

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: -

The Structure Plan allowed the City Local Plan to allocate 175 Ha of business land over the 21 year period to 2030, and in fact the City LDP has allocated 199 Ha for development in that period. However the new SDP allows for only the same level of growth (175 Ha over the 21 year period from 2014 to 2035) which allows for no new land release in the period 2030-2035, while anticipating a faster pace of both population and residential growth. A similar situation pertains in the 'Shire part of the SDP area.

The logical outcome from this approach is that the local economy will be constrained as the land supply dries up, new office and factory construction contracts, and business growth is constrained due to a scarcity of available premises.

We have objected to the SDP as the target for business growth is too low, and suggest the target for business land supply (in the period to 2035) should be increased by a further 75 Ha to be allocated in the AMHA.

It is also notable that many of the employment land sites allocated in the 2012 LDP are either very large sites, or a part of very large mixed use sites (including several thousand houses in some cases). Concern is therefore raised over the potential to deliver such sites timeously, and address the growing demand for quality employment land.

This Local Development Plan bid is therefore necessary to address 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 Employment Land Audit and progress on 2012 LDP sites in the interim. Seeking to predict these three variables at this stage in the process is impossible.

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- 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 2nd 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
Address: Banchory Business Centre, Burn O'Bennie Road, Banchory
Postcode: AB31 5ZU

2 Name of landowner: Milltimber Farms Ltd. c/o Bancon Developments Ltd.
Address: As above.

The site and your proposal

3 Site Name: Milltimber South

4 Site Location map: The site is considered to be a 'gap site', located to the south of the A93 in Milltimber. Housing sits to the east, west and north of the site, and the Deeside Way runs along the southern boundary. Beyond the Deeside Way, a recently completed livery has been developed.



Fig 1 – Proposed development site and route of proposed AWPR.

5 National Grid reference of the site: NJ 862015

6 Current Use of Site/Previous Development: Agricultural/grazing land.

7 Proposed Use of the Site: Residential and commercial

- 8** Details of Housing Proposals: It will be seen from the attached indicative plan that strategic landscaping belts are proposed all around the site. To the west, and east, the belt will be 20 metres wide to provide a strong screen for the established housing areas as well as footpath and wildlife corridors. On the northern side of the site, the landscape belt will be 30 metres deep so that development cannot start until well down the slope. This will ensure that the view over the site for those walking or driving along the North Deeside Road will not be obscured. As a further ‘factor of safety’ in this, the first row of houses and shops is proposed to be single storey. To the south of the site there will be a 10 metre wide landscape strip to accommodate both a buffer to the Deeside Way and to contain necessary SUDS measures.

Apart from the generous landscaping, the masterplan demonstrates the site developed with 60 houses set in generous plots, along with a group of commercial buildings, providing space (of 1225 sq.m.) for a variety of retail or office users. The gross residential density would be 5.2 dwellings / Ha (2.1 / acre) which is highly compatible with surrounding development in the area.

The indicative layout has been designed utilising the principles of ‘Designing Streets’ with all the properties being very well connected. Most are related to a formal square, or an area of green open space. The majority have rear service access, so that a continuous street frontage can be designed – when looking at the individual house and plot layouts at the detailed design stage. It would be a very attractive layout, highly desirable to the market, and would provide further locational choice in an area which currently has few development options.

- 9** Provision of Affordable Housing: Affordable housing will be provided on site, at a rate of 25%.
- 10** Business Land Proposals: The indicative plan shows the potential for commercial uses (retail or office use), with space of 1225sq.m.
- 11** Other Proposed Land Uses: N/A
- 12** Phasing: The development would be built in two phases.
- 13** Community Engagement: The site was promoted for residential development through the 2012 LDP review. This involved presentation to public meetings, and several constructive meetings with the local Community Council. Our Local Development Plan bid and objections to the Main Issues Report and Proposed Plan were placed on our website for public inspection, and this bid will also be made publically available in the same way. All public feedback received is recorded and addressed through the design process.

Sustainable Development and Design

14 Sustainability Checklist:

- A) Exposure – The site has good shelter to northerly winds
- B) Aspect – The site is south facing, therefore benefitting from passive solar gain. The site sits at a lower level than the A93, ensuring continued views from the road and houses to the north, and no interruption to their residential amenity or sunlight. Views to the south over the River Dee valley are very attractive.
- C) Slope – The site is gently sloping, although the initial drop in level from the A93 is steeper. The housing is set back some 30m from the A93, to provide appropriate landscaping, but this also ensures there is ample room to grade the access appropriately. Fig 2 below shows a typical section from the A93 to the housing on the site.

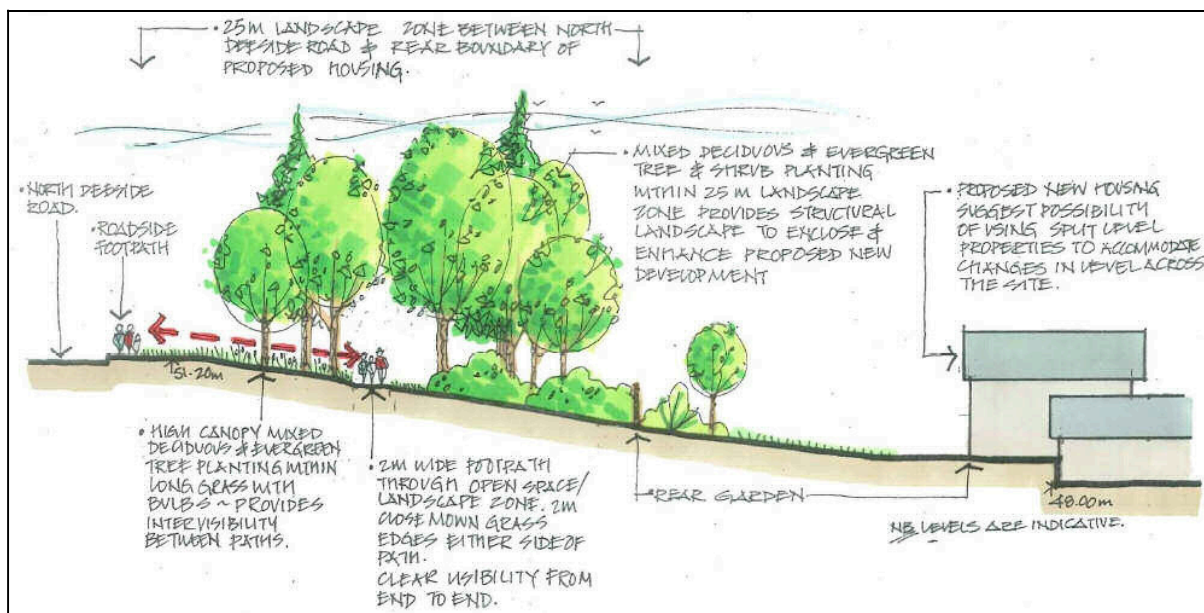


Fig 2 – typical section from the A93 to the housing

- D) Flooding – A flood risk assessment has been carried out and shows that the site is not at risk from a 1:200 year flood event.
- E) Drainage – The site is capable of being drained effectively. The lower Deeside trunk sewer runs to the south of the site while surface water can be disposed of using SUDS.
- F) Built and Cultural Heritage – The development will not lead to the loss or impact upon any listed building or historic landscape.
- G) Natural conservation – The development of the site would not impact negatively upon any nature conservation interests, and the proposed landscaping will contribute to the biodiversity of the area.
- H) Landscape features – The site has no notable landscape features, as it is agricultural grazing land. However, adjacent sites contain mature trees, and deciduous trees line the Deeside

Way to the south of the site. These can be seen in Fig 3 below, taken from the A93 close to the centre of the site looking southeast.



Fig 3 – eastern half of the site looking southeast from the A93.

- I) Landscape fit – A landscape and visual impact assessment has been prepared for the site, and is appended to this bid. The proposed development will be landscaped to ensure a successful integration into the landscape.
- J) Relationship to existing settlements – The proposed development will fit successfully into the existing settlement, with development existing on all sides of the site. The aerial photograph with the masterplan area imposed in Fig 4 demonstrates how well suited the site is for development.



Fig 4 – integration into the surrounding area.

- K) Land use mix – The proposed residential development will be compatible with the surrounding area, and the provision of retail and office space will provide valuable local

employment opportunities, and potentially provide local shopping facilities which are currently lacking in Milltimber.

L) Accessibility – The whole of the proposed development site is within 400m of a bus stop on the A93. Vehicular access is directly to the A93. The AWPR is planned to pass the site around 500m to the west, with a new grade separated interchange to the north of the A93, providing excellent accessibility to all parts of the city and the wider area.

M) Proximity to services and facilities –

Community facilities – within 400 of the site

Local shops – potentially on site.

Sports facilities – 400-800m from the site

Public transport networks – Within 400m of the site

Primary school – within 400m 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 at Fig 5 demonstrates the range of formal routes that surround the site. The Deeside Way offers an excellent means to access the services and facilities in Cults or Culter without conflicting with public roads, and the path along the northern bank of the River Dee offers excellent recreational walks.

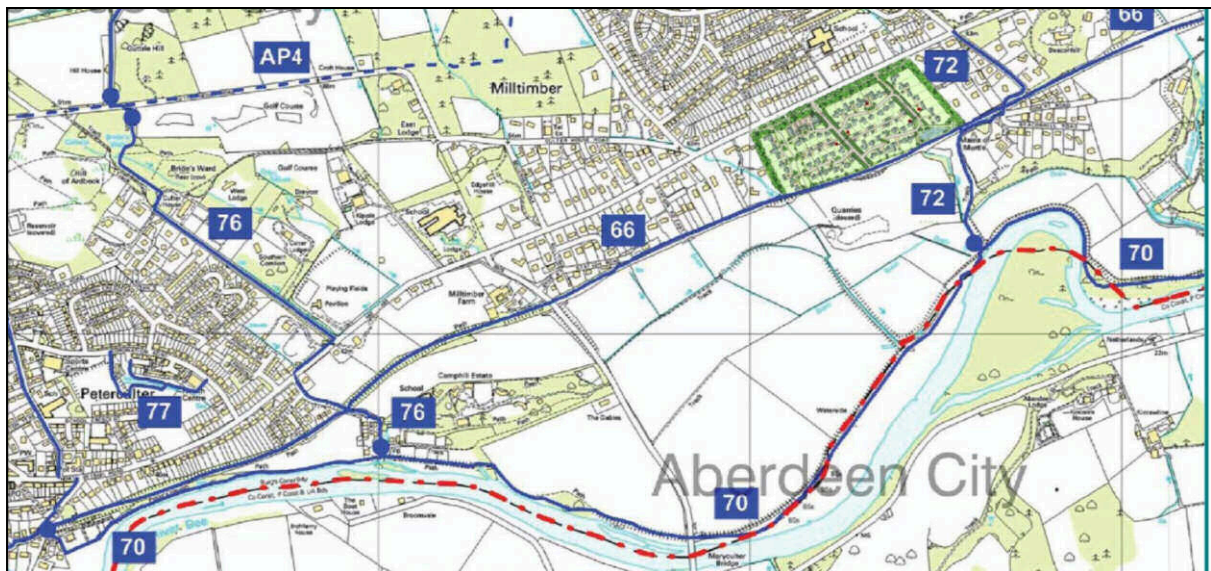


Fig 5 – site in context with the core paths plan.

O) Proximity to employment opportunities – Milltimber offers limited employment opportunities at present. The town is, however, excellently placed to provide access to Westhill and Kingswells, which both offer extensive employment opportunities. The nearby AWPR access will further enhance the connection with these towns. The provision of office and retail opportunities within the development site will create local employment opportunities.

P) Contamination – No constraints.

Q) Land use conflict – No conflict.

R) Physical Infrastructure –

Electricity – available

Gas – available

Water and Sewage – capacity available

Secondary School Capacity – current forecasts indicate capacity at Cults Academy

Primary Capacity – Significant capacity is available at Culter Primary School.

15 Supporting Surveys: This bid is supported by a landscape and visual impact assessment and also an ecological assessment of the site.

16 Community Benefits of the Proposed Development: The development of the site will provide local housing, including 25% affordable housing. The provision of local office and retail opportunities will improve local employment opportunities and improve the sustainability of Milltimber, which is predominantly a residential commuter town serving Aberdeen.

