

TOWN & VILLAGE STATEMENTS

THE PLANNING BACKGROUND

The 1993-98 Local Plan continued the designation of the Beil's Brae site in Station Road, (R1) only because it was an inherited designation from the Moray and Nairn County Council in 1968. Phase 1 of this development is now complete with phase 2 almost complete. The village has also experienced a small number of infill developments on Main Street.

As with other villages similar in character and size to Urquhart (e.g. Dyke, Cummington, Duffus and Garmouth) problems of access, traffic congestion/road safety and public drainage place limitations on the extent to which the village can grow. Urquhart does not possess the infrastructure in terms of roads and drainage to support any significant expansion. Indeed on the grounds of village character alone it may be considered that further development will compound pressures, given recent developments approved both in the village and at Malverston. It is therefore anticipated that once R1 has been developed no further land for house building will be released beyond the existing settlement boundary.

CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE

Urquhart is a small commuter village with a distinctly rural character. Its centre is focused in Main Street where a number of long, narrow, white cottages, some of which are listed, give the village a very distinctive identity. Main Street is a mix of the new and the old and although some of the traditional character of the village has been lost in recent years by the infill of several open spaces, the village still retains a variety of local architectural styles which maintain its essential rural charm.

Outwith Main Street and the south end of Station Road, Local Authority houses to the north and the Beil's Brae development have departed from the village's traditional character. The Beil's Brae layout is suburban in style with little reference to the rest of the village, which when complete will occupy a disproportionate amount of the built-up area of Urquhart. The development will be softened by the provision of a landscaped strip along the north boundary required as a condition of the planning consent.

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To restrict further expansion of the village within the settlement boundaries.
- (ii) To safeguard and enhance the rural character of the village.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

In addition to the site specific requirements identified below and in development briefs, all developments must meet the terms of the Implementation policies (L/IMP1-8) in Chapter 8 (relating to siting, layout and design, character impact, landscaping, drainage, environmental and traffic impact). Subject to the scale of the development having a measurable impact on local community facilities, amenities or infrastructure, funding policies L/F1 Developer Contributions and L/F2 'Commuted Payments' in Chapter 7 may also apply.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

The Local Plan policies for business development are contained in Chapter 1 'Economic Development'.

Opportunity Sites

Opportunity Sites are sites which have the potential for redevelopment for a range of possible uses. The governing local plan policy is L/ED6 in Chapter 1. Other policies may apply pending the nature of the redevelopment proposal.

OPP1 Former Church, Station Road:

This building now used as a grain dryer and would be suitable for conversion to residential use. Such a project should preserve the elevations and architecture of the original building, which is a key village landmark at the end of Main Street. (The site would be well suited to a sheltered housing development).

Proposals must meet the following requirements:

- (i) The former church building can be developed in association with a courtyard development comprising no more than four houses to the rear of the property. The courtyard must be designed to complement the architecture of the church building and respect the scale of the neighbouring cottage and church hall adjacent to the cemetery.**

Population 280

(ii) The main building can be subdivided internally to accommodate a number of residential units and/or a suitable commercial development such as a restaurant or retail use.

(iii) The frontage of the church must be restored by the reconstruction of the original opening/doorway and the repair of the original window openings.

(iv) The reconstruction/renovation of the church must be completed prior to the occupation of the associated courtyard development.

(v) A single access to the site shall be provided using the lane immediately to the south of the church building. No access shall be taken via the lane serving the cemetery.

(vi) Parking provision shall be provided at the southern end of the site for the use of visitors to the cemetery in consultation with the Council's Roads and Technical and Leisure Services.

ENVIRONMENT

The policies for the maintenance and enhancement of the environment are found in Chapter 2 (Environment).

The principal policies for the local environment are L/ENV10 'Settlement Boundaries' and L/ENV18 'Public Amenity and Open Spaces' in Chapter 2, and L/IMP1 'Development in Built Up Areas' in Chapter 8.

Under the terms of policy L/ENV18 (Public Amenity and Open Spaces) a number of spaces have been identified which contribute to the environment and amenity of the town. The purpose of policy L/ENV18 is to protect the integrity of these spaces from inappropriate development and to ensure that their contribution to the amenity of the built up area is not compromised.

ENV1: Trees/Graveyard:

The tree belt at the entrance to the village is identified for its environmental and visual qualities. Development will be prohibited within this area.

ENV2: Oak Tree/Royal Oak

A Tree Preservation Order is proposed for the single oak on Station Road which is of high amenity value and contributes significantly to the character of the village and the area surrounding the junction with Main Street.

ENV3: Open Space/Main Street

This is one of the few open spaces remaining which would once have been a feature of the village. This small area is to remain open and unobstructed from development.

ENV4: Beil's Brae

This area to be landscaped in association with development of R1. A Tree Preservation Order has been served.

ENV5: Playing Field

This area is designated for recreational use and open space and will be protected.

HOUSING

The main governing local plan policy for new housing developments is L/H3 in Chapter 3 (Servicing and Layout of new Housing Developments). Policy L/H7 in Chapter 3 (Affordable Housing provision) may also apply pending on the size and location of the development.

