

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 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: Mr Tinch and Mr MacIntyre c/o Bancon Developments Ltd.
Address: As above.

The site and your proposal

3 Site Name: Craigton Road, Pitfodells

4 Site Location map: The site is located to the north of The International School and the Marcliffe Hotel, and immediately west of Airyhall House and the recent care home development. To the west of the site is a residential development carried out by Stewart Milne Homes, and to the north playing fields.



Fig 1 – site location.

5 National Grid reference of the site: NJ904038

6 Current Use of Site/Previous Development: Redundant steading sites and grazing land.

7 Proposed Use of the Site: Residential, care home.

8 Details of Housing Proposals: The proposed development consists of 32 dwellinghouses set out in a low density fashion with significant retention of existing trees and planting of new trees. A road and footpaths will be taken from northeast to southwest across the site, following the line of existing overhead pylons, with substantial low level landscaping and planting to create an attractive access. In addition to the housing, it is proposed to develop

a new care home on the site, adjacent to the existing care home fronting onto Craigton Road.

The proposed development of this site was promoted through the last LDP review, and initially supported in the Main Issues Report for development along the southern half of the site, with woodland retained along the northern half. Bancon made detailed representations in support of the development of the whole site. The final plan amended the zoning to provide 20 houses on a nearby site to the east, and maintain this site as green belt/green space network. Copies of the representations are appended to this bid as supporting information. Therein is a detailed critique of the value of the green belt and green space network designation on the land, as the site contributes little to each.

- 9** Provision of Affordable Housing: Affordable housing will be provided at 25% of the development, either on site, off site (at the adjacent Maidencraig development) or via commuted payment.
- 10** Business Land Proposals: Not Applicable
- 11** Other Proposed Land Uses: The success of the adjacent care home, and the continued demand for such facilities has led to the proposal for a second home. Whilst independently operated, the location of two homes alongside each other has several obvious benefits.
- 12** Phasing: It is proposed to develop the site as one phase, although the delivery rate may be slower than on other sites due to the low density and size of houses proposed.
- 13** Community Engagement: The proposed development of this site was promoted through the last LDP review, and initially supported in the Main Issues Report for development along the southern half of the site, with woodland retained along the northern half. Bancon attended local consultation events, and presented the proposals to the general public.

Sustainable Development and Design

- 14** Sustainability Checklist:
 - A) Exposure – The site has good shelter from both the prevailing southwesterly and northerly winds
 - B) Aspect – The site is south facing.
 - C) Slope – The site is gently sloping, but not greater than 1:20 at any point.
 - D) Flooding – No part of the site is at risk of flooding.
 - E) Drainage – The site is capable of being drained effectively with foul water to the mains system and surface water 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) Nature conservation – The site contains some mature trees, particularly along field boundaries and the periphery of the site. The proposed development seeks to retain much of the existing tree cover, and plant substantial areas of new trees, particularly along the north and south site boundaries.
- H) Landscape features – The proposed development is supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, which is appended to this bid.



Fig 2 – the site is dominated by a line of pylons, but peripheral tree planting is of value.

- I) Landscape fit – The development of the land will effectively round off the development in the area, and provide a defensible Green Belt boundary along Craigton Road, where playing fields and wider areas of open space contribute positively to the Green Belt and Green Space Network. The proposal to include substantial tree planting, particularly along the northern and southern boundaries will contrast (positively) with adjacent development to the west, where there is little in the way of landscaping along the Craigton Road frontage. The landscape fit is further addressed in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal appended to this report.

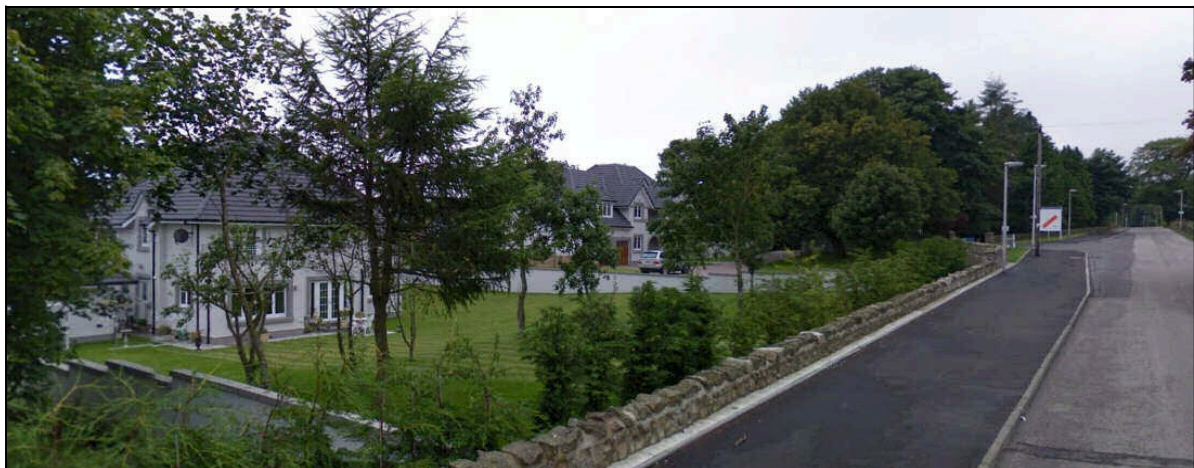


Fig 3 – Adjacent development to the west has little peripheral landscaping.

- J) Relationship to existing settlements – The site is enclosed by development on three sides, with Craighton Road bounding the fourth side. It is a logical rounding off of the development in the area.
- K) Land use mix – The primary use of the site is residential, and the provision of a care home is entirely compatible with that. Indeed, it will provide local employment opportunities.
- L) Accessibility – The site is accessible by a range of transport methods. The 15 bus service runs past the site with a 30 minute frequency. The Deeside Way and other core paths are within a short walk or cycle of the site. Vehicular access, via Craighton Road leads directly to the city and the wider transport network.
- M) Proximity to services and facilities –
 - Community facilities – within 400m of the site.
 - Local shops – 400-800m from the site.
 - Sports facilities – within 400m of the site.
 - Public transport networks – Within 400m of the site.
 - Primary schools – around 600m from the site.
- N) Footpath and cycle connections – The site is well placed to benefit from the existing surrounding footpaths and cycle routes. The excerpt from the Core Path plan below shows the close proximity of several popular routes, most notably the Deeside Way (path 66).

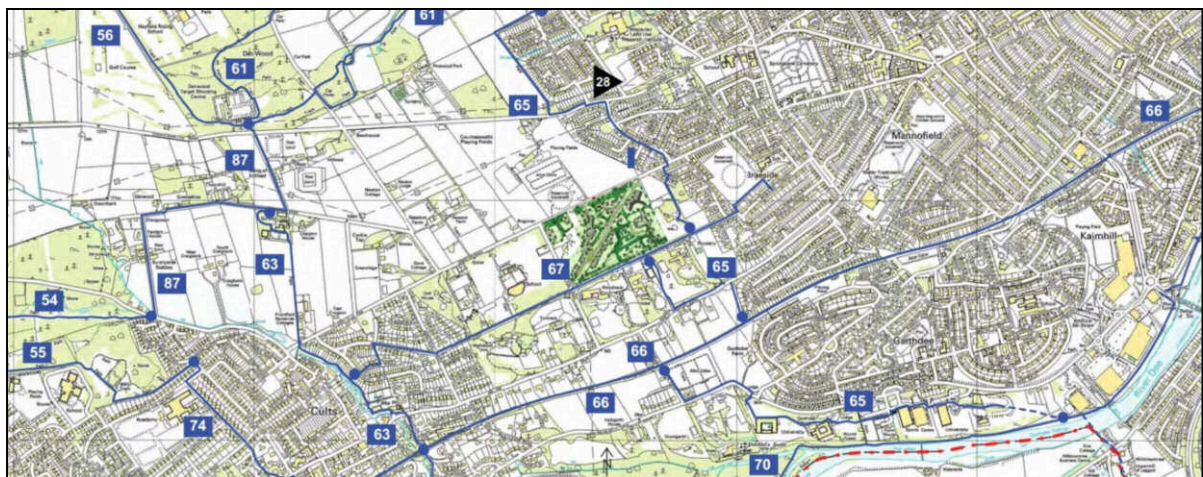


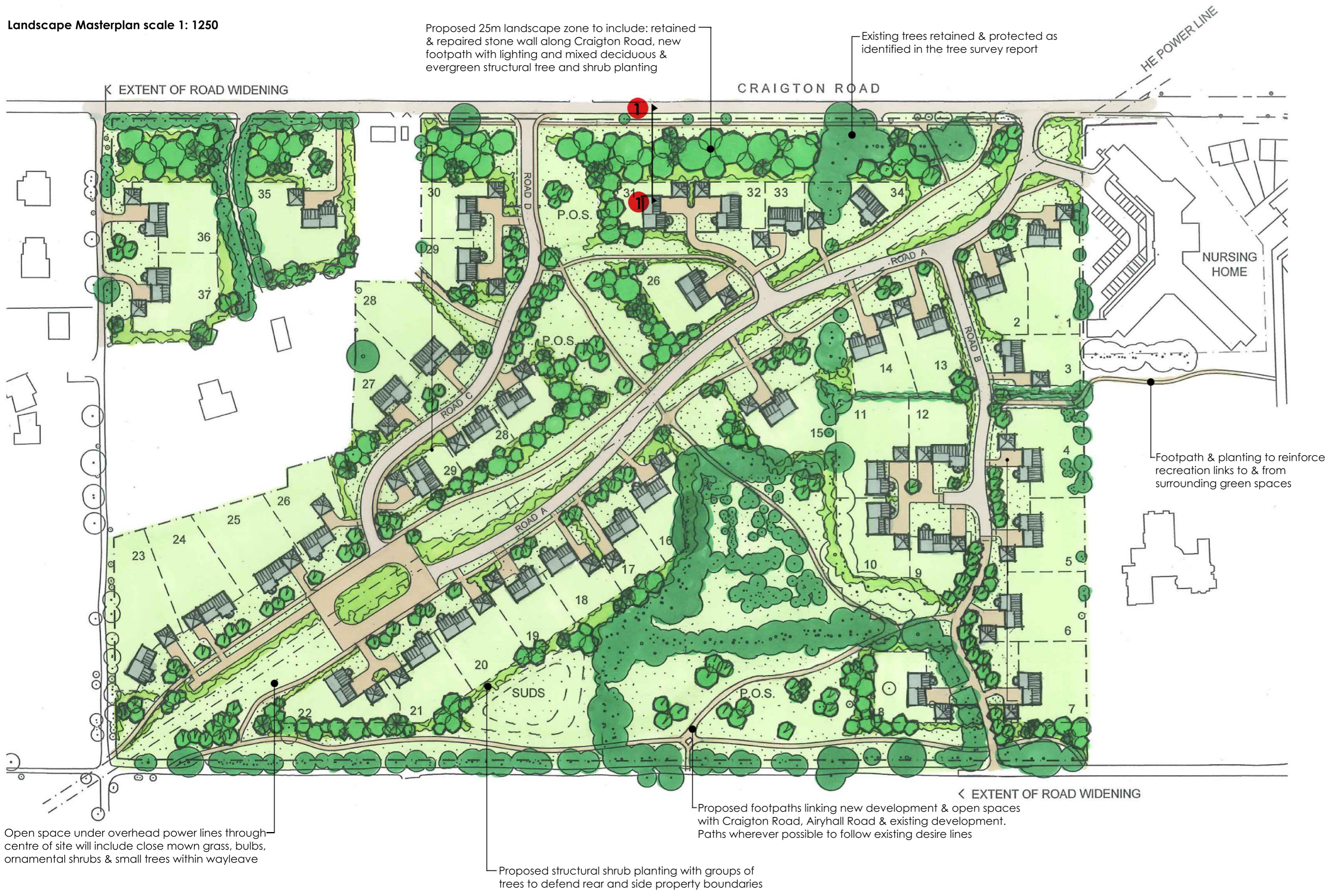
Fig 4 – Core Paths Plan excerpt.

- O) Proximity to employment opportunities – The site is located on the periphery of Aberdeen, and therefore within a walk or bus journey of a range of employment opportunities. The proposed care home will also provide additional opportunities on the site.
- 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 – forecasts indicate capacity at Cults or Hazlehead Academy
Primary Capacity – There is currently capacity at Airyhall School, but the roll is expected to rise significantly over the next decade. The proposed development would contribute only around 10 pupils, however, due to the low density proposed.
- 15 Supporting Surveys: This bid is supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, and also representations made to the 2012 LDP review that consider the impact on the Green Belt and Green Space Network.
- 16 Community Benefits of the Proposed Development: The proposed development will round off the development in the area, and provide a further supply of housing. The proposed landscaping and planting will provide an attractive neighbourhood. The provision of a second care home in the area will provide additional employment opportunities. Key walking routes are maintained through the development.
- 17 Masterplan/Framework: The plan appended does not include the care home site, with an alternative layout of 5 houses shown instead, but contains considerable detail on the landscaping proposals, including sections. The plan below shows the same layout with the care home included.



