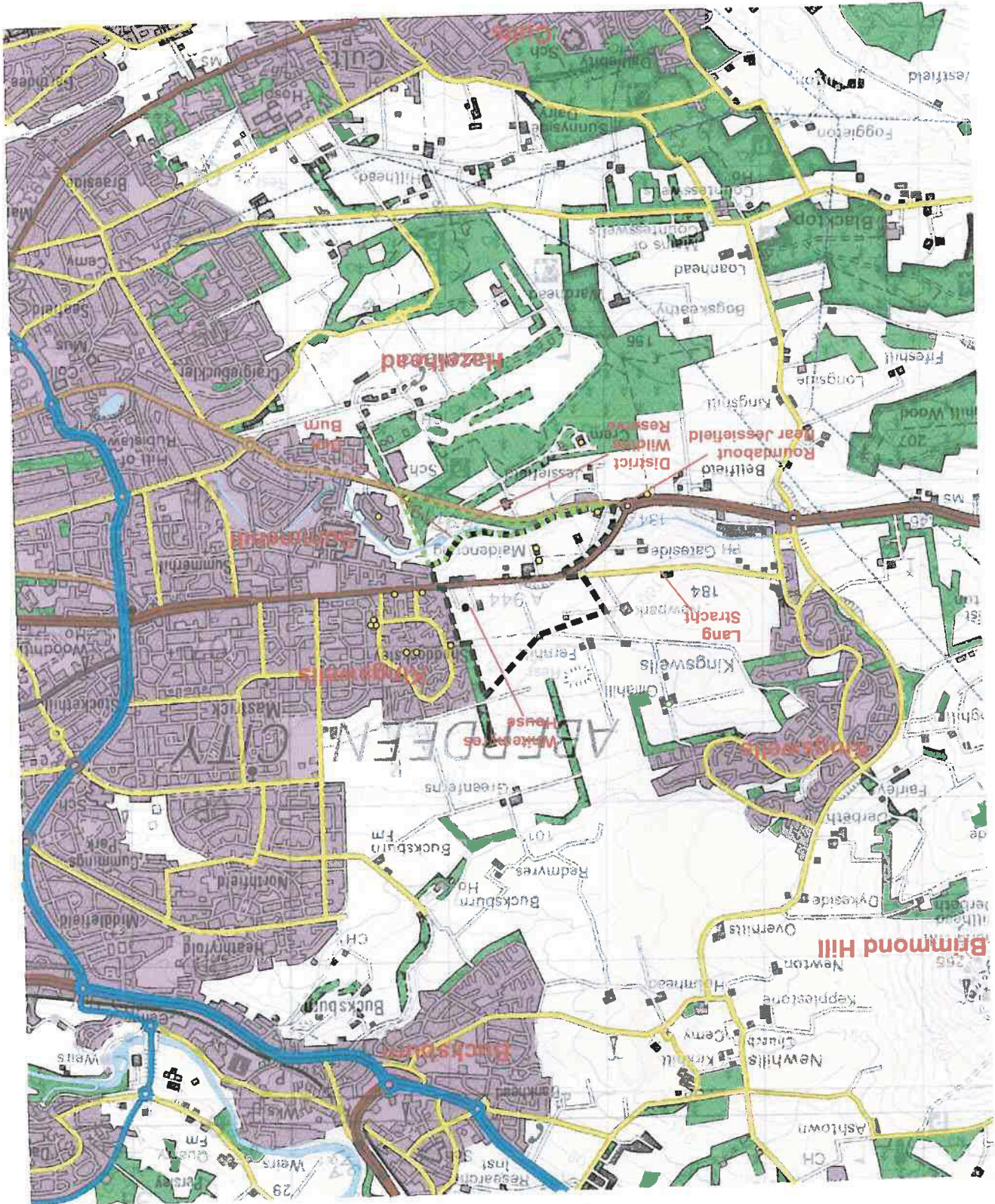
- 5.5 The smaller rises and falls within the area form small valleys and wider plateaus into which the built forms tend to nestle. These create long views in some directions and hidden areas in others.
- 5.6 The topography of the area is illustrated in drawing number L3. (contour analysis)
- 5.7 The site itself sits on a plateau to the north of the Den Burn valley which slopes away to the south of the site. Part of the valley forms the Maldenraig Local District Wildlife Reserve. Beyond this on the other side of the burn, the land rises again. To the north the land continues to rise over the site up towards Fernhill Reservoir which sits on a ridge between the valleys of the Denburn and Bucksburn. This gives it a degree of enclosure.
- 5.8 The land to the east and west varies slightly but there are no extremes in elevation which create views very far in these directions.

### Human Influences and Archaeology

- 5.9 The landscape of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire has been populated since Mesolithic times and this presence has shaped and influenced the history and culture of the area in profound ways. The presence of humans as hunter gatherers, early farmers clearing the land, modern large scale agriculturalists and larger scale city forming industrialists have left their mark upon the landscape. This is reflected in the significant number of archaeological sites that exist throughout the area. See Map 1 LI (Context)
- 5.10 These are recorded by Historic Scotland and commonly fall into four categories; Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, National Monuments and Historic Landscapes and Gardens. Within each of these categories there will be varying degrees of importance and value but all such recorded features are considered.
- 5.11 There are a few listed buildings within the study area and these have been considered first, in relation to each potential development area and then those beyond the area but within 100m of the boundary of that area

**MAIDENCRAIG EAST,  
ABERDEEN**  
L1 LOCATION AND CONTEXT  
Scale  
Date Oct 2007  
DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES  
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- Primary Route 
- Major Road 
- Minor Road 
- Water body 
- Woodland 
- Settlements 
- Power Line 
- Railway Line 
- Listed Building 
- National Monument 
- District Wildlife Reserve 
- Site Boundary 





