

5.	Site Details	
5.1	What name would you like the site to be known by?  (Please note if the site is currently included within the ALDP2017 please use the OP site number)	Maidencraig North West
5.2	Site Address	Land adjacent to Dobbies Garden Centre, Lang Stracht, Aberdeen
5.3	Postcode	AB15 6AX
5.4	Have you any information for the site on the internet? If so please provide the web address:	No
5.5	Is the site currently being marketed?	No
5.6	Site Location Map (Please include an OS Map with the Boundary of the site clearly marked)	Please see attached
5.7	Please provide the National Grid reference of the site.	NJ881068
5.8	What is the current use of the site?	Agriculture
5.9	Has there been any previous development on the site? If yes please provide details	No

<b>6. Legal and Planning History</b>			
6.1	Please indicate the relationship to the Proposer or Person / Organisation they are working on behalf of, has with the site.	Sole owner	
		Part owner	
		Option to purchase	x
		No legal interest	
6.2	Is the site under option to a developer?	Yes	
6.3	Is the proposed site included in the ALDP2017?	No	
6.4	Is the proposed site included in the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan?	No	
6.5	Has the site been subject of previous discussions with the Council or any agent there of?	No	
6.6	Has the site been subject of previous Planning Applications? (Please provide a planning reference)	No	
6.7	Has the site been subject of a previous Bid to a previous LDP? (Please provide the bid reference number)	Yes – B0311	
6.8	Are there any legal restrictions on the title deeds such as rights of way, way leaves etc.	No	
6.9	Are there any other legal factors that might prevent or restrict development? (e.g. ransom strips / issues with accessing the site etc.)	No	

<b>7.</b>	<b>Your Proposal</b> (Please provide as much detail as possible on your site proposal)											
7.1	Proposed Use	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Housing</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employment</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed Use</td> <td>x</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retail</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (Please Specify)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Housing		Employment		Mixed Use	x	Retail		Other (Please Specify)	
Housing												
Employment												
Mixed Use	x											
Retail												
Other (Please Specify)												
7.2	Do you have a specific occupier in mind for the site?	No										
7.3	Site Area (hectares)	12.1ha										
	Housing											
7.4	Approx. no of units.											
7.5	Proposed Mix and Number (Number of Flats / Terraced / Semi-detached / detached etc.)											
7.6	Affordable Housing Percentage											
7.7	Affordable Housing Partner (Details of any partner organisation, Registered Social Landlord etc.)											
7.8	Tenure (Details of tenure type, Private Rental Sector / private sale / Housing for the elderly etc.)											
	Employment											
7.9	Business and Office	m <sup>2</sup>										
7.10	General Industrial	m <sup>2</sup>										
7.11	Storage and distribution	m <sup>2</sup>										
7.12	Other Please specify	m <sup>2</sup>										
	Mixed Use (Please provide as much detail as possible on each use class)											
7.13	Housing	No of units and type:- Up to 100 units, 25% affordable, range of house types and sizes										
7.14	Employment	Up to 5000 m <sup>2</sup>										
7.15	Retail	Up to 2000 m <sup>2</sup>										
	Retail											
7.16	Approx. floor area	m <sup>2</sup>										

	Other (Please Specify examples could include retailing, tourism, renewable energy, sports, leisure and recreation, institutions and education.)	
7.17	Details of proposal	
7.18	Approx. floor area	m <sup>2</sup>

<b>8.</b>	<b>Engagement and Delivery</b>	
8.1	Has the local community been given the opportunity to influence/partake in the development proposal?	<p>If there has been any community engagement please provide details of the way in which it was carried out and how it has influenced your proposals. If no consultation has yet taken place please detail how you will do so in the future.</p> <p>Not specifically, but the site has been subject to public scrutiny through previous LPD processes.</p>
8.2	Will the proposed development be phased?	Yes
8.3	Expected development <b>start</b> post adoption of the plan in 2022	Year 0-5
8.4	Expected development <b>completion</b>	Year 6-10
8.5	Is finance in place and if so what form? (Secured Loan, Grant Funding etc.)	Yes, Company Banking Facility
8.6	Are there any other issues with the delivery of the site that we should be made aware of? (These should include any issues which may prevent or impact on the deliverability of the site.)	No

<b>9.</b>	<b>Sustainable Development and Design</b>		
9.1	Have you applied principles of sustainable siting and design to your site? The City Council has produced a Sustainability Checklist which provides guidance on the principles of sustainable siting and design and other issues which can be found on <a href="http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk">www.aberdeencity.gov.uk</a> . Please provide the following information:		
	Orientation		
9.2	Exposure:- (does the site currently have)	Little shelter from northerly winds	
		Some shelter from northerly winds	
		Good shelter from northerly winds	x
9.3	Aspect:- (is the site mainly)	North facing	
		East or west facing	
		South, south west or south east facing	x
9.4	Slope:- (do any parts of the site have a gradient greater than 1 in 12?)	Yes	
		If yes approx. what area (hectares or %)	
		No	x
	Flooding & Drainage		
9.5	Flooding (is any part of the site at risk of flooding or has it previous flooded, if so provide detail You can view the SEPA flood maps at <a href="http://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm">http://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm</a> )	Yes (If yes please use the SEPA flood maps to determine the risk)	
		Little or No Risk	
		Low to Medium Risk	
		Medium to High Risk	
		If yes approx. what area (hectares or %)	
		No	x
9.6	Has a flooding strategy been developed for the site?	N/A	
9.7	Have discussions been had with the Council's flooding team?	N/A	
9.8	Have discussion been had with Scottish Water?	No	
9.9	Is there <b>waste water</b> capacity for the proposed development? <a href="http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/business/Connections/Connecting-your-property/Asset-Capacity-Search">http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/business/Connections/Connecting-your-property/Asset-Capacity-Search</a> )?	Yes	
9.10	Is there <b>water</b> capacity for the proposed development?	Yes	

	<a href="http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/business/Connections/Connecting-your-property/Asset-Capacity-Search">http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/business/Connections/Connecting-your-property/Asset-Capacity-Search</a> )?		
	Land Use, Built and Cultural Heritage		
9.11	Built and Cultural Heritage (would the development of the site lead to the loss or disturbance of archaeological sites or vernacular or listed buildings?)	Significant loss or disturbance	
		Some potential loss or disturbance	
		No loss or disturbance	X
9.12	Natural conservation (would the development of the site lead to the loss or disturbance of wildlife habitats or species?)	Significant loss or disturbance	
		Some potential loss or disturbance	
		No loss or disturbance	X
9.13	Landscape features (would the development of the site lead to the loss or disturbance of linear and group features of woods, tree belts, hedges and stone walls?)	Significant loss or disturbance	
		Some potential loss or disturbance	
		No loss or disturbance	X
9.14	Landscape fit (would the development be intrusive into the surrounding landscape?)	Significant intrusion	
		Slight intrusion	X
		No intrusion	
9.15	Relationship to existing settlements (how well related will the development be to existing settlements?)	Unrelated (essentially a new settlement)	
		Partially related	
		Well related to existing settlement	X
9.16	Land use mix (will the development contribute to a balance of land uses, or provide the impetus for attracting new facilities?)	No contribution	
		Some contribution	X
		Significant contribution	
9.17	Contamination (are there any contamination or waste tipping issues with the site?)	Significant contamination or tipping present	
		Some potential contamination or tipping present	
		No contamination or tipping present	X