Landscape Masterplan scale 1: 1250



INDICATIVE PLANTING SCHEDULE

ROADSIDE 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 TREE 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 TINGIS EVE PRICE
 SPIRAEA X ARGUTA
 WEIGELA FLORIDA VARIEGATA
 PRUNUS LAUROCERASUS CAUCASICA

GROUND COVER SHRUB PLANTING
 COTONEASTER CORAL BEAUTY
 EUONYMUS FORTUNEI EMERALD GAITY
 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
 BRACHYGLOTTIS 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

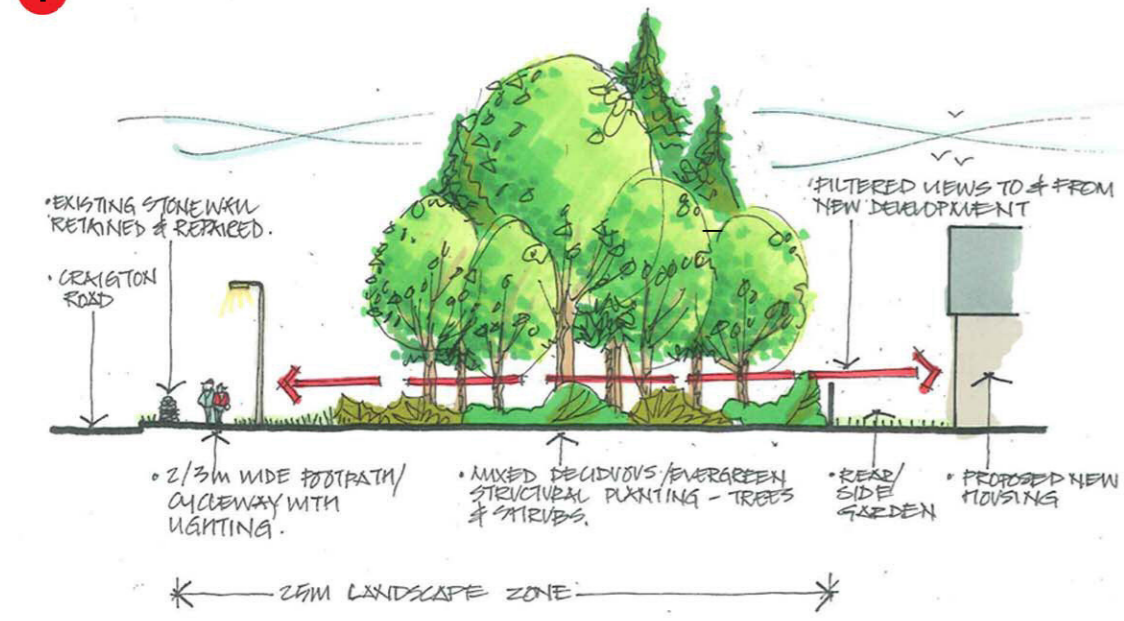
GENERAL NOTES

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. For information on levels & drainage refer to engineers drawings.
4. No information with regard to levels & drainage was available at time of preparation of drawing.

Legend

- Existing trees retained and protected as identified in tree survey (By others)
- 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

1 Typical cross section through Craigton Road to proposed new housing NTS



NOT FOR SITE ISSUE

site: Craigton Road, Pitfodles	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Landscape Masterplan	
scale: 1:1250 @ A2	date: 16 / 12 / 10
drawing number: 0590 / 1	
drawn by: J Brindley	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 Ltd.	
brindley associates landscape architects & environmental planners design assessment ecology	



Landscape and Visual Appraisal Proposed Residential Development Site at Craigton Road, Piffodels



For: Bancon Developments Ltd

15th December 2010

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Appendix 2 Extract from current Local Plan

Appendix 3 Extract from the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan

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1. Location Plan & Viewpoint Locations
2. Site Landscape Appraisal
3. Landscape Character
4. Internal Landscape Character Photographs
5. External Landscape Character Photographs
6. Photographic viewpoint 1
7. Photographic viewpoint 2
8. Photographic viewpoint 3
9. Photographic viewpoint 4
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11. Sketch Landscape Strategy

1.0 Introduction

Brindley Associates Ltd, Landscape Architects and Environmental Planners, were commissioned by Bancon Developments Limited Ltd in April 2010 to prepare a landscape and visual appraisal in support of a proposed residential development site at Craigton Road, Pitfodells Aberdeen. The Site is located between Craigton Road and Airyhall Road and lies to the north of the consented extension to the existing Marcliffe Hotel site and the International School site, which is currently under construction.

The appraisal will assess the existing landscape features; identify constraints and potential for the proposed development site. The appraisal includes a landscape strategy to mitigate identified residual landscape and visual effects to provide a context for the development and to create locally appropriate boundaries for the development site.

2.0 Methodology

A preliminary appraisal of the baseline landscape and visual characteristics of the site was carried out through desk study. The extent of the study area was taken to cover the site itself, the immediate surroundings, a 2km radius study area and viewpoints located at key locations on the boundaries of the site.

A visit to the site to appraise the landscape and visual impacts was carried out on Wednesday 7th April 2010 by Ross Wilkie, a Chartered Landscape Architect. Ross walked over the site, public roads and paths surrounding the development and took site photographs to inform the Landscape Appraisal.

This report is not intended to be a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; however it 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 Second Edition.

3.0 The Proposal

An initial draft masterplan has been prepared by The William Cowie Partnership (drawing number 2176/100) and this information has been used to inform this landscape appraisal. The masterplan shows approximately 64 detached residential units for private sale and a nursing home in the north eastern corner of the site. The masterplan also shows indicative areas of structural landscape planting and internal open spaces, footpath linkages and a SUDS pond in the south of the site. The landscape mitigation strategy provided in this report is developed from this indicative masterplan layout.

4.0 Site Setting and Description

The Craigton Road Site comprises three areas of land between Craigton Road and Airyhall Road in the Pitfodells area of Aberdeen. The eastern boundary comprises existing residential areas. The western boundary is formed by Bairds Brae, an unmade track linking Craigton Road with Airyhall Road and North Deeside Road. (See Figure 1).

The site itself comprises of the following:

- A number of relatively flat abandoned fields previously put to pasture;
- Five fields which are currently in management as pasture;
- Abandoned farm buildings;
- Abandoned and derelict walled gardens;
- Areas of unmanaged and declining woodland associated with the walled garden;
- A paddock in the south of the site; and
- An existing access from Airyhall Road with trees on either side.

There are remnant boundary tree avenues associated with Bairds Brae and Airyhall Road although it should be noted that many of these trees are also declining in condition. (See Figure 2)

Internal field boundaries and the site boundary comprise a range of materials including stone walls, often derelict and reinforced with post and wire fencing or overgrown beech hedging. The site is diagonally traversed by a 33kV overhead power line running from the north east to south west. The site is generally flat, falling to gently south facing slopes towards Airyhall Road. Informal recreational access tracks are found throughout the site although there is no formal access provision. (See Figure 4)

A number of residential properties lie within the overall site area including Senang, Treepark and Westwood House, although these properties are outwith the site boundary.

Within the general area of the proposed development lie a complex mix of urban and urban fringe landuses including large areas of existing residential development associated with Cults and Aberdeen. To the north of Craigton Road lies sports fields which are separated from the road by a prominent ball stop fence, areas of stone wall and a grass covered raised reservoir. (See Figure 5)

To the immediate south of the site lie Woodbank (Shell Headquarters), the Marcliffe Hotel and the New International School campus fronting onto North Deeside Road. These large plots contain substantial areas of mature trees and woodland, which, in association with the trees present on the south of the site, provide a wooded character to Airyhall Road and screen the majority of views south from the site.

To the immediate east of the proposed development lies the rear boundary of existing residential properties within Northcote Crescent and Avenue in the Braeside area of Aberdeen which forms a substantial existing residential area. To the west of the site lies the recently completed Stewart Milne residential development at Woodland Gardens (See Figure 2).

Craigton Road links the existing residential areas of Cults and Braeside and forms the northern boundary of the site. The road is straight and is of variable character, being defined in places by adjacent residential frontages, or in the case of the adjacent Stewart Milne development by rear gardens abutting onto it. Some sections are separated from the site by a low wall and have views across it towards the woodland on Airyhall Road.

In the immediate vicinity of the site the character of Craigton Road is defined by its linear route and the adjacent stone walls which form a continuous boundary on both sides. Near the covered reservoir the wall to the north of Craigton Road is taller and is located adjacent to the road edge, and forms a substantial visual barrier. The earth mounded reservoir adjacent to the wall provides further screening. Alongside the playing fields the wall reduces in height and is augmented by the approximately 4 metre tall green mesh ball stop fence which is a visually prominent element. Through the fence there are views to residential areas seen across sports fields. The boundary with the proposed development site is generally comprised of a low (approximately 1 metre) stone wall, which has collapsed in some locations. There is remnant avenue planting associated with the wall in some locations, mainly comprising lime species (*Tilia spp*) much of this boundary appears to be historically open with no screening or woodland framework associated with the wall. There are small groups of trees associated with gateways, which comprise either formal entrances with gate piers or an access points adjacent to the derelict cottage. (See Figure 5)

Bairds Brae and Airyhall Road are both unmade lanes. Airyhall Road provides access to the rear of properties fronting onto North Deeside Road, the recent retirement Flat development at Airyhall and Bairds Brae provides access to the property of Westwood. These roads have an intimate and informal character created by the adjacent boundary stone walls remnant tree avenues and individual trees. It should again be noted that many of the trees are currently in decline and the boundary walls are in a generally poor condition and the existing character of the road will decline if management is not undertaken. Recent and ongoing development at both the adjacent Stewart Milne residential development and at the International School has changed the character of these roads by increasing the prominence of development. (See Figure 5)

In summary the site is of an increasingly derelict character with buildings, boundary walls, internal walls and trees in generally poor condition and large areas of pasture unmanaged. In the absence of active management it is expected that the condition of the site will continue to deteriorate.

5.0 Planning Policies and Landscape Designations

The proposed development lies within the area covered by the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 and the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008. The proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan is currently out to public consultation.

5.1 Aberdeen City Shire Structure Plan

Within the current Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan the following policies may be of relevance to the landscape and visual appraisal of the proposed housing development:

- Strategic Policy – Strategic Growth Areas- Aberdeen City – the scale of growth anticipated requires that more than half of the developments will take place on Greenfield sites;
- Strategic Policy – Sustainable Development; and
- Strategic Policy - Quality of the Environment - To make sure new development maintains and improves the regions important built, natural and cultural assets.

5.2 Aberdeen Local Plan

The site is covered by Pitfodells Conservation Area (Area 10), is identified as Green Belt (GSN 29) and Green Space Network (GSN 29) and lies between Residential Area R40 Pitfodells and Residential Area R40 Mannofield. It is appropriate to note at this stage that the Green Belt designation and Green Space Network is a planning designation, not a landscape designation. (See Figure 3)

Within the Aberdeen Local Plan the following policies may be of relevance to the landscape and visual appraisal of the proposed residential development:

- Policy 28 – Green Belt: Area of Green Belt (GB28) is subject to review in 2010;
- Policy 29 – Green Space Network (GSN 29);
- Policy 31– Landscape Protection: Maintain and manage landscape setting in developments;
- Policy 33 – Protecting Trees and Woodland: protect and enhance Aberdeen's trees and woodland with the aim of doubling the existing tree cover of the City;
- Policy 39 – Green Space Provision in Residential Development; and
- Policy 40 – Residential Areas (R40): In areas of existing residential development and areas where new residential development has taken place the predominantly residential character and amenity will be retained.

It should be noted that the Pitfodells Conservation Area Appraisal prepared by Aberdeen City Council as a review of the Pitfodells Special Character Area (H10) for the draft of the current Aberdeen Local Plan was abandoned.

The guidance and policies contained within the Pitfodells Conservation Area Appraisal set out development proposal requirements in terms of aspirations for spatial separation, layout, access, landscape, external appearance and services. However, as the Appraisal has now been abandoned by Aberdeen City Council we understand that its guidance is no longer a material consideration.

5.3 The Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan

The Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan is the replacement to the current Aberdeen Local Plan. At the time of writing the Local Development Plan is out to consultation from 24th September 2010 until 17th December 2010).

The proposed Local Development Plan modifies a number of policies with reference to the Craigton Road site and suggests revisions to the Green Space Network (NE1), revisions to the Greenbelt boundary (NE2), and the release of part of the site for development (OP64), although part of the area identified as OP64 is previously developed land. The proposed revised boundaries are shown in Appendix 3.

6.0 Effects upon Landscape Character

The development site lies in an area of enclosed urban fringe countryside directly and indirectly affected by urban, urban fringe and infrastructure developments. The urban edges of Aberdeen and Cults lie on the east and western boundaries of the site and are prominent and visible elements in views available from it. Ongoing and consented development at the International School and the Marcliffe Hotel on North Deeside Road are introducing prominent new structures in the vicinity of Airyhall Road.

From the vicinity of the site views are available of urbanised open space to the north. There are also views to existing residential areas across sports fields, seen through the visually prominent ball stop fence. Views out of the site are limited by the adjacent development and trees on the southern boundary of the site and limited within the large plots associated with North Deeside Road. There are occasional long distance views across the Dee Valley where the power line way leave allows a framed view to the south west. An appraisal of the landscape of the site is shown on Figure 2.

Individual elements including the existing reservoir, adjacent established and more recent residential developments, the overhead power line crossing the site, the Airyhall House flats and the ongoing construction of the International School, sports pitches, lighting and fencing add further urbanising elements into the vicinity of the site. Long distance views to and from the site are limited by existing development, reservoir, walls and trees on the site boundaries.

Distinct areas of landscape character identified within the 2km study area include the following, (see Figure 3):

- The Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area;
- Central Wooded Estate Landscape Character Area;
- Urban Areas Local Landscape Character Area; and
- The Valley Landscape Character Area.