5.12 The following Listed Buildings are included in the site:

- **OLD WHITEMYRES, FARMHOUSE** - Dated W/ MG 1704 at skew, probably recast shortly after 1751. 2-window and modern centre porch, later outshot to back; harked with chamfered margins, small windows N. frontage. (Category: C(S)
  - **WHITEMYRES HOUSE** - Late 18th century. 2-storey and dormerless attic 3-window harked with margins, with plain doorpiece in W. gable; circular keylocked opening in E. gable; coped chimneys; T-plan single-storey back wing. Semi-derelict. (Now restored) (Category: B)
  - **OLD WHITEMYRES, N. PART OF STEADING** - Probably shortly after 1751. Rubble-built rectangular block with ball finials at apices of gables. (Category: C(S)
- 5.13 The following features are on or within 100m of the site and appear on the National Monuments of Scotland Record:
- Maidencraig, meal mill - Meal-mill
  - Whitemyres House - House
  - Old Whitemyres - Farmstead
  - Old Whitemyres - Part of steading
  - Maidencraig - Farm
  - Newton Cottage - Cottage
  - Home Farm Sheddocksley - Smithy

5.14 There are no Ancient Monuments or Historic Gardens or Landscapes within 100m of the site.

## Transport

5.15 The site is bisected by the A944 Lang Stracht, which is one of the main routes west of Aberdeen. To the west of Maidencraig East the route splits into the A944 and B9119 at the roundabout near Jessiefield. This alleviates some of the traffic but the section through the site is still a busy thoroughfare. There is an advantage in terms of sustainable development as residents would be close to main public transport links into the city and would have less need for commuting by car. Both the Structure Plan and Local Plan Policies encourage new development to follow these main transport routes rather than branch out into more rural and sensitive areas.

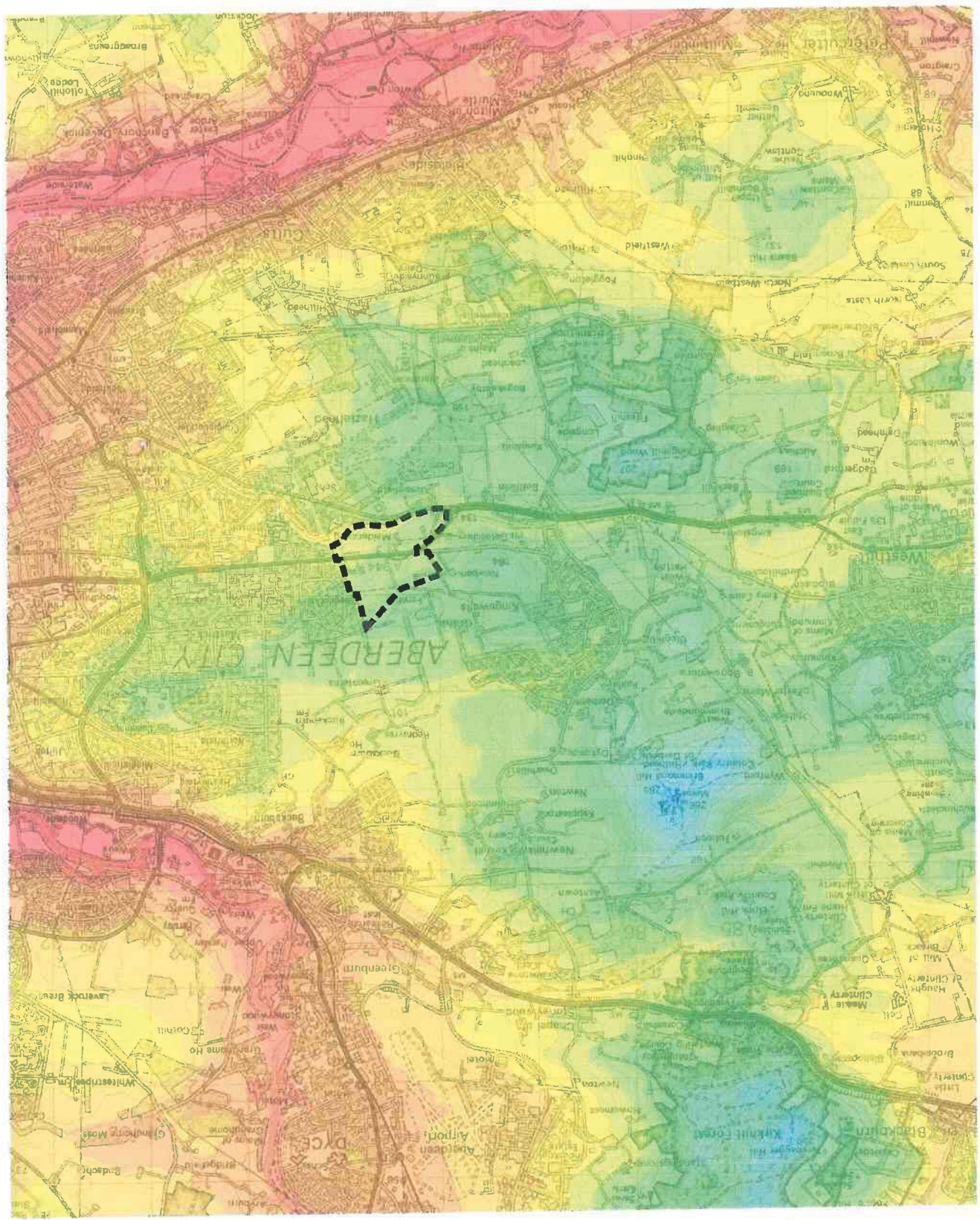
## Conclusions

- 5.16 There are no constraints upon the site from the topography of the site other than from any visual issues that it might produce. This will be looked at in more detail in the relevant chapter in the report. The gradient of the site will impose no constraints.
- 5.17 There are a few listed buildings upon the site associated with the farm building and row of dwellings along the A944. These are not high category buildings however and should be accommodated within the site without any great detrimental effect provided their setting is treated with consideration.
- 5.18 The impacts upon the A944 road must be studied separately.
- 5.19 There are benefits for sustainability and fewer conservation issues related to development along existing transport corridors when compared with other rural sites.

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**MAIDENCRAIG EAST, ABERDEEN**  
 L2 CONTOUR ANALYSIS

Date Oct 2007  
 Scale NTS



## 6. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 6.1 Scottish Natural Heritage has commissioned a range of Landscape Character Assessments which cover Scotland. These studies cover a wide area and much of the information, by its nature, has to be generalised. It is not only possible, but necessary to consider these generalisations and establish how the site being assessed, relates to the points raised.
- 6.2 The site is included within "Scottish Natural Heritage Review no 80: Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen", Ian Nicol, Anne Johnston and Laura Campbell: 1996.

