

### 11.3 Elgin West: Development Site Recommendations

Some of the development bids would be appropriate in the Distinctive Hills character type, but with important mitigating measures. Development would need to be located on lower slopes and low lying fields within this area, and may require a change of character from open, rounded, grazed knolls to wooded hills and ridges as a more appropriate backdrop for development and potential recreation use. It would be important to replace any existing fields with well maintained, high quality policy type woodland, to ensure that a landscape character of equivalent quality replaces the existing one. This would be a significant change in character for the area, but one which would have a secure long term future and which is reminiscent of other parts of Elgin, where high quality Scots pine and mixed broadleaved woodland form an important component of the town's setting.

An additional, discreet site which is also appropriate for less dense, edge of settlement development, set in a more wooded or parkland type setting in is also identified to the east of Palmers Cross House.

There are no sites appropriate for development in landscape terms within the Level Flood Plain area. It is noted that this area might also be inappropriate due to potential flood risk, the dynamics of which are also part of its landscape character.

There are opportunities for carefully designed, high quality buildings within the River Meanders character type. These opportunities are limited to the redevelopment of the hotel site and one potential site for a one off building to the north of Cedarwood. This area is a sensitive arrival point to Elgin, which has great potential to be a fine introduction to the town, but which is now neglected in terms of its landscape quality and rather fragmented in built character. There is an opportunity to undertake considerable landscape enhancement to create a very positive sense of arrival to Elgin from the west. In time, it may also be appropriate to consider removal of the low lying industrial buildings along Sherriffmill Road to reinstate the integrity of the flood plain.



INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO  
THE MORAY LANDSCAPE


**Elgin West**  
**DEVELOPMENT SITE RECOMMENDATIONS**

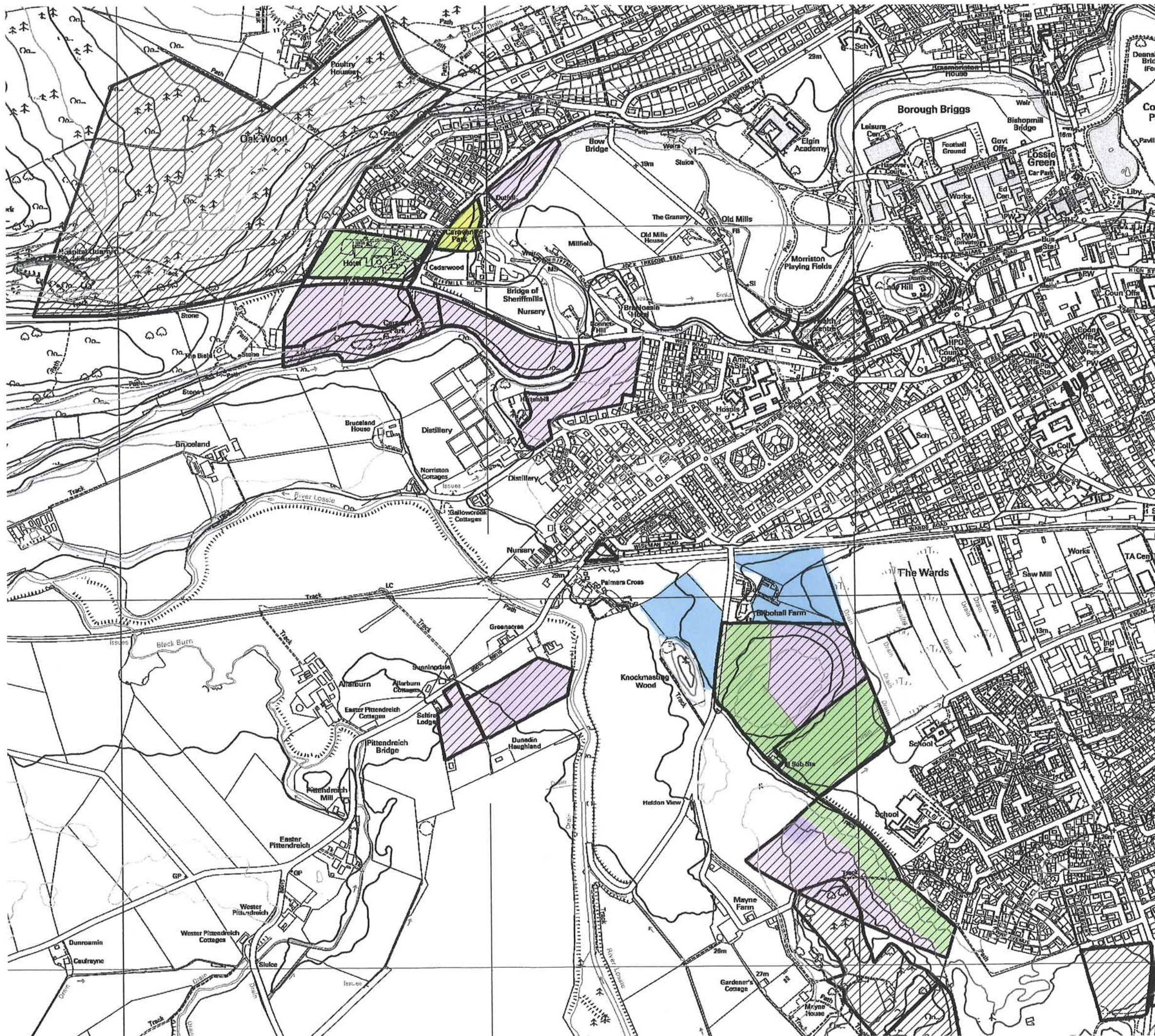
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Assessment of Development Bids