R1 Beil's Brae - Phase 2

The site is nearing completion with only a few plots remaining. In order to minimise the environmental impact of the completion of the Beil's Brae development, additional land has been allocated to enable housing to be stepped back from the north western boundary of the site which if developed in its present form would constitute a highly conspicuous skyline development on the northern boundary of the village where the development boundaries bear no relation to existing field contours. This should avoid a rather unsympathetic visual impact within the surrounding landscape (particularly when viewed from the Meft Road and the Garmouth/Elginshill Road to the north), additional land has been included to provide for a landscaped edge (ENV4) along the north-western boundary of the site. The most recent planning consent shows a revised layout for the entire R1 and ENV4 designations.

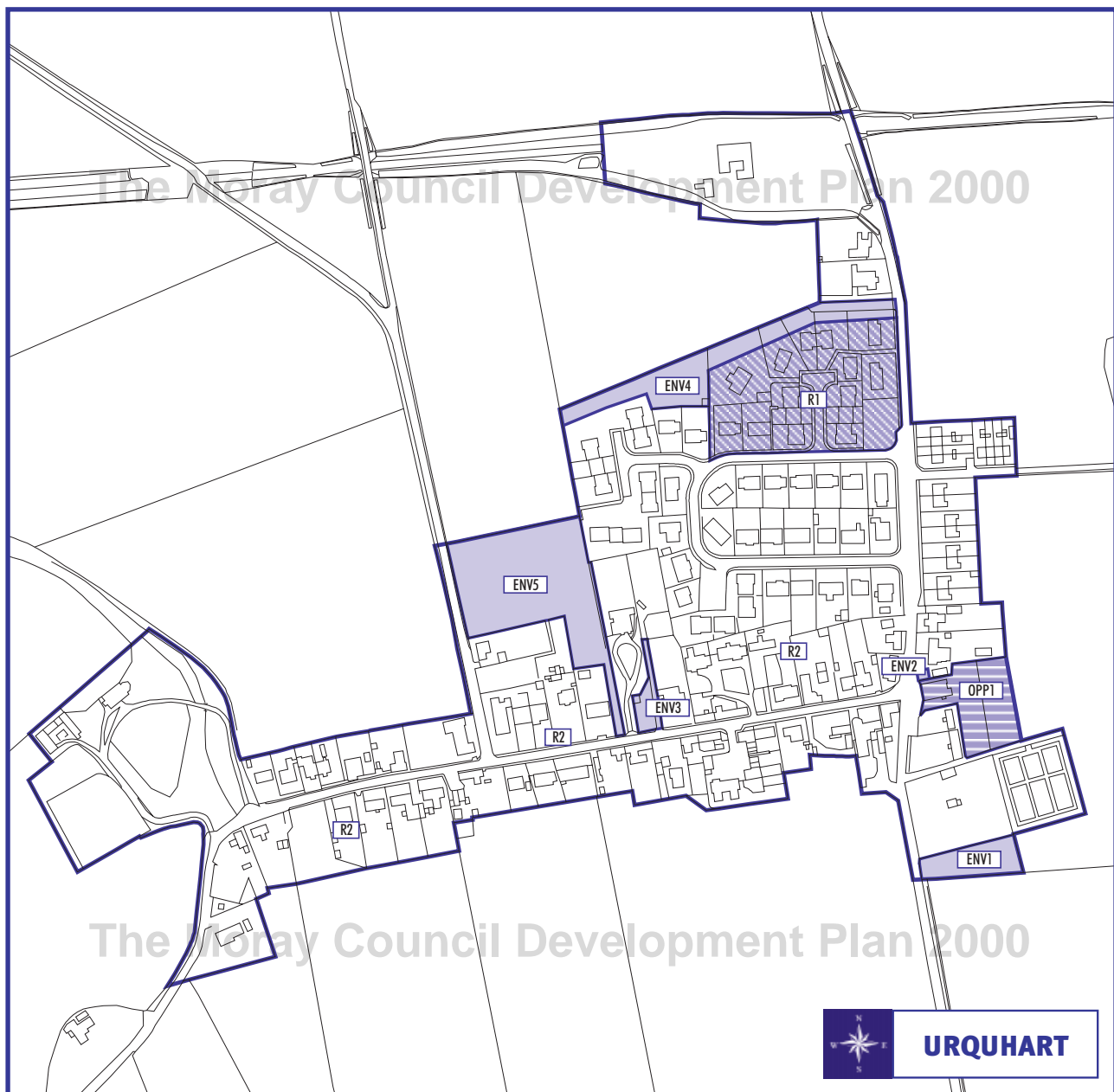
The layout reflects a more informal rural character and houses are stepped back or staggered along the elevated north-west boundary (ENV4) in order to merge with a landscaped strip with an appropriate mix of native hardwoods planted at heavy standard. This woodland edge, which has been incorporated with individual feus is the subject of a Tree Protection Order. The site (once complete) will be a mix of one and one and a half storey housing styles.

R2 Sub-Division Backland Development

In line with objective (ii) as stated above, the Council will not permit the sub-division of plots or backland development within the village boundary. This policy will take precedence over policy L/H5. It will not prevent replacement or redevelopment of existing sites on a one for one basis.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT

There is ample capacity in the public drainage system to cater for all proposals in the plan. Sewage is pumped to Lhanbryde and then to Elgin where it is treated.



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