

## The Potential Effects of Built Development on Landscape Character: Elgin North

	Sloping Ridgeline	Lowlying Basin	Low Wide Ridge
Landscape Character	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development in this area would be perceptually detached and physically distant from the main settlement core, separated from the settlement by the wooded ridgeline around Spynie Hospital which provides a robust containing edge at present</li> <li>To the east this ridgeline has been slightly breached by recent development</li> <li>Wooded landscape of contained farmland is relatively quiet and undisturbed: woodland well used for recreation</li> </ul>	<p>Negative/neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building in this area would impact upon the distinctive form of the interlocking knolls, which would be subject to earth moving</li> <li>The area is perceptually detached, visually separate and physically distant from central Elgin, therefore development here would not have a strong relationship with the settlement core.</li> <li>However, recent development already significantly breaches the ridgeline separating this area from Elgin</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development in this area would be perceptually detached, visually separate and physically distant from the main settlement core. This is in part compounded the orientation of the area away from the settlement and the separation provided by the crest of the ridge at Linksfield</li> <li>Recent development slightly breaches this ridgeline, although extensive new planting aims to provide visual containment</li> </ul>
Settlement Form	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settlement form would extend over the existing containing ridgeline, drawing the settlement away from its association with the River Lossie</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settlement form would extend even more over the existing containing ridgeline, drawing the settlement away from its association with the River Lossie</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settlement form would extend even more over the existing containing ridgeline at Linksfield, drawing the settlement away from its association with the River Lossie</li> </ul>
Landscape Setting	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High quality wooded character of the ridgelines in particular contribute to the existing setting, as does the relative quiet and integrity of the existing character</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The low lying basin does not contribute to the wider setting of the town, although Spynie Ridge does.</li> <li>The area is peri urban in character and not of a high scenic quality, although the low knolls are distinctive</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area does not contribute significantly to the wider visual setting of the town</li> </ul>
Sense of Arrival	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing sense of arrival from the B9012 is well defined, particularly by the wooded 'gateway' and the arrival at the crest of the ridge</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing sense of arrival is characterised by the drama of the view from the A941 at the crest of the Spynie ridge. This would not be affected by increased development</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No major roads approach the town across this character area</li> <li>The existing sense of arrival will be reinforced once recent planting has matured.</li> </ul>

<p>Settlement Edge</p>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust and well defined settlement edge is created by a ridgeline reinforced by established policy woodland.</li> <li>• Current edge maintains the focus of the town on the basin rising up from the River Lossie</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing settlement edge does not relate to natural landform but has been reinforced by modified land form and planting.</li> <li>• An alternative settlement edge option is the low point in the landform at Myreside Road.</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing settlement edge does not relate to natural landform but has been reinforced by planting.</li> <li>• There is no obvious alternative to a settlement edge in this open and relatively featureless landscape</li> </ul>
<p>Views and Visual Features</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area is visually relatively self contained , and development would be visually contained by land form and woodland</li> </ul>	<p>Negative/neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The view of the settlement edge is broken by the rounded knolls</li> <li>• The area is visually relatively self contained , and development would be visually contained by landform and woodland</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area is visually relatively self contained , and development could be visually contained by gentle landform</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Elgin North: Opportunities and Constraints for Development

### 5.2.1 Preferred Opportunities for Development

The majority of this area lies within an elongated shallow bowl contained by low ridges. The area is perceptually and visually very detached from Elgin, although there are direct links to the centre, particularly along the A941.

Settlement expansion is limited by the presence of well defined containing ridges, which gives a strong coherence to the location and extent of the settlement at Spynie hospital and to the east at Linksfield. Both these areas have pronounced landform containment reinforced by extensive woodland.

The approaches to the town, along the B9012 from the north west and the minor roads from the east are particularly robust, creating a good sense of arrival reinforced by gradient change and woodland.

Opportunities for expansion of the settlement within the Sloping Ridgeline and Low Wide Ridge areas of landscape character are limited by the pronounced sense of detachment from the existing settlement within these areas. This is reinforced by the visual and physical separation afforded by the existing landform, where pronounced ridges, reinforced at least in part by woodland, create a distinct edge to the existing settlement and sever these areas from the existing town.

These ridges which in the past have contained and defined the settlement of Elgin to the north have been however already been breached most significantly within the Lowlying Basin character area. This existing area of settlement expansion links to the A94, which crosses the ridge at its most gentle, lowlying point.

### 5.2.2 Long Term Options

Long term options for settlement expansion of Elgin could most appropriately focus on developing the Low Lying Basin character area. While further development in this area would be detached from the town, this area is also not of particularly high landscape quality, has good direct access to town on the A94, and there are good opportunities to create a robust sense of arrival, while the extensively wooded surrounding ridges could provide a new edge to an extended settlement.

Should development need to extend into this area, the creation of a new, separate neighbourhood with an independent focus and a well structured setting would be required within this area. The network of overhead power lines currently limits the layout of development and may need to be put underground. The fine detail of the small scale rounded landforms within this area contribute to the immediate setting of the town, and some of these should be maintained as open space within any future expansion.

# INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO THE MORAY LANDSCAPE

## Elgin North


### OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Scale 1:10 000


#### Landscape Opportunities for Development

No preferred areas for immediate development were identified, but the area was considered to be appropriate for long term major expansion of Elgin, once a master plan and associated design guidance was in place.