17 Masterplan/Framework: An indicative plan is appended to the report.



INDICATIVE PLANTING SCHEDULE

BOULEVARD TREE PLANTING

- ACER PLATANOIDES EMERALD QUEEN
- TILIA CORDATA GREENSPIRE
- PRUNUS SUNSET BOULEVARD

OPEN SPACE TREE PLANTING

- AESCULUS HIPPOCASTANUM
- CEDRUS ATLANTICA GLAUCA
- FAGUS SYLVATICA
- QUERCUS RUBRA
- PINUS SYLVESTRIS

FRONT GARDEN / ROAD FRONTAGE TREE PLANTING

- BETULA JACQUEMONTII
- SORBUS AUCUPARIA
- SORBUS ARIA 'MAJESTICA'
- MALUS JOHN DOWNIE

SPECIMEN SHRUB PLANTING

- AMELANCHIER CANADENSIS
- CORYLUS AVELLANA CONTORTA
- PINUS MUGO MUGHUS
- RHODODENDRON HYBRIDS IN VARIETY

STRUCTURE PLANTING

- ALNUS GLUTINOSA
- BETULA PENDULA
- FAGUS SYLVATICA
- FRAXINUS EXCELSIOR
- LARIX X EUROLEPSIS
- PINUS SYLVESTRIS
- PRUNUS AVIUM
- QUERCUS ROBUR

SHRUB PLANTING

- ACER CAMPESTRE
- CORYLUS AVELLANA
- CRATAEGUS MONOGYNA
- ILEX AQUIFOLIUM
- PRUNUS SPINOSA
- VIBURNUM OPULUS

LARGE HEIGHT SHRUB PLANTING

- BUDDLEJA DAVIDII WHITE PROFUSION
- COTINUS COGGYGRIA ROYAL PURPLE
- ELAEAGNUS PUNGENS MACULATA
- PIERIS FOREST FLAME
- PYRACANTHA ROGERSIANA FLAVA
- RHODODENDRON HYBRIDS IN VARIETY
- VIBURNUM TINUS EVE PRICE
- SPIRAEA X ARGUTA
- WEIGELA FLORIDA VARIEGATA
- PRUNUS LAUROCERASUS CAUCASICA

GROUND COVER SHRUB PLANTING

- COTONEASTER CORAL BEAUTY
- EUONYMUS FORTUNEI EMERALD GAIEY
- GERANIUM JOHNSONS BLUE
- HEBE PINGUIFOLIA PAGEI
- HELLEBORUS ORIENTALIS
- JUNIPERUS SQUAMATA BLUE CARPET
- LONICERA MAY GREEN
- PACHYSANDRA TERMINALIS
- POTENTILLA RED ACE
- STACHYS LANATA
- VINCA MINOR

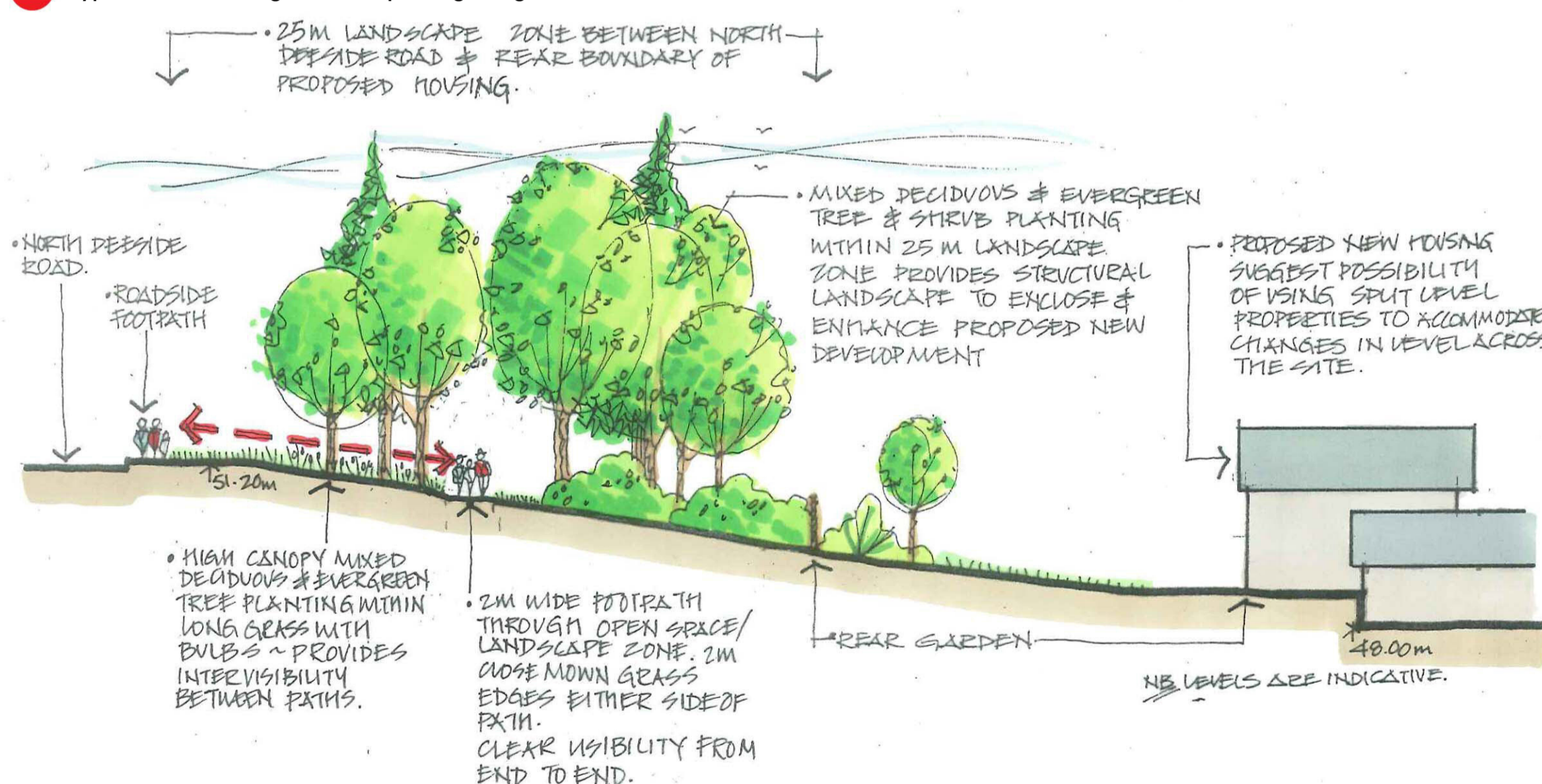
MEDIUM HEIGHT SHRUB PLANTING

- BERBERIS OTTAWENSIS SUPERBA
- CHOISYA TERNATA
- HEBE RED EDGE
- POTENTILLA ABBOTSWOOD
- BRACHYLOTTIS SUNSHINE
- ROSMARINUS MISS JESSOP'S UPRIGHT
- SKIMMIA JAPONICA RUBELLA
- VIBURNUM DAVIDII
- HYPERICUM HIDCOTE
- CYTISUS X PRAECOX ALLGOLD

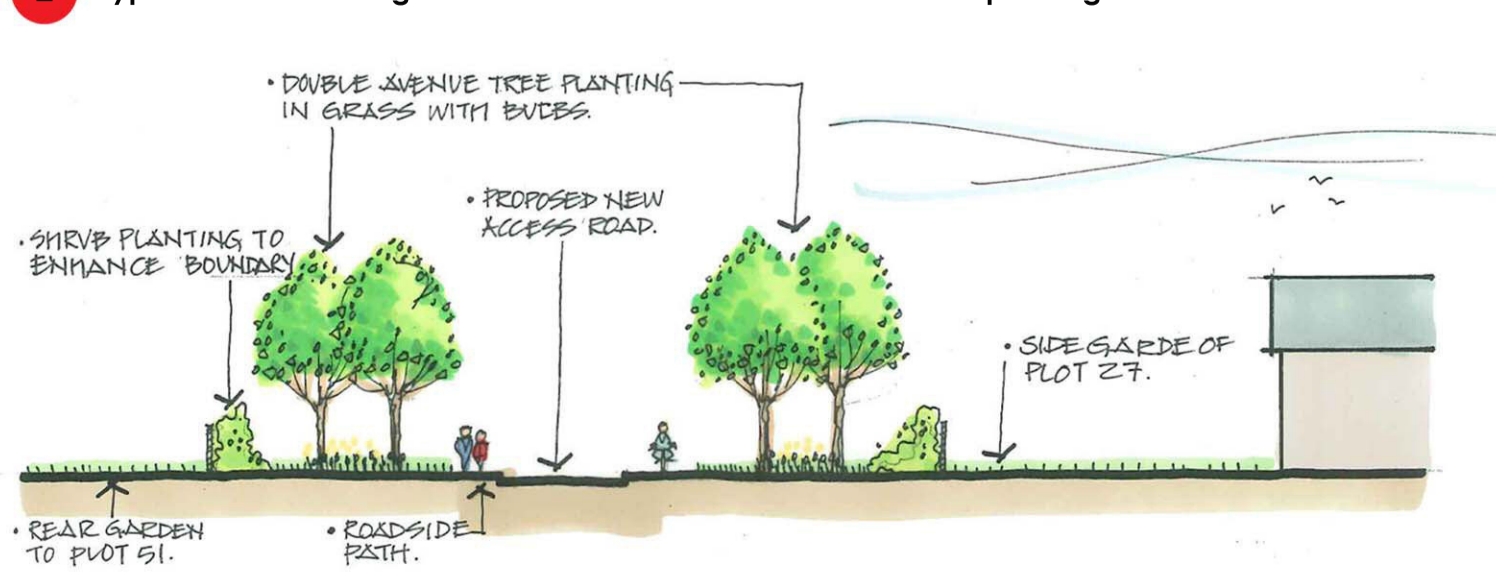
BULB PLANTING

- COLCHICUM SPECIOSUM
- HYACINTHOIDES NON SCRIPTA
- NARCISSUS FEBRUARY GOLD
- NARCISSUS ICE FOLLIES

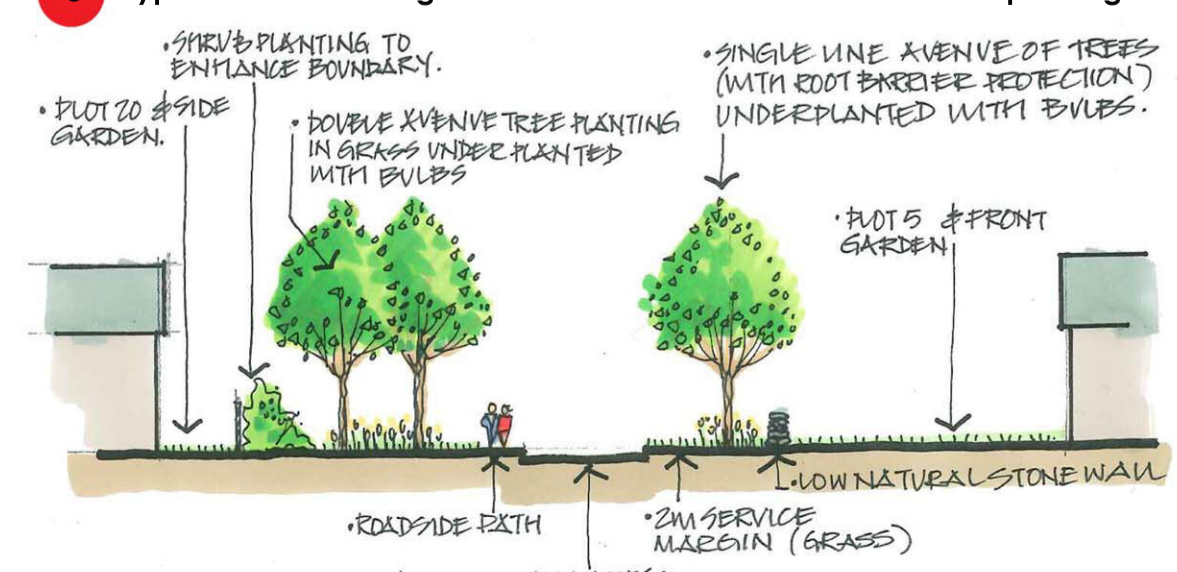
1 Typical section through structure planting along North Deeside Road - 1: 250 scale



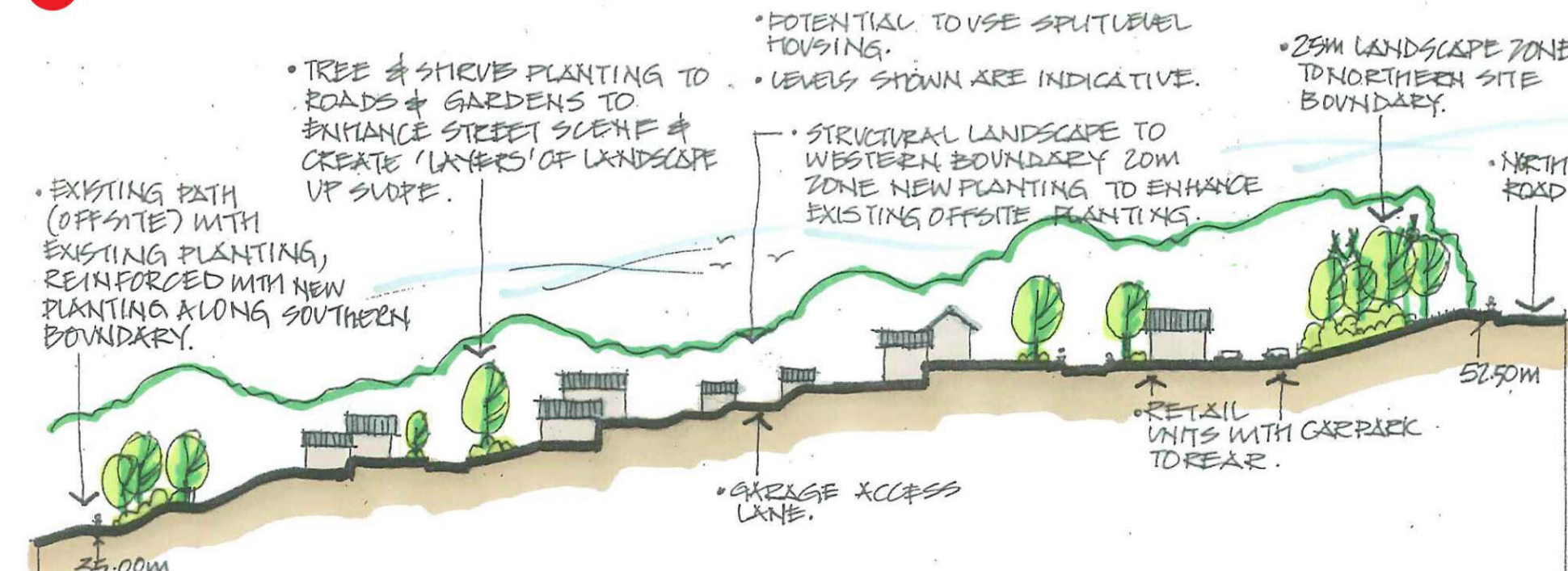
2 Typical section through western access road & boulevard tree planting - Not To Scale



3 Typical section through eastern access road & boulevard tree planting - Not To Scale



4 Typical long section north-south through site - 1:1000 scale



Legend

- Proposed structural tree and shrub planting
- Proposed tree planting to open spaces, road frontages and within front gardens
- Proposed shrub planting
- Proposed close mown grass
- Existing trees off-site

GENERAL NOTES

- Prior to commencement of any work on site protective fencing must be erected around existing trees to be retained in accordance with BS 5837:2005.
- Prior to any deep cultivation or excavation of planting pits the landscape contractor must check with the site engineer for exact locations of any underground services.
- For information on levels & drainage refer to engineers drawings.
- No information with regard to levels & drainage was available at time of preparation of drawing.

Revision A – changes to landscape masterplan to reflect changes to housing layout (16.12.2010)

NOT FOR SITE ISSUE

site: 149-261 North Deeside Road	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Landscape Masterplan	
scale: Various @ A1	date: 28/ 05 / 10
drawing number: 0555A / 1A	
drawn by: J Brindley	checked by: R Wilkie
axwell house east mains industrial estate broxburn west lothian EH52 5AU t: 01506 858 757 f: 01506 855 635 www.brindleyassociates.co.uk © Brindley Associates Ltd.	