### Geology

- 6.3 The geology of the area is uniquely linked with the character of the City of Aberdeen. Large deposits of igneous rock beneath the west of the City have produced the abundance of granite from which the City famously constructed its earliest Victorian buildings, earning it the title 'The Granite City'. This has continued in modern times but due to rising costs it is now mainly restricted to facings and decorative work. Deposits of sandstone and other sedimentary rocks underlie the landscape to the north and centre areas of the City, which have produced the sandy coastline and beaches. These contrast markedly with the dolerite rocks that have formed the cliff lined shore that extends south from the City along the coast.

- 6.4 This underlying solid geology has been covered over time through processes of erosion and deposition mainly through glaciation over the past 2 million to 10,000 years. This process affects the weaker areas of substrate by deepening river valleys and fault lines. The courses of both the Dee and the Don follow meltwater channels formed by this process. This process of erosion and deposition has resulted in the undulating nature of the city's landscape between the low-lying channels of the two main rivers.

### Topography

- 6.5 The eastern coastal position of the City means that it has less rainfall than the West of Scotland but it is susceptible to the ingress of sea haar, particularly in

the springtime. The topography in relation to the colder more northern climate has influenced the development of the City in the past, with the more exposed areas and higher ground being left undeveloped. Pressures for expansion have increasingly negated this effect in recent times.

- 6.6 Soils in the area mainly comprise of glacial tills formed from granitic rocks. Other soil types can be found in the river valleys due to the deposition of various parent materials. The area on which the site sits is classified as:

"Till: widespread mantle of glacially deposited rock debris, consisting of unsorted, generally unstratified, clay, sandy clay or sand, usually containing many pebbles and boulders, but locally almost stoneless."

- 6.7 The general vegetation and landcover of Aberdeen is described in the report as:  
"The present landcover ..... primarily consists of extensive areas of agricultural land, both pastoral and arable. Moorland occurs on a few areas of hilltop.....; elsewhere forestry plantation is the dominant hill-top vegetation. Deciduous woodland is notable in the areas of old policy planting.....and in established suburban areas, particularly along Deeside."

### Landscape Character

- 6.8 The Landscape Character Assessment divides the various landscape character types into various categories. The assessment document describes the area in which Maidencraig East sits as the following.

### 6.9 Open Farmland

*"Both types of farmland broadly correspond to the "Rolling Agricultural Landscape" identified in the Aberdeenshire (Central) assessment. The open farmland is an extensive character type that forms much of the immediate hinterland of the city outwith the river valleys. To the west it forms the eastern flanks of the enclosing hills. Although it occurs at varying heights, from near sea level up to approximately 150 metres, the relatively even topography and open*

character with few trees are distinguishing characteristics. Generally the landform is gently rolling, with low-lying peat-filled basins at a few locations, but only at Loirston Loch and Corby Loch are there significant water bodies."

"Agriculture is the predominant landuse, with the fields often being bordered by drystone dykes formed from boulders removed from the glacial till-derived soils. Post-and-wire fences are also used, but hedgerows are rare. Woodland occurs, but not in significant amounts. The traditional settlement pattern in this character type consists of scattered farmsteads that are often associated with small clumps of trees. In the present day there is considerable pressure from the expanding city to increase the amount of development into these areas adjacent to Aberdeen."

"The views that are possible from within the area vary according to altitude and topography, but can be fairly wide due to the lack of visually enclosing woodland. The visibility of the character type depends on its location: those areas that are close to main approach routes to the city are highly visible. Other areas, even adjacent areas, can be almost hidden from the city and its transport routes by intervening topography. The sensitivity to development of any of these areas can be quite high because of their open character, but there will be variations due to factors such as visibility that are not uniform across the whole character type."

### **Maidencraig East**

6.10 The Maidencraig East site is classified as Open Farmland and falls within the Maidencraig Character Area. This area is described as follows:

"This area comprises the shallow valley of the Denburn. It extends from Hazlehead Park in the south to a ridge line between Kingswells and Sheddocksley in the north. The landform encloses the area, allowing restricted views of the city edge around Sheddocksley to the east and Kingswells to the west. From the higher slopes views to the hills further west can be gained."

"The primary landuse is agriculture. However, there is also a Local Nature Reserve at Den of Maidencraig, within which large areas have recently been planted with trees. There is a recreational footpath at the eastern end of the reserve. The main route east out of Aberdeen follows the line of the valley. Walled field boundaries form a distinctive feature of the area. In some places they have been formed into consumption dykes of considerable size, and are

designated as ancient monuments. There is some native hazel woodland at Maidencraig, but little other woodland (except the new planting mentioned above). Along the valley floor there is some scrub, but apart from this trees tend to be isolated, or located in clumps often associated with buildings. Nonetheless, the character of the area is fairly open. The mature (to over-mature) beech trees lining the main road as it enters the built-up area form a notable feature."

"Part of the extended settlement of Kingswells is situated at the western end of the area. Farm steadings and cottages are dotted throughout the area, mainly on the rising slopes although the derelict Mill of Maidencraig is located in the valley bottom. Kingswells House and Whytemyres House are situated on either end of the elongated area have architectural merit and are set in wooded policies, but it is the clock tower of Woodend Hospital within the urban area immediately to the east which forms the most notable man-made feature. The area also contains a main road route, as outlined above."

The urban edge of the city in this area generally follows the landform well, and it therefore avoids an overly-abrupt or harsh junction with the adjacent rural area. However, there is little "definition" to the urban edge - there are few trees located here, and the car park for the District Wildlife Reserve is, consequently, rather prominent.

6.11 The distinctive landscape features are set out as follows:

- The small-scale valley landform;
- The beech trees that line the main road into the city;
- Stone dykes, occasionally consumption dykes;
- Frequent, scattered buildings, generally traditional in style;
- Views to architectural landmarks.

6.12 As with the other two Character Areas this landscape is considered sensitive to change and specific issues are raised:

"Visibility - This area is located on the western edge of the city, and is highly visible from the busy A944 Alford road, which is well-used by commuters, as is the "Lang Stracht" road on the opposite side of the valley."