The proposed development site lies adjacent to the extensive Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area (LCA) as identified by SNH although the Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen (No.80) appears to be identified by SNH as lying within the Valley Landscape Character Area, The development site would be separated from the Valley LCA by existing urban developments associated with North Deeside Road, and has some characteristics applicable to both LCA and some characteristics applicable to neither. As there is a shared boundary with the Wooded Farmland LCA and no direct link to the River Dee corridor, it has been assumed for the purposes of this assessment that the site relates more to the Wooded Farmland LCA.

The adjacent Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeenshire (No.102) identifies the Central Wooded Estates LCA. The urban areas and valley components of the study area are considered in sections 6.3 and 6.4.

6.1 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.

The Wooded Farmland LCA is generally 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. The LCA component within the study area is however exposed to significant urban, urban fringe and infrastructure uses that render it untypical of the broader

LCA. In the vicinity of the site the LCA contains significant urban edges, sports pitches, overhead power lines and an earth covered reservoir. The site itself is partially derelict and abandoned land, and again is not typical of the LCA.

This Character Area in the vicinity of the proposed development site is considered to be of Low sensitivity to residential development.

The proposed development will result in the direct loss of a small and derelict component of land on the boundary of the Wooded Farmland LCA which will be replaced by residential land uses. The proposed development will not be seen from the majority of the LCA due to intervening rolling landform and screening provided by existing woodland adjacent residential areas and boundary walls. Where the proposed development is visible it will be seen in the context of the existing built form of Cults, and Aberdeen and will only be significantly visible from a short section of Craigton Road and the sports pitches to the immediate north which are not typical of the Broader LCA.

The magnitude of change for the Wooded Farmland LCA is considered to be locally moderate significant and adverse as the proposed development will directly affect a site on the boundary of the LCA. However as the component of the LCA affected is contained by developed land and recreational land uses and is itself currently partially derelict, the effect of the proposed development on the broader LCA is considered to be Negligible.

This is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the Wooded Farmland LCA.

6.2 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.

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. This Character Area is considered to be of Low sensitivity to development outwith its boundaries as a result of the minimal effect that existing residential development visible in Cults and Aberdeen has had upon its strongly rural character.

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

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.

6.3 Urban Areas

The Urban Area Character Area mainly comprises the areas of Craigiebuckler Braeside, Mannofield, Kaimhill and Garthdee in Aberdeen and the eastern component of Cults which lie on the south facing northern slopes of the Dee Valley. The boundary of this character area has been plotted following site work to identify recent changes to the urban envelope. 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.

The Urban Area Character Area 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 in the vicinity of the site although development is denser in the eastern areas towards Aberdeen city centre and as a result a large amount of mature trees are present in the LCA. This results in a wooded and generally enclosed suburban character.

The LCA is urbanised and views tend to be short to medium, enclosed by surrounding 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.

The proposed development areas will not be directly visible from the majority of the Urban Areas LCA as the new development is generally well-contained by topography and vegetation. Areas of the LCA immediately adjacent to the site will experience some change as abandoned grassland and 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. This is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the Urban Area LCA.

6.4 Valley

The Valley LCA runs east to west through the south of the study area and comprises the River Dee, its floodplain and the lower slopes of the Dee Valley. This LCA is separated from the Craigton Road site by existing residential development along the North Deeside Road 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.

The 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.

The proposed development areas will not be directly visible from the majority of the River Dee LCA as the new development is generally well-contained by existing development and mature trees. The magnitude of change is considered to be Negligible which is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the main areas of the River Dee Valley LCA.

7.0 Effects upon Visual Amenity

Visibility issues that may arise from the proposed development have been discussed with reference from a selection of locations with close representative views of the proposed development site, these include:

- Views from the adjacent Craigton Road;
- Views from Bairds Brae;
- Views from Airyhall Road; and
- Views from within the site itself.

Landscape impacts are qualitative changes to the character of the landscape resulting from land use changes.

Visual impacts relate solely to changes in available views of the landscape and the effect of these changes on visual receptors. Hence visual impact assessment is concerned with:

- The direct impact of the development upon views of the landscape;
- The reaction of viewers who may be affected; and
- The overall impact on visual amenity, which can range from degradation through to enhancement.

Landscape significance and visual impact significance is assessed in terms of sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change. (See Definition of Effects tables in Appendix 1)

7.1 Photo Viewpoint 1- Craigton Road, near reservoir (Figure 6)

This view will be experienced mainly by road users; these receptors are considered to be of medium sensitivity to change of the nature proposed.

Changes to this view will include:

- Loss of medium distance views across an open pasture field and abandoned grassland towards broadleaved trees and overhead power lines;
- New views through structural landscape planting towards a residential landscape; and
- Views to a regenerated boundary with Craigton Road.

The proposed changes are predicted to result in a locally high magnitude of change which will result in major adverse effects upon visual receptors at this close viewpoint. The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is considered to be significant however these effects can be expected to decline over time as the structural landscape areas mature and provide visual integration.

7.2 Photo Viewpoint 2 – Bairds Brae (Figure 7)

This view will be experienced mainly by small numbers of walkers on the Bairds Brae seeing the view through the adjacent roadside trees; these receptors are considered to be of high sensitivity to change of the nature proposed.

Changes to this view include:

- Loss of medium distance views to mixed woodland and avenues associated with Craigton Road and off site properties;
- New views through structural landscape planting towards a residential landscape; and
- Loss of views towards ballstop fencing and the covered reservoir structure.

The proposed changes are predicted to result in a locally high magnitude of change which will result in major effects upon visual receptors at this viewpoint. The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is considered to be significant.

7.3 Photo Viewpoint 3 – Bairds Brae/ Airyhall Road (Figure 8)

This view will be experienced mainly by small numbers of walkers on Airyhall Road and the Bairds Brae seeing the view through the adjacent site boundary trees; these receptors are considered to be of high sensitivity to change of the nature proposed.

Changes to this view include:

- Loss of medium distance views to Westwood House and open pastures;
- Loss of open views of the electricity pylon;
- New views through structural landscape planting towards a residential landscape; and
- Views to a regenerated site boundary with Airyhall road.

The proposed changes are predicted to result in a locally high magnitude of change which will result in major effects upon visual receptors at this viewpoint. The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is considered to be significant.

7.4 Photo Viewpoint 4 – North of Derelict Walled Garden Onsite (Figure 9)

This view will be experienced mainly by receptors involved in informal recreational access to the site, normally as dog walkers, who are considered to be of medium sensitivity to change of the nature proposed. The photograph shows existing close views to derelict grassland, overhead power infrastructure, the derelict cottage adjacent to Craigton Road and prominent existing local residential development.

Changes to this view will include:

- Loss of medium distance views to existing residential development;
- Loss of open views of the electricity pylons;
- Removal of derelict land and structures; and
- New views towards a residential landscape.

The proposed changes are predicted to result in a locally high magnitude of change which will result in major effects upon visual receptors at this viewpoint. The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is considered to be significant.

7.5 Photo Viewpoint 5 – Airyhall Road (Figure 10)

Changes to this view will include:

- Loss of medium distance views to existing residential development;
- Loss of open views of unmanaged and fly tipped land;
- Loss of close views to derelict hedgerow; and
- New views towards new residential development.

The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is not considered to be significant as close views of residential development seen in the context of unmanaged land will be replaced with close views of residential development.

7.6 General Visibility of the Development Site in the Wider Area

The above viewpoints illustrated represent close views of the development site. These viewpoints are all immediately adjacent to or are very close to the proposed site as they are representative of the only significant public locations that have clear visibility of the site.

There will be inevitable substantial visual effects arising in the immediate locale of the proposed development site as close views to unmanaged urban fringe land, derelict structures and declining trees will be replaced by views to a new residential area with its associated landscape structure. In the existing close views however, there are many urbanising elements already visible in the form of

new structures, existing residential properties, recent residential and other developments together with longer distance views towards the existing urban edges of Cults and Aberdeen.

Within the broader study area the site is generally well contained by off site woodland and trees associated with the sites southern, eastern and western boundaries, and by small areas of onsite woodland and individual trees. From the south, existing development and the landscapes associated with the developments between North Deeside Road and Airyhall Road also modifies visibility and provides substantial screening. Screening is again provided to the west and east by existing and recent residential developments. The recently constructed International School complex provides additional screening when the site is viewed from the south which in combination with the topography means that general visibility of the proposed development sites are negligible.

Apart from the immediate site boundaries the site will only be visible from the recreational land to the north where the majority of the receptors will be those involved in active recreation that will see development on the site in the context of existing housing development and from the Craigton road where it forms the site boundary.

Substantial visual effects are therefore considered to be restricted to those areas immediately adjacent to the site and it is considered that there will be limited effects upon visual amenity in the broader study area. Landscape mitigation proposals have been produced which, if implemented, would substantially reduce the potential visual effects of developing the site. These mitigation proposals are discussed below.

8.0 Appraisal of Potential Effects on the Role of the Green Belt

The proposed development site lies within an area that has been designated as Green Belt in the Aberdeen local plan.

Development on the proposed site will lead to the conversion of an area of Green Belt land into urban land. The area that will be converted currently has existing residential areas to the north east and west and lies in an area where existing residential and other development associated with the North Deeside Road links the residential areas of Aberdeen and Cults. It is not considered that urban coalescence will result from development of the Craigton Road site or that developing the site will materially affect the primary role of the Green Belt.

The proposed development site is contained by Craigton Road to the North which, suitably reinforced by an appropriate landscape structure associated with the development site and Craigton Road can form a new and defensible boundary for the Green Belt.

9.0 Landscape and Visual Mitigation Strategy

Based upon Pan 44 and the evolving landscape and visual appraisal of the site, a landscape strategy has been developed to mitigate against adverse landscape and visual effects. The landscape strategy provides an appropriate and locally appropriate landscape setting for the proposed development and offers substantial habitat creation and biodiversity gains.

The landscape strategy proposed is capable of maturing into a landscape structure for the development which will integrate it with the surrounding landscape.

Key issues addressed by the landscape strategy include:

- Retention, management and reinforcement and regeneration of the existing, poor quality, site boundary walls and trees;
- Creation of gateways into the site in keeping with existing gateway features;
- Reinforce the proposed new Green Belt boundary along Craigton Road with locally appropriate areas of structural landscape to reinforce the remnant landscape character;
- Formalise access to the existing Public Right of Way which links Airyhall Road to North Deeside Road and improve pedestrian access across the site and on Craigton Road;
- Provision of a mix of structural tree and shrub planting together with wetland planting associated with SUDs will create new habitats and create new wildlife corridors linking to existing areas of habitat;
- Integration of the development into the landscape by the creation of layers of landscape structure planting throughout the new development site;
- Tree planting to the open spaces and residential landscapes within the development site will use locally appropriate tree species. We suggest that lime, beech and scots pine form the basis of the plant palette to reflect the existing character; however appropriate species, densities and stock sizes will be agreed with Aberdeen City Council.

A sketch showing the landscape mitigation strategy is provided, (See Figure 11), this strategy shows, in broad brush, the landscape structure that will be created in association with the development of the Site at Craigton Road. It is being refined as the masterplan develops and additional information will be supplied to Aberdeen City Council.

10.0 Summary & Conclusion

It is considered that visual effects arising from the proposed development at the Craigton Road site will be largely contained within the immediate vicinity of the site boundary due to the topography of the study area, containment provided by existing woodland and the screening provided by existing development on the boundaries of the site.

Landscape effects are considered to be restricted to the immediate footprint of the site itself and to an area to the immediate north. The area affected nominally lies within the Wooded Farmland LCA, however as it contains playing fields, allotments, and an earth covered reservoir it is not considered to be typical of the wider LCA. The site itself, which comprises a mix of unmaintained grassland, pasture, derelict structures, declining field boundary walls and unmanaged trees is also regarded to be atypical of the adjacent Wooded Farmland LCA.

The character of the site is largely open, with screening and containment provided by remnant trees and declining avenues of trees generally associated with the site boundaries and the original access routes. There is very little structural woodland on site and the woodland associated with the walled garden appears to be largely secondary regeneration resulting from the abandonment of site management. There appears no have been no planned management of the site structures and trees for several decades, resulting in an increasing dereliction of the built elements and a decline in the quality of the trees.

The proposed housing development is considered to be in keeping with surrounding land uses. The proposed development site will be contained by existing residential developments and by the

properties on the North Deeside Road which will frame the site on its eastern, western and southern boundaries. The site will be visible from a small area to the north where it will be seen from recreational landscapes. To mitigate these views appropriate structural landscapes are proposed for the northern boundary of the site and management is proposed to retain and enhance the character of the boundaries to Bairds Brae and Airyhill Road. It is therefore predicted that this development will result in minimal long-term adverse impact upon the landscape and visual amenity of the broader study area.

It is further considered that Craigton Road itself provides a long term defensible boundary for the Green Belt prohibiting further northwards expansion and retaining a substantial undeveloped corridor. As an infill site with existing settlement on three sides it is considered that development at the Craigton Road is now unable to lead to settlement coalescence as existing developments and residential areas on both sides of the North Deeside Road currently link the settled areas of Cults and Braeside.

Throughout the broader study area impacts on landscape and visual amenity are considered to be largely Negligible. Potential significant and adverse effects which have been identified relate to immediate and close effects experienced immediately adjacent to the proposed development site. Mitigation planting is proposed to integrate the new development with the adjacent landscape; screen the development's more open northern boundary and to manage and reinstate the declining southern and western boundaries.

The proposed new structure planting will be designed to relate to existing structures and species currently found within the area in order to improve the landscape fit of the new development and access routes throughout the site will provide a network of footpath links across the site and promoting public access to the open spaces within the development.