DAVIDSON
SMITH
PARTNERSHIP
ARCHITECTS & DESIGNERS

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT NORTH DEESIDE ROAD, MILLTIMBER



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VIEW FROM NORTH DEESIDE ROAD LOOKING SOUTH



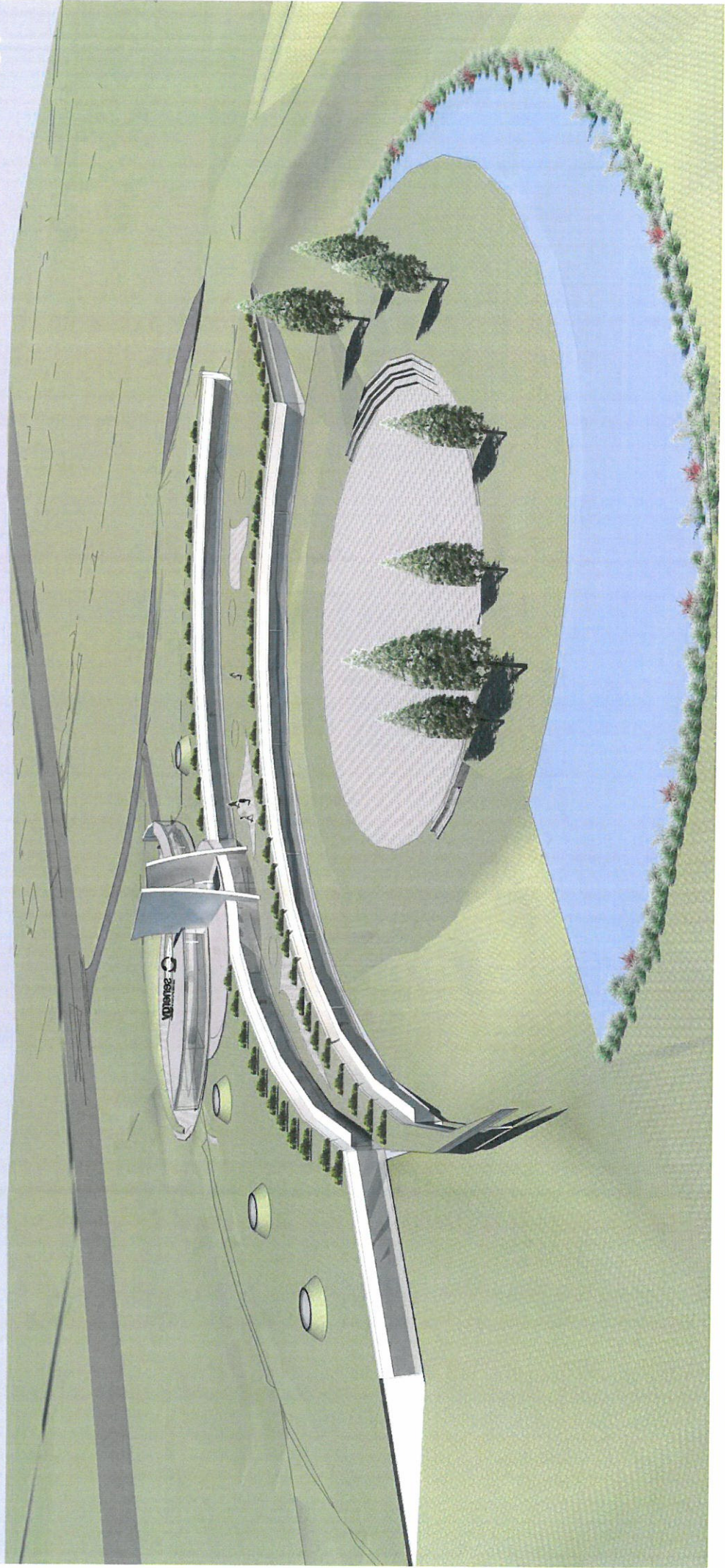
DAVIDSON
S M I T H
PARTNERSHIP

ARCHITECTS & INTERIORS

BIRDSEYE VIEW LOOKING NORTH EAST



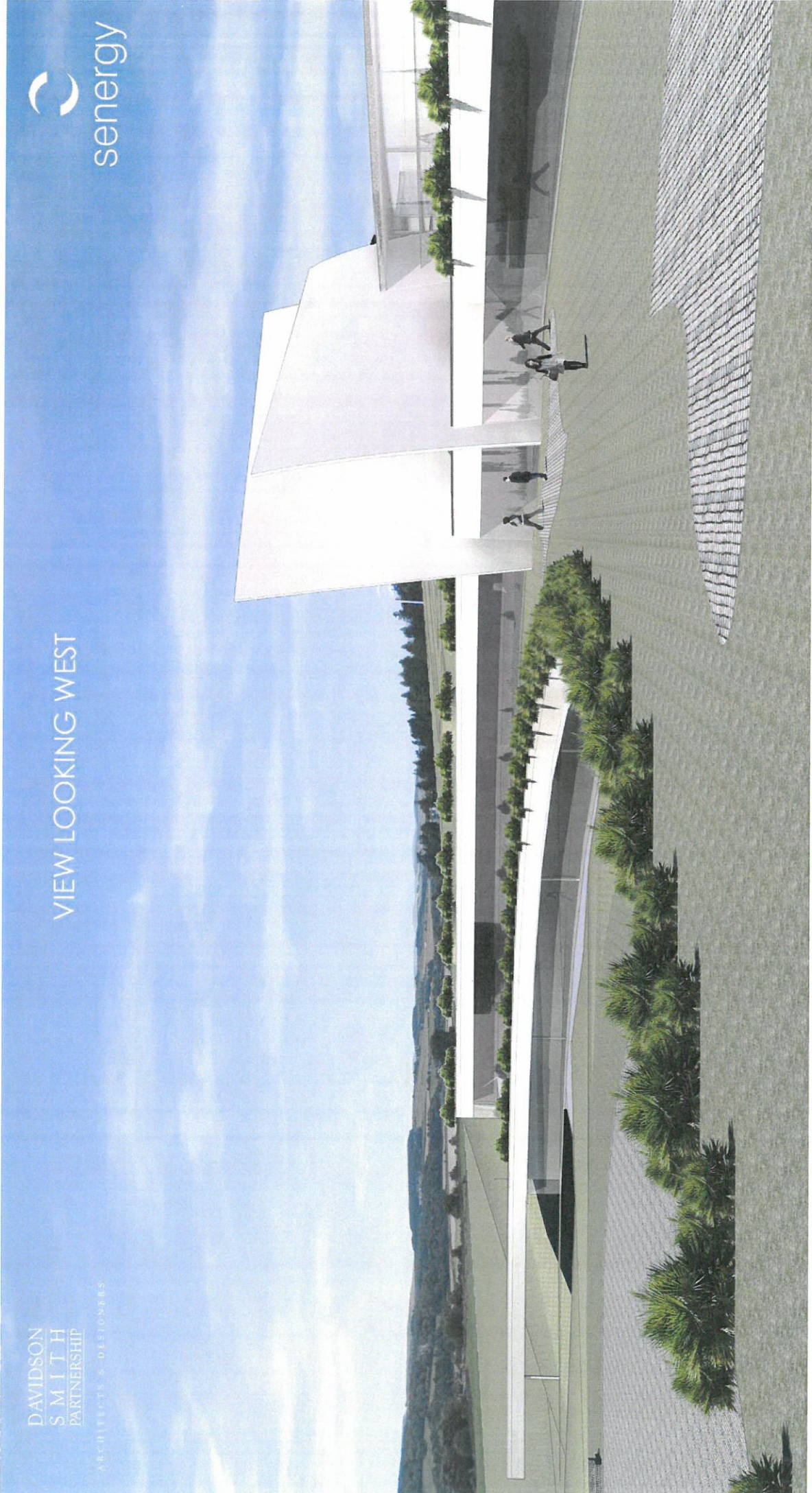
senergy



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VIEW LOOKING WEST



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VIEW LOOKING NORTH



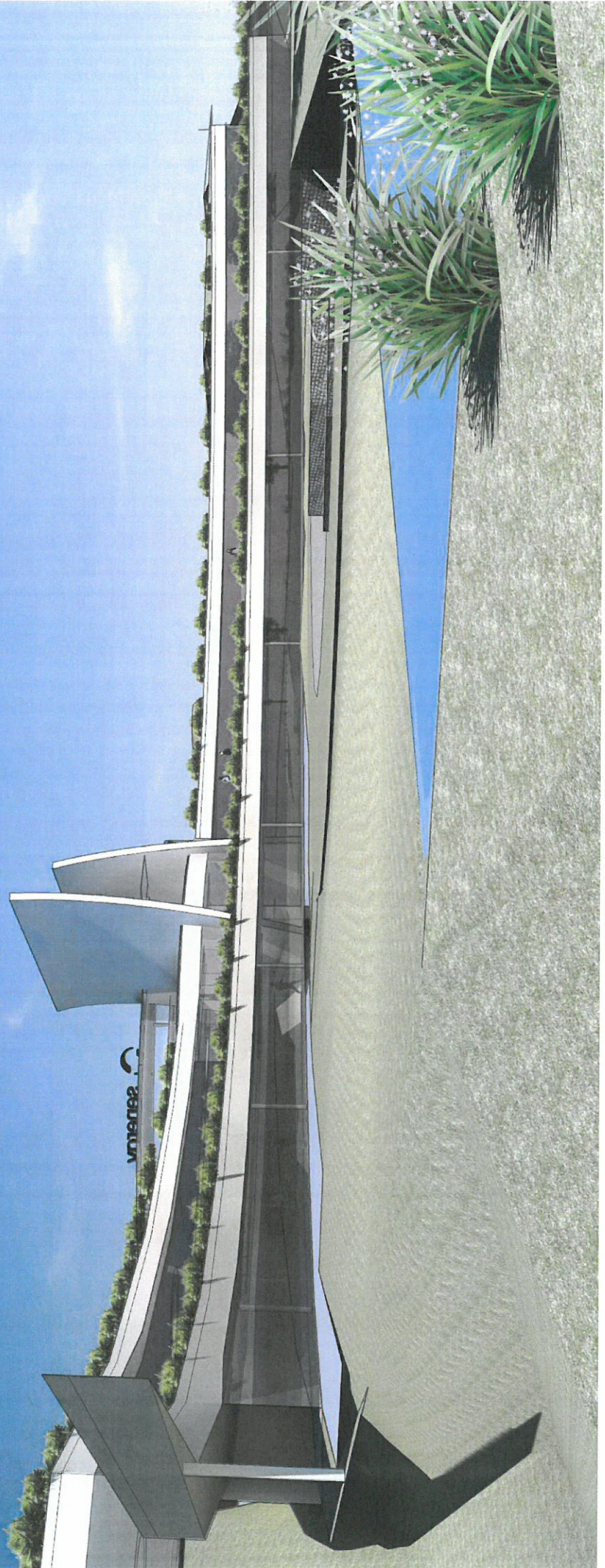
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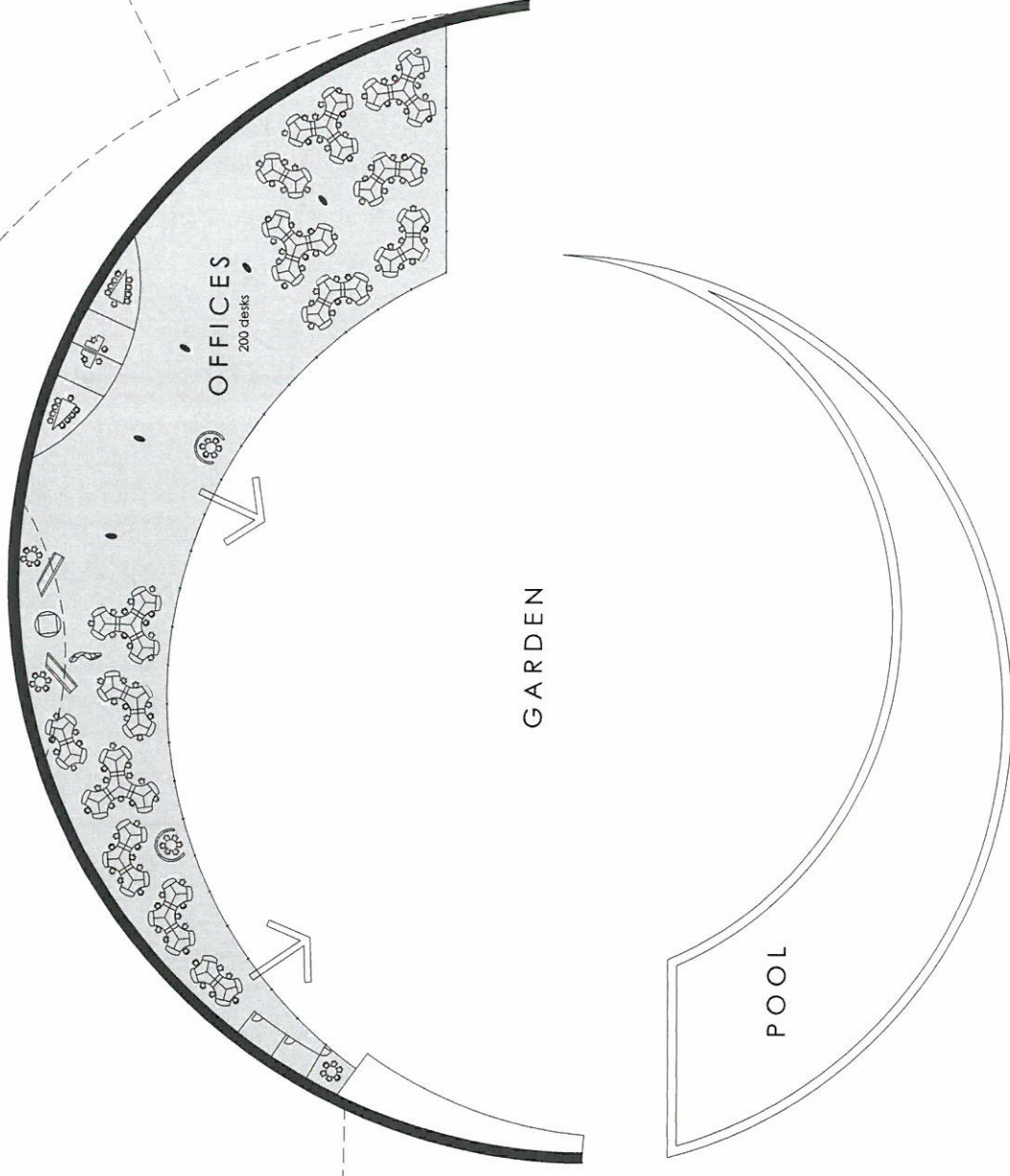
VIEW LOOKING NORTH EAST