"Built Development - The western edge of Aberdeen is visible from the area. There is a lack of both flat land and tree cover, and the high visibility of the area makes it sensitive to development. The existing settlement is primarily traditional in style and small scale. Buildings are often clustered into small groups, and are

frequently associated with small clumps of deciduous trees. However, there is little existing woodland or tree cover to provide screening or provide a feature for integrating development."

"Transportation - Upgrading of the existing road corridor, which runs east-west along the line of the valley, would be likely to have limited impact - depending upon the detailed design. Any new roads or structures which ran across the east-west "grain" of the landscape would be more obtrusive."

"Agriculture / Forestry - Areas of forestry occur in adjacent landscape character areas, and can be seen from this zone. Additional woodland and tree planting could be accommodated in this area, particularly if it echoed the current pattern, for example forming small clumps adjacent to buildings. Key views to nearby city landmarks should be left clear of obstructions. The existing pattern of stone dyke field boundaries is distinctive, and should be retained where feasible, possibly with grant aiding to facilitate this."

"Recreation - The existing informal recreational use could be extended with little impact on the area. The current wildlife project at Maidencraig proposes to extend its links eastwards along a wildlife corridor at Woodend and Pernilea and into the urban edge. Similar links to Hazlehead to the paths are possible. However, tree planting to ensure integration with existing elements should be considered."

6.13 Finally the report sets out development guidelines.

*Conserve / Manage*

- *Manage the beech trees that line main road into city to ensure continuance of this feature;*
- *Reinstate / conserve stone dykes, particularly near roads.*

*Enhance*

- *Consider planting more trees on urban edge to "soften" it;*
- *Consider encouraging more tree planting around buildings within the rural fringe area;*

**Conclusion**

6.14 Relevant issues highlighted by the character assessment which affect this area are:

- *The busy A944 and Lang Stracht are busy bus routes and development would have a visual impact on these roads.*
- *High visibility of the area due to landform makes it sensitive to development.*
- *Little existing woodland cover to provide screening.*
- *East – west road development would not be too intrusive whereas north – south ones would be due to 'grain' of landform.*
- *Additional woodland could be accommodated if it followed the same format as exists.*
- *There is scope for increase in informal recreational activity.*

6.15 The report recommends that the tree cover and stone dykes along city approach roads are conserved and that additional planting along city edge and buildings should be encouraged. These elements could all be integrated into a proposed development. The high visual impact of development within the area will be examined further in the relevant later chapter.

## 7. SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY

7.1 *The photographs on the following pages were taken using a Fuji Finepix S5600 digital camera with a picture quality of 5.1 megapixels and a Fujinon Zoom Lens 6.3 to 63mm and 1:3.2-3.5.*

7.2 This section provides a general description of the expanded site as described in the Local Plan Inquiry Report and considers any particular factors of note which exist. These are then illustrated and expanded upon through the photographic study.

### Description

7.3 The site is approximately 78.5ha although this is reduced in developable area by the A944 running through and existing dwellings on the site. The future viability and ownership boundaries of these will need to be established. If these are removed from the overall area the remaining land covers around 70ha.

7.4 As has been mentioned previously the A944 bisects the site and splits it into two distinct areas to the north and south. The area to the north lies over field compartments which surround Whitemyre House and Farnstead and Fernhill Farm. To the east lies Sheddocksley on the other side of a broken tree belt approximately 6m wide. This tree belt becomes far more substantial to the north of the site but for the majority, it is little more than a hedgerow in places. The northern boundary is set in the report to run along the line of the 145m contour line. There is new woodland planting directly to the north and combined with the topography it is fairly successful in blocking views from this direction. To the west the boundary is set by a farm access road which heads north from the just within the older section of the Lang Stracht road off of the A944.

7.5 The southern area now occupies the entire section of land enclosed by the A944 road to the north and west round to the roundabout close to Jessitefield, the Den Burn to the south and the area of residential area of Summerhill to the east. This housing adjoins the site and the watercourse runs into it as the houses line either side of the valley that it has formed.

### Topography

7.6 The site drops gradually from north to south from the 145m contour line at the northern boundary down to 120m at the edge of the burn. This is over a distance of around 1km which is an approximate average gradient of 1 in 40 although it is greater in the area north of the A944 at 1 in 25. The landform within the site is fairly uniform with no extremes of height. The land slopes down to the A944 a little more steeply where the channel of the road was dug out in the past but this is not an extreme change and indeed the entrance to Whitemyres House comes through here. Higher area could be overcome through earth works. To the west the land is fairly flat close to the roundabout but raised above the road height.