9.18	Will the site impact on any water courses?	No			
9.19	Does the development site contain carbon-rich soils or peatland? <a href="http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/advice-for-planners-and-developers/soils-and-development/cpp/">http://www.snh.gov.uk/planning-and-development/advice-for-planners-and-developers/soils-and-development/cpp/</a>	No			
9.20	Is the development site within the airport safety exclusion zone?	No			
9.21	Is the development site within the airport 57dB LAeq noise contours?	No			
9.22	Land use conflict (would the development conflict with adjoining land uses or have any air quality or noise issues?)	Significant conflict			
		Some potential conflict			
		No conflict		x	
9.23	If there are significant conflicts, what mitigation measures are proposed?	N/A			
Transport and Accessibility					
9.24	Has contact been made with the Council's transport team?	No			
9.25	Is access required onto a Trunk road and if so has contact been made with Transport Scotland?	No			
9.26	Accessibility (is the site currently accessible to bus, rail, or major road network?)		Bus Route	Rail Station	Major Road
		More than 800m		x	
		Between 400-800m			
		Within 400m	x		X
9.27	Proximity to services and facilities (How close are any of the following?)		400m	400-800m	>800m
		Community facilities	x		
		Local shops	x		
		Sports facilities		x	
		Public transport networks	x		
		Primary schools			x
9.28	Footpath and cycle connections (are there any existing direct footpath and cycle connections to	No available connections			
		Limited range of connections			

	community and recreation facilities or employment? Give the Core Path number if core path is present <a href="https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/core-paths-plan">https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/core-paths-plan</a> )	Good range of connections	X
9.29	Proximity to employment opportunities (are there any existing employment opportunities within 1.6km for people using or living in the development you propose?)	None	
		Limited	
		Significant	X
	Infrastructure		
9.30	Physical Infrastructure (does the site have connections to the following utilities?)	Electricity	X
		Gas	X
9.31	Does the development have access to high speed broadband?	Yes	
9.32	Does the development include a Heat Network/District Heating Scheme?	No	
9.33	How is the development proposing to satisfy the Councils Low and Zero Carbon Policy?	Methods and equipment to be used to be determined at the detailed planning stage, due to ever changing requirements and targets. Currently we utilize solar PV panels and flue gas heat recovery systems	
9.34	Are there any further physical or service infrastructure issues affecting the site?	No	
	Public open space		
9.35	Will the site provide the required level of open space as per the current LDP (Please provide details of your calculations)	A detailed layout will provide public open space in accordance with the LDP policy.	
9.36	What impact will the development have on the Green Space Network?	Enhance the Network	
		No impact on the Network	X
		Negatively impact the Network	
		The site is not within the Green Space Network, but effective landscaping will contribute to the surrounding green belt	



<b>10.</b>	<b>Education</b>	
10.1	Have discussions been had with the Council's Education Department?	No
10.2	Is there currently education capacity for the proposed development? <a href="https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-and-childcare/schools-and-education/schools-pupil-roll-forecasts">https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-and-childcare/schools-and-education/schools-pupil-roll-forecasts</a>	Primary - Kingsford Primary School – ample capacity  Secondary – Hazelhead Academy – limited capacity post 2023 – mitigation would be required to accommodate development.

<b>11.</b>	<b>Community benefits</b>	
	Community benefits can include new community facilities (such as local shops, health, education, leisure and community facilities), affordable housing, green transport links and open spaces. Include elements which you anticipate may be required as developer contributions from the development. (Please note, specific contributions will have to be negotiated with the Council on the basis of the proposal.)	
11.1	Does the development proposal give any benefits to the community? If so what benefits does the development bring, and how would they likely be delivered?	Improved housing provision, including much needed affordable housing

<b>12.</b>	<b>Masterplan Development Framework</b>	
12.1	If you have prepared a framework or masterplan showing a possible layout for the site, please include it with this form.	No

<b>13.</b>	<b>Additional attachments</b>		
	No site is going to be perfect and the checklist above will inevitably raise some potential negative impacts from any development. Where negative impacts are identified, please provide details of their nature and extent and of any mitigation that may be undertaken. Listed below are examples of further information that may be included in your submission;		
		Included	Not Applicable
13.1	Contamination Report		x
13.2	Flood Risk Assessment		x
13.3	Drainage Impact Assessment		x

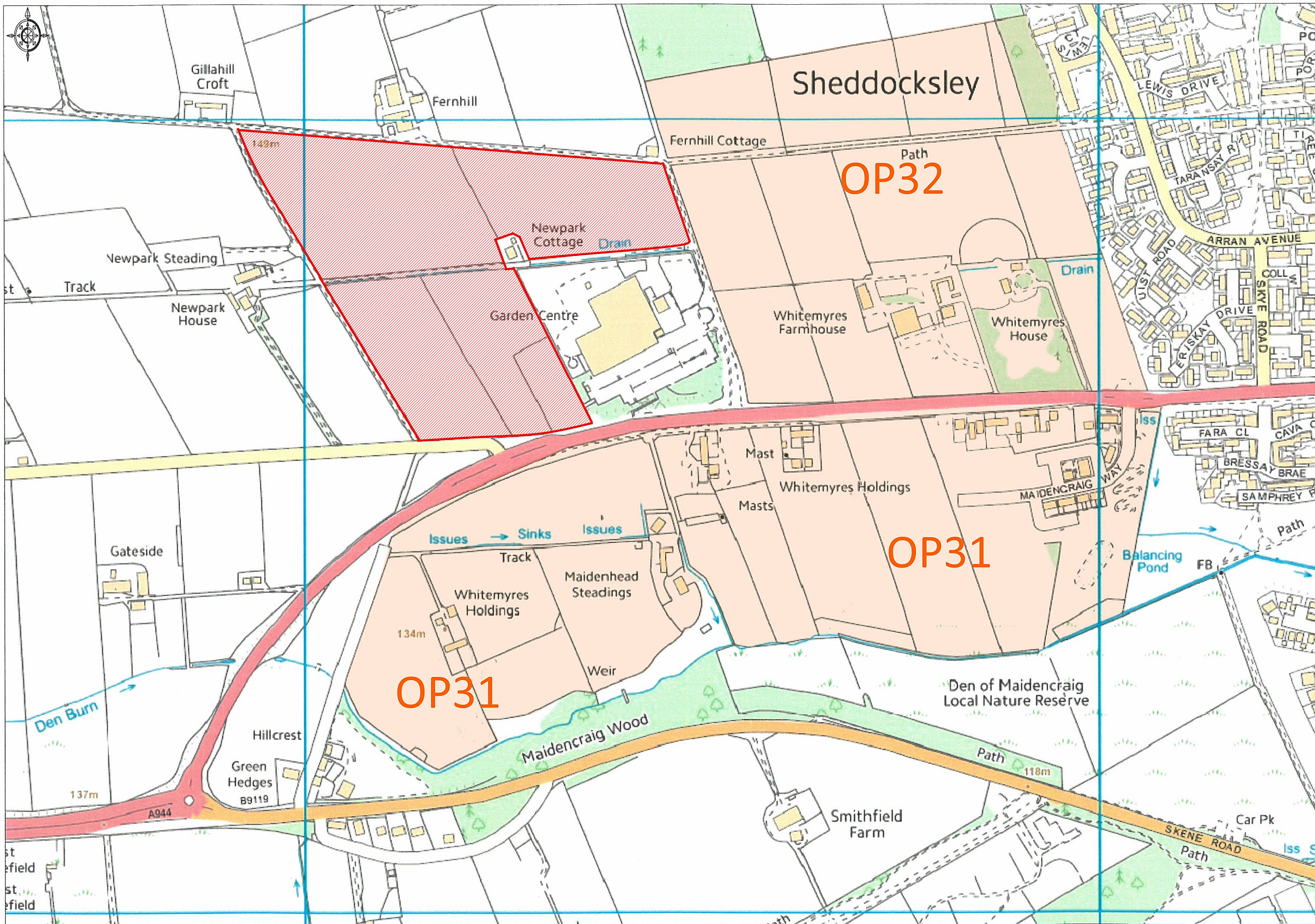
13.4	Habitat/Biodiversity Assessment		X
13.5	Landscape Assessment	X	
13.6	Transport Assessment		X
13.7	Other as applicable (e.g. trees, noise, dust, smell, retail impact assessment etc. please state)		X

<b>14.</b>	<b>Development Viability</b>		
14.1	Taking into account all the information provided above, and the requirements of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017 and supporting Supplementary Guidance, please confirm that you have assessed the financial viability of your proposed development and found it to be viable for development in the timeframe set out above.	I confirm that I consider the site to be viable as per the details provided above.	X
		Our Maidencraig development has demonstrated an ongoing market through the economic downturn. Recently released phases have continued to sell, and there is no evidence to suggest this will not continue. It is therefore prudent to plan for an extension of the site beyond the current allocation.	