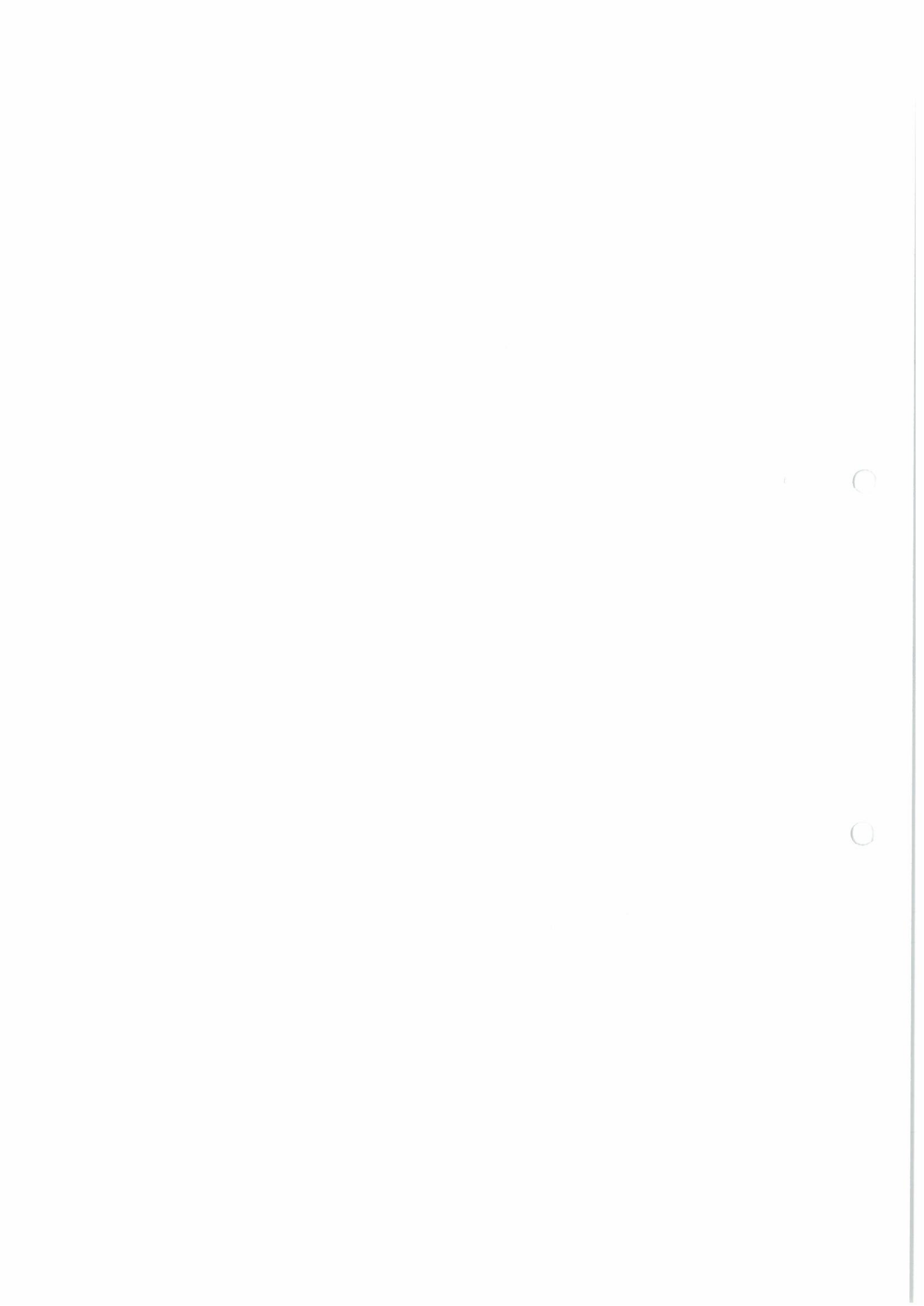
senergy



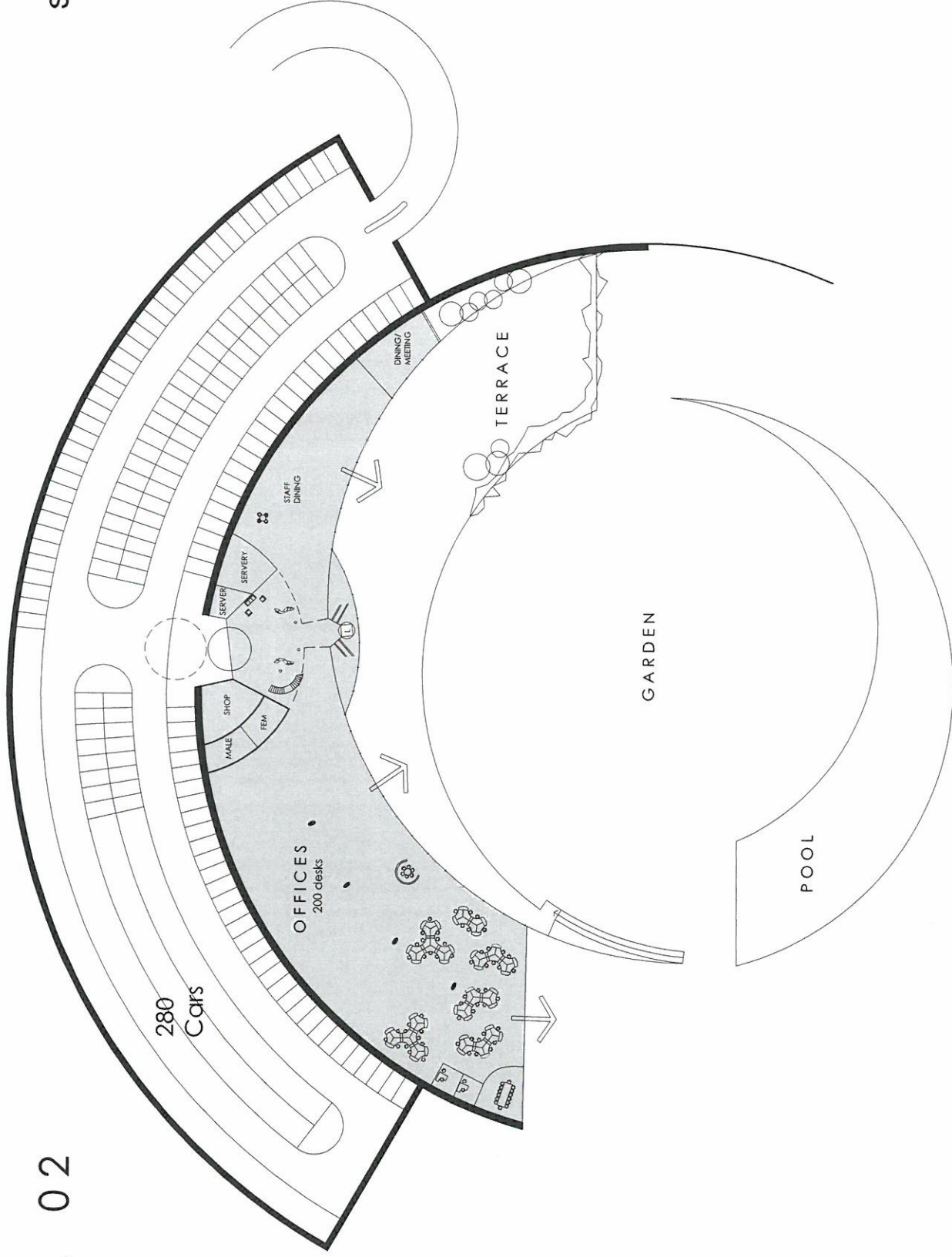
LEVEL 01



POTENTIAL OFFICE DEVELOPMENT FOR SENERGY
MILLTIMBER, ABERDEEN

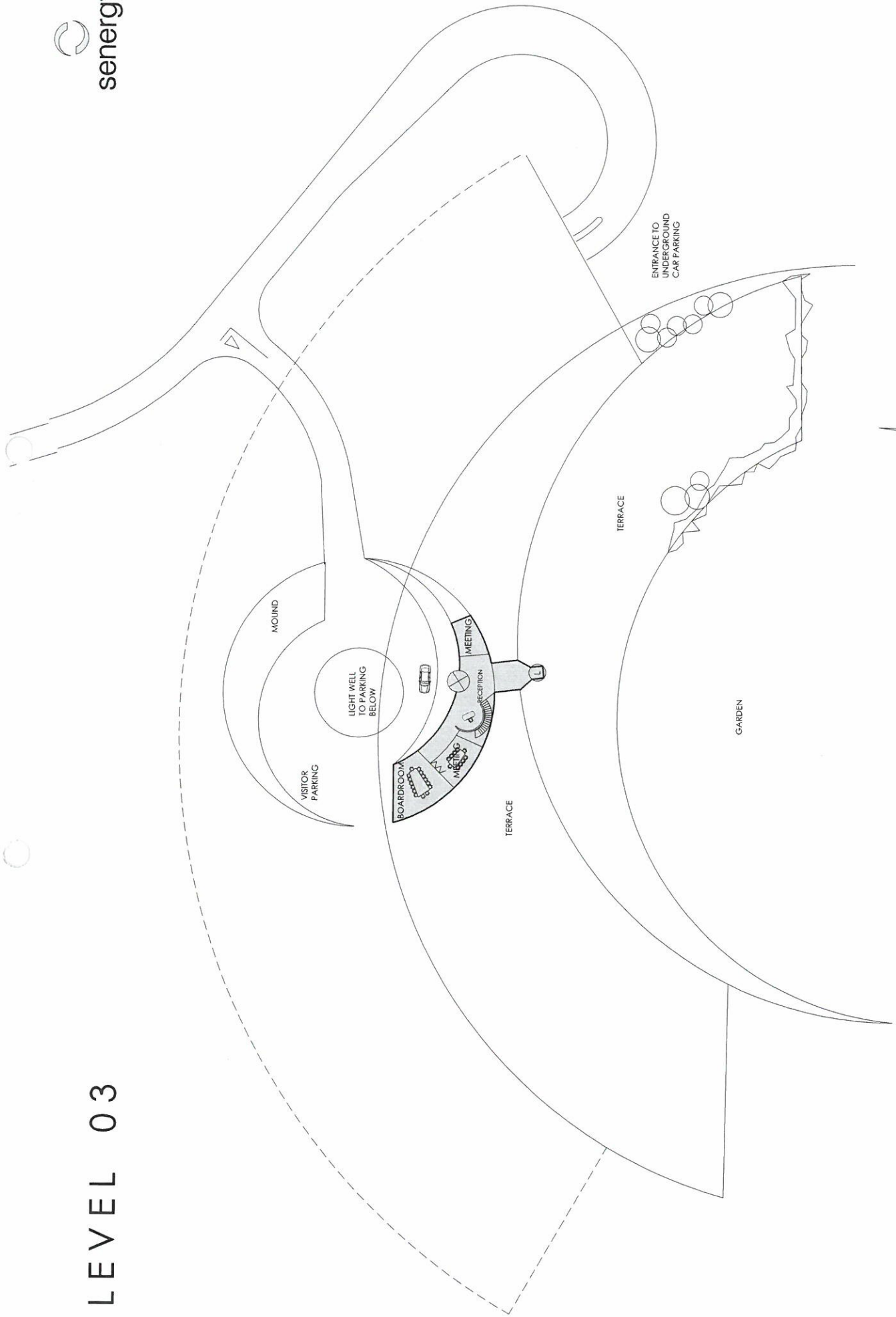


LEVEL 02



POTENTIAL OFFICE DEVELOPMENT FOR SENERGY MILLTIMBER, ABERDEEN

LEVEL 03



POTENTIAL OFFICE DEVELOPMENT FOR SENERGY MILLTIMBER, ABERDEEN



Ecological Assessment Addendum Report, Milltimber South For Bancon Homes Ltd



Job no. 0555
10th December 2010

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Brindley Associates Ltd. was commissioned by Bancon Homes Ltd to undertake ecological assessments of two potential development sites in Milltimber, Aberdeenshire. The intention was to promote these areas as housing/retail development sites within the emerging Aberdeen Local Plan. An Ecological Assessment of the sites was issued in December 2009. Subsequent to the issue of the 2009 report, Bancon Homes Ltd has concentrated on promoting one of the two sites. This addendum report is a revision of the original ecological assessment to reflect the changes in identified ecological effects that may occur as a result. The assessment has been based on a site walkover to identify any features of particular ecological interest that may require more detailed survey work. In addition the walkover takes account of any habitats likely to support European Protected Species (EPS) or other specially protected species.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies to the south of the settlement of Milltimber and is located between North Deeside Road and the Old Deeside Line footpath. (See Figure 1). The site is presently in agricultural use with the primary agricultural activity being silage production and cattle grazing. Notwithstanding the edge of town location, the overall appearance is of well managed and maintained fields without the run down feel that often accompanies urban fringe agricultural land. (See Photo 1)



Photo 1 – Silage Production on the Urban Fringe

3.0 DESKTOP ANALYSIS

The site itself is not the subject of any nature conservation designations. The nearby River Dee is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is a European Protected Site within the Natura 2000 suite of designated sites. The River Dee qualifies as an SAC by virtue of its populations of Freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), and Otter (*Lutra lutra*). All three are EC Habitats Directive Annex II species. Otters are known to be well distributed throughout the River Dee and its tributaries and environs and are protected by the

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Schedule 5) as amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Otters are also a European Protected Species (EPS) protected by Annex IV of the EC Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) as an animal species of Community interest in need of strict protection.