### Vegetation

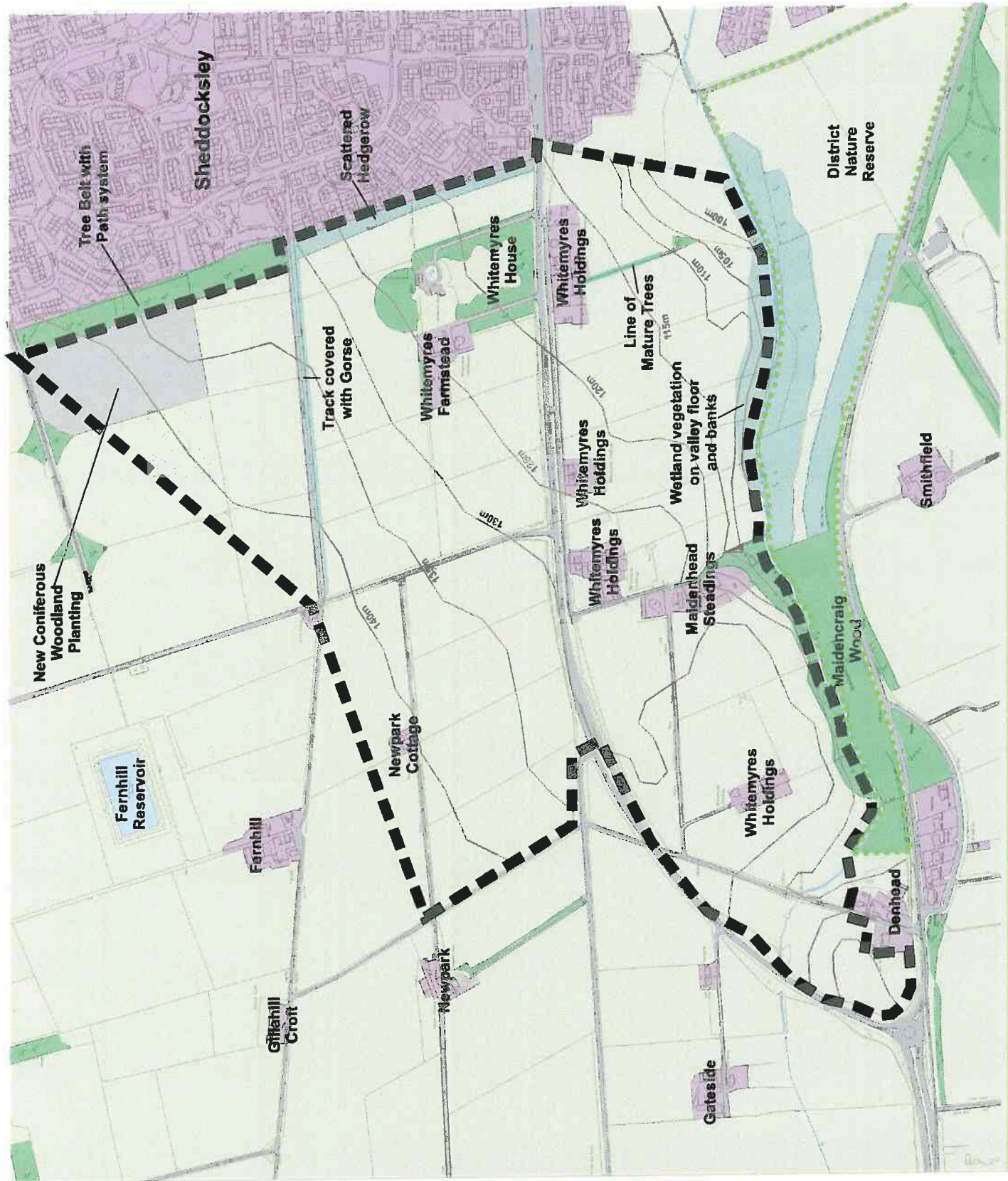
7.7 As the site has previously been used on rotation both for rose growing and as pasture land and set out into fields, the majority of the area is clear of significant vegetation or trees. These are restricted to hedgerows, field boundaries and the grounds of the existing houses. Significant examples of these will be highlighted in the photographic study.

### Built Forms

7.8 As have been mentioned previously there are some buildings existing in the study area. These are mainly associated with the A944 with the row of houses along the southern edge. In addition to these the building complex of Whitemyres House, Farnstead and grounds occupy a large space on the northern section of the site. These are set back from the A944 in wooded grounds. Other settlements are scattered throughout the southern section of the site most notably at Denhead and at Maidenhead Steadings.

7.9 A common theme in the northern section of the site and along the A944 corridor is the use of stone walling. This is a characteristic of the landscape in the wider area and have been conserved and in the case of the road way reintroduced. This is potentially a means of integrating the new elements into the older landscape character. These are an attractive asset.

-  Settlements
-  Woodland
-  Hedgerow/Vegetation
-  Path / Track
-  Road
-  District Wildlife Reserve
-  Water Course
-  Site Contours
-  Site Boundary



**MAIDENCRAIG EAST,  
ABERDEEN**

L3 SITE DESCRIPTION

Date  
Oct 2007

Scale  
NTS

**DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES**  
landscape architects

## District Wildlife Reserve

7.10 The area of the Den Burn to the south east of the Study Area (restricted to south of the burn) is designated as a District Wildlife Reserve. This is a popular recreational area and will be sensitive to impact. It should not be directly impacted by development of the site. Development has already taken place on either side of the burn in the areas immediately to the west. There will likely be some visual impact however. This will be examined in the following chapter.

## Photographic Study

7.11 **Photograph One** – Shows a view across the north western section of the site from the access road to Fernhill. The site can be seen to slope down to the south (right) but in a gentle, even gradient. The woodland around Whitemyres House can be seen and at the back, the tree belt to the north west of the site.

7.12 **Photograph Two** – looking westwards along the A944 from the houses along the southern edge of the road. The height difference of the road is almost unnoticeable here. Again the stone wall is used to mark the boundary.

7.13 **Photograph Three** – A view from further east along the A944. The mature woodland around Whitemyres House can be seen as can the scattered hedgerow strip along the eastern boundary. It goes some way towards screening the houses in Sheddocksley but has large gaps and low cover in places. The belt to the north can be seen in the background and is far more developed in comparison.

7.14 **Photograph Four** – Shows a view south from the northern section of the site. This part of the site has been planted with an area of coniferous woodland.

7.15 **Photograph Five** – Shows a view looking west from the lower parts of the Den Burn valley within Summerhill. The District Wildlife Reserve can be seen on the left of the image and the route of the watercourse in the centre. The foreground appears boggy but the site on the right on the higher ground is separated out by the embankment of the valley and can be seen to be agricultural land.

7.16 **Photograph Six** – This effect can again be seen in this image looking south west from the A944. The dip into the valley separates the landscape type from the undisturbed grassland of the District Wildlife Reserve. There is a small group of

mature trees which run in a hedgerow south of the houses on the A944 which are among the few which are present on the site itself.

7.17 **Photograph Seven** – A view of the site from the District Wildlife Reserve to the south. The majority of the southern part of the site can be seen. To the right are the houses at Summerhill. The line of mature trees can be seen again.

7.18 **Photograph Eight** – A view south from the A944 close to the houses on the roadside. The land is mainly flat, only sloping away to the south close to the valley. The compound at Whitemyre Holdings can be seen to the right and the line of mature trees are on the left. The land cover is various types of pasture separated by mainly post and wire fences and here a broken down stone wall.

7.19 **Photograph Nine** – This image shows the view north east from close to the roundabout. The site is higher than the road level due to the way the channel has been excavated into the topography. The site is mainly clear with some trees associated with some of the settlement gardens.

## Conclusions

7.20 There are a few restrictions on the development of the site caused by the physical elements that currently exist on it. Vegetation should be retained where possible if it is of sufficient quality, helps to screen the development or has an ecological value.