The land promoted for development forms a logical expansion of the existing Maicdenraig development, which is due to be completed within the next ten years. The allocation of the proposed site was supported by the Scottish Government Reporter in his report of the Local Plan inquiry in 2008. Aberdeen City Council, however, decided not to accept his recommendation on this occasion.

Supported by a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Bancon submitted that development could be accommodated within the landscape up to the 145m contour line, or thereabouts, without risk of significant visual impact or risk of coalescence with Kingswells. This was specifically supported by the Reporter, who stated that the 145m contour line should mark the boundary of the zoning.

Subsequently, the Dobbies Garden Centre has been built, but a significant area of land below the 145m contour, to the west and north of the garden centre, remains undeveloped. The land is suitable for around 100 dwellinghouses and associated business and retail uses to compliment the overall Maidencraig masterplan area.





## MAIDENCRAIG EAST, ABERDEEN

### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

On behalf of BANCON DEVELOPMENTS.  
Oct 2007

## DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES landscape architects



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**MAIDENCRAIG EAST, ABERDEEN**

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

**October 2007**

**DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES  
landscape architects**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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



## 2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 This study will assess the impact of implementing a mixed use residential development on the Maidencraig East site. It will begin by considering the current location and context of the site and its relationship with the wider landscape of Aberdeenshire and the City of Aberdeen with particular attention to the landscape character of the area and the visual impact upon it.
- 2.2 The study will begin with a review of the planning issues related to the site and the findings of the Reporter on the Local Plan Inquiry. The consequences of these findings will then be considered in the scoping of the remainder of the study.
- 2.3 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will commence by considering the wider context of Aberdeenshire and how the site relates to the fabric of the City and adjoining countryside. Elements such as transport links, landscape designations, Tree Preservation Orders, archaeological features are examined in this section and relevant conclusions drawn.
- 2.4 The Landscape Character of the site and surroundings are then examined in relation to Scottish Natural Heritage Review no 80, Landscape Character Assessment of Aberdeen, 1996. This document sets out the officially accepted description of the character of the site. It contains guidelines for development, within this landscape character type, and these are taken into consideration.
- 2.5 Scottish Planning Policy document SPP3: "Planning for Housing" sets out the general principles for locating good quality residential developments in the best locations. It refers in particular to Planning Advice Notes 44, "Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape" and 52, "Planning and Small Towns". The specific recommendations in these documents have served to guide the methodology used in the preparation of this report. The same document also refers to a number of other Planning Advice Notes and National Planning Policy Guidance documents. The range, within that document, has been considered and the relevant ones discussed.
- 2.6 Following this, the physical conditions of the site itself are addressed through study of the topography, vegetation and built forms. This is followed up with a photographic study of the site, illustrating the conditions and features that exist.
- 2.7 The visual impact of any development of the site is then looked at in more detail by the determination of the visual envelopes of the site. That is to say the envelopes of land from which any development on it will be seen. This will be carried out using Key Terra Firma ground modelling software to anticipate the visual range of the development. An assessment of the more sensitive visual receptors within the area is then undertaken and any issues highlighted.
- 2.8 From the conclusions drawn from analysis of the site, a set of constraints to development and any necessary mitigation is compiled. From these, recommendations are made for the development of the site so as to secure the least degree of impact and any appropriate mitigation.
- 2.9 Over the course of the study, cognisance will be taken of the North East Scotland Together Structure Plan (2001-2016) produced by Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City and the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan (2004) by Aberdeen City Council, along with any associated guidance provided within these documents.
- 2.10 In applying the above methodology, careful regard has been made to National Planning Policy on development on previously unbuilt land, the assimilation of development into the landscape, and the expansion of small towns. Particular regard has been made to the principles of Planning Advice Note 44, "Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape".
- 2.11 The overall methodology has been undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment" published by the Landscape Institute in conjunction with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

### 3. PLANNING CONTEXT

#### Structure Plan

- 3.1 The Structure Plan, referred to as NEST (North East Scotland Together), which covers this area, sets out a range of core strategies. In reference to the location of new housing, core strategic Objective 7 aims;

*"To secure a choice of location for a viable supply and adequate variety of land for housing (including affordable housing), employment, services and open space, which:*

- relates development to each settlement's ability to accommodate it without loss of amenity or identity;*
- ensures that the particular use or uses proposed for each site will maximise the overall sustainability of the community;*
- gives preference to the use and re-use of sites within existing settlements;*
- avoids development in areas liable to flood, or near other major hazards;*
- relates the density of development, when considered with adjoining land uses, to its proximity to services and the transport network;*
- will help to regenerate poorer communities and areas."*

- 3.2 In relation to the environment as a whole the Structure Plan states the core strategic objectives as;

*"Objective 9 -To confirm the function and role of Aberdeen's Green Belt.*

*Objective 10 -To protect the countryside from development other than what is needed for the rural economy and settlement strategy.*

*Objective 11- To give special protection to international, national and locally designated sites of environmental importance, but also to foster the natural and built environment as a whole."*

- 3.3 The Structure Plan then addresses the issues relating to housing land allocation more specifically. It states;

*..... housing is to be located within settlements which are accessible to services and facilities and support economic development. National planning*

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

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

#### Emerging Local Plan

- 3.5 These strategies are developed further, and in respect to specific sites, in the Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan-Green Spaces New Places. In regard to the green space network within Aberdeen it states:

*"The green structure is based on some of Aberdeen's prime assets (e.g. the river valleys, wildlife sites and woodlands) whilst the development corridors are based on sustainable transportation routes into the city. The green fingers are also connected by a series of orbital 'greenways' around Aberdeen thereby creating the Green Space Network."*

*"Benefits generated from adjacent developments will be directed to these areas to make landscape improvements, plant woodland, create wildlife corridors and implement the core path network - thereby increasing access opportunities for all. They are afforded protection from development so that nothing should harm their recreational or wildlife integrity."*

- 3.6 It further sets out a number of Policies for the development of the landscape of Aberdeen. The following policies are ones which are relevant to the development of the study area. It also describes specific criteria for the development of the sites.

### The Western Peripheral Route

- 3.7 In Policy 73 it discusses the Western Peripheral Route and its role in encouraging development. The opportunity to use part of the development to contribute financially to the cost of the route is not missed:



*"The WPR is an integral component of the LTS. The route should free up road capacity in the urban area, providing the opportunity to reallocate more road space to buses and other priority modes of transport. Traffic will also be encouraged to transfer onto the more appropriate distributor roads, allowing traffic management and traffic calming to be introduced into residential and other sensitive areas. Residential areas will become more acceptable environments for walking and cycling. Road capacity should also become*

*available for greater pedestrian priority in the City Centre. The WPR will link several park and ride sites around the edge of the city. This will enable people to drive to the most appropriate site to then be able to use public transport to their final destination. The problems associated with the Air Quality Management Area (Nitrogen Dioxide) Order 2001 could also, potentially, be reduced by removing much of the through traffic from the area affected by the order. The WPR is also seen as a key part of the Green Spaces-New Places Strategy as set out at the beginning of this plan. The WPR is seen as a potential means of releasing land that will be vital for appropriate, sustainable development. Appropriately located development might be required to make a financial contribution to the road in order to mitigate access or other related problems."*

### 3.8 Policy 73: The Western Peripheral Route

*"The City Council will work with the Scottish Executive to confirm and safeguard the road alignment. The final design of the road should reflect the best practicable option not entailing excessive cost"*

### Conclusion

- 3.9 The site responds well when viewed against the ideals set out in the Local Plan. The site is not a Brownfield one but it has been recognised that there are not enough of these to meet current demand. It is a reasonably sustainable site as it is on a major transport corridor and has links to existing footpath and cycle networks, leisure facilities and community resources. The Western Peripheral Route would benefit the site as it is close by but is far enough removed not to be affected directly by it.
- 3.10 Many of the planning issues were discussed at the Local Plan Inquiry and whilst the site does not meet with all of the aims of the plan it compares favourably with other sites in the area including those originally proposed within the local plan. The findings of the local plan are discussed in detail in the next section.