11.0 Bibliography & References

- 1) Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan (2009);
- 2) Aberdeen Local Plan (2008);
- 3) Pitfodells Conservation Area Appraisal, Aberdeen City Modified Finalised Local Plan (2002);
- 4) Nicol I, Johnston A & Campbell L, 1996. Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen (Scottish Natural Heritage Review no. 80);
- 5) Environmental Resources Management 1998. South and Central Aberdeenshire: Landscape Character Assessment. (Scottish Natural Heritage Review no. 102);
- 6) The Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) 2002; and
- 7) Planning Advice Note (PAN) 44 – Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape

Appendix 1

Table1: Definition of Landscape and Visual Impacts

Landscape and Visual Effect	Definition of Effect
Major Beneficial (positive) effect	The proposals constitute a major restructuring of a degraded landscape.
Moderate beneficial (positive) effect	The proposals greatly enhance the existing quality, value, form and pattern of the landscape; or further national objectives to regenerate degraded countryside.
Minor beneficial (positive) effect	The proposals fit well with the scale, landform, quality, value and pattern of the landscape; and they incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure they would blend in well with surrounding landscape.
Negligible effect	The proposals are well designed to complement the scale, landform quality, value and pattern of the landscape They incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure that the scheme would blend in well with surrounding landscape features and elements. They avoid conflict with national policies towards protection of the countryside.
Minor adverse (negative) effect	The proposals do not entirely integrate with the landform and scale of the landscape; and They cannot be substantially mitigated against because of the nature of the proposal itself or the character of the wider landscape.
Moderate adverse (negative) effect	The proposals are out of scale with the landscape, or at odds with the local pattern and landform. Mitigation would not prevent the scheme from scarring the landscape in the longer term as some features of interest would be partly destroyed or their setting diminished. They are in conflict with policy for the protection of nationally recognised countryside.
Major adverse (negative) effect	The proposals are at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape; They are likely to degrade, diminish or even destroy the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements or their setting; They would be substantially damaging to a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape; They are in serious conflict with policy for the protection of nationally recognised countryside.

Limitations of the assessment

The assessment of effects on Landscape Character has been undertaken by a combination of desk and field survey.

Limitations and Assumptions

The assessment is based upon development proposals supplied by the client; assumptions have been made about the appearance of the completed development based upon discussion with the Client and with reference to the draft masterplan developed by The William Cowie Partnership, the assessment conclusions assume that the landscape and visual mitigation strategy is implemented.

Significance Criteria

The following methodology is used for assessing the significance of predicted effects;

- Magnitude = high, medium, low, negligible;
- Sensitivity / Importance = high, medium, low, negligible; and
- Impact = major, moderate, minor, negligible, none.

The inter-relationship between the magnitude, sensitivity and impact is indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Matrix for Determining Landscape and Visual Impact

		Sensitivity of Receptor/Receiving Environment to Change			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	None

In the context of this assessment major, moderate and moderate/ minor landscape and visual effects are considered to be significant.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal Proposed Residential Development Site at Craigton Road, Piffodels



For: Bancon Developments Ltd

15th December 2010

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Appendix 1 Definition of landscape and visual impacts & matrix for determining landscape significance

Appendix 2 Extract from current Local Plan

Appendix 3 Extract from the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan

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1. Location Plan & Viewpoint Locations
2. Site Landscape Appraisal
3. Landscape Character
4. Internal Landscape Character Photographs
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9. Photographic viewpoint 4
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1.0 Introduction

Brindley Associates Ltd, Landscape Architects and Environmental Planners, were commissioned by Bancon Developments Limited Ltd in April 2010 to prepare a landscape and visual appraisal in support of a proposed residential development site at Craigton Road, Pitfodells Aberdeen. The Site is located between Craigton Road and Airyhall Road and lies to the north of the consented extension to the existing Marcliffe Hotel site and the International School site, which is currently under construction.

The appraisal will assess the existing landscape features; identify constraints and potential for the proposed development site. The appraisal includes a landscape strategy to mitigate identified residual landscape and visual effects to provide a context for the development and to create locally appropriate boundaries for the development site.

2.0 Methodology

A preliminary appraisal of the baseline landscape and visual characteristics of the site was carried out through desk study. The extent of the study area was taken to cover the site itself, the immediate surroundings, a 2km radius study area and viewpoints located at key locations on the boundaries of the site.

A visit to the site to appraise the landscape and visual impacts was carried out on Wednesday 7th April 2010 by Ross Wilkie, a Chartered Landscape Architect. Ross walked over the site, public roads and paths surrounding the development and took site photographs to inform the Landscape Appraisal.

This report is not intended to be a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; however it 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 Second Edition.

3.0 The Proposal

An initial draft masterplan has been prepared by The William Cowie Partnership (drawing number 2176/100) and this information has been used to inform this landscape appraisal. The masterplan shows approximately 64 detached residential units for private sale and a nursing home in the north eastern corner of the site. The masterplan also shows indicative areas of structural landscape planting and internal open spaces, footpath linkages and a SUDS pond in the south of the site. The landscape mitigation strategy provided in this report is developed from this indicative masterplan layout.

4.0 Site Setting and Description

The Craigton Road Site comprises three areas of land between Craigton Road and Airyhall Road in the Pitfodells area of Aberdeen. The eastern boundary comprises existing residential areas. The western boundary is formed by Bairds Brae, an unmade track linking Craigton Road with Airyhall Road and North Deeside Road. (See Figure 1).

The site itself comprises of the following:

- A number of relatively flat abandoned fields previously put to pasture;
- Five fields which are currently in management as pasture;
- Abandoned farm buildings;
- Abandoned and derelict walled gardens;
- Areas of unmanaged and declining woodland associated with the walled garden;
- A paddock in the south of the site; and
- An existing access from Airyhall Road with trees on either side.

There are remnant boundary tree avenues associated with Bairds Brae and Airyhall Road although it should be noted that many of these trees are also declining in condition. (See Figure 2)

Internal field boundaries and the site boundary comprise a range of materials including stone walls, often derelict and reinforced with post and wire fencing or overgrown beech hedging. The site is diagonally traversed by a 33kV overhead power line running from the north east to south west. The site is generally flat, falling to gently south facing slopes towards Airyhall Road. Informal recreational access tracks are found throughout the site although there is no formal access provision. (See Figure 4)

A number of residential properties lie within the overall site area including Senang, Treepark and Westwood House, although these properties are outwith the site boundary.

Within the general area of the proposed development lie a complex mix of urban and urban fringe landuses including large areas of existing residential development associated with Cults and Aberdeen. To the north of Craigton Road lies sports fields which are separated from the road by a prominent ball stop fence, areas of stone wall and a grass covered raised reservoir. (See Figure 5)

To the immediate south of the site lie Woodbank (Shell Headquarters), the Marcliffe Hotel and the New International School campus fronting onto North Deeside Road. These large plots contain substantial areas of mature trees and woodland, which, in association with the trees present on the south of the site, provide a wooded character to Airyhall Road and screen the majority of views south from the site.

To the immediate east of the proposed development lies the rear boundary of existing residential properties within Northcote Crescent and Avenue in the Braeside area of Aberdeen which forms a substantial existing residential area. To the west of the site lies the recently completed Stewart Milne residential development at Woodland Gardens (See Figure 2).

Craigton Road links the existing residential areas of Cults and Braeside and forms the northern boundary of the site. The road is straight and is of variable character, being defined in places by adjacent residential frontages, or in the case of the adjacent Stewart Milne development by rear gardens abutting onto it. Some sections are separated from the site by a low wall and have views across it towards the woodland on Airyhall Road.

In the immediate vicinity of the site the character of Craigton Road is defined by its linear route and the adjacent stone walls which form a continuous boundary on both sides. Near the covered reservoir the wall to the north of Craigton Road is taller and is located adjacent to the road edge, and forms a substantial visual barrier. The earth mounded reservoir adjacent to the wall provides further screening. Alongside the playing fields the wall reduces in height and is augmented by the approximately 4 metre tall green mesh ball stop fence which is a visually prominent element. Through the fence there are views to residential areas seen across sports fields. The boundary with the proposed development site is generally comprised of a low (approximately 1 metre) stone wall, which has collapsed in some locations. There is remnant avenue planting associated with the wall in some locations, mainly comprising lime species (*Tilia spp*) much of this boundary appears to be historically open with no screening or woodland framework associated with the wall. There are small groups of trees associated with gateways, which comprise either formal entrances with gate piers or an access points adjacent to the derelict cottage. (See Figure 5)

Bairds Brae and Airyhall Road are both unmade lanes. Airyhall Road provides access to the rear of properties fronting onto North Deeside Road, the recent retirement Flat development at Airyhall and Bairds Brae provides access to the property of Westwood. These roads have an intimate and informal character created by the adjacent boundary stone walls remnant tree avenues and individual trees. It should again be noted that many of the trees are currently in decline and the boundary walls are in a generally poor condition and the existing character of the road will decline if management is not undertaken. Recent and ongoing development at both the adjacent Stewart Milne residential development and at the International School has changed the character of these roads by increasing the prominence of development. (See Figure 5)

In summary the site is of an increasingly derelict character with buildings, boundary walls, internal walls and trees in generally poor condition and large areas of pasture unmanaged. In the absence of active management it is expected that the condition of the site will continue to deteriorate.

5.0 Planning Policies and Landscape Designations

The proposed development lies within the area covered by the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 and the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008. The proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan is currently out to public consultation.

5.1 Aberdeen City Shire Structure Plan

Within the current Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan the following policies may be of relevance to the landscape and visual appraisal of the proposed housing development:

- Strategic Policy – Strategic Growth Areas- Aberdeen City – the scale of growth anticipated requires that more than half of the developments will take place on Greenfield sites;
- Strategic Policy – Sustainable Development; and
- Strategic Policy - Quality of the Environment - To make sure new development maintains and improves the regions important built, natural and cultural assets.

5.2 Aberdeen Local Plan

The site is covered by Pitfodells Conservation Area (Area 10), is identified as Green Belt (GSN 29) and Green Space Network (GSN 29) and lies between Residential Area R40 Pitfodells and Residential Area R40 Mannofield. It is appropriate to note at this stage that the Green Belt designation and Green Space Network is a planning designation, not a landscape designation. (See Figure 3)

Within the Aberdeen Local Plan the following policies may be of relevance to the landscape and visual appraisal of the proposed residential development:

- Policy 28 – Green Belt: Area of Green Belt (GB28) is subject to review in 2010;
- Policy 29 – Green Space Network (GSN 29);
- Policy 31– Landscape Protection: Maintain and manage landscape setting in developments;
- Policy 33 – Protecting Trees and Woodland: protect and enhance Aberdeen's trees and woodland with the aim of doubling the existing tree cover of the City;
- Policy 39 – Green Space Provision in Residential Development; and
- Policy 40 – Residential Areas (R40): In areas of existing residential development and areas where new residential development has taken place the predominantly residential character and amenity will be retained.

It should be noted that the Pitfodells Conservation Area Appraisal prepared by Aberdeen City Council as a review of the Pitfodells Special Character Area (H10) for the draft of the current Aberdeen Local Plan was abandoned.

The guidance and policies contained within the Pitfodells Conservation Area Appraisal set out development proposal requirements in terms of aspirations for spatial separation, layout, access, landscape, external appearance and services. However, as the Appraisal has now been abandoned by Aberdeen City Council we understand that its guidance is no longer a material consideration.

5.3 The Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan

The Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan is the replacement to the current Aberdeen Local Plan. At the time of writing the Local Development Plan is out to consultation from 24th September 2010 until 17th December 2010).

The proposed Local Development Plan modifies a number of policies with reference to the Craigton Road site and suggests revisions to the Green Space Network (NE1), revisions to the Greenbelt boundary (NE2), and the release of part of the site for development (OP64), although part of the area identified as OP64 is previously developed land. The proposed revised boundaries are shown in Appendix 3.

6.0 Effects upon Landscape Character

The development site lies in an area of enclosed urban fringe countryside directly and indirectly affected by urban, urban fringe and infrastructure developments. The urban edges of Aberdeen and Cults lie on the east and western boundaries of the site and are prominent and visible elements in views available from it. Ongoing and consented development at the International School and the Marcliffe Hotel on North Deeside Road are introducing prominent new structures in the vicinity of Airyhall Road.

From the vicinity of the site views are available of urbanised open space to the north. There are also views to existing residential areas across sports fields, seen through the visually prominent ball stop fence. Views out of the site are limited by the adjacent development and trees on the southern boundary of the site and limited within the large plots associated with North Deeside Road. There are occasional long distance views across the Dee Valley where the power line way leave allows a framed view to the south west. An appraisal of the landscape of the site is shown on Figure 2.

Individual elements including the existing reservoir, adjacent established and more recent residential developments, the overhead power line crossing the site, the Airyhall House flats and the ongoing construction of the International School, sports pitches, lighting and fencing add further urbanising elements into the vicinity of the site. Long distance views to and from the site are limited by existing development, reservoir, walls and trees on the site boundaries.

Distinct areas of landscape character identified within the 2km study area include the following, (see Figure 3):

- The Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area;
- Central Wooded Estate Landscape Character Area;
- Urban Areas Local Landscape Character Area; and
- The Valley Landscape Character Area.

The proposed development site lies adjacent to the extensive Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area (LCA) as identified by SNH although the Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen (No.80) appears to be identified by SNH as lying within the Valley Landscape Character Area, The development site would be separated from the Valley LCA by existing urban developments associated with North Deeside Road, and has some characteristics applicable to both LCA and some characteristics applicable to neither. As there is a shared boundary with the Wooded Farmland LCA and no direct link to the River Dee corridor, it has been assumed for the purposes of this assessment that the site relates more to the Wooded Farmland LCA.