The only other EPS that may be present on site are bats (*Vespertilionidae*). Bats are protected under Annex IIa and IVa of the EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EC) and applied in Scotland under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended by the Conservation (Natural Habitats Etc.) Amendment Regulations of 2004 and 2007. As European Protected Species the key protection, other than a prohibition on killing or taking them relates to the protection of their breeding or resting sites (even when not in occupation) and protection from disturbance, particularly in relation to activities that impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or otherwise care for their young. In addition it is an offence to disturb such an animal in a manner that is, or in circumstances which are, likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which it belongs.

4.0 SITE ANALYSIS

Site walkovers were undertaken on 16th June 2009. Weather conditions were ideal being warm, dry and sunny allowing unrestricted opportunity for site survey. It was noted during the visit that land surveying works in association with the proposed river bridge crossing as part of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route were ongoing.

5.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site comprises three grass fields, two of which had recently been cut for silage at the time of survey. The two larger fields are separated by a north-south farm track accessing onto North Deeside Road. The intensive cropping regime dictates that these fields have minimal ecological value with the only area of interest being a small stream issuing from a culvert in the south-east corner and flowing under the Deeside Line Railway Walk. The streamside is riddled with rabbit burrows and the floral diversity has been compromised by continual rabbit grazing, although there is a line of mature ash trees enclosing a small portion of field that appears not to be cropped. These trees may provide potential roosting habitat for bats and should the site be consented for development a more detailed bat survey should be undertaken at that point to establish their presence or absence. An area of rosebay willowherb in the small field appeared to have been recently sprayed with herbicide. (See Figure 2)

The sites lie, at the closest point, approximately 700 metres from the River Dee and are physically separated from it and the SAC designation by agricultural fields and the Old Deeside Line Walk. This margin effectively mitigates any potential negative impacts on the integrity of the SAC, both in terms of direct disturbance, as well as limiting the possibility for accidental pollution of the river by suspended solids or toxic liquids that may arise from the development of the site.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The reduced site area is in itself is of little nature conservation interest and there is no doubt that mitigation in the form of sensitive planting and management of the limited existing resource could result in a net benefit to local biodiversity. The significant distance between the site and the northern boundary of the River Dee SAC make it extremely unlikely that development of this site will have a significant effect upon the integrity of the SAC or upon its qualifying interest.



KEY

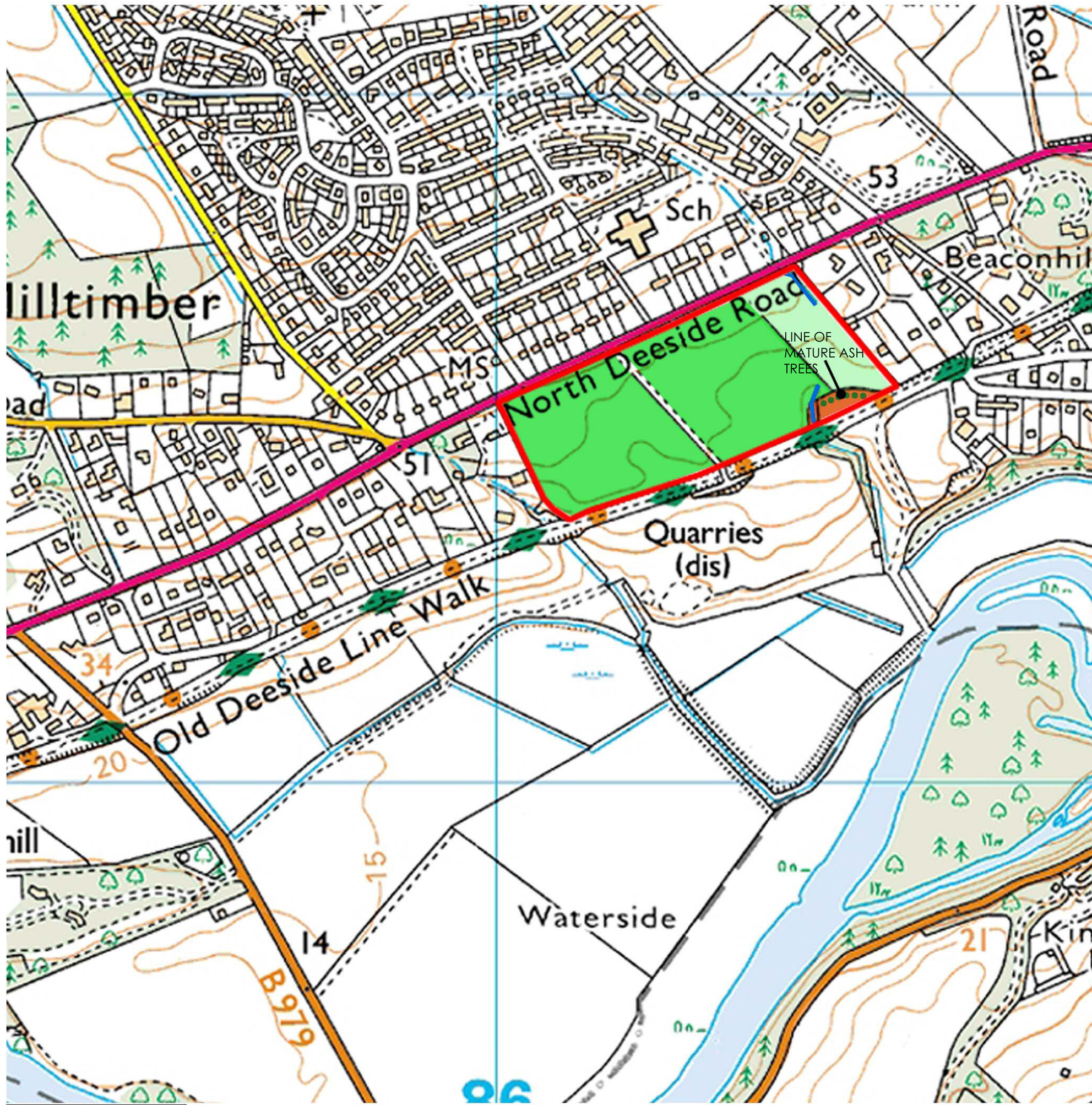


SITE BOUNDARY


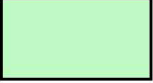
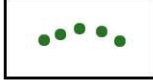



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site: MILLTIMBER SOUTH	client: BANCON HOMES
drawing title: LOCATION PLAN	
scale: NTS	date: 01 / 12 / 10
figure number: 01	
drawn by: L Wilkinson	checked by: R Wilkie
axwel house east mains industrial estate broxburn west lothian EH52 5AU t: 01506 858 757 f: 01506 855 635 www.brindleyassociates.co.uk	brindley associates landscape architects & environmental planners design assessment ecology




KEY

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  IMPROVED GRASSLAND
-  SILAGE
-  GRASS
-  LINE OF MATURE ASH TREES
-  RUNNING WATER IN CURRENTLY OPEN DITCH



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site: MILLTIMBER SOUTH	client: BANCON HOMES
drawing title: HABITAT SURVEY PLAN	
scale: NTS	date: 01 / 12 / 10
figure number: 02	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
axwel house east mains industrial estate broxburn west lothian EH52 5AU t: 01506 858 757 f: 01506 855 635 www.brindleyassociates.co.uk	 landscape architects & environmental planners design assessment ecology

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Addendum Report Milltimber South For Bancon Homes



Job no. 0555
10th December 2010

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Brindley Associates Ltd, Landscape Architects and Environmental Planners, were commissioned by Bancon Homes Ltd to carry out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of two adjoining proposed development sites located on the southern boundary of the settlement of Milltimber, approximately six miles west of Aberdeen city centre. The completed LVIA was issued in December 2009. Subsequently, Bancon Homes Ltd has concentrated on promoting only one of the sites originally assessed. This report, which should be read with the original LVIA, is an addendum which revisits the original assessment in the light of the reduction in the area being proposed for development to update the predicted landscape and visual impacts.

1.1 The Proposed Development Site

The proposed development site is located on the southern edge of Milltimber, north of the River Dee and lies between North Deeside Road and the Old Deeside Line Walk. (See Figure 01)

The site is 8.94 hectares (Ha) and is bounded on three sides by existing residential suburban areas; to the north by North Deeside Road, to the east by Beaconhill and to the west by Milltimber Brae. The south of the site lies adjacent to the Old Deeside Line Walk. The southern boundary of the site is formed by a dry stone wall at the top of an old railway embankment, currently the Old Deeside Line Walk. The site slopes relatively steeply from North Deeside Road down to the Old Deeside Line Walk. It falls by approximately 15 metres and has open views south across the River Dee Valley. The site is agricultural and is currently put to pasture.

1.2 The Broader Study Area

The defined study area for this development has been taken to be the land lying within an approximately 2km radius of the site. The 2km study area encompasses three Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are no designated historic gardens, landscapes or conservation areas within the study area, Murtle Estate and Camphill Estate lie within the study area and contain elements of designed estate landscape but these areas are not designated. Numerous core paths pass through the study area including Core Path no.66 Deeside Way and Core Path no. 70, which run near the site.

In the north of the study area lie the settlement of Milltimber, East Peterculter, Murtle Estate and Milton of Murtle. South of Milltimber and Peterculter is the River Dee. In the south of the study area, across the River Dee is the small settlement of Kirkton of Maryculter.

Milltimber together with the nearby settlement of Peterculter represent the western periphery of Aberdeen conurbation and comprises primarily suburban residential development. There is an abrupt transition between the suburban landscape of Milltimber and the adjacent countryside of wooded farmland. The larger settlements and developments are well contained within the River Dee valley, with little or no settlement on the plateaus. The linear pattern of development and the roads follow the valley with one crossing point, Maryculter Bridge, south of Milltimber. Open swathes of countryside on the valley slopes and plateaus contain a matrix of well maintained forestry, woodland and pasture.

1.3 The Proposed Development

The proposed developments have not been designed in detail and are subject to revision depending upon the potential effects identified by this and other assessments.

The current proposals for the site include a mix of approximately sixty single storey dwellings and a community / commercial core. The proposed development also includes open space and large areas of strategic planting including tree planting on the North Deeside Road corridor. Road access to the development can be achieved from the North Deeside Road.

2.0 LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

This section remains the same as the 2009 report and is not replicated here.

3.0 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Methodology

This landscape assessment has been prepared with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management Assessment (2002). The full methodology utilised is described in Appendix 1.

3.1 Existing Landscape Context

3.1.1 Overview

The proposed development sites are located on the southern and western fringes of the existing settlement of Milltimber, which, with the nearby settlement of Peterculter, forms the western fringes of the Aberdeen conurbation. The site lies to the east of the corridor of the proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and will be seen in the context of the new road corridor, its associated earthworks and landscape. The site is contained on three sides by adjacent existing urban areas of mainly suburban residential development within Milltimber. Much of the existing development is set in extensive and heavily wooded grounds which substantially screen and contain the sites when seen from large parts of the north of the study area. The site lies on the lower valley slopes of the Dee Valley and, as a relatively low lying area it is visually contained by rising topography to the north and south, by extensive areas of rural woodland and forestry, and by the heavily wooded suburban landscapes on the periphery of Milltimber and Peterculter.

The broader study area consists of three key elements – the flood plain landscape associated with the Dee Valley which runs west to east through the study area, the extensive suburban development that exists on the south facing slopes of the Dee Valley and the more rural farmland and forestry landscapes of the upper valley slopes and adjacent plateaus in the north and the south of the study area.

Although containing substantial amounts of residential development, the study area maintains a strongly rural and rural fringe character. This is in part due to some open views across the River Dee towards open countryside and in part due to the presence of extensive woodland and tree planting associated with the public realm, and from housing and institutions set in often extensive grounds containing large numbers of mature trees.

The presence of extensive areas of forestry and woodland in the more rural zones and associated with the river reinforces the strongly wooded nature of the study area and extensively modifies and limits visibility. This woodland pattern, combined with the enclosure of much of the study area provided by the valley sides, creates an attractive and well maintained landscape of woodland, water and rolling topography.

3.1.2 Potential Changes to Baseline Landscape Context

The proposed AWPR would run north to south through the study area and will, if constructed, have a major effect upon the landscape context of the proposed development site. A major road corridor up to approximately 150m wide in places with associated movement, earthworks, large scale engineering works, and substantial areas of structural landscape planting will be introduced into a largely rural and urban fringe landscape that does not currently contain large scale infrastructure of any kind. The AWPR would, if constructed, have a significant effect upon the baseline landscape character of the study area.

3.2 Predicted Impacts

3.2.1 Introduction

Consideration of the impact on landscape character has involved:

- an understanding of the landscape changes that will occur in the study area as a result of the construction of the proposed AWPR;
- an overview of implications for designated landscapes and other sites of local value;
- the evaluation of both direct and indirect impacts on local landscape character in terms of loss or modification to existing landscape elements (typically tree removal, changes to ground cover, land use or existing landform) and the implications for the balance of components that frame local character;
- an evaluation of the implications for the identified local landscape areas; and
- an evaluation of the effects of the proposed landscape and visual mitigation strategy.

The extent to which the proposed residential and commercial development has the potential to appear intrusive and hence, detrimental to the landscape character is somewhat limited by their low lying and enclosed nature. Topography and vegetation limit the influence of the developments to the immediate locale, and structural landscape throughout the sites and on the southern boundary of Site 2 will integrate the development with its surrounding landscape. As such significant effects are expected to be restricted to the immediate vicinity of the site boundaries.

3.3 SNH Landscape Character Areas (Figure 03)

The Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen (No.80) identifies one landscape character type (LCA) within the 2 km study area – Wooded Farmland, the adjacent Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeenshire(No.102) identified a further LCA within the study area- Central Wooded Estates. The urban areas and river valley components of the area are considered in section 3.6.