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

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

### Conclusions

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

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

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

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

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

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

*The suggested development for ‘Maidencraig East’ in the ‘Master Plan Proposed Zonings’ (documentBAN2) would not make full use of the foregoing potential development area.”*

### Recommendations

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

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

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

## 5. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

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

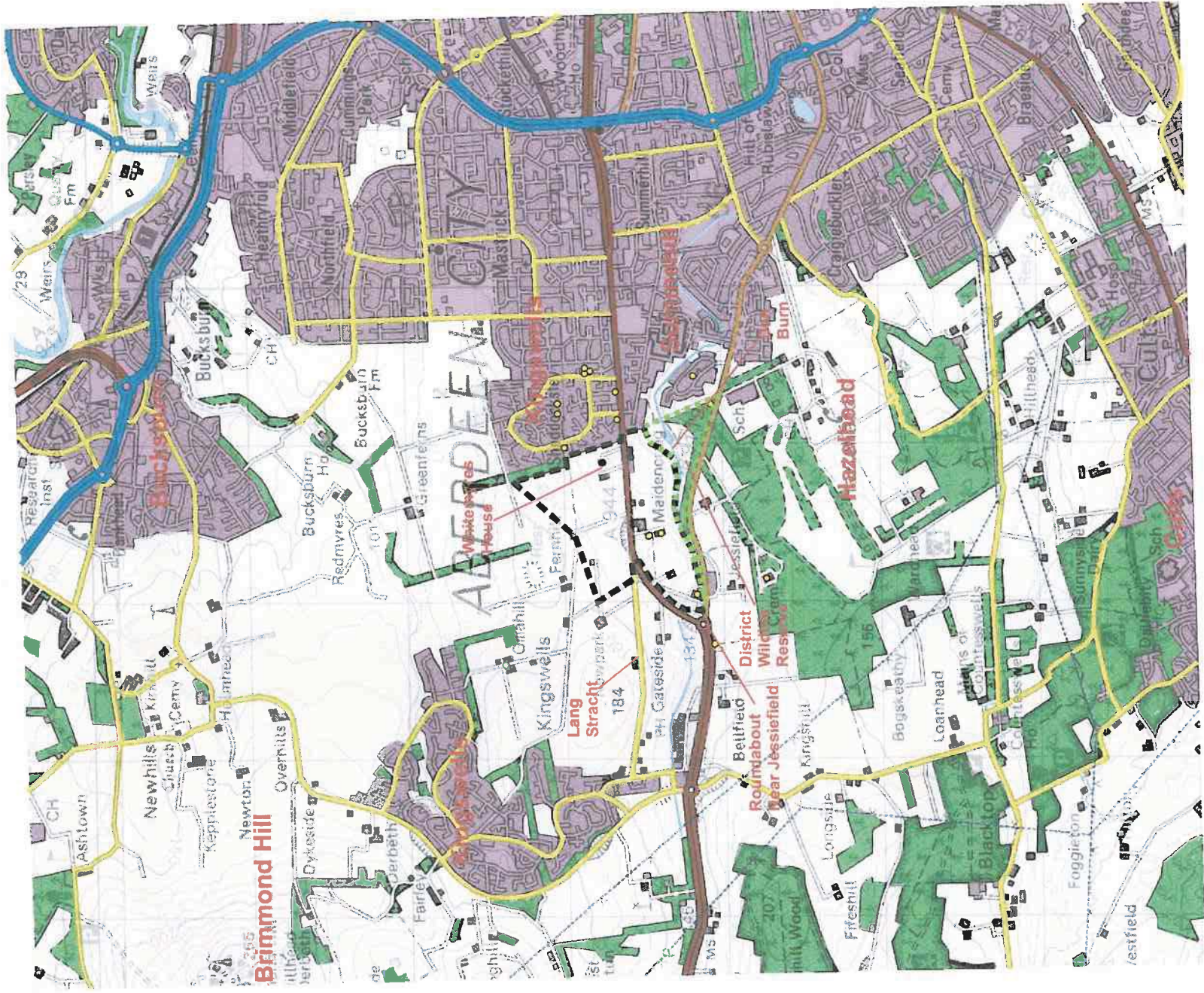
### Topography

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

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

### Human Influences and Archaeology

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



- Settlements
- Woodland
- Water body
- Minor Road
- Major Road
- Primary Route
- Power Line
- Railway Line
- Listed Building
- National Monument
- District Wildlife Reserve
- Site Boundary

**MAIDENCRAIG EAST,  
ABERDEEN**

L1 LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Date  
Oct 2007

Scale  
NTS

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5.12 The following Listed Buildings are included in the site:

- **OLD WHITEMYRES, FARMHOUSE** - Dated WI MG 1704 at skew, probably recast shortly after 1751. 2-window and modern centre porch, later outshot to back; harled with chamfered margins, small windows N. frontage. (Category: C(S))
- **WHITEMYRES HOUSE** - Late 18th century. 2-storey and dormerless attic 3-window harled with margins, with plain doorpiece in W. gable; circular keyblocked opening in E. gable; coped chimneys; T-plan single-storey back wing. Semi-derelict. (Now restored) (Category: B)
- **OLD WHITEMYRES, N. PART OF STEADING** - Probably shortly after 1751. Rubble-built rectangular block with ball finials at apices of gables. (Category: C(S))

5.13 The following features are on or within 100m of the site and appear on the National Monuments of Scotland Record:

- Maidencraig, meal mill - Meal-mill
- Whitemyres House – House
- Old Whitemyres – Farmstead
- Old Whitemyres – Part of steading
- Maidencraig – Farm
- Newton Cottage – Cottage
- Home Farm Sheddocksley - Smithy