The adjacent Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeenshire (No.102) identifies the Central Wooded Estates LCA. The urban areas and valley components of the study area are considered in sections 6.3 and 6.4.

6.1 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.

The Wooded Farmland LCA is generally 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. The LCA component within the study area is however exposed to significant urban, urban fringe and infrastructure uses that render it untypical of the broader

LCA. In the vicinity of the site the LCA contains significant urban edges, sports pitches, overhead power lines and an earth covered reservoir. The site itself is partially derelict and abandoned land, and again is not typical of the LCA.

This Character Area in the vicinity of the proposed development site is considered to be of Low sensitivity to residential development.

The proposed development will result in the direct loss of a small and derelict component of land on the boundary of the Wooded Farmland LCA which will be replaced by residential land uses. The proposed development will not be seen from the majority of the LCA due to intervening rolling landform and screening provided by existing woodland adjacent residential areas and boundary walls. Where the proposed development is visible it will be seen in the context of the existing built form of Cults, and Aberdeen and will only be significantly visible from a short section of Craigton Road and the sports pitches to the immediate north which are not typical of the Broader LCA.

The magnitude of change for the Wooded Farmland LCA is considered to be locally moderate significant and adverse as the proposed development will directly affect a site on the boundary of the LCA. However as the component of the LCA affected is contained by developed land and recreational land uses and is itself currently partially derelict, the effect of the proposed development on the broader LCA is considered to be Negligible.

This is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the Wooded Farmland LCA.

6.2 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.

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. This Character Area is considered to be of Low sensitivity to development outwith its boundaries as a result of the minimal effect that existing residential development visible in Cults and Aberdeen has had upon its strongly rural character.

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

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.

6.3 Urban Areas

The Urban Area Character Area mainly comprises the areas of Craigiebuckler Braeside, Mannofield, Kaimhill and Garthdee in Aberdeen and the eastern component of Cults which lie on the south facing northern slopes of the Dee Valley. The boundary of this character area has been plotted following site work to identify recent changes to the urban envelope. 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.

The Urban Area Character Area 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 in the vicinity of the site although development is denser in the eastern areas towards Aberdeen city centre and as a result a large amount of mature trees are present in the LCA. This results in a wooded and generally enclosed suburban character.

The LCA is urbanised and views tend to be short to medium, enclosed by surrounding 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.

The proposed development areas will not be directly visible from the majority of the Urban Areas LCA as the new development is generally well-contained by topography and vegetation. Areas of the LCA immediately adjacent to the site will experience some change as abandoned grassland and 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. This is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the Urban Area LCA.

6.4 Valley

The Valley LCA runs east to west through the south of the study area and comprises the River Dee, its floodplain and the lower slopes of the Dee Valley. This LCA is separated from the Craigton Road site by existing residential development along the North Deeside Road 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.

The 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.

The proposed development areas will not be directly visible from the majority of the River Dee LCA as the new development is generally well-contained by existing development and mature trees. The magnitude of change is considered to be Negligible which is not considered to represent a significant effect upon the landscape character of the main areas of the River Dee Valley LCA.

7.0 Effects upon Visual Amenity

Visibility issues that may arise from the proposed development have been discussed with reference from a selection of locations with close representative views of the proposed development site, these include:

- Views from the adjacent Craigton Road;
- Views from Bairds Brae;
- Views from Airyhall Road; and
- Views from within the site itself.

Landscape impacts are qualitative changes to the character of the landscape resulting from land use changes.

Visual impacts relate solely to changes in available views of the landscape and the effect of these changes on visual receptors. Hence visual impact assessment is concerned with:

- The direct impact of the development upon views of the landscape;
- The reaction of viewers who may be affected; and
- The overall impact on visual amenity, which can range from degradation through to enhancement.

Landscape significance and visual impact significance is assessed in terms of sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change. (See Definition of Effects tables in Appendix 1)

7.1 Photo Viewpoint 1- Craigton Road, near reservoir (Figure 6)

This view will be experienced mainly by road users; these receptors are considered to be of medium sensitivity to change of the nature proposed.

Changes to this view will include:

- Loss of medium distance views across an open pasture field and abandoned grassland towards broadleaved trees and overhead power lines;
- New views through structural landscape planting towards a residential landscape; and
- Views to a regenerated boundary with Craigton Road.

The proposed changes are predicted to result in a locally high magnitude of change which will result in major adverse effects upon visual receptors at this close viewpoint. The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is considered to be significant however these effects can be expected to decline over time as the structural landscape areas mature and provide visual integration.

7.2 Photo Viewpoint 2 – Bairds Brae (Figure 7)

This view will be experienced mainly by small numbers of walkers on the Bairds Brae seeing the view through the adjacent roadside trees; these receptors are considered to be of high sensitivity to change of the nature proposed.

Changes to this view include:

- Loss of medium distance views to mixed woodland and avenues associated with Craigton Road and off site properties;
- New views through structural landscape planting towards a residential landscape; and
- Loss of views towards ballstop fencing and the covered reservoir structure.

The proposed changes are predicted to result in a locally high magnitude of change which will result in major effects upon visual receptors at this viewpoint. The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is considered to be significant.

7.3 Photo Viewpoint 3 – Bairds Brae/ Airyhall Road (Figure 8)

This view will be experienced mainly by small numbers of walkers on Airyhall Road and the Bairds Brae seeing the view through the adjacent site boundary trees; these receptors are considered to be of high sensitivity to change of the nature proposed.

Changes to this view include:

- Loss of medium distance views to Westwood House and open pastures;
- Loss of open views of the electricity pylon;
- New views through structural landscape planting towards a residential landscape; and
- Views to a regenerated site boundary with Airyhall road.

The proposed changes are predicted to result in a locally high magnitude of change which will result in major effects upon visual receptors at this viewpoint. The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is considered to be significant.

7.4 Photo Viewpoint 4 – North of Derelict Walled Garden Onsite (Figure 9)

This view will be experienced mainly by receptors involved in informal recreational access to the site, normally as dog walkers, who are considered to be of medium sensitivity to change of the nature proposed. The photograph shows existing close views to derelict grassland, overhead power infrastructure, the derelict cottage adjacent to Craigton Road and prominent existing local residential development.

Changes to this view will include:

- Loss of medium distance views to existing residential development;
- Loss of open views of the electricity pylons;
- Removal of derelict land and structures; and
- New views towards a residential landscape.

The proposed changes are predicted to result in a locally high magnitude of change which will result in major effects upon visual receptors at this viewpoint. The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is considered to be significant.

7.5 Photo Viewpoint 5 – Airyhall Road (Figure 10)

Changes to this view will include:

- Loss of medium distance views to existing residential development;
- Loss of open views of unmanaged and fly tipped land;
- Loss of close views to derelict hedgerow; and
- New views towards new residential development.

The overall visual impact during construction and at completion of the development is not considered to be significant as close views of residential development seen in the context of unmanaged land will be replaced with close views of residential development.

7.6 General Visibility of the Development Site in the Wider Area

The above viewpoints illustrated represent close views of the development site. These viewpoints are all immediately adjacent to or are very close to the proposed site as they are representative of the only significant public locations that have clear visibility of the site.

There will be inevitable substantial visual effects arising in the immediate locale of the proposed development site as close views to unmanaged urban fringe land, derelict structures and declining trees will be replaced by views to a new residential area with its associated landscape structure. In the existing close views however, there are many urbanising elements already visible in the form of

new structures, existing residential properties, recent residential and other developments together with longer distance views towards the existing urban edges of Cults and Aberdeen.

Within the broader study area the site is generally well contained by off site woodland and trees associated with the sites southern, eastern and western boundaries, and by small areas of onsite woodland and individual trees. From the south, existing development and the landscapes associated with the developments between North Deeside Road and Airyhall Road also modifies visibility and provides substantial screening. Screening is again provided to the west and east by existing and recent residential developments. The recently constructed International School complex provides additional screening when the site is viewed from the south which in combination with the topography means that general visibility of the proposed development sites are negligible.

Apart from the immediate site boundaries the site will only be visible from the recreational land to the north where the majority of the receptors will be those involved in active recreation that will see development on the site in the context of existing housing development and from the Craigton road where it forms the site boundary.

Substantial visual effects are therefore considered to be restricted to those areas immediately adjacent to the site and it is considered that there will be limited effects upon visual amenity in the broader study area. Landscape mitigation proposals have been produced which, if implemented, would substantially reduce the potential visual effects of developing the site. These mitigation proposals are discussed below.

8.0 Appraisal of Potential Effects on the Role of the Green Belt

The proposed development site lies within an area that has been designated as Green Belt in the Aberdeen local plan.

Development on the proposed site will lead to the conversion of an area of Green Belt land into urban land. The area that will be converted currently has existing residential areas to the north east and west and lies in an area where existing residential and other development associated with the North Deeside Road links the residential areas of Aberdeen and Cults. It is not considered that urban coalescence will result from development of the Craigton Road site or that developing the site will materially affect the primary role of the Green Belt.

The proposed development site is contained by Craigton Road to the North which, suitably reinforced by an appropriate landscape structure associated with the development site and Craigton Road can form a new and defensible boundary for the Green Belt.

9.0 Landscape and Visual Mitigation Strategy

Based upon Pan 44 and the evolving landscape and visual appraisal of the site, a landscape strategy has been developed to mitigate against adverse landscape and visual effects. The landscape strategy provides an appropriate and locally appropriate landscape setting for the proposed development and offers substantial habitat creation and biodiversity gains.

The landscape strategy proposed is capable of maturing into a landscape structure for the development which will integrate it with the surrounding landscape.

Key issues addressed by the landscape strategy include:

- Retention, management and reinforcement and regeneration of the existing, poor quality, site boundary walls and trees;
- Creation of gateways into the site in keeping with existing gateway features;
- Reinforce the proposed new Green Belt boundary along Craigton Road with locally appropriate areas of structural landscape to reinforce the remnant landscape character;
- Formalise access to the existing Public Right of Way which links Airyhall Road to North Deeside Road and improve pedestrian access across the site and on Craigton Road;
- Provision of a mix of structural tree and shrub planting together with wetland planting associated with SUDs will create new habitats and create new wildlife corridors linking to existing areas of habitat;
- Integration of the development into the landscape by the creation of layers of landscape structure planting throughout the new development site;
- Tree planting to the open spaces and residential landscapes within the development site will use locally appropriate tree species. We suggest that lime, beech and scots pine form the basis of the plant palette to reflect the existing character; however appropriate species, densities and stock sizes will be agreed with Aberdeen City Council.

A sketch showing the landscape mitigation strategy is provided, (See Figure 11), this strategy shows, in broad brush, the landscape structure that will be created in association with the development of the Site at Craigton Road. It is being refined as the masterplan develops and additional information will be supplied to Aberdeen City Council.

10.0 Summary & Conclusion

It is considered that visual effects arising from the proposed development at the Craigton Road site will be largely contained within the immediate vicinity of the site boundary due to the topography of the study area, containment provided by existing woodland and the screening provided by existing development on the boundaries of the site.

Landscape effects are considered to be restricted to the immediate footprint of the site itself and to an area to the immediate north. The area affected nominally lies within the Wooded Farmland LCA, however as it contains playing fields, allotments, and an earth covered reservoir it is not considered to be typical of the wider LCA. The site itself, which comprises a mix of unmaintained grassland, pasture, derelict structures, declining field boundary walls and unmanaged trees is also regarded to be atypical of the adjacent Wooded Farmland LCA.

The character of the site is largely open, with screening and containment provided by remnant trees and declining avenues of trees generally associated with the site boundaries and the original access routes. There is very little structural woodland on site and the woodland associated with the walled garden appears to be largely secondary regeneration resulting from the abandonment of site management. There appears no have been no planned management of the site structures and trees for several decades, resulting in an increasing dereliction of the built elements and a decline in the quality of the trees.

The proposed housing development is considered to be in keeping with surrounding land uses. The proposed development site will be contained by existing residential developments and by the

properties on the North Deeside Road which will frame the site on its eastern, western and southern boundaries. The site will be visible from a small area to the north where it will be seen from recreational landscapes. To mitigate these views appropriate structural landscapes are proposed for the northern boundary of the site and management is proposed to retain and enhance the character of the boundaries to Bairds Brae and Airyhill Road. It is therefore predicted that this development will result in minimal long-term adverse impact upon the landscape and visual amenity of the broader study area.

It is further considered that Craigton Road itself provides a long term defensible boundary for the Green Belt prohibiting further northwards expansion and retaining a substantial undeveloped corridor. As an infill site with existing settlement on three sides it is considered that development at the Craigton Road is now unable to lead to settlement coalescence as existing developments and residential areas on both sides of the North Deeside Road currently link the settled areas of Cults and Braeside.

Throughout the broader study area impacts on landscape and visual amenity are considered to be largely Negligible. Potential significant and adverse effects which have been identified relate to immediate and close effects experienced immediately adjacent to the proposed development site. Mitigation planting is proposed to integrate the new development with the adjacent landscape; screen the development's more open northern boundary and to manage and reinstate the declining southern and western boundaries.

The proposed new structure planting will be designed to relate to existing structures and species currently found within the area in order to improve the landscape fit of the new development and access routes throughout the site will provide a network of footpath links across the site and promoting public access to the open spaces within the development.