3.4 Wooded Farmland

The Wooded Farmland LCA lies to the north of the River Dee Valley. The key characteristics of the LCA are summarised below:

- Varied topography of plateaus, rounded hills and upper valley slopes;
- Large areas of woodland framing and enclosing pastures and small settlements;
- Well maintained farmland with drystone dykes and fences as boundaries;
- Framed views to distant hills and localised views across the Dee Valley; and
- Abrupt transition to the adjacent Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements LCA

3.4.1 Sensitivity

The Wooded Farmland LCA is a predominantly pastoral landscape interspersed with large areas of woodland and forestry and smaller woodlands, copses and incidental trees to create a strongly rural character, with little intrusion from the adjacent urban areas. The LCA is separated from the proposed development sites by the existing settlement of Milltimber. This Character Area is considered to be of Low sensitivity to residential development outwith its boundaries as a result of the minimal effects that existing development on its boundaries has had upon its strongly rural character.

3.4.2 Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of change for the Wooded Farmland LCA is considered to be Negligible as the proposed development will not affect directly or be visible from the LCA.

3.4.3 Significance of Effect

The effect of the proposed development on this landscape type is considered to be Negligible. This is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the Wooded Farmland LCA.

3.5 Central Wooded Estates

The Central Wooded Estates are broadly similar in character to the Wooded Farmland LCA. The Central Wooded Estates represent an extensive character area spreading from the River Dee south as far as the River Don valley. The key characteristics of the LCA are summarised below:

- Broad sweeping landscape of valleys and hills;
- Small and large scale fields interacting with strong structure of dense woodland as coniferous plantation and semi native shelterbelts;
- Combination of enclosed spaces and sudden open and long distance views; and
- Scattered areas of housing and settlement, clusters of farm buildings.

3.5.1 Sensitivity

The Central Wooded Estates LCA is a variable character area with a contrast between wooded enclosure and occasional open and long distance views across the low-lying Dee Valley towards Peterculter and Milltimber. This Character Area is considered to be of Low sensitivity to residential development outwith its boundaries as a result of the minimal effect that existing residential development at Peterculter and Milltimber has had upon its strongly rural character.

3.5.2 Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of change for the Wooded Farmland LCA is considered to be Negligible as the proposed development will not affect directly or be visible from the LCA.

3.5.3 Significance of Effect

The effect of the proposed development on this landscape type is considered to be Negligible. This is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the Central Wooded Estates LCA.

3.6 Local Landscape Character Areas (See Figure 04)

The definition of landscape types indicated in the SNH character assessment document provides a great deal of information relevant at a regional level. However due to the limited size of the study area and the requirement to accurately assess the effects of the proposed development at a local level, a further assessment has been undertaken to reflect the detailed character found within the study area. An analysis of existing landscape character and quality has been carried out by a combination of field and desk studies and a further two landscape character areas have been identified.

These local landscape character areas are:

- Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements; and
- River Dee Valley.

3.7 Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements

The Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements Character Area is predominately located in the north of the study area and mainly comprises the settlements of Milltimber and Peterculter which lie on the south facing northern slopes of the Dee Valley. Kirkton of Maryculter is the only component of this LCA found in the southern part of the study area. The key features of the LCA are as follows:

- Primarily residential landuse with a predominance of 1.5 - 2 storey dwellings, highly modified and man made character;
- Extensive gardens with large numbers of mature broadleaved and coniferous trees creating a contained and wooded framework;
- Visually diverse range of building materials and styles, reflecting the evolution of the settlements; and
- Further visual containment provided by the presence of buildings, garden trees, hedgerows, walls and other structures.

3.7.1 Sensitivity

The Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements LCA is a typical residential settlement landscape with a mix of building types and styles in a range of materials in close proximity, creating a small scale and variable housing landscape. Plot sizes tend to be large and as a result a large amount of mature trees are present in the LCA. This results in a mature, wooded and generally enclosed suburban character.

The LCA is highly modified and views tend to be short to medium, enclosed by adjacent built form, garden vegetation and local areas of woodland. This character area is considered to be of Low sensitivity to development of the type proposed.

3.7.2 Magnitude of Change

The proposed development areas will not be directly visible from the majority of the Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements LCA as the new development is generally well-contained by topography and vegetation. Areas of the LCA immediately adjacent to site will experience some change as pasture is converted into residential landscapes, however this is not considered to fundamentally affect the character of the existing urban areas.

The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be Negligible.

3.7.3 Significance of Effect

The effect of the proposed development on this landscape type is considered to be Negligible. This is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements LCA.

3.8 River Dee Valley

The River Dee Valley LCA runs east to west through the centre of the study area and comprises the River Dee, its floodplain and the lower slopes of the Dee Valley. This LCA contains the proposed development sites and its key features are as follows:

- Meandering river on valley floor;
- Arable crops and pastures on the floodplain in large open fields defined by post and wire fences and embankments;
- Low lying linear LCA contained by adjacent and heavily wooded LCA;
- Views generally enclosed and orientated in the direction of the river; and
- Further visual containment provided by the presence of buildings, garden trees, hedgerows, walls and other structures.

3.8.1 Sensitivity

The River Dee Valley LCA is attractive and enclosed by woodland and existing suburban landscapes which are generally contained within a strong woodland framework. Views tend to be short to medium distance and tend to focus on the river or upon the opposite sides of the valley. This character area is considered to be of Medium sensitivity to development of the type proposed.

3.8.2 Magnitude of Change

As the LCA currently exists in close proximity to suburban landscapes it is not considered that the proposed development introduces a new or discordant element into the existing landscape framework and does not fundamentally affect the character of the majority of the existing River Dee Valley LCA. The LCA would not experience direct change however those areas of the LCA near the development sites would experience a locally low magnitude of change which would reduce to Negligible as structural landscape planting associated with the development matures and blends the new areas of development into the adjacent suburban landscapes.

3.8.3 Significance of Effect

The effect of the proposed development on this landscape type is considered to be locally minor to moderate adverse effect in the short term which is initially significant and adverse. As mitigating structural landscape planting matures this effect is predicted to fall to Negligible and not significant. This is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the River Dee Valley LCA.

3.9 Landscape Designations (See Figure 04)

There are no landscape designations within the study area; however three Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) have been identified.

3.10 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Three Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) have been identified within the Study Area. Maryculter House, Church and Burial ground to the south west, Corbie Linn Prehistoric Enclosure to the south and Binghill House, Stone Circle & Cairn.

3.10.1 Sensitivity

None of the three Scheduled Ancient Monuments are in close proximity of the proposed development sites. Maryculter House, Church and Burial Ground has fragmented visibility of the development sites due to the presence of intervening woodland; no visibility of the site due to woodland screening. Corbie Linn Prehistoric Enclosure has no visibility due to the presence of adjacent woodland and Binghill House, Stone Circle and Cairn are again screened from any visibility of the sites by existing woodland and also by close, existing suburban developments. The SAMs in this instance are considered to have High sensitivity to change of the nature proposed.

3.10.2 Magnitude of Change

All three SAMs will be unaffected by the proposed development due to the screening provided by woodland, forestry and existing housing. Therefore the magnitude of change is considered Negligible.

3.10.3 Significance of Effect

The effect of the proposed development on SAMs is considered to be Negligible and not considered to represent a significant effect to the type of development proposed.

3.11 Landscape Assessment Summary

Table 1 - Summary of Assessment of Impacts on Local Landscape Character Areas and Designated Landscapes

Landscape Character Area / Local Landscape Character Area	Significance of Effect of Development
Wooded Farmland LCA	Negligible
Central Wooded Estate LCA	Negligible
Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements	Negligible
River Dee Valley	Locally Moderate Adverse, Significant falling to Negligible with time Generally Negligible across most of the LLCA
Landscape Designations	Significance of effect
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Negligible

4.0 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Methodology

This visual impact assessment has been prepared with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2002). The full methodology utilised is described in Appendix 1 of the original LVIA.

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the assessment of the impacts of the reduced residential and retail development at Milltimber South on the visual amenity of the study area. Visual amenity is defined as the pleasantness of the view or outlook of an identified receptor or group of receptors.

The assessment determines the degree of anticipated change to visual amenity, considering buildings, any areas of public open space, roads and transport corridors that would occur as a result of the proposed scheme. The buildings, open spaces, roads and transport corridors that may experience views of the proposed development are collectively referred to as 'receptors'. Residual effects have been identified for each receptor. The assessment has been undertaken to include the visual impacts on the basis that the AWPR is constructed and also on the basis that the AWPR is not constructed. If the AWPR is built the development site will be seen in the context of the AWPR new road corridor; the associated earthworks; landscape mitigation and the new high level bridge. The new high level bridge and embankments will span the River Dee immediately to the west of the Milltimber South Sites and the AWPR will also cross under the North Deeside Road resulting in significant disturbance and engineering works in this area.

4.2 Potential Effects

Development can change people's experience of landscape depending on existing context, the scale, form, colour and texture of the proposals, the nature of activity associated with the development and the distance from and the angle of view that the receptor has to the proposed development.

The proposals involve the conversion of an area of pasture adjacent to North Deeside Road into a residential landscape with a community / commercial core. The proposed development will include:

- Mainly 1 – 1.5 storey residential development although the proposed development is relatively flexible and open to review based upon the findings of this assessment;
- New infrastructure including access roads and lighting;
- New planting associated with the development including hedges, street trees, garden trees and shrub planting; and
- Structural landscape and areas of open space and tree planting.

In this context the key concern relating to visual impact is the extent to which the proposed development would intrude into existing views experienced by existing residents and day to day users of the area.

There are a number of ways in which the proposed development might impact on the existing landscape and visual amenity. Effects are likely to be either temporary (and relate specifically to the construction stage of works), or permanent (and incurred upon completion of the development), whilst other effects would be reduced over time as landscape mitigation measures mature and integrate the proposed development into the existing landscape. Listed below are some likely key factors:

- The scale and form of the proposals may prove intrusive in the context of the existing landscape elements and overall visual character;

- The construction and final form of the proposals may involve the loss or fragmentation of landscape elements (buildings, open space, woodland and trees);
- The extent to which the proposals may intrude into existing views experienced by residents and day to day users of the area; and
- The extent to which current users of the landscape such as local residents or visitors may be subject to new effects.

4.3 Statutory and Planning Context

Statutes and national planning policy make no direct provision for the protection or conservation of specific views. They are however, an implicit part of the values and qualities recognised in broader landscape designations that seek to protect areas of high scenic quality.

4.4 Viewpoints (see Figure 02)

Five viewpoints were selected as having the potential to show representative views to the proposed development site from analysis of mapping and the site visit. The viewpoints are:

Table 2 – Viewpoint Locations

No	Location	Grid Reference	Main Receptors
1	Near Millbank	NT 385416, 799685	Road users and residents
2	B979 & River Dee	NT 385846, 800389	Road users, Recreational Users
3	Contlaw Road, Hill of Milltimber	NT 385018, 802599	Road users and residents
4	North Deeside Road	NT 385268, 801216	Road users and residents
5	River Dee Footpath	NT 386618, 801206	Recreational Users

4.5 Visual Mitigation

Visual effects resulting from the introduction of development would arise from the areas of new buildings, creation of access roads, structural and amenity landscape areas, substantial areas of boundary planting, changes to the existing landform, street lighting and other ancillary structures. These effects can in some instances be mitigated by sensitive site design, use of appropriate materials and colours and provision of screening. The provision of screening will take the form of structural woodland and boundary planting as well as an internal landscape structure within the majority of the development. This landscape structure would include tree, shrub and hedgerow planting which will help the development to integrate into the existing landscape and views.

4.6 Visual Baseline Conditions

The baseline landscape and its broad visual context are described under Landscape Character (Section 4). With reference to the theoretical visibility of the development the viewpoints have been selected from locations within the study area with potential visibility of the proposed development. The baseline conditions change significantly if the proposed AWPR is consented and built; proposals are described in Section 2. Viewpoint locations are illustrated on Figure 02.

Groups of receptors within the 2km study area are largely limited and were identified during review of the visual envelope and site survey. They include:

- Residents within Milltimber;
- Travellers along the B979; and
- Walkers along the River Dee Core Path no. 70.

4.7 Predicted Visual Effects

Viewpoints have been selected from within the limited areas of the study area with theoretical visibility of the proposed development site and therefore reflect only effects from within this area. In some cases viewpoints were taken very close to the site boundary, due to the very enclosed nature of the visibility pattern and in other cases the viewpoints have been selected to represent theoretical distant views. It should be noted that the majority of the 2km study area is predicted to have no or negligible visibility of the proposed development site due to woodlands associated with large estate landscapes, woodlands associated with the river valley, suburban tree planting, woodland planting associates with large private gardens and the topography of River Dee valley landform which encloses views from the north.

4.8 Viewpoint 1, Near Millbank (Figure 06)

4.8.1 Viewpoint Description:

This viewpoint is located approximately 1.5km from the south-west corner of the site on a road running parallel to the valley slope, near Millbank. This viewpoint was chosen to represent views from the south of the study area experienced by road users and residents. The minor road offers access to properties at Millbank and Storybook Glen Family Theme Park.

4.8.2 Existing View:

The existing view from left to right shows: good quality open pastoral farmland in the foreground and mid ground, in a matrix of mixed woodland running along the river valley in the mid ground, and up and beyond the valley ridgeline in the background. The settlements of Peterculter and Milltimber respectively are visually separated by the estate landscape of Camphill and they are also partially screened by mixed woodland on the northern valley slope. The settlements do not breach the skyline due to their lower position on the valley slope and the presence of continuous woodland on the ridgeline behind the settlements. Below Milltimber the valley woodland vegetation opens up and expanses of pastoral fields become visible in the mid ground. To the right of the farmland the cluster of buildings that form Millbank is well screened by existing vegetation and tree planting. To the far right the minor road that links Millbank with the B9077 and B979 is visible, with a mature hedgerow along its southern edge. Sensitivity to the type of development proposed here is considered to be Medium.

4.8.3 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change during Construction:

There will be middle to distant views to the construction of new residential areas and associated infrastructure of mainly 1 and 1.5 storey housing developments in a small component of the view. A small area of pasture seen in the context of existing residential development will be converted to housing set within a structural landscape of trees and hedges as well as construction machinery and its associated movement.

The magnitude of change during construction is considered to be Negligible.

4.8.4 Impact on Visual Amenity during Construction:

Given the context of the viewpoint on a minor road serving a few residential properties the receptors are considered to be of Medium sensitivity to the type of development proposed. The proposed development would remove an area of pasture from the centre of the view and replace it with residential development. The effect on visual amenity caused by the proposed development is predicted to be Negligible, which in the context of this assessment is not considered to be Significant.