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

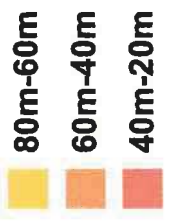
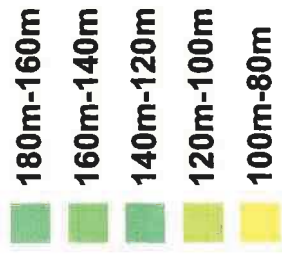
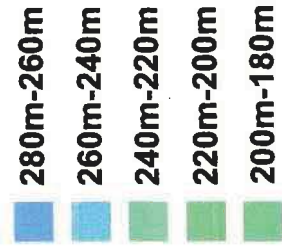
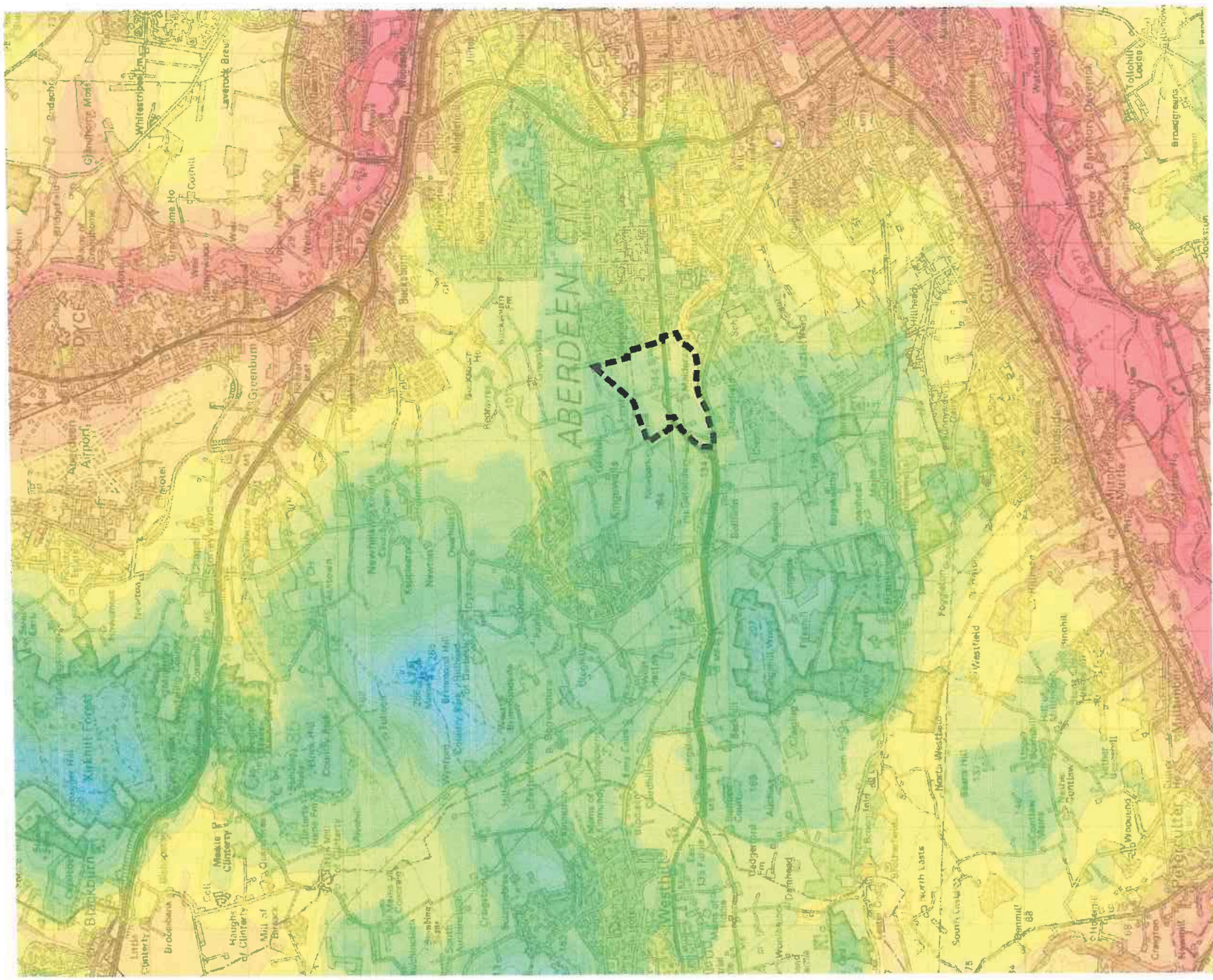
#### Transport

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

#### Conclusions

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





**MAIDENCRAIG EAST,  
ABERDEEN**  
L2 CONTOUR ANALYSIS  
Date Oct 2007  
Scale NTS  
**DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES**  
landscape architects

## 6. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

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

### Geology

- 6.3 The geology of the area is uniquely linked with the character of the City of Aberdeen. Large deposits of igneous rock beneath the west of the City have produced the abundance of granite from which the City famously constructed its earliest Victorian buildings, earning it the title 'The Granite City'. This has continued in modern times but due to rising costs it is now mainly restricted to facings and decorative work. Deposits of sandstone and other sedimentary rocks underlie the landscape to the north and centre areas of the City, which have produced the sandy coastline and beaches. These contrast markedly with the dalradian rocks that have formed the cliff lined shore that extends south from the City along the coast.
- 6.4 This underlying solid geology has been covered over time through processes of erosion and deposition mainly through glaciation over the past 2 million to 10,000 years. This process affects the weaker areas of substrate by deepening river valleys and fault lines. The courses of both the Dee and the Don follow meltwater channels formed by this process. This process of erosion and deposition has resulted in the undulating nature of the city's landscape between the low-lying channels of the two main rivers.

### Topography

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

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

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

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

- 6.7 The general vegetation and landcover of Aberdeen is described in the report as;

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

### Landscape Character

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

#### 6.9 *Open Farmland*

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

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

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

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

#### **Maidencraig East**

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 6.11 The distinctive landscape features are set out as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.13 Finally the report sets out development guidelines.

*Conserve / Manage*

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

*Enhance*

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

## Conclusion

- 6.14 Relevant issues highlighted by the character assessment which affect this area are:
- *The busy A944 and Lang Stracht are busy bus routes and development would have a visual impact on these roads.*
  - *High visibility of the area due to landform makes it sensitive to development.*
  - *Little existing woodland cover to provide screening.*
  - *East – west road development would not be too intrusive whereas north – south ones would be due to 'grain' of landform.*
  - *Additional woodland could be accommodated if it followed the same format as exists.*
  - *There is scope for increase in informal recreational activity.*
- 6.15 The report recommends that the tree cover and stone dykes along city approach roads are conserved and that additional planting along city edge and buildings should be encouraged. These elements could all be integrated into a proposed development. The high visual impact of development within the area will be examined further in the relevant later chapter.

## 7. SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY

- 7.1 *The photographs on the following pages were taken using a Fuji Finepix S5600 digital camera with a picture quality of 5.1 megapixels and a Fujinon Zoom Lens 6.3 to 63mm and 1:3.2-3.5.*
- 7.2 This section provides a general description of the expanded site as described in the Local Plan Inquiry Report and considers any particular factors of note which exist. These are then illustrated and expanded upon through the photographic study.

### Description

- 7.3 The site is approximately 78.5ha although this is reduced in developable area by the A944 running through and existing dwellings on the site. The future viability and ownership boundaries of these will need to be established. If these are removed from the overall area the remaining land covers around 70ha.
- 7.4 As has been mentioned previously the A944 bisects the site and splits it into two distinct areas to the north and south. The area to the north lies over field compartments which surround Whitemyre House and Farmstead and Fernhill Farm. To the east lies Sheddocksley on the other side of a broken tree belt approximately 6m wide. This tree belt becomes far more substantial to the north of the site but for the majority, it is little more than a hedgerow in places. The northern boundary is set in the report to run along the line of the 145m contour line. There is new woodland planting directly to the north and combined with the topography it is fairly successful in blocking views from this direction. To the west the boundary is set by a farm access road which heads north from the just within the older section of the Lang Stracht road off of the A944.
- 7.5 The southern area now occupies the entire section of land enclosed by the A944 road to the north and west round to the roundabout close to Jessiefield, the Den Burn to the south and the area of residential area of Summerhill to the east. This housing adjoins the site and the watercourse runs into it as the houses line either side of the valley that it has formed.