11.0 Bibliography & References

- 1) Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan (2009);
- 2) Aberdeen Local Plan (2008);
- 3) Pitfodells Conservation Area Appraisal, Aberdeen City Modified Finalised Local Plan (2002);
- 4) Nicol I, Johnston A & Campbell L, 1996. Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen (Scottish Natural Heritage Review no. 80);
- 5) Environmental Resources Management 1998. South and Central Aberdeenshire: Landscape Character Assessment. (Scottish Natural Heritage Review no. 102);
- 6) The Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) 2002; and
- 7) Planning Advice Note (PAN) 44 – Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape

Appendix 1

Table1: Definition of Landscape and Visual Impacts

Landscape and Visual Effect	Definition of Effect
Major Beneficial (positive) effect	The proposals constitute a major restructuring of a degraded landscape.
Moderate beneficial (positive) effect	The proposals greatly enhance the existing quality, value, form and pattern of the landscape; or further national objectives to regenerate degraded countryside.
Minor beneficial (positive) effect	The proposals fit well with the scale, landform, quality, value and pattern of the landscape; and they incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure they would blend in well with surrounding landscape.
Negligible effect	The proposals are well designed to complement the scale, landform quality, value and pattern of the landscape They incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure that the scheme would blend in well with surrounding landscape features and elements. They avoid conflict with national policies towards protection of the countryside.
Minor adverse (negative) effect	The proposals do not entirely integrate with the landform and scale of the landscape; and They cannot be substantially mitigated against because of the nature of the proposal itself or the character of the wider landscape.
Moderate adverse (negative) effect	The proposals are out of scale with the landscape, or at odds with the local pattern and landform. Mitigation would not prevent the scheme from scarring the landscape in the longer term as some features of interest would be partly destroyed or their setting diminished. They are in conflict with policy for the protection of nationally recognised countryside.
Major adverse (negative) effect	The proposals are at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape; They are likely to degrade, diminish or even destroy the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements or their setting; They would be substantially damaging to a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape; They are in serious conflict with policy for the protection of nationally recognised countryside.

Limitations of the assessment

The assessment of effects on Landscape Character has been undertaken by a combination of desk and field survey.

Limitations and Assumptions

The assessment is based upon development proposals supplied by the client; assumptions have been made about the appearance of the completed development based upon discussion with the Client and with reference to the draft masterplan developed by The William Cowie Partnership, the assessment conclusions assume that the landscape and visual mitigation strategy is implemented.

Significance Criteria

The following methodology is used for assessing the significance of predicted effects;

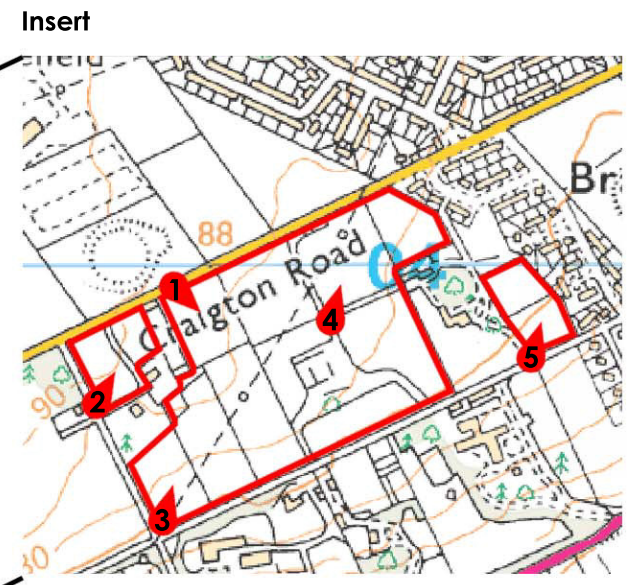
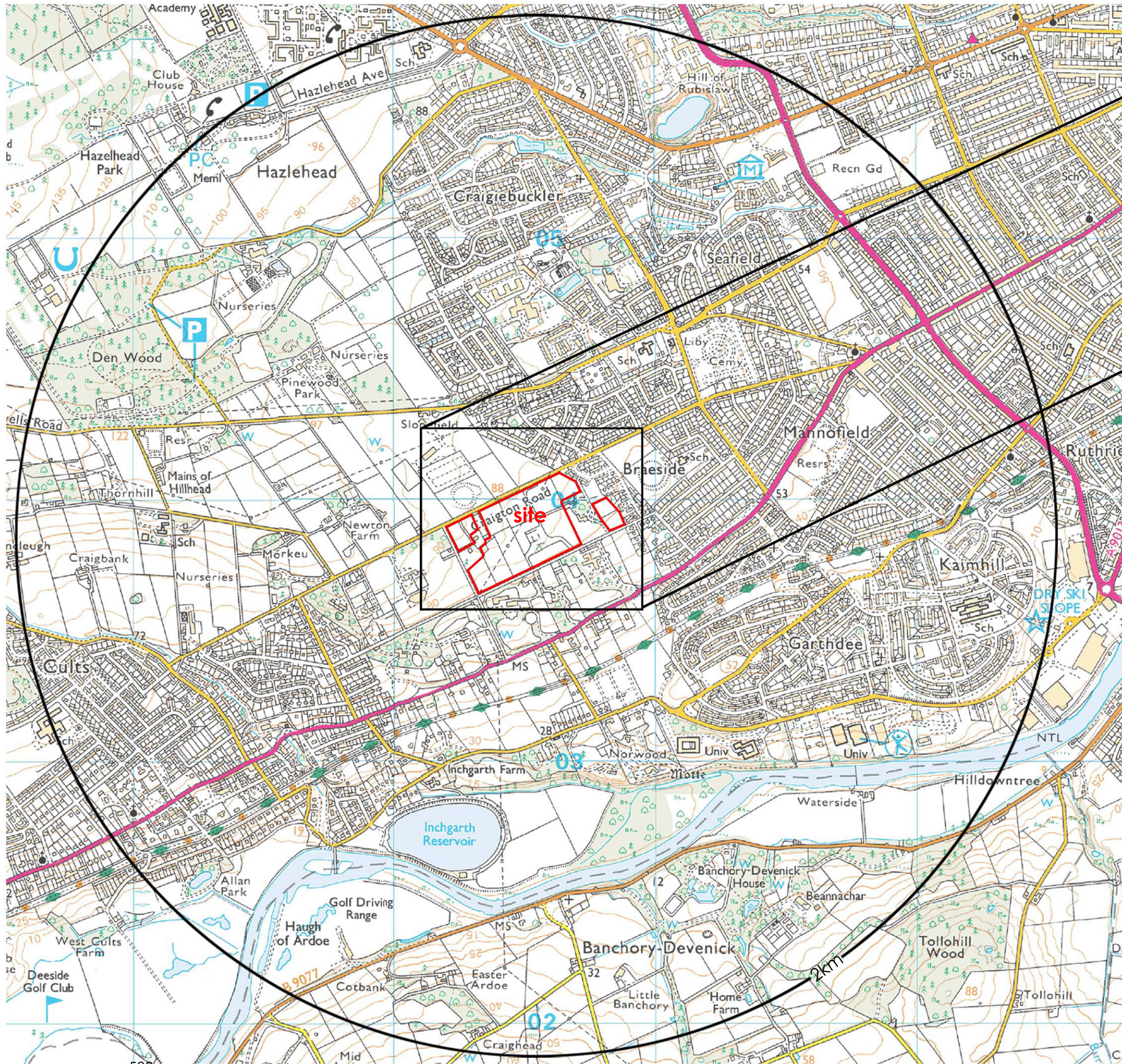
- Magnitude = high, medium, low, negligible;
- Sensitivity / Importance = high, medium, low, negligible; and
- Impact = major, moderate, minor, negligible, none.




The inter-relationship between the magnitude, sensitivity and impact is indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Matrix for Determining Landscape and Visual Impact

		Sensitivity of Receptor/Receiving Environment to Change			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	None

In the context of this assessment major, moderate and moderate/ minor landscape and visual effects are considered to be significant.




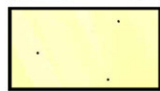
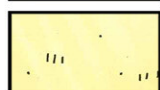


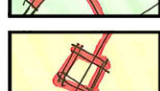


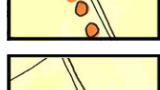
- Legend**
-  Site Boundary
 -  2 km study area
 -  Viewpoint Location

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drawing title: Location Plan and Viewpoint Locations	
scale: NTS	date: 21/04/10
drawing number: Figure 1	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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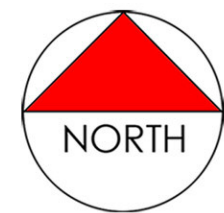


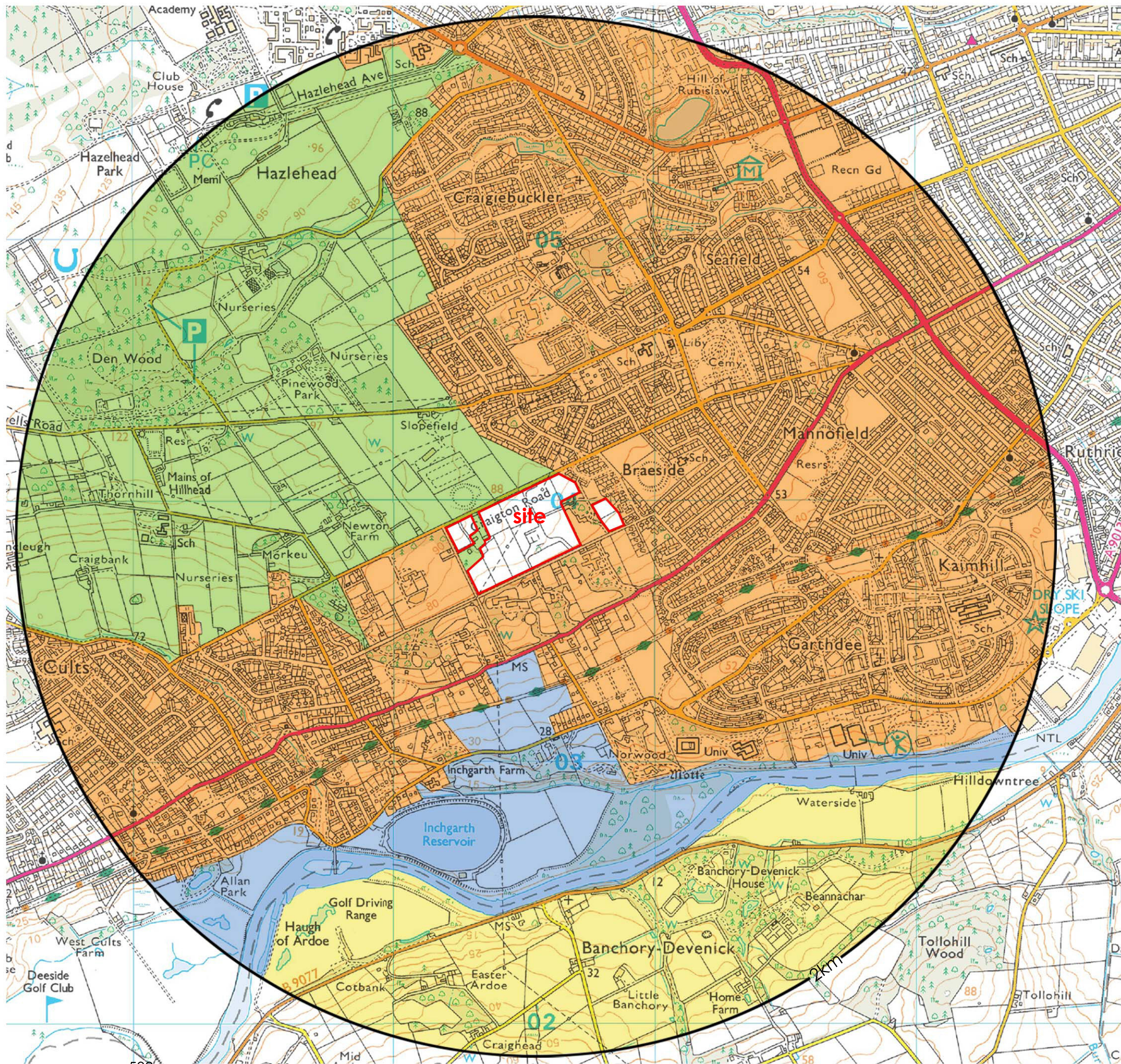


Legend

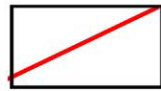

-  Existing vegetation
-  Existing pasture
-  Existing abandoned grassland
-  Existing close mown grass
-  Views out of site
-  Existing overhead powerlines
-  Existing development
-  Existing footpath links
-  Existing walls in various states of repair

site: Craigton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Site Landscape Appraisal	
scale: NTS	date: 27/04/10
drawing number: Figure 2	
drawn by: L Wilkinson	checked by: R Wilkie
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Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  2 km study area

SNH Landscape Character Areas

-  Wooded Farmland
-  Central Wooded Estate
-  Valley

Local Landscape Character Areas

-  Urban Areas

site: Craigton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Local Landscape Character	
scale: NTS	date: 21/04/10
drawing number: Figure 3	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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Gateway on site boundary, Craighton Road



Woodland and derelict walled garden



Derelict beech hedge and wall



Derelict house on Craighton Road



Rank grassland



Maintained agricultural grassland bounded by mature trees

site: Craighton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Internal Landscape Character Photographs	
scale: NTS	date: 21/ 04/ 10
drawing number: Figure 4	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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Avenue and wall, Craigton Road



