

A12.2 Extracts from SNH Landscape Character Assessments

1 Introduction

1.1.1 This appendix supports Chapter 12 (Landscape). Extracts from the following SNH Landscape Character Assessments are provided in Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of this appendix respectively:

- Fife Landscape Character Assessment. Review No 113. David Tyldesley and Associates on behalf of Scottish Natural Heritage, 1999.
- The Lothians Landscape Character Assessment Review No 91. ASH Consulting Group on behalf of Scottish Natural Heritage, 1998.

2 Extracts from SNH Fife Landscape Character Assessment (FLCA)

C.5 Lowland Hills and Valleys

See Figure 7 (page 179) and Figures 14 and 15 (sheets 1-5) at the back of the report.

Key Characteristics and Features of the Lowland Hills and Valleys:

the variety and subtlety of landform;

the open, regular farmland patterns of medium-scale fields of arable and grasslands;

the variable pattern of post and wire fences and mostly tall hedges with hedgerow trees;

the extensive areas of plantations, shelter planting, roadside planting and policies linked to large estates;

the regular often linear pattern of the distribution of steadings and larger settlements and towns all of which are generally well related to the landscape;

the network of roads often well related to landform;

other dominant linear and point features of plantations and tree groups, individual trees or local buildings;

a generally tended, safe, quiet, balanced and calm landscape, but also a busy, random, disturbed and noisy one in the more urban, industrialised areas;

the variety of interrelated middle and long distance views of, from and across the low hills;

the variety, continuity, maturity and subtlety of the landscape with its long history of settlement.

Distribution

An expansive area including much of lowland Fife, running the length of the study area between the volcanic uplands and Foothills and the coastal systems, and comprising 15 local units namely: North West Cupar (LH31), East Cupar (LH32), Tarvit Mill (LH33), Strathmiglo (LH34), North and East of Dunfermline (LH35), Fordell (LH36), West Dunfermline (LH37), South Dunfermline (LH38), South Oakley (LH39), Black Devon (LH40), Bluther Burn (LH41), Devilla Forest (LH42), Cameron (LH43), Prior Muir (LH44) and Falkland (LH45).

Natural Systems and Processes

A series of low hills and valleys predominantly of boulder clay with outcrops of bedrock, the valleys closely associated with the main river systems (see Figure 2) and a number of burns draining to the coast.

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Description

Physical Characteristics

- C.5.1 This extensive landscape type extends across the whole of Fife in a wide band between the Upland Slopes, Foothills, Volcanic Hills, Coastal Hills and coastal Braes. The landscape type is locally interrupted by volcanic hills and by river and loch basins and designed landscapes. It includes 15 local landscape units (LH31 to LH45). It forms a series of valleys with ridges of low, rounded hills rising on average up to 100m to 150m AOD. The hills and valleys consist mainly of boulder clay overlaying the Millstone Grit of the sedimentary carboniferous rocks with smaller areas of limestone and coal measures. Their landform is very variable but typically consists of gently undulating, rounded, low hills often with relatively large areas of plantations, and policy planting associated with large estates.
- C.5.2 Most of the areas lie within the main river valleys of the Eden, Ore and Leven or they drain to the Firth of Forth via a series of small rivers and burns which flow in a network of sinuous valleys between the hills. However, some areas in the north of this character type drain westwards to the Rivers Devon and Black Devon.
- C.5.3 LH40 the Black Devon Valley and LH42 Devilla Forest and Bath Moor Plantation are distinctive areas to the west of this character type. The Black Devon Valley has extensive areas of broadleaved woodland on relatively unspoilt, gently undulating grasslands. It is designated an AGLV. The Black Devon and several smaller burns drain westwards across this unit, with a regular scattering of traditional steadings. Devilla Forest and Bath Moor Plantation have been planted on poor soils to the west of the study area, the former having been planted after the felling of woodland once part of the Tulliallan estate.
- C.5.4 Unit LH36 (Fordell) is a distinctive area between the M90 and the Cullaloe Hills. The undulating and, in parts, steep landform includes extensive areas of broadleaved and softwood plantations, associated with the Fordell Estate. Fordell Castle lies adjacent to the Fordell Burn which flows southwards to the coast.
- C.5.5 To the south of Dunfermline (LH38), to the east of Devilla Forest (LH42) and to the south of Oakley (LH39) there are substantial parts of the landscape type which have a typically varied topography and land cover which, in places, have been enhanced by policy planting, and which lie close to the Coastal Hills. They are largely intact in character with all the variety, maturity and continuity typical of the landscape character type. Units LH35 and LH37 are the larger expanses to the west (LH37), and the north, north east and east of Dunfermline (LH35). In respect of landform these areas are typical of the character type, being a series of low, rounded hills and valleys associated with the burns. They include many of the larger settlements within the study area (except those on the coast). Unit LH37, to the west, is a relatively natural, unspoilt landscape with several large plantations, woodlands and remnant policy plantings, and occasional areas of mineral working and former bings. Unit LH35, to the north and east of Dunfermline, is a much more industrialised, despoilt landscape, including large areas of previously worked open-cast mines, the Mossmorran Chemical Works