### Topography

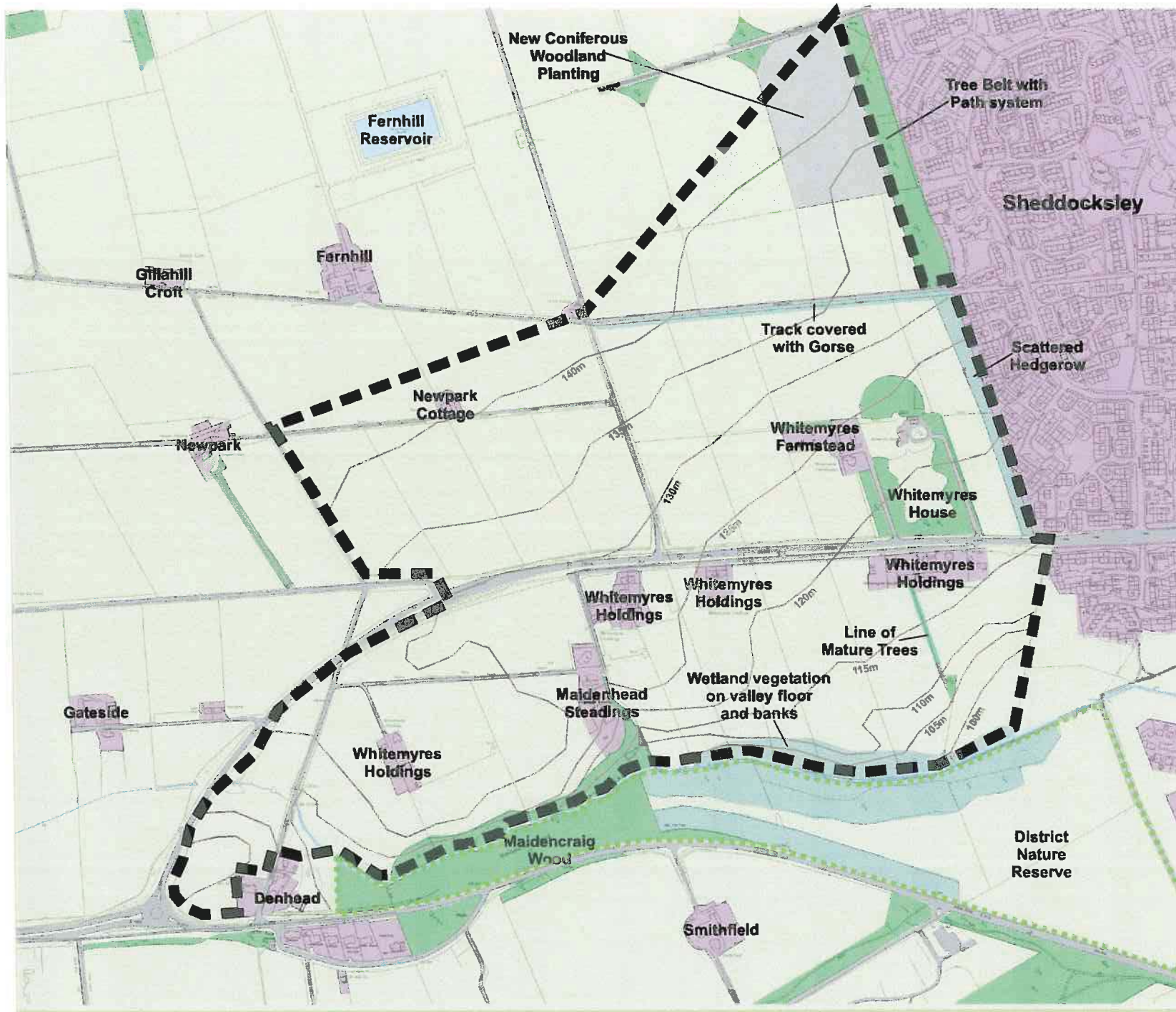
- 7.6 The site drops gradually from north to south from the 145m contour line at the northern boundary down to 120m at the edge of the burn. This is over a distance of around 1km which is an approximate average gradient of 1 in 40 although it is greater in the area north of the A944 at 1 in 25. The landform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

### Vegetation

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

### Built Forms

- 7.8 As have been mentioned previously there are some buildings existing in the study area. These are mainly associated with the A944 with the row of houses along the southern edge. In addition to these the building complex of Whitemyres House, Farmstead and grounds occupy a large space on the northern section of the site. These are set back from the A944 in wooded grounds. Other settlements are scattered throughout the southern section of the site most notably at Denhead and at Maidenhead Steadings.
- 7.9 A common theme in the northern section of the site and along the A944 corridor is the use of stone walling. This is a characteristic of the landscape in the wider area and have been conserved and in the case of the road way reintroduced. This is potentially a means of integrating the new elements into the older landscape character. These are an attractive asset.



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

**MAIDENCRAIG EAST,  
ABERDEEN**

L3 SITE DESCRIPTION

Date Oct 2007 Scale NTS

**DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES**  
landscape architects

### District Wildlife Reserve

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

### Photographic Study

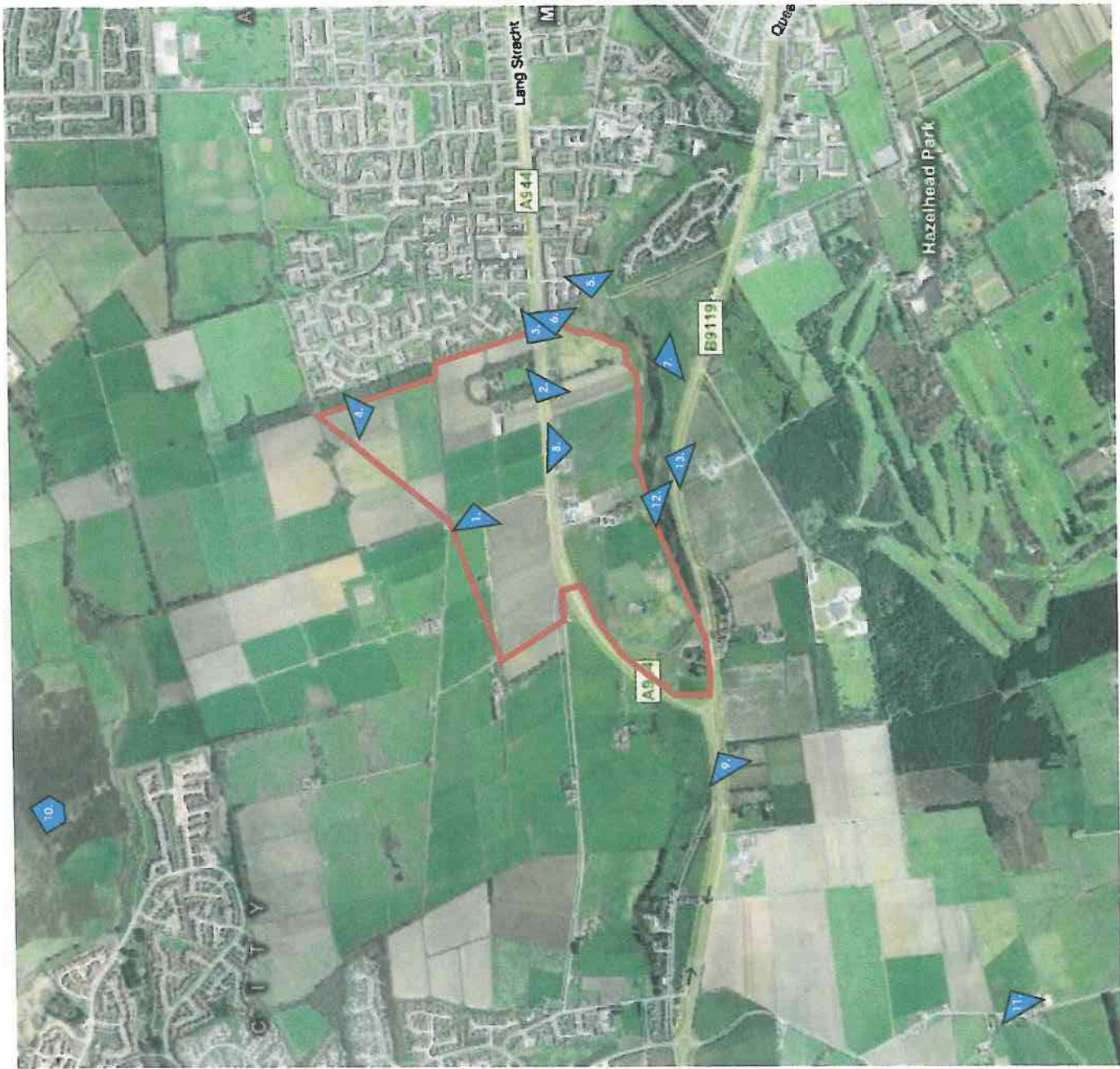
- 7.11 **Photograph One** – Shows a view across the north western section of the site from the access road to Fernhill. The site can be seen to slope down to the south (right) but in a gentle, even gradient. The woodland around Whitemyres House can be seen and at the back, the tree belt to the north west of the site.
- 7.12 **Photograph Two** – looking westwards along the A944 from the houses along the southern edge of the road. The height difference of the road is almost unnoticeable here. Again the stone wall is used to mark the boundary.
- 7.13 **Photograph Three** – A view from further east along the A944. The mature woodland around Whitemyres House can be seen as can the scattered hedgerow strip along the eastern boundary. It goes some way towards screening the houses in Sheddocksley but has large gaps and low cover in places. The belt to the north can be seen in the background and is far more developed in comparison.
- 7.14 **Photograph Four** – Shows a view south from the northern section of the site. This part of the site has been planted with an area of coniferous woodland.
- 7.15 **Photograph Five** – Shows a view looking west from the lower parts of the Den Burn valley within Summerhill. The District Wildlife Reserve can be seen on the left of the image and the route of the watercourse in the centre. The foreground appears boggy but the site on the right on the higher ground is separated out by the embankment of the valley and can be seen to be agricultural land.
- 7.16 **Photograph Six** – This effect can again be seen in this image looking south west from the A944. The dip into the valley separates the landscape type from the undisturbed grassland of the District Wildlife Reserve. There is a small group of