7.21 The existing buildings should be protected if they are of a sufficient conservation value and have been recognised with listed building status.

7.22 Maintaining the integrity of the District Wildlife Reserve is of the utmost importance but this should not be physically impacted provided that development is kept back to a sufficient distance away from it.



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**landscape architects**

Date Oct 2007  
 Scale NTS

**MAIDENCRAIG EAST, ABERDEEN**  
 L4 PHOTOGRAPH POINTS

▶ Photo Points  
 ◀ Panoramic View







4.



5.



6.

7.



8.



9.



## 8. VISUAL IMPACT

- 8.1 For the purposes of this visual impact assessment six points have been chosen across the site at regular intervals to give a reasonably accurate representation of the entire site. The Visual Envelope illustrated in figures L6 is the areas from which it is predicted the site can be seen.

### Visual Envelope

- 8.2 This has been established through ground model analysis using KTF 6.7 software produced by Key TERRA-FIRMA Ltd and topographical Land-Form PROFILE data supplied by Ordnance Survey. The 'Zones of Visual Influence' output data show the areas from which the site can be seen based on the topography of the landscape with the larger areas of woodland superimposed as visual barriers at a generic height of 8m. The supposed height of development is taken to be 8m from ground level (the finished building height will be 10m high but it is supposed that the apex of the roof lines will not have a great impact without some of the lower roof being exposed also). It takes no account of physical visual barriers such as individual houses, smaller settlements, farm buildings and smaller tree cover. These can be added to the analysis but are too numerous and varied to be included accurately. Within this envelope, there are areas, which will have a higher degree of visual sensitivity than others. Elements from which the site can be seen from are referred to in "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment" as visual receptors. These visual receptors have been looked at further as firstly a desktop study and then with a physical on-site analysis. At this point the impact of various physical barriers can be assessed.

- 8.3 The visual envelope drawing which this produces is fairly well contained by the landform of the Den Burn Valley and the built form of the city to the east. The woodland associated with Hazelhead Park restricts views from the south. It is predicted that the site will be visible from Brimmond Hill also which is a popular local viewing point which sits high above the landscape to the north.

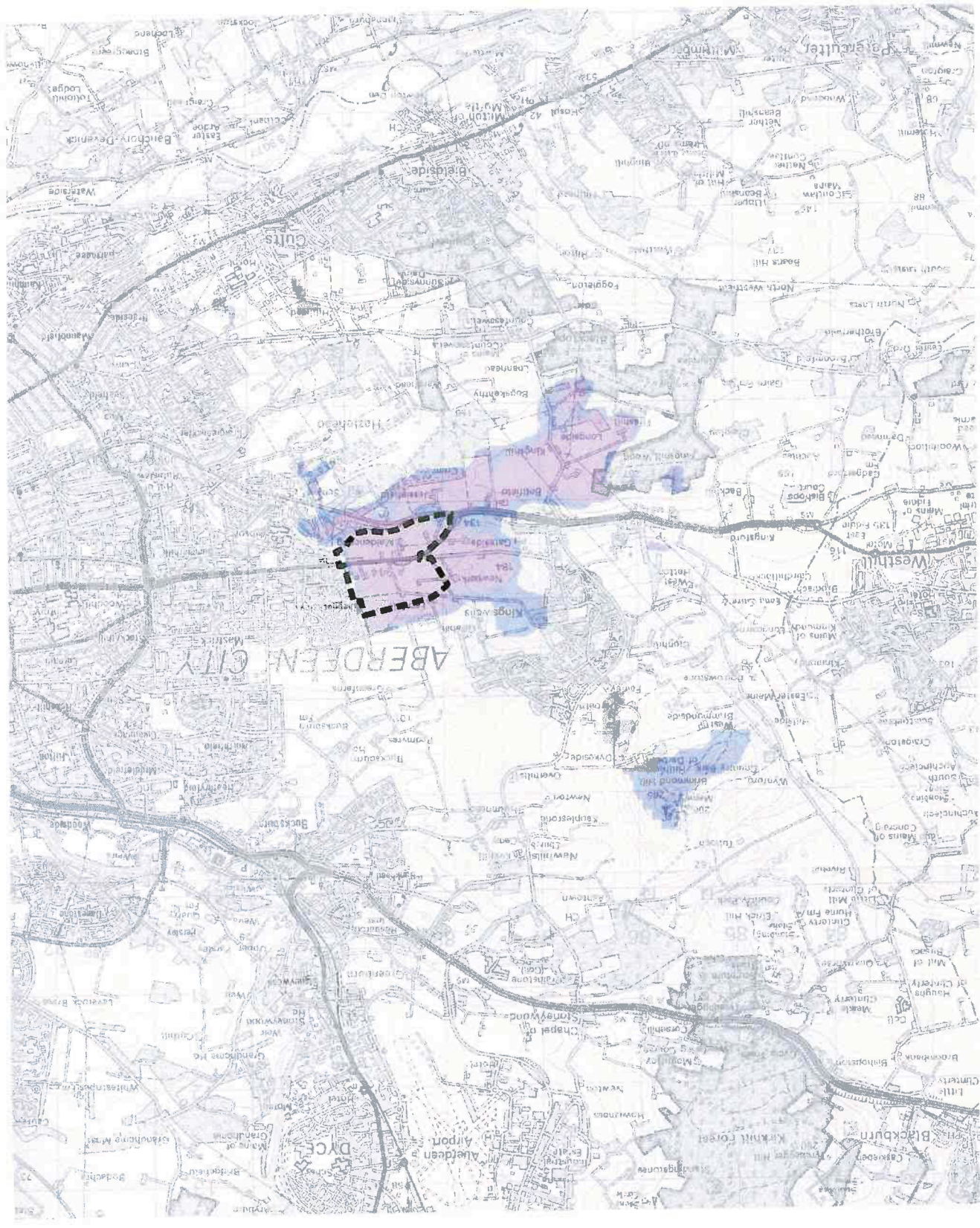
### Visual Receptors

- 8.4 The following is a more detailed assessment of the impacts on the more sensitive visual receptors, which are shown within the visual envelope.