#### Landscape Constraints on Development


 Development constrained by the elevation of this relatively exposed ridgeline which contains the land to the east.

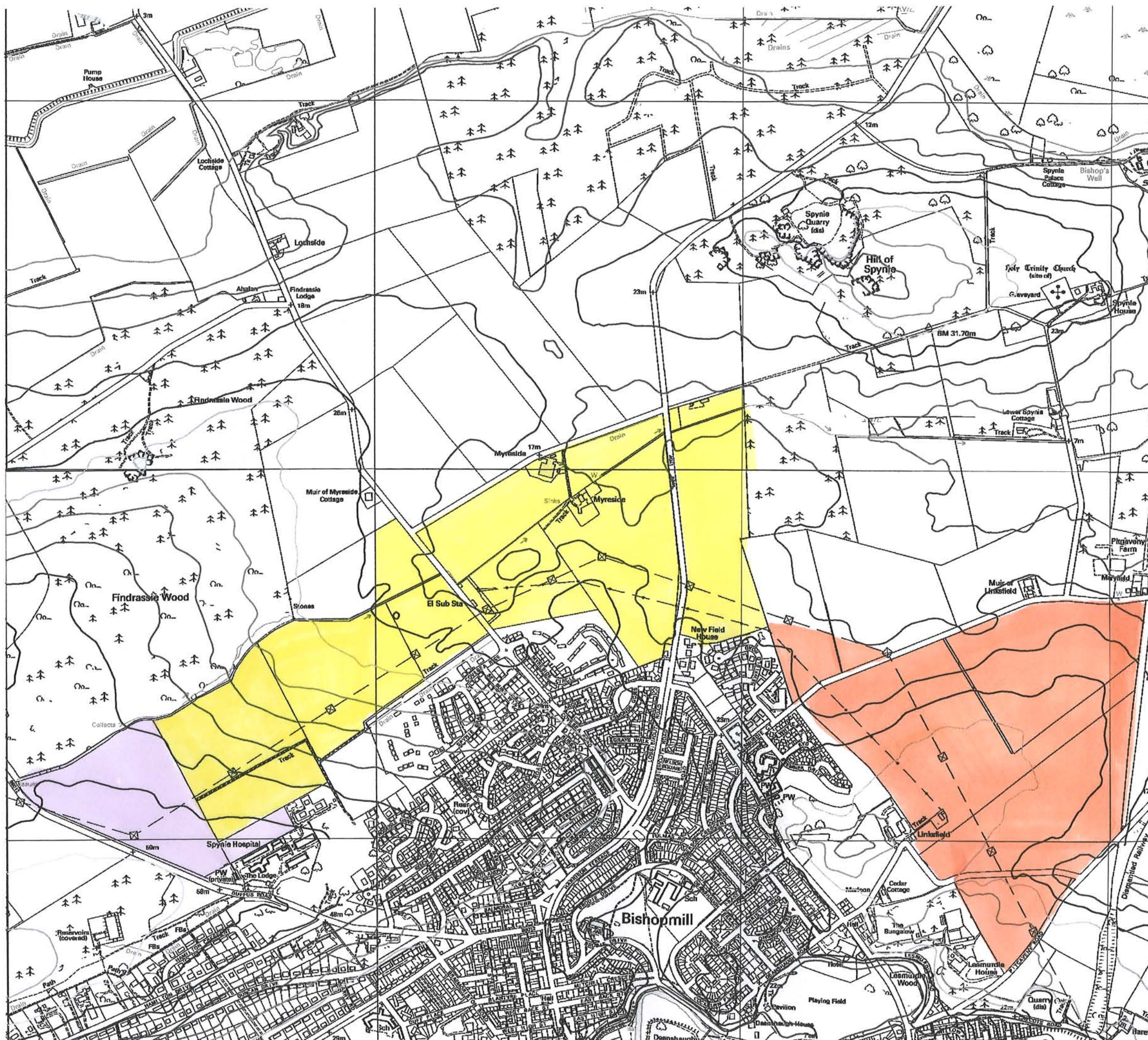
Development here would be perceptually very detached from the settlement core, and physically separated from the town by the wooded ridgeline associated with Spynie hospital.

 Development here is constrained by the strong sense of detachment from Elgin experienced from these more distant fields, which is compounded by the lack of visual links with settlement core, and the orientation of these slopes away from the settlement.

This elevated land along the settlement boundary also provides a containing ridge, in part is reinforced by planting, which creates a defined settlement edge which would be breached by settlement extending east

#### Other Opportunities

 Although this area is very detached from the settlement, the containing ridgeline which demarcated the settlement edge in the past has been significantly breached by recent development. While not a preferred area for immediate expansion, the analysis indicates that there is an opportunity to create a new neighbourhood, associated with the farm at Myreside, within this lowlying basin.



### **5.3 Elgin North: Development Site Recommendations**

No development bid site was identified where settlement expansion could be accommodated while maintaining the character and existing relationship between the town and its relatively well defined northern setting.

It was noted, however, that the low lying basin character type offered some future expansion potential as an area where a new neighbourhood might be opened up, with a focus and structure independent of the existing town. This area would need to have its own identity and character, creating a substantial new neighbourhood of Elgin. Such a proposal would require extensive master planning to develop and implement a landscape framework and associated guidance within which new development could be developed incrementally.