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

- 7.17 **Photograph Seven** – A view of the site from the District Wildlife Reserve to the south. The majority of the southern part of the site can be seen. To the right are the houses at Summerhill. The line of mature trees can be seen again.
- 7.18 **Photograph Eight** – A view south from the A944 close to the houses on the roadside. The land is mainly flat, only sloping away to the south close to the valley. The compound at Whitemyre Holdings can be seen to the right and the line of mature trees are on the left. The land cover is various types of pasture separated by mainly post and wire fences and here a broken down stone wall.
- 7.19 **Photograph Nine** – This image shows the view north east from close to the roundabout. The site is higher than the road level due to the way the channel has been excavated into the topography. The site is mainly clear with some trees associated with some of the settlement gardens.

### Conclusions

- 7.20 There are a few restrictions on the development of the site caused by the physical elements that currently exist on it. Vegetation should be retained where possible if it is of sufficient quality, helps to screen the development or has an ecological value.
- 7.21 The existing buildings should be protected if they are of a sufficient conservation value and have been recognised with listed building status.
- 7.22 Maintaining the integrity of the District Wildlife Reserve is of the upmost importance but this should not be physically impacted provided that development is kept back to a sufficient distance away from it.



-  Photo Points
-  Panoramic View

**MAIDENCRAIG EAST,  
ABERDEEN**

L4 PHOTOGRAPH POINTS

Date Oct 2007      Scale NTS

**DAVID WILSON ASSOCIATES**  
landscape architects







7.



8.



9.