Playing fields and housing to north of site



International School, from Airyhall Road



Retirement flats, Airyhall Road



Stewart Milne housing to west



Covered reservoir from Craigton Road



Bairds Brae from Craigton Road

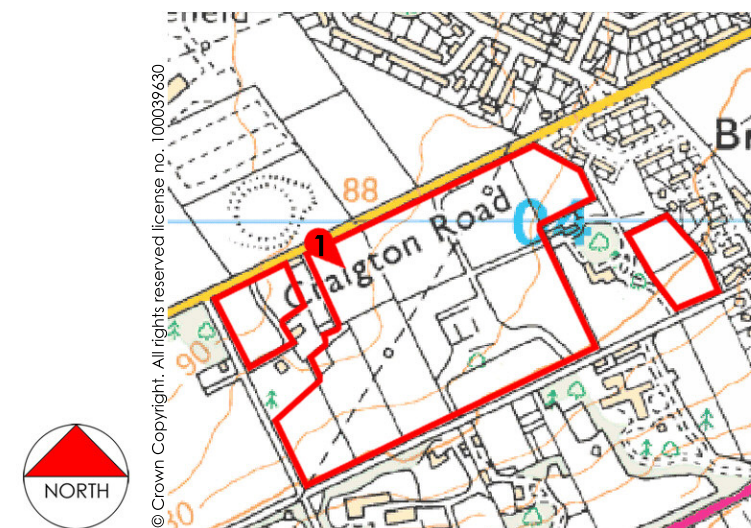



Existing residential areas, Craigton Road

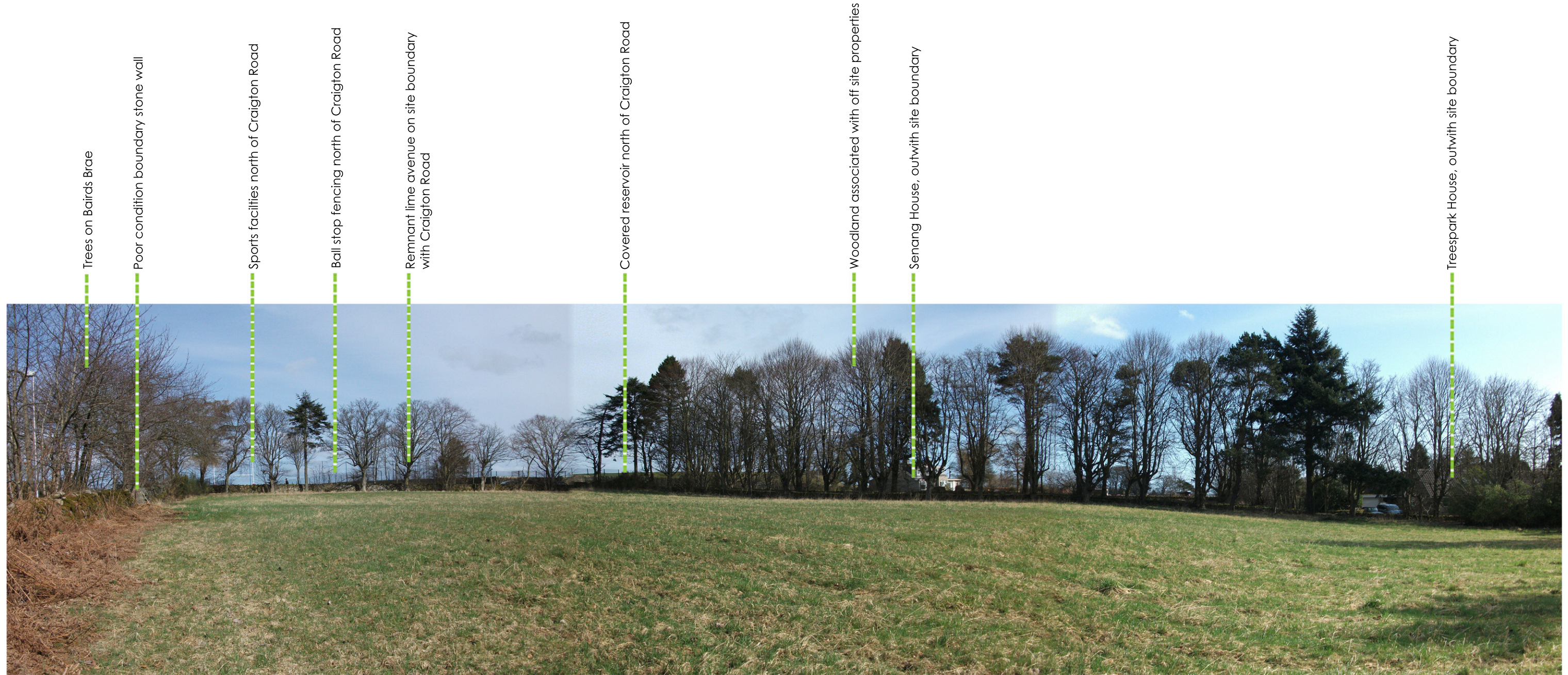
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drawing number: Figure 5	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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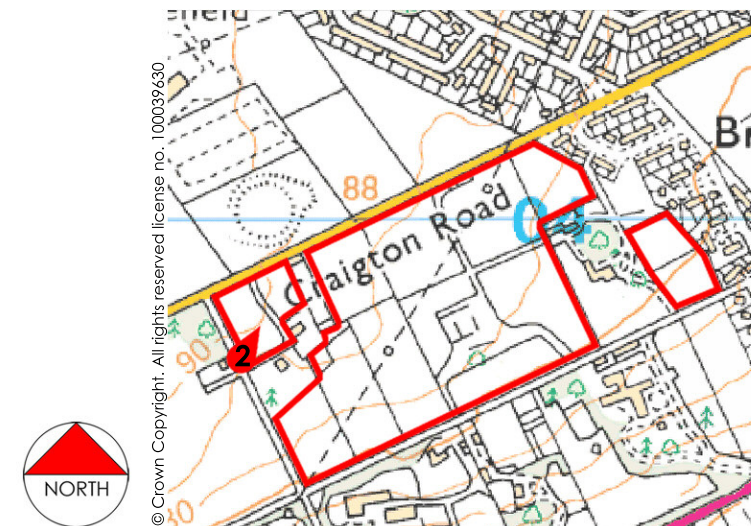
Viewpoint 1: Craigton Road, Near Reservoir




site: Craigton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Viewpoint 1	
scale: NTS	date: 21/ 04/ 10
drawing number: Figure 6	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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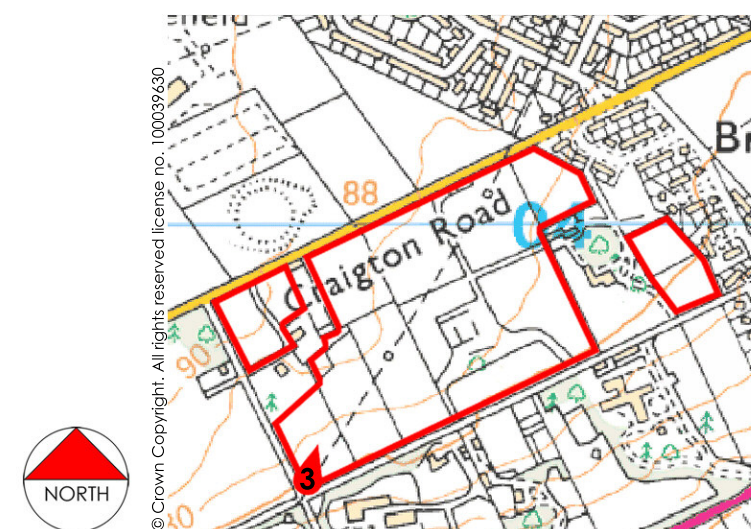
Viewpoint 2: Bairds Brae




site: Craighton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Viewpoint 2	
scale: NTS	date: 21/ 04/ 10
drawing number: Figure 7	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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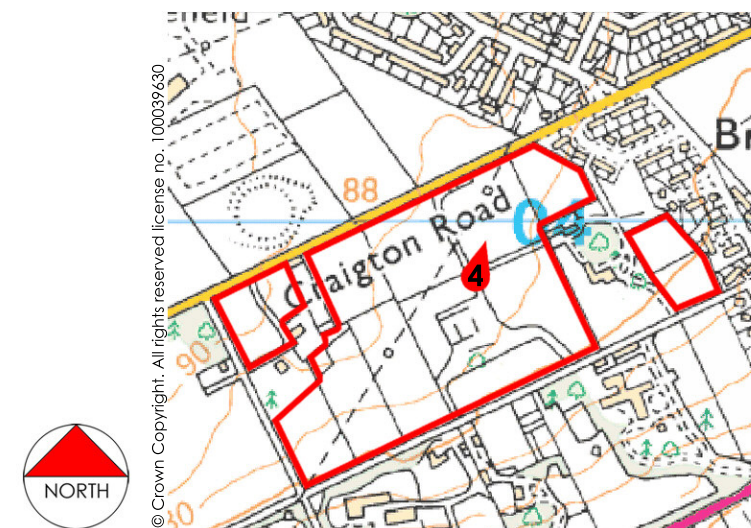
Viewpoint 3: Bairds Brae/ Airyhall Road



site: Craigton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Viewpoint 3	
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drawing number: Figure 8	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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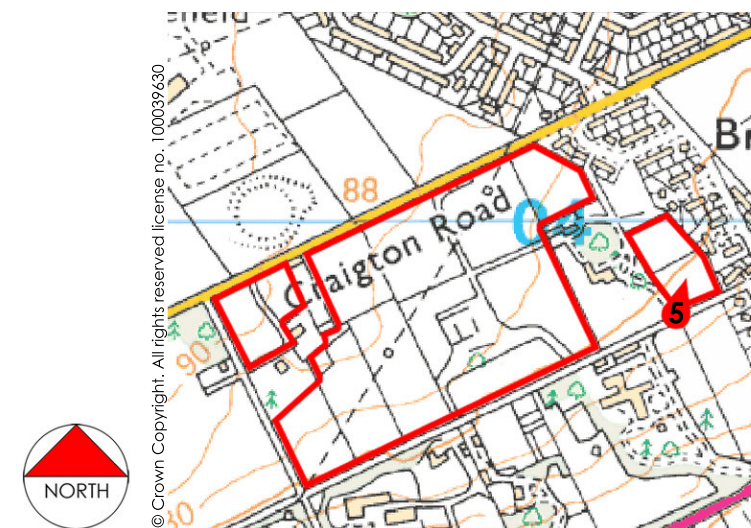
Viewpoint 4: North of Derelict Walled Garden Onsite



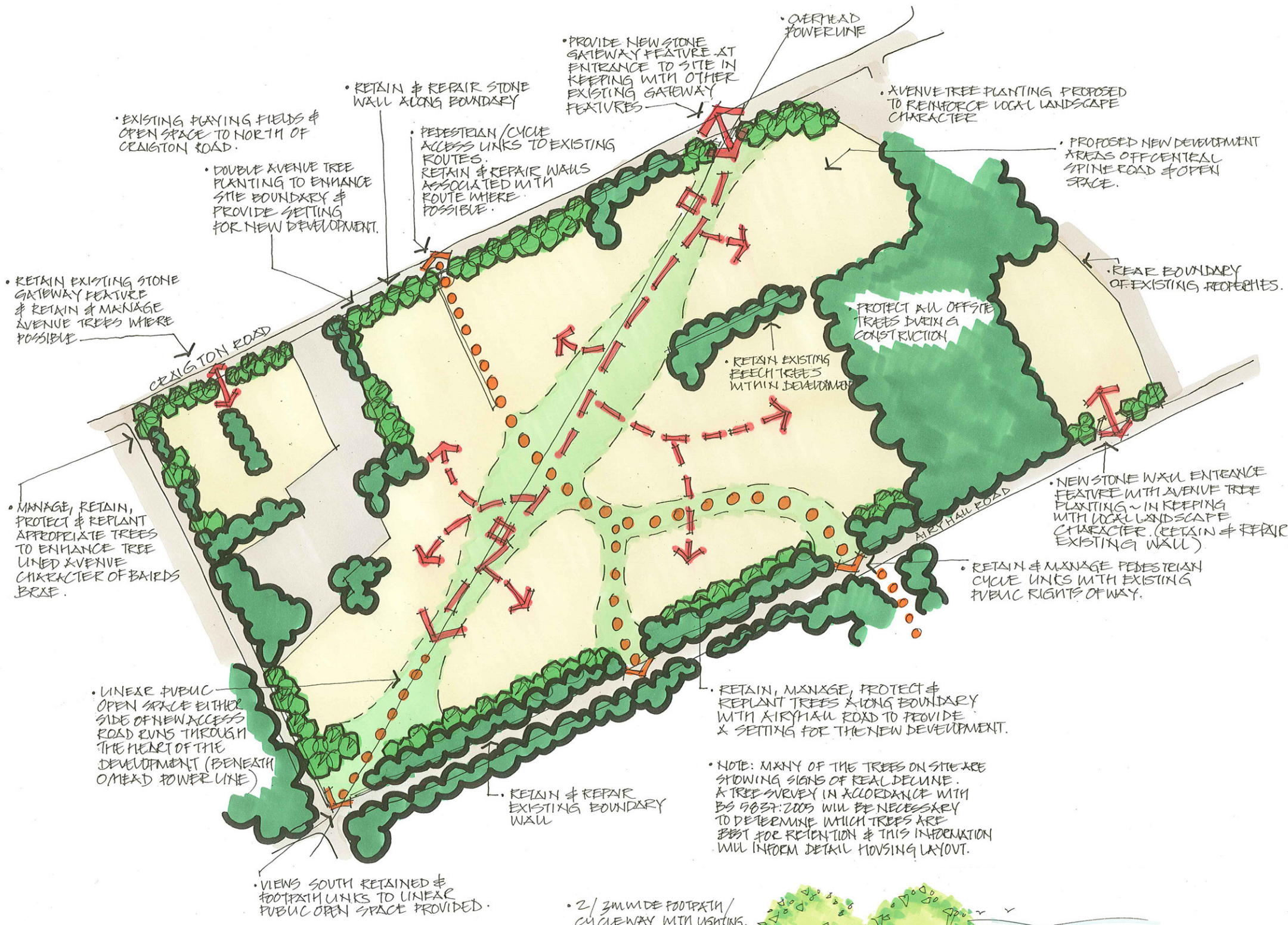
site: Craigton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Viewpoint 4	
scale: NTS	date: 21/ 04/ 10
drawing number: Figure 9	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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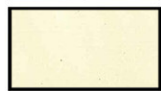
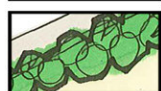