4.8.5 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Winter of Completion:

An area of flat and valley pasture will be replaced by residential development and associated infrastructure. The development will be partially screened by the creation of landscape buffer planting; however the development on the slopes will remain visible at the winter of completion in this view.

The magnitude of change is considered to be Negligible.

4.8.6 Impact on Visual Amenity, Winter Completion:

For the receptors at this viewpoint the completion impact on visual amenity is predicted to be Negligible which, in the context of this assessment is not considered to be Significant.

4.8.7 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15:

By the summer of year 15 it is considered that the structural, landscape planting and internal landscape structure of the development will be well established and it will integrate the developed area into adjacent residential landscapes.

The magnitude is considered to be Negligible.

4.8.8 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15:

For the receptors at this viewpoint it is predicted that the visual amenity impact will be Negligible as a result of the well established the structural, landscape planting and internal landscape structure of the development.

4.8.9 Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

The magnitude of change within this view would be Negligible as a result of the AWPR and its associated engineering, embankments, bridge and landscape mitigation screening the proposed development from view.

4.8.10 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

The impact on visual amenity at this viewpoint of the building of the AWPR and its associated embankments, high level bridge and landscape structure would reduce the impact of the proposed development at Milltimber to Negligible.

4.9 Viewpoint 2, B979 & River Dee (Figure 06)

4.9.1 Viewpoint Description:

The viewpoint is located on Maryculter Bridge. The bridge connects Milltimber and Peterculter in the north to Maryculter in the south via the B979 road. The viewpoint provides an indication of visual impacts on road users of the bridge travelling north. The viewpoint, located approximately 1km from the south west corner of the site representative of views from the south of the proposed development.

4.9.2 Existing View:

The existing view from left to right shows: in the foreground the bridge and the River Dee with scrub vegetation. The middle ground of the view shows low lying agricultural floodplain fields and the background is comprised of a wooded valley slope with significant residential development seen in the context of a well wooded landscape.

4.9.3 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change during Construction:

A small area of sloping land currently surrounded on three sides by existing residential development will be replaced by middle distance views of the construction of a new mainly 1 to 1.5 storey residential development together with the associated road infrastructure and structural planting.

The magnitude of change during construction is considered to be Low.

4.9.4 Impact on Visual Amenity during Construction:

Given the context of the viewpoint on a road corridor with the majority of receptors being road users experiencing short duration views towards the proposed development, sensitivity to the type of development proposed is considered to be medium.

For these receptors at this viewpoint, the initial impact on visual amenity caused by construction of the proposed development would be Minor to Moderate which, in the context of this assessment is Significant.

4.9.5 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Winter of Completion:

An area of pastureland, on the slope will be replaced by residential development and associated infrastructure in the middle ground of the existing view. The development will be partially screened by planting associated with the structural, landscape; however this will not be fully established in the winter of completion and will not provide significant cover in the winter.

The magnitude of change at completion is considered to be Low.

4.9.6 Impact on Visual Amenity, Winter Completion:

For the receptors at this viewpoint, the impact on visual amenity caused at the completion of the proposed development would be Minor to Moderate which, in the context of the assessment would be Significant.

4.9.7 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15:

Assuming appropriate species of woodland are planted and maintained in the structural, landscape planting and internal landscapes of the development by the summer of year 15 it is considered that the landscape mitigation measures and internal landscape structure of the development would screen and integrate the majority of the proposed development at this viewpoint.

The magnitude of change is considered to be Negligible.

4.9.8 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15:

For the receptors at this viewpoint travelling on the Maryculter Bridge corridor, the post mitigation impact on visual amenity caused by the proposed development would fall to Negligible, which, in the context of this assessment would not be significant.

4.9.9 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

The building of the AWPR would significantly change the existing baseline adding a significant amount of earthworks, engineering, and landscape structure to this view. With the new high level bridge and associated AWPR landform in place the proposed development would not be visible in the view.

The magnitude of change of proposed development with the building of the AWPR would be Negligible.

4.9.10 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

The AWPR, if consented and built would screen views to the proposed development altogether at this viewpoint due to the engineering work associated with the AWPR and the high level bridge. The impact on visual amenity of the proposed development with the AWPR built would be Negligible.

4.10 Viewpoint 3, Contlaw Road, Hill of Milltimber (Figure 07)

4.10.1 Viewpoint Description:

This viewpoint is located to the north of the proposed development, approximately 1.4km from the northern boundary of the site, on a rural road near to a cluster of farmsteadings and the Hill of Milltimber. The viewpoint is representative of elevated distant views from the north of the study area towards the proposed development typically available to residents and road users.

4.10.2 Existing View:

The existing view from left to right shows: in the foreground and middle-ground, a minor rural road, open pasture fields with mixed woodland in the background and glimpsed views through to wooded hilltops in the distance.

4.10.3 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change during Construction:

The existing view will experience negligible change as a result of the proposed development due to the screening provided by the landform of the river valley, the estate woodlands and coniferous plantations, and the location of the proposed development on the lower valley slopes.

The magnitude of change during construction is considered to be Negligible.

4.10.4 Impact on Visual Amenity during Construction:

Given the context of the view on a minor road servicing relatively few properties, the receptors would be assumed to be of medium sensitivity to change associated with the proposed development, as the majority will be agricultural workers or drivers experiencing short duration views towards the proposed development.

However, the proposed development is not visible from this viewpoint; therefore the initial impact caused by construction of the proposed development would be Negligible/ None.

4.10.5 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Winter of Completion:

At winter of completion the proposed development will not be visible from this view due to the screening of the river valley landform and the estate woodlands and coniferous plantations.

The magnitude of change is considered to be Negligible.

4.10.6 Impact on Visual Amenity, Winter Completion:

The impact on visual amenity at this viewpoint in the winter of completion will be Negligible.

4.10.7 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15:

The proposed view will not experience change due to the proposed development by the summer of year 15, due to the existing river valley landform and woodland plantations. The magnitude of change is Negligible.

4.10.8 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15:

The impact on visual amenity in the summer of year 15 of the proposed development will be Negligible.

4.10.9 Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

The proposed development will not change the existing view with the addition of the AWPR. The magnitude of change due to the proposed development with the AWPR remains Negligible.

4.10.10 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

The impact of the proposed development on visual amenity from this viewpoint with the AWPR in summer year 15 remains Negligible due to the river valley landform, woodland and plantations and location of the proposed development in the base of the valley.

4.11 Viewpoint 4, North Deeside Road (Figure 07)

4.11.1 Viewpoint Description:

The viewpoint is located on the western boundary of Milltimber, approximately 400m to the north-west of the proposed development site. It has been chosen to represent close views from the north both residential views from Milltimber Brae as well as road users on the main route east through Milltimber on the A93, and to road users joining the B797.

4.11.2 Existing View:

The existing view from left to right shows: in the foreground the A93, a busy road corridor into Aberdeen, suburban development in the middle ground with long distance views across the river valley to wooded slopes where Kingcausie House and Lower Deeside Holiday Park are

discernable. The sensitivity of the receptors at this viewpoint, road users, to the type of development proposed is considered to be Medium.

4.11.3 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change during Construction:

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to the screening provided by intervening existing built development and mature vegetation.

The magnitude of change during construction is therefore considered to be Negligible.

4.11.4 Impact on Visual Amenity during Construction:

The proposed view will not experience change due to the proposed development during construction. For receptors at this viewpoint there is considered to be Negligible impact on visual amenity.

In the context of this assessment this is not considered to be Significant.

4.11.3 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Winter of Completion:

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to the screening provided by intervening existing built development and mature vegetation.

The magnitude of change at the winter of completion is therefore considered to be Negligible.

4.11.4 Impact on Visual Amenity, Winter Completion:

The proposed view will not experience change due to the proposed development by the winter of completion. The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint.

In the context of this assessment this is not considered to be Significant.

4.11.5 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15:

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to the screening provided by intervening existing built development and mature vegetation.

The magnitude of change by the summer year 15 is therefore considered to be Negligible.

4.11.6 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15:

The proposed view will not experience change due to the proposed development by the summer of year 15.

In the context of this assessment this is not considered to be Significant.

4.11.7 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to the screening provided by intervening existing built development and mature vegetation.

The magnitude of change by the summer year 15 with the AWPR is therefore considered to be Negligible.

4.11.8 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

The proposed view will not experience change due to the proposed development by the summer of year 15 with the AWPR.

In the context of this assessment this is not considered to be Significant.

4.12 Viewpoint 5, River Dee Footpath (Figure 08)

4.12.1 Viewpoint Description:

Located on the River Dee footpath to the south-east of the development site, this viewpoint has been chosen to represent typical close views for recreational users of the River Dee footpath, at the junction of core path numbers 70 and 72. It should be recognized that visibility of the

proposed development from the River Dee footpath is restricted by the adjacent flood prevention embankment. This viewpoint is taken from the top of the embankment.

4.12.2 Existing View:

From left to right the existing view shows: from foreground to middle ground the flood embankment and low lying pastoral fields; in the background mixed woodland on the valley slopes with the vegetated edge of Milltimber on the skyline. Sensitivity to the type of development proposed here is considered to be High due to the recreational users of the River Dee footpath.

4.12.3 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change during Construction:

A limited view of an area of pasture which is currently seen in the context of existing residential development will be replaced by views of the construction of a new development with associated road infrastructure and structural landscape planting. The proposed development will be partially screened by existing vegetation and land form however it will be visible as an area of new land use with construction activity across the Old Deeside Line walk.

The magnitude of change during construction is considered to be Low.

4.12.4 Impact on Visual Amenity during Construction:

Given the context of the view adjacent to the River Dee footpath, although elevated, the receptors, as recreational users would be considered to be of high sensitivity to change associated with the proposed development.

The proposed development has the potential to be visible as an area of building activity from this viewpoint during construction. For receptors at this viewpoint, the initial impact on visual amenity caused by construction of the proposed development would therefore be Moderate which, in the context of this assessment would be Significant.

4.12.5 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Winter of Completion:

A new area of housing will be visible in the context of existing housing, although it will not bring residential development any closer to the receptor.

The magnitude of change at completion is considered to be Low.

4.12.6 Impact on Visual Amenity, Winter of Completion:

For the recreational receptors at this viewpoint, the winter of completion impact on visual amenity caused by construction of the proposed development would be Moderate which, in the context of this assessment would be Significant.

4.12.7 Proposed View and Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15:

By year 15 it is considered that the landscape structure planting will be established. This will integrate the development with middle distance views to the existing residential edge of Milltimber. Any housing visible will be seen in the context of the new woodland framework which will connect to existing areas of woodland with existing residential development. In this situation, the magnitude of change is considered to be Negligible.

4.12.8 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15:

The change in view in this instance is not considered to be of negative impact, the landscape structure planting will benefit the new development by integrating it with the adjacent urban edge. The impact of the new landscape and development is considered to be Negligible assuming that structural landscape planting associated with the access road has been established.

4.12.9 Magnitude of Change, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

From this viewpoint the building of the AWPR will have limited impact on the visual amenity due to its distance from this viewpoint. It is considered that the implementation, establishment and

maintenance of landscape structure planting will screen and integrate the majority of the development from this viewpoint. Any residential development that is visible will be seen in the context of an established woodland framework in an area of existing residential development within woodland. It is therefore considered that the magnitude of change will be Negligible.

4.12.10 Impact on Visual Amenity, Summer Year 15 with AWPR:

The impact on visual amenity with the AWPR at this viewpoint is considered to be Negligible, and not significant. This predicted visual impact is based upon the assumption that appropriate species of woodland are planted and maintained in the structural landscape areas together with appropriate structural planting along the access road.

4.13 Summary of effects on Visual Amenity

TABLE 3 - Summary of Assessment of Impacts on Viewpoints

Viewpoint	During Construction	Winter, Completion	Summer, Year 15	Summer, Year 15 With AWPR
Near Millbank	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant
B979 & River Dee	Minor to Moderate Significant	Minor to Moderate Significant	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant
Contlaw Road, Hill of Milltimber	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant
North Deeside Road	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant
River Dee Footpath	Moderate Significant	Moderate Significant	Negligible, not Significant	Negligible, not Significant

5.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The proposed reduced development site at Milltimber South is located on an infill site surrounded by the existing developed suburban edge. Visibility of the reduced development site within the study area is restricted both by the valley topography and by the presence of woodland and heavily wooded suburban landscapes. The generally wooded character of the study area limits visibility of the site from many areas and also contains it within a woodland context when it is visible, particularly in more distant views from the south.

Fieldwork has shown that the visibility of the development site from within the study area is largely limited to the immediate boundary of the site itself and from occasional longer distance views available from the south. Topography and extensive areas of woodland provide screening and containment. Viewpoints have been identified that have a degree of visibility of the site but it should be noted that they have been selected from the limited component of the study area with visibility, and as such the viewpoints tend to lie within very close proximity of the site boundary. The viewpoints will also be affected by the possible construction of the AWPR which, if built will introduce often close views of significant transport infrastructure into the viewshed, and modify the baseline views available.

With restricted visibility throughout the study area, the potential effects caused by developing the Milltimber site will be largely restricted to the immediate vicinity of the development. The effects upon visual amenity are considered to be greater during construction due to the disturbance caused by the construction process and the absence of a mature landscape structure within the development site. Localised effects upon visual amenity are considered to be initially significant and adverse at two of the five representative viewpoints during construction.

As a result of mitigation in terms of site planting and structural landscape planting it is considered that by the summer of year 15 post completion, all of the five viewpoints will experience Negligible and not significant effects upon visual amenity.

Landscape character was assessed in terms of sensitivity, magnitude of change and significance of effect. Two Landscape Character Areas as determined by Scottish Natural Heritage were assessed – Wooded Farmland and Central Wooded Estate - and a further two Local Landscape Character Areas were identified and included as part of the assessment. These were recognised as Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements, and River Dee Valley. Again, development of the AWPR would have the potential to significantly affect the existing landscape character of the study area and render it less sensitive to development of the type proposed at Milltimber South.

Both of the SNH Landscape Character Areas are predicted to experience a Negligible impact due to the limited extent of the proposed development site and the screening that will be provided by structural planting associated with it. The proposed development will also be seen as a residential area within a strong woodland landscape structure. This will allow it to integrate with the adjacent existing areas of residential development which are set in a well wooded context. As a result the proposed development is not considered to introduce a new landuse into the study area.