- 8.5 **Sheddocksley** – The site is adjacent to Sheddocksley and the houses on Eriskay Drive, Uist Road and Benbecula Road back on to the boundary of the site. The broken treebelt and gap which it provides does much to screen the views. These houses and the treebelt screen almost all views of the site from any further east.
- 8.6 **Kingswells** – The village sits around a mile to the west on the north side of the A944. The visual envelope predicts that the site will be visible from a very small section of the village on its eastern edge. These views would be over some distance, be broken by the landform and be seen against the backdrop of the developed area behind. Given these factors and the very small amount of the settlement affected, the impact can be considered very low indeed.
- 8.7 **Brimmond Hill** – this hill top is a local viewing point and has spectacular views across the western part of the city. It is possible that the area of the site north of the A944 will be seen from here but this will be over some distance and will blend in with the existing houses adjacent. The orientation of the site is also such that it is sloping away from the hill in a southerly direction which will further diminish any impact.
- 8.8 **The A944** – This busy road runs through the site and will therefore be impacted by any development of it. It is however from a point where the road emerges from a very urban character area into a rural one. The transition point between these areas would be moved to the east and therefore impact would not be as great as if it were only a rural area. Views will however extend out westward for eastbound traffic for a short distance towards, but not as far as, Kingswells. This is an impact which will affect mainly road users but is still fairly contained and not considered of great consequence in the Local Plan Inquiry Report.
- 8.9 **B9119** – runs along the southern side of the District Wildlife Reserve after splitting away from the A944 at the roundabout to the west. The site is mostly screened by the tree coverage along the road and in the District Wildlife Reserve but some brief views may be possible.
- 8.10 **Hazelhead** – this area of the city sits to the south of the site over the Den Burn Valley. Areas to the northern edge of the district may get some views of the east of the site but these will be broken by the trees in the District Wildlife Reserve

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 Date Oct 2007  
 Scale NTS  
**MAIDENCRAIG EAST, ABERDEEN**  
**L6 VISUAL ENVELOPE**

Site Boundary  
 Visual Envelope



and along the B9119. Within the area these views will disappear.

- 8.11 Kingshill – This is one of several small settlements dotted within the visual envelope. These usually consist of no more than a few dwellings but should be assessed none-the-less. Kingshill sits on higher ground to the south of Kingswell over the valley. The landform and other obstacles will make views of the site difficult but some might be possible of the top section of the north part of the site from this area.
- 8.12 Derbeth – The visual envelope predicts that views may be possible from Derbeth to the north west of Kingswells of higher ground as it rises up towards Brimmond hill. In reality the only area that could be seen would be the north western section and this would be over a large distance. It would also be seen against the backdrop of the city and so could be considered to be a very low impact which could be further reduced through screen planting.
- 8.13 New Park – this is a farmstead which is to the west. It will have views of the site with its extended area westwards.
- 8.14 Gateside – similarly to New Park the views from Gateside will be greater with the extended site area. These farmsteads will be impacted to some extent but there are only a few such settlements within the very contained visual envelope.

#### Photographic Study

- 8.15 The following describes a short photographic study of some of the visual receptors predicted by the visual envelope drawing and analyses the extent of the visual impact that will be caused.
- 8.16 **Photograph Ten** – The view from the viewing point at Brimmond Hill. On the right is Kingswells and Aberdeen on the left and background. The landscape in the centre forms a flat bowl shape and to the south it is undulating in level around the Den Burn. The site is mainly hidden behind the raised landform although a small section of the western part may be visible albeit at a great distance.
- 8.17 **Photograph Eleven** – The view from Kingshill. The lower parts of the site are hidden behind the landform of the Den Burn valley but the higher parts of the north western area are visible.

8.18 **Photograph Twelve** – This photograph is taken from the path running through the District Wildlife Reserve on the southern side of the Den Burn Valley. The site is on the immediate north side of the valley and is therefore highly visible from here.

8.19 **Photograph Thirteen** – The view looking north east from the B9119 to the south of the District Wildlife Reserve. The tree cover along the road help to screen the site from it but the higher parts of the site are visible where cover is sparse. Further east and west along the road the tree cover is thicker and views are more contained.

#### Conclusion

- 8.20 The visual envelope produced by the topographical information is fairly well contained by the landform of the Den Burn Valley. Upon further study on site these impacts have been assessed and the actual visual envelope can be seen to be even smaller.
- 8.21 The parts which will have the greatest impact will be the A944 road and the District Wildlife Reserve. The A944 can be considered a less sensitive visual receptor and will be less impacted than the District Wildlife Reserve although it is likely to have a greater number of viewers. The highest points of the reserve will be impacted most by development particularly on the path directly across the valley from the site. The lower parts of the valley will not be as strongly impacted.
- 8.22 These impacts can be reduced through the introduction of screen planting but some visual impact will inevitably remain.

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## 9. CONSTRAINTS

### Planning Constraints

- 9.1 The site has been reviewed through the Local Plan Inquiry process and has been found to be not only a preferred site but was recommended for expansion by the Reporter. This indicates that any planning constraints which would have been upon the site are deemed to be reasonably acceptable in comparison to the resulting benefits. Consideration should be given to any requirements for future community infrastructure such as schools, shops etc.

### Topographical Constraints

- 9.2 There are no topographical constraints in terms of gradient on the site and indeed the landform of the Den Burn Valley is an advantage in containing views around the site.

### Built Form Constraints

- 9.3 There are a few listed building within the study area. Consideration of the setting of these buildings must be made so they are not adversely affected. This should mean adequate spacing of new build and screen planting where appropriate.
- 9.4 The stone walls in the area should be retained wherever possible.

### Vegetation Constraints

- 9.5 The vegetation on the site is mainly around the periphery and the existing buildings. Development should not adversely affect these areas. The line of mature trees at the south of the development should be protected if they are found to be in good health. Other sections of planting should be protected as far as possible particularly if they aid in screening any part of the development.

### District Wildlife Reserve Constraints

- 9.6 Development should be kept well back from the edge of the Wildlife reserve to avoid any impacts upon it.