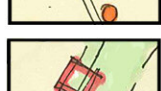
Viewpoint 5: Airyhall Road

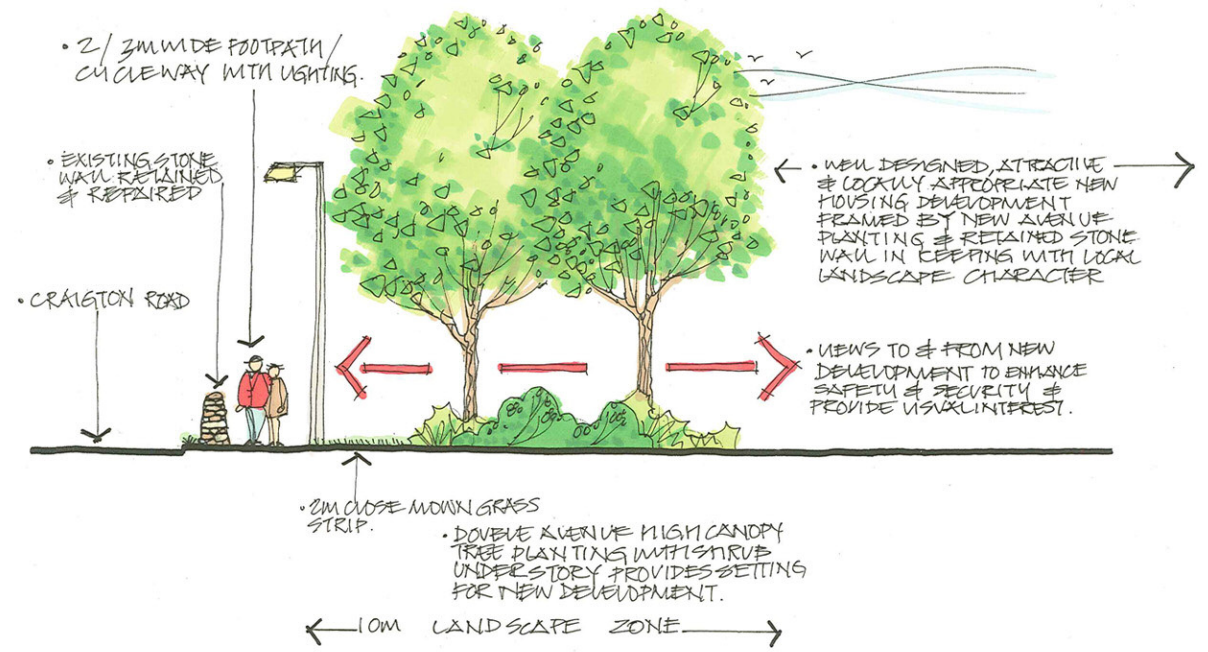


site: Craigton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Viewpoint 5	
scale: NTS	date: 21/ 04/ 10
drawing number: Figure 10	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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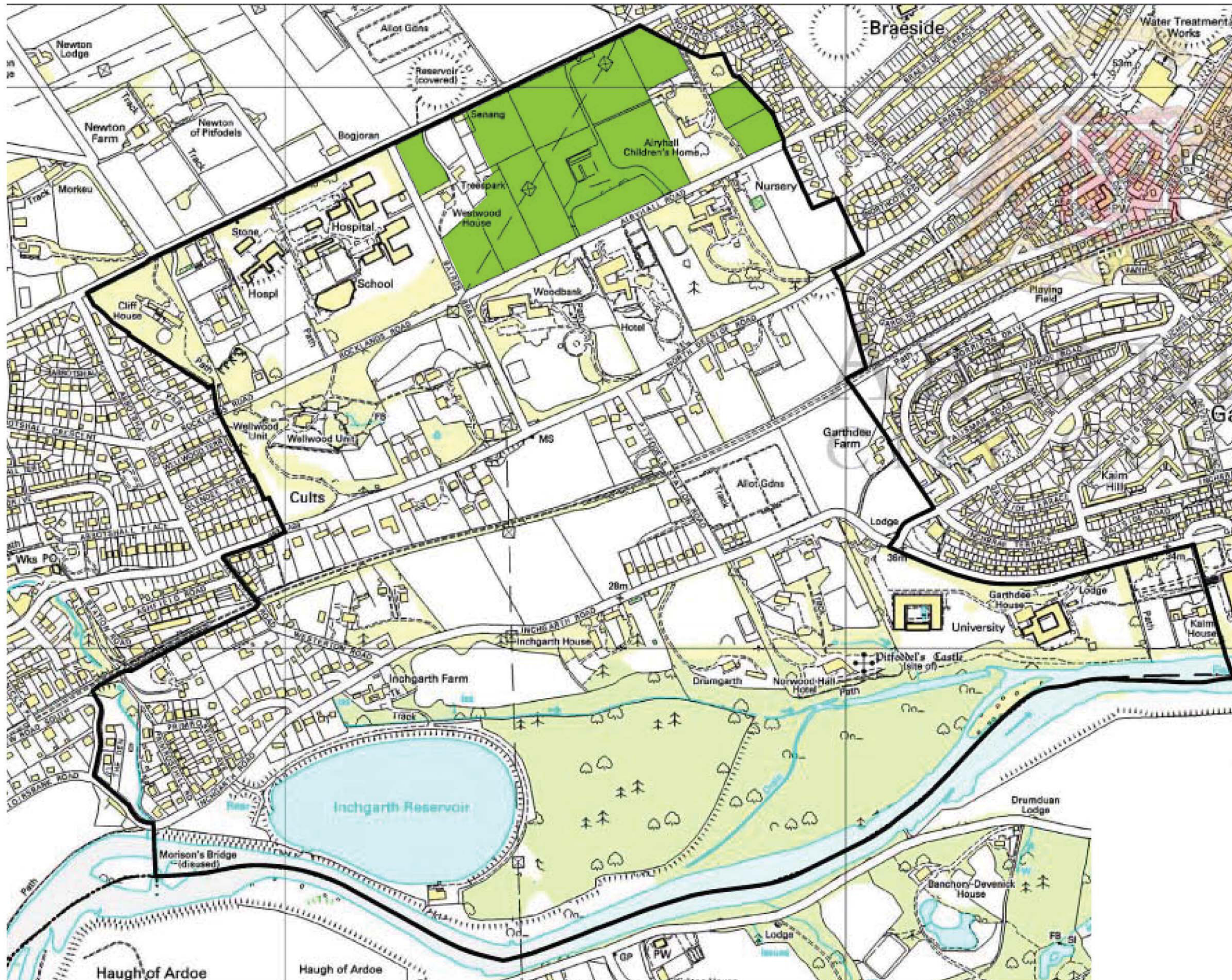


Legend

-  Existing vegetation
-  Proposed residential development
-  Proposed structural planting
-  Proposed open space corridor
-  Proposed access to new development
-  Proposed footpath / cycleway
-  Existing overhead powerlines



site: Craigton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Sketch Landscape Strategy	
scale: NTS	date: 27/04/10
drawing number: Figure 11	
drawn by: L Wilkinson	checked by: R Wilkie
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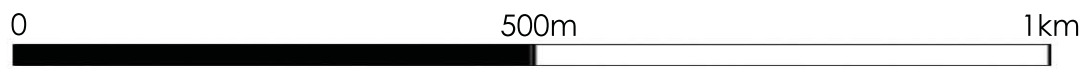


KEY

 THE SITE



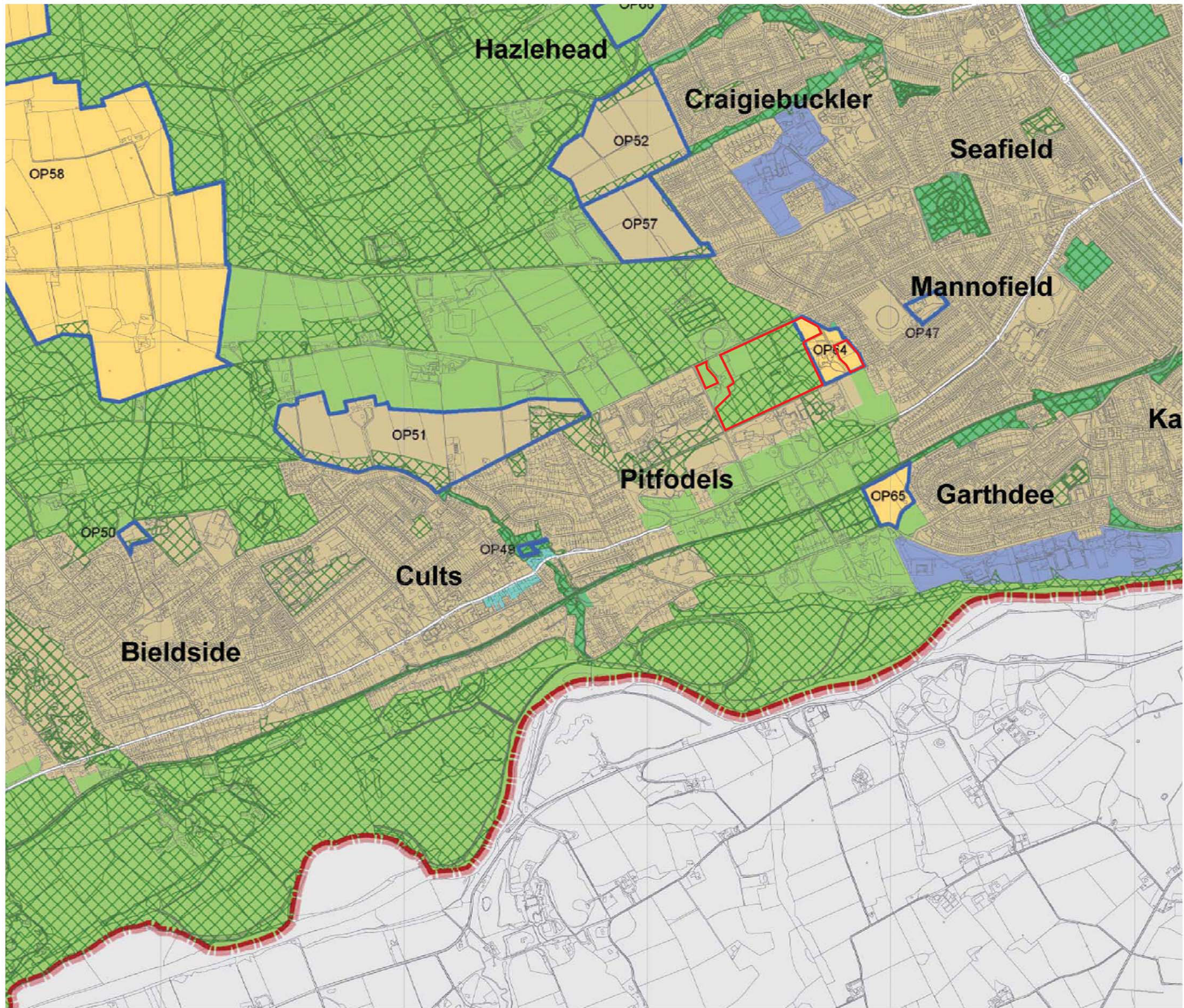
site: Craighton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Extract from Local Plan	
scale: NTS	date: 22 / 04 / 10
figure number: Appendix 2	
drawn by: J Johnston	checked by: R Wilkie
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SCALE BAR

PITFODELS CONSERVATION AREA FIGURE REPRODUCED FROM ABERDEEN LOCAL PLAN

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KEY

-  THE SITE
- Natural Environment**
 -  Greenbelt (NE2)
 -  Green Space Network (NE1)
 -  Urban Green Space (NE3)
- Housing**
 -  Residential Areas (H1)
 -  Mixed Use Areas (H2)
 -  Land Release Policy (LR1)
- Community Facilities**
 -  Existing Community Sites and Facilities (CF1)
 -  New Community Sites and Facilities (CF2)
- Economic Development**
 -  Business and Industrial Land (BI1)
 -  Specialist Employment Areas (BI2)
 -  West End Office Area (BI3)
 -  Aberdeen Airport and Harbour (BI4)
- Transport**
 -  Land for Transport (T1)
 -  Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
 -  Aberdeen Harbour Port Boundary
 -  Aberdeen Airport Public Safety Zone
- Retailing**
 -  Town, District and Neighbourhood Centres (RT3)
 -  Retail Parks (RP)
- City Centre**
 -  City Centre Business Zone (C2)
- Others**
 -  Opportunity Sites (OP number)
 -  City Centre Boundary
 -  City Boundary



site: Craighton Road, Pitfodels	client: Bancon Homes
drawing title: Extract from Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan	
scale: NTS	date: 15/ 12 / 10
figure number: Appendix 3	
drawn by: R Wilkie	checked by: J Brindley
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EXTRACT FROM PROPOSED ABERDEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN CITY WIDE PROPOSALS MAP

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