## 8. VISUAL IMPACT

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

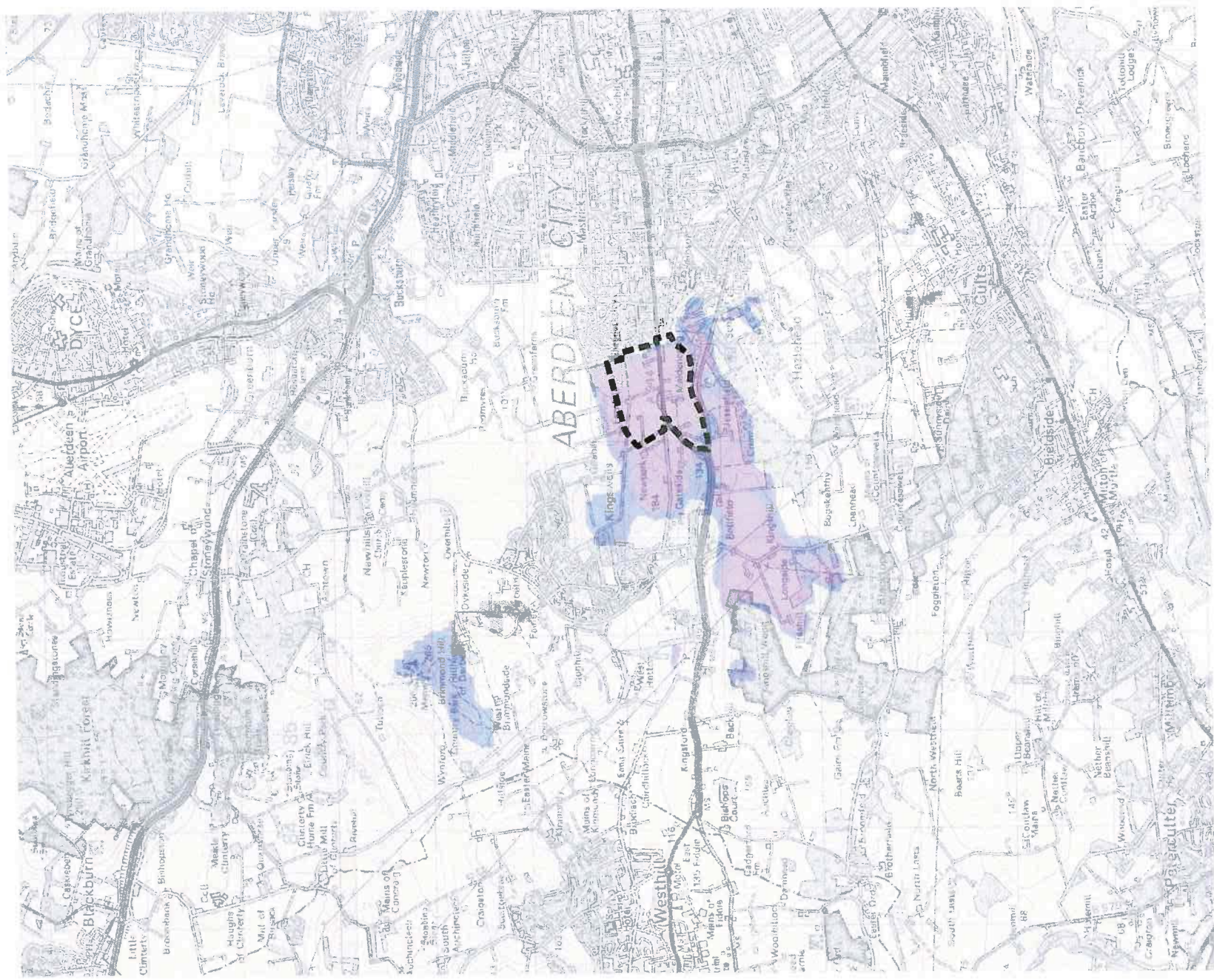
### Visual Envelope

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

### Visual Receptors

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

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



□ Site Boundary

■ Visual Envelope

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L6 VISUAL ENVELOPE

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

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

#### **Photographic Study**

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

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

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

#### **Conclusion**

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

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## 9. CONSTRAINTS

### Planning Constraints

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

### Topographical Constraints

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

### Built Form Constraints

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

### Vegetation Constraints

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

### District Wildlife Reserve Constraints

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

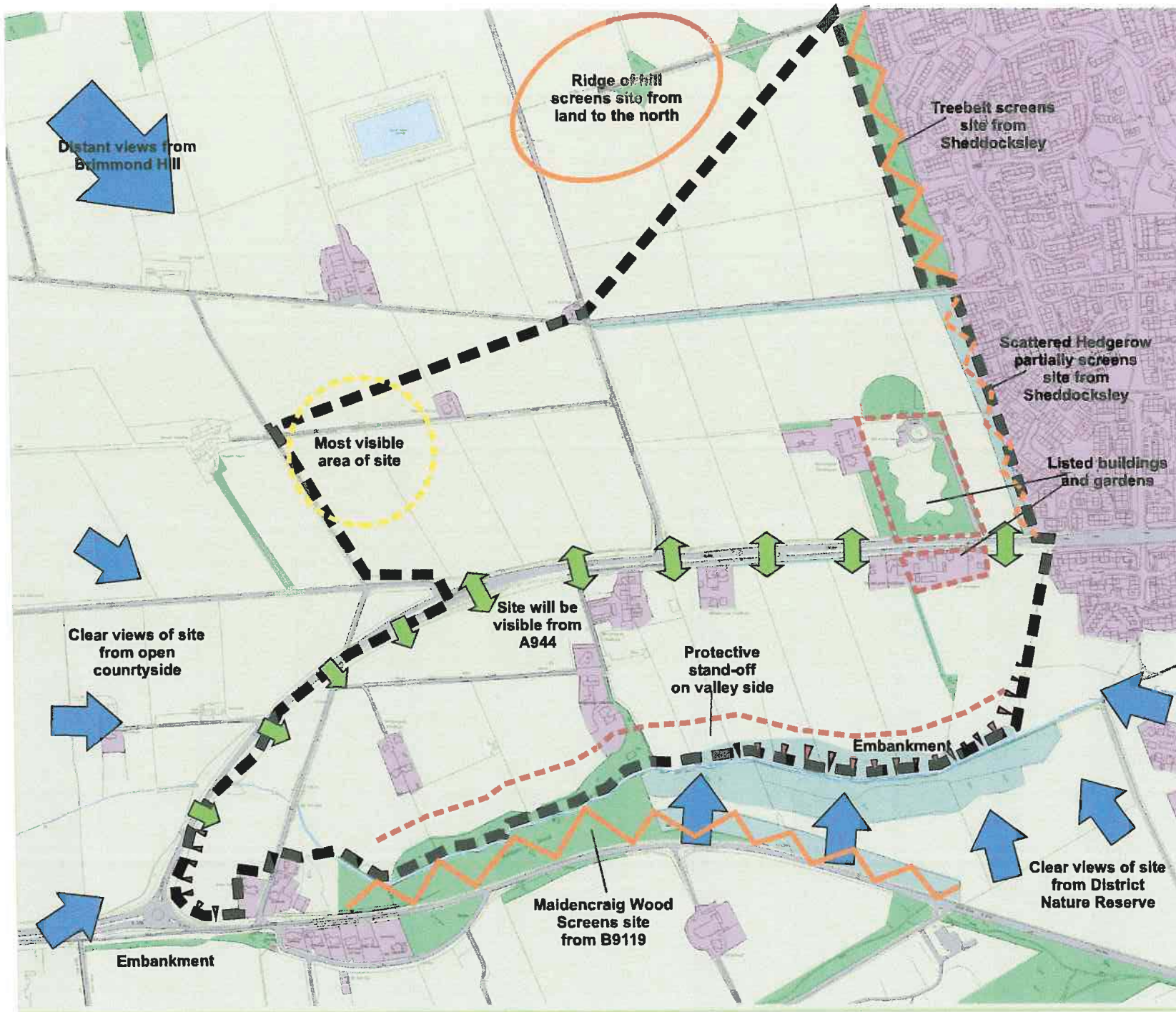
### Landscape Character Constraints

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

### Visual Impact Constraints

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





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L6 CONSTRAINTS

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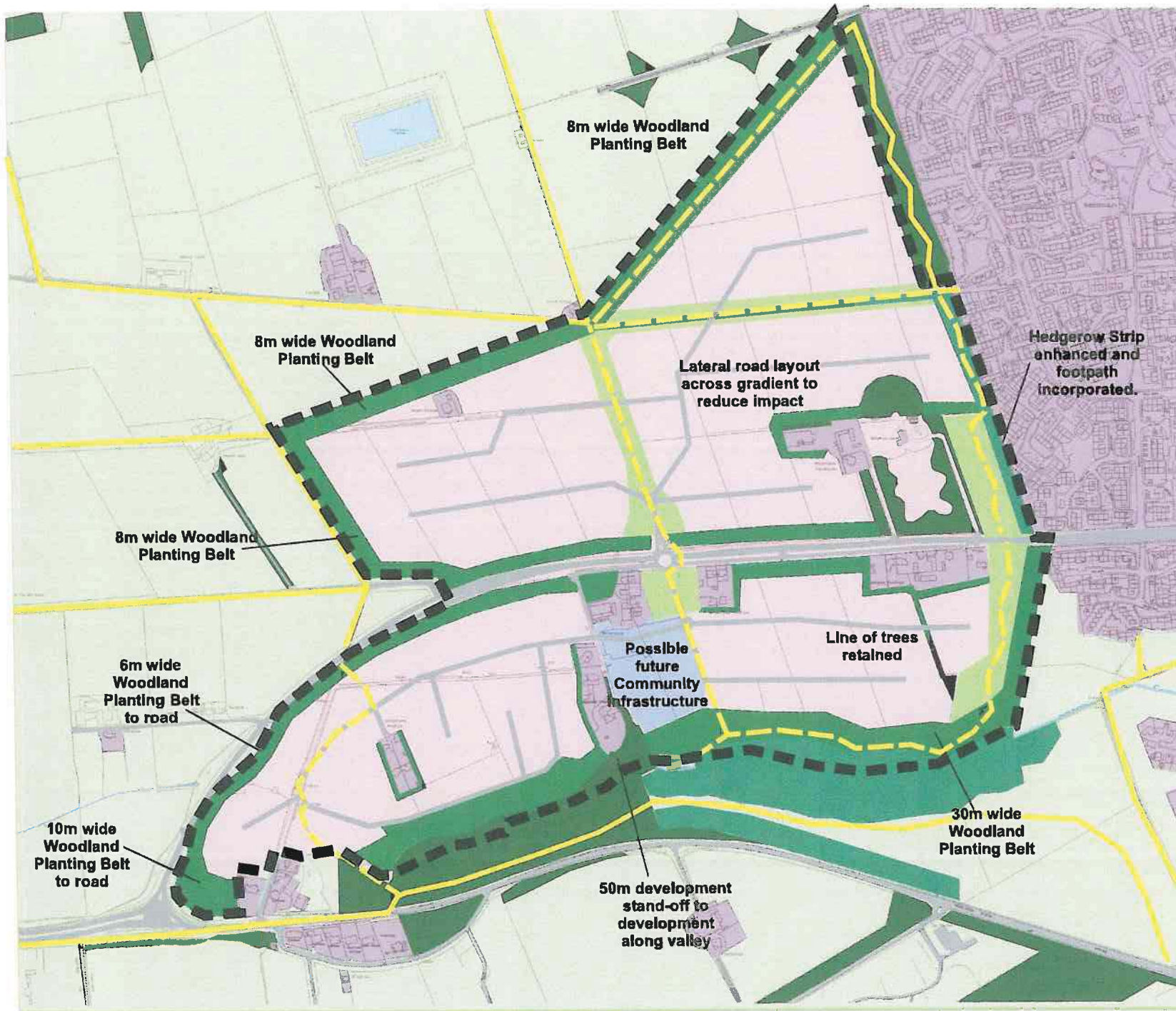
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## 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

These recommendations are illustrated graphically on Map L7 overleaf



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

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L7 RECOMMENDATIONS

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