### Landscape Character Constraints

- 9.7 The landscape character assessment was mainly concerned with issues of Visual Impact and mainly along the A944. The visual impact is dealt with elsewhere but there were also issues raised over lack of woodland cover. The development would require that sufficient boundary planting should be carried out to redress this shortage. This should be planted early and at a good mix of sizes to give an initial effect.
- 9.8 The East to West road layouts should be utilised wherever possible and should be addressed at a detailed design stage.

### Visual Impact Constraints

- 9.9 The greatest visual impacts will be from the A944, the north-west section and the District Wildlife Reserve. Efforts must be made to use screen planting along the A944 and Northern and western boundaries to reduce this impact.
- 9.10 The southern boundary will require substantial screening to reduce the impact of the development from the District Wildlife Reserve. This will not hide it from view completely but will make its appearance more in keeping with the District Wildlife Reserve within an urban environment.

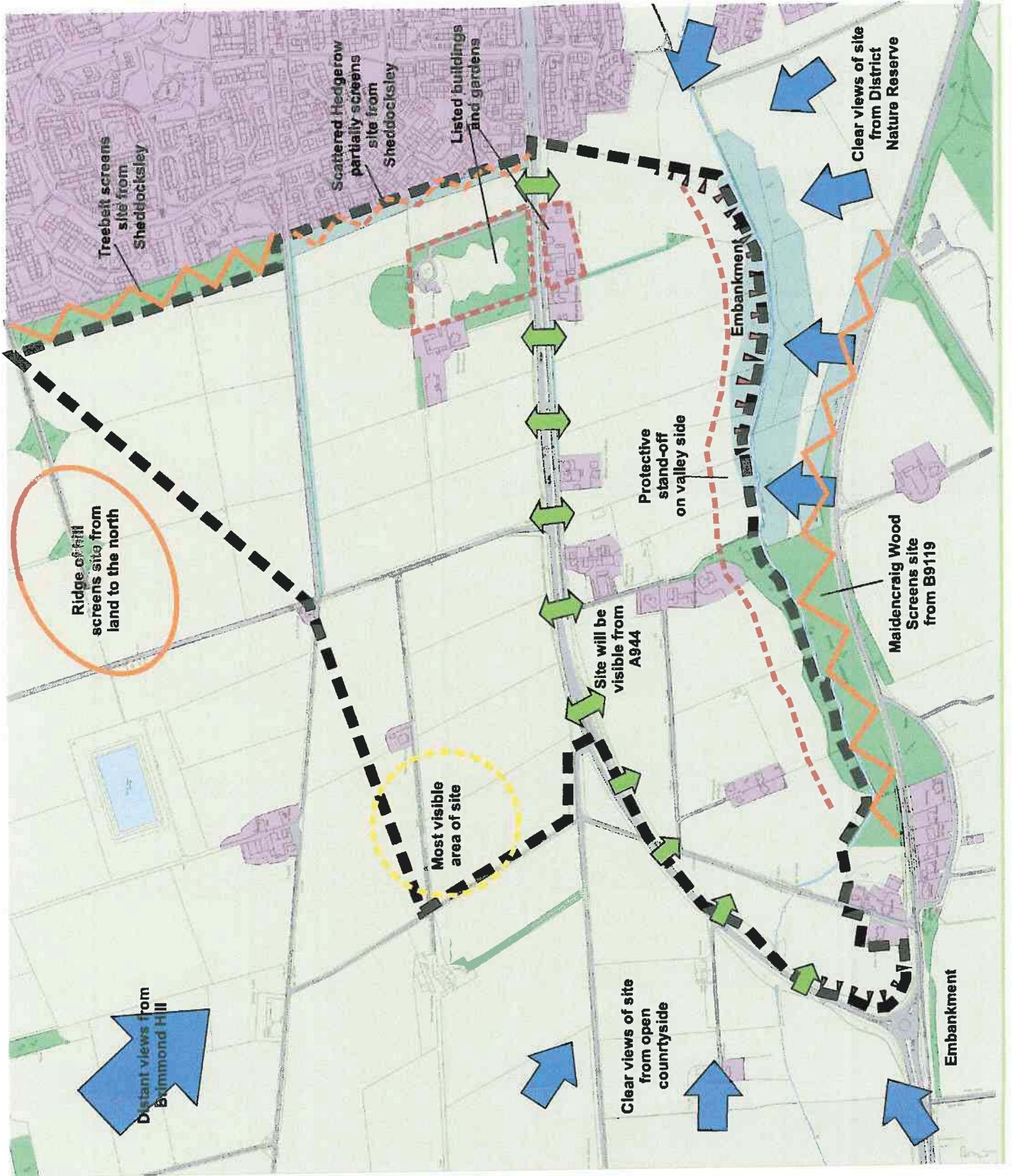
**MAIDENCRAIG EAST,  
ABERDEEN**

L6 CONSTRAINTS

Date  
Oct 2007

Scale  
N.T.S.

**DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES**  
landscape architects



## 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 If the site is to be developed, a strong boundary treatment of woodland should be incorporated to restrict the visual impact to a minimum and preserve the landscape character of the area. This should include a varied size mix of planting of a similar style to existing woodland in the area.
- 10.2 The settings of the existing buildings should be preserved by having suitable stand-off distances and screen planting where necessary. This is particularly true of the rears of the houses on the southern side of the A944 and in the south western section.
- 10.3 The A944 frontage should have a high degree of landscape planting to soften any visual impacts that result. This should be at least 6m back from the road side and be extended to 10m at the roundabout.
- 10.4 The broken tree belt between the site and Sheddocksley should be enhanced and could incorporate a pedestrian route which links with the footpath through the woodland belt to the north.
- 10.5 Development should be kept back from the edge of the wildlife reserve to at least 30m.
- 10.6 The southern boundary should have a thick woodland belt along the side of the Den Burn Valley to soften visual impact. This should be 20m wide from the rear fences of the development and again incorporate a variation in size of trees to give an initial coverage. It should also feature species which are in keeping with the District Wildlife Reserve and local area.
- 10.7 The stone walling in the area should be retained and used as a feature of the development to help integrate it into the character of the area.

These recommendations are illustrated graphically on Map L7 overleaf

- Settlements
- Woodland
- Hedgerow/Vegetation
- Existing Path
- Potential Path link
- Possible Road Layout
- Potential Development Area
- Potential Future Community Area
- Water Course
- Site Boundary