Of the Local Character Areas assessed, the River Dee Valley to experience localised significant but indirect effects. It is considered that these effects are localised and that the majority of the River Dee Valley character area will not be significantly affected.

The Urban, Suburban and Rural Settlements are predicted to experience negligible effects.

Within the study area there are no specific landscape designations. However three Scheduled Ancient Monuments are present and are considered to be sensitive to changes in their landscape and visual environment. It is predicted that, due to screening by vegetation and topography the three Scheduled Ancient Monuments will experience Negligible and not significant effects.

6.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is considered that landscape and visual effects of the proposed reduced development will be largely contained within the immediate vicinity of the site due to the topography of the Dee Valley and the large areas of woodland that are present within the study area.

Throughout the rest of the study area impacts on landscape and visual amenity are considered to be generally Negligible. Potential significant impacts which have been identified are generally temporary in nature and will be substantially reduced over time provided that structural landscape planting associated with the proposed developments is maintained. This planting should also be designed to relate to the existing woodland and parkland species currently found within the study area. This mitigation will allow the reduced development site to integrate, both visually and in terms of landscape character, with the adjacent existing suburban and wooded landscape of the settlement of Milltimber.

The proposed development is considered to be appropriate for the development site and its context. The development proposals are in keeping with surrounding land use patterns and local scale of development. There is predicted to be minimal long term impact upon the landscape and visual amenity of the study area.

The majority of the study area is not predicted to experience permanent significant landscape and visual effects as a result of the proposed development at Milltimber South. Mitigation, in terms of landscape structure is expected to minimise the majority of effects to Negligible by 15 years after completion.

The AWPR will, if constructed, substantially modify both the visual characteristics and the landscape character of the study area and in the context of the AWPR the study area would be considered to be less sensitive to the proposed development at Milltimber. It is considered that the landscape and visual effects of the proposed developments will be reduced if seen in the context of a study area containing the AWPR, its earthworks, SUDs and structural landscape.

The reduced development now being promoted by Bancon Homes will result in the already low residual landscape effects being further reduced with the proposed development not considered to give rise to any long term significant effects upon landscape receptors.

Although the original assessment of the development areas 1 and 2 identified significant effects on three viewpoints during construction and at winter of completion, the reduced development proposal is considered to result in significant effects over the same period at only two of the viewpoints.

The reduced scheme is not predicted to result in any long term significant effects upon visual receptors.

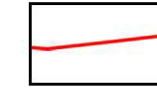
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7. <http://www.awpr.co.uk/>
8. <http://jura.rcahms.gov.uk/PASTMAP/start.jsp>

8.0 FIGURES



KEY



SITE BOUNDARY

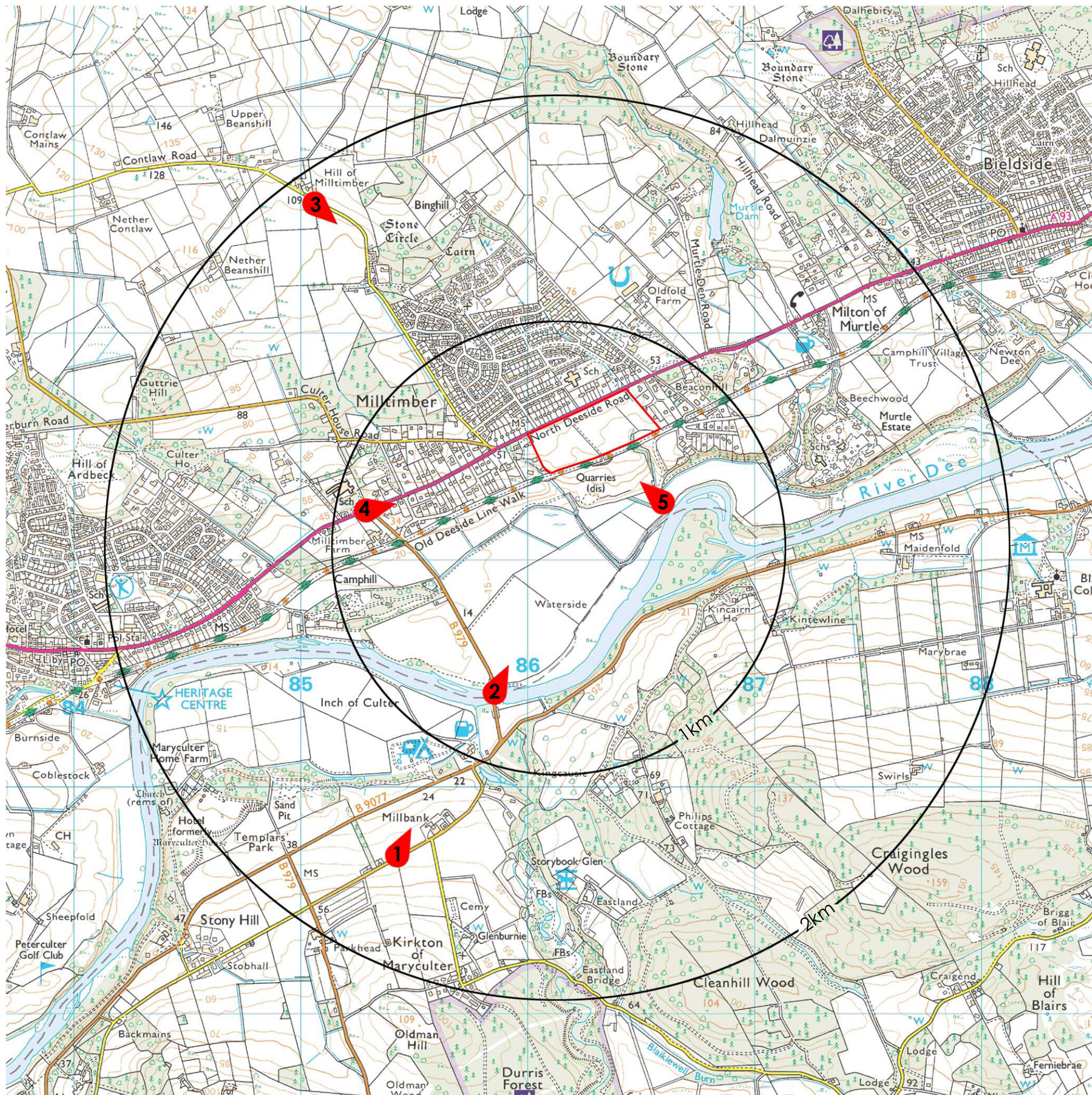


STUDY AREA BOUNDARY (2KM)



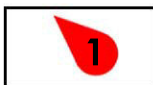


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site: MILLTIMBER SOUTH	client: BANCON HOMES
drawing title: LOCATION PLAN / STUDY AREA	
scale: NTS	date: 01 / 12 / 10
figure number: 01	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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KEY

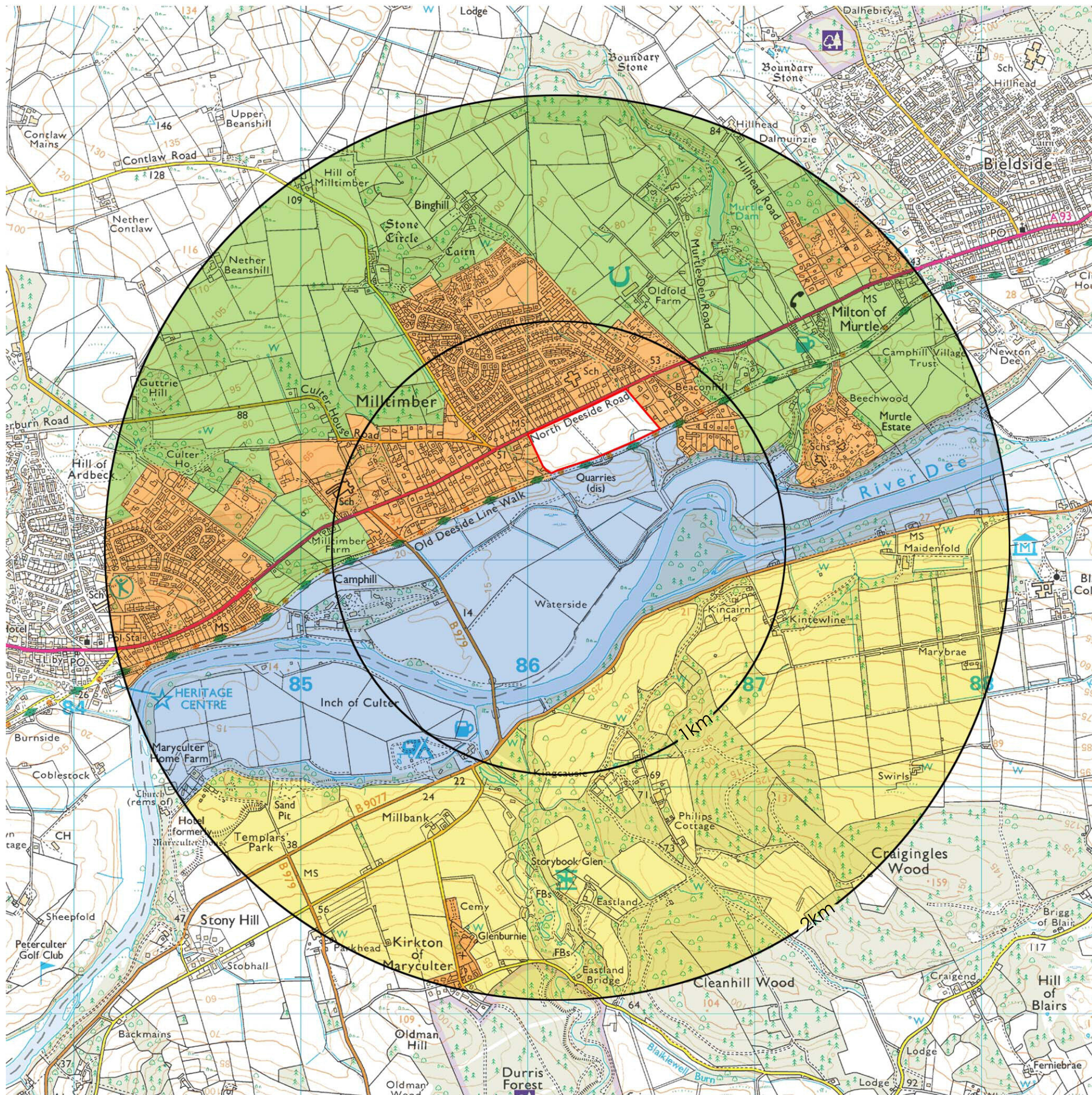
-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  STUDY AREA BOUNDARY (2KM)
-  VIEWPOINT LOCATION

VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS



1. NEAR MILLBANK
(GRID REF. 385416, 799685)
2. B979 & RIVER DEE
(GRID REF. 385846, 800389)
3. CONTLAW ROAD, HILL OF MILLTIMBER
(GRID REF. 385018, 802599)
4. NORTH DEESIDE ROAD
(GRID REF. 385268, 801216)
5. RIVER DEE FOOTPATH
(GRID REF. 386618, 801206)




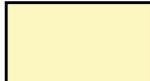
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figure number: 02	
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KEY

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  STUDY AREA BOUNDARY (2KM)

SNH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

-  WOODED FARMLAND
-  CENTRAL WOODED ESTATE

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

-  URBAN, SUBURBAN & RURAL SETTLEMENTS
-  RIVER DEE VALLEY

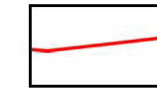


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drawing title: LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER	
scale: NTS	date: 01 / 12 / 10
figure number: 03	
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KEY



SITE BOUNDARY



STUDY AREA BOUNDARY (2KM)



SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT
 1. MARYCULTER HOUSE, CHURCH & BURIAL GROUND
 2. CORBIE LINN PREHISTORIC ENCLOSURE
 3. BINGHILL HOUSE, STONE CIRCLE & CAIRN



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SNH WOODED FARMLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



SNH WOODED FARMLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



SNH CENTRAL WOODED ESTATE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



SNH CENTRAL WOODED ESTATE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



SUBURBAN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER




SUBURBAN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



RIVER DEE VALLEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



RIVER DEE VALLEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER


site: MILLTIMBER SOUTH	client: BANCON HOMES
drawing title: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ILLUSTRATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS	
scale: NTS	date: 02 / 06 / 09
figure number: 05	
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VIEWPOINT 01: NEAR MILLBANK, LOOKING NORTH EAST TOWARDS THE SITE (GRID REF. 385416, 799685)
ARROW INDICATES APPROXIMATE SITE CENTRE



VIEWPOINT 02: B979 & RIVER DEE, LOOKING NORTH EAST TOWARDS THE SITE (GRID REF. 385846, 800389)
ARROW INDICATES APPROXIMATE SITE CENTRE


site: MILLTIMBER SOUTH	client: BANCON HOMES
drawing title: VIEWPOINT 1 & 2	
scale: NTS	date: 01 / 12 / 10
figure number: 06	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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VIEWPOINT 03: CONTLAW ROAD, HILL OF MILLTIMBER, LOOKING SOUTH EAST TOWARDS THE SITE (GRID REF.385018, 802599)
 THE ARROW INDICATES THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE, HOWEVER DUE TO LANDFORM THE SITE IS NOT VISIBLE FROM THIS VIEWPOINT




VIEWPOINT 04: NORTH DEESIDE ROAD, LOOKING SOUTH EAST TOWARDS THE SITE (GRID REF. 385268, 801216)
 BRACKETED AREA SHOWS APPROXIMATE EXTENT OF THE SITE, HOWEVER DUE TO SCREENING BY VEGETATION THE SITE IS NOT VISIBLE FROM THIS VIEWPOINT

site: MILLTIMBER SOUTH	client: BANCON HOMES
drawing title: VIEWPOINT 3 & 4	
scale: NTS	date: 01 / 12 / 10
figure number: 07	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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VIEWPOINT 05: RIVER DEE FOOTPATH, LOOKING NORTH WEST TOWARDS THE SITE (GRID REF.386618, 801206)
 ARROW INDICATES APPROXIMATE SITE CENTRE

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drawing title: VIEWPOINT 5	
scale: NTS	date: 01 / 12 / 10
figure number: 08	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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