-  Development bids appropriate for development in landscape terms
-  Development bids appropriate for future development in landscape terms once landscape mitigation measures have been established
-  Development bids not appropriate for development due to significant landscape constraints

Additional Opportunities

-  Additional land, not subject to a development bid, which has been identified as appropriate for development in landscape terms





## **12 ELGIN WEST: MITIGATION MEASURES AND ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS**

### **12.1 Elgin West: Identifying Positive and Negative Landscape Features**

The western edge of Elgin is characterised by a very wide range of different landforms and features, many of which contribute to the setting of the town. The distinct rounded hills contrast with the flat plinth of level flood plain, while the sweeping river meanders provide a focus for open space within the town.

The farmland is generally managed as grassland, particularly on land subject to flooding, with some arable cultivation, and there are occasional field trees, although these are more associated with the setting of large houses. Woodland features strongly within the more contained landscapes, either as organically shaped policy woodlands within the Distinct Hills character type, or associated with the river and the higher land elsewhere.

There were some opportunities for immediate settlement expansion identified in this area, associated with the low lying land adjacent to the school and Bilbohall Farm to the south west and the potential redevelopment of the hotel on arrival from Inverness along the A96.

#### **12.1.1 Existing Positive Characteristics and Features**

- Mature woodland along the A96, although largely commercial in nature, contributes to the strong sense of arrival as well as providing an informal recreation resource
- The wide meanders of the River Lossie which create an extensive floodplain
- Smaller watercourses, which are fairly substantial burns, their presence and location emphasised by sporadic riparian woodland
- The policy woodland associated with Palmers Cross House, which contributes to the setting of the south west corner of the town
- Informal access routes and footpaths take advantage of the less used roads and some woodland
- Wetland, which adds textural diversity to the flood plains and creates a focal point of the Wards
- Occasional roadside and field trees, for example around Palmers Cross

#### **12.1.2 Existing Negative Characteristics and Features**

- The rather untidy character of the Wards wetland, although it must be an important local habitat as well as a useful recreation resource
- The unmanaged grassland and over mature poplars which extend either side of the A96 on arrival from the west
- The noise from the A96

- The electricity substation

## **12.2 Landscape Change**

The key pressures for change relate to development opportunities and the economics of the agricultural and forestry sectors. There is also the opportunity to consider extensive landscape enhancement measures linked to flood management along the River Lossie.

### **12.2.1 Features and Characteristics in Decline**

- Mature trees, in particular the Poplars on the A96, the small Scots pine woodlands to the south west of the town and the broadleaved trees adjacent to the River Lossie, which are not being replaced
- Mature commercial woodland is likely to be felled, but will be replanted: there may also be some opportunity for continuous cover felling in this low lying location
- Managed land, particularly where it is subject to flooding, and most notably adjacent to the Lossie on either side of the A96

### **12.2.2 Features and Characteristics in Ascendance**

- Management of the Wards, which is being opened up to increase its potential for recreation
- Occasional field or roadside tree on the farmland south of Palmers Cross which have been relatively recently established

## Landscape Enhancement Opportunities



- Well used school access could be reinforced with hedgerow trees



- A more managed definition of the edge of the Wards would create a better transition between the wetland and the housing



- Mature pine is located on upper ridges



- Wetland areas could offer the opportunity for habitat management



- Mature poplar trees on arrival along the A96 obscure views of river Lossie



- Flood plain of the River Lossie could be the focus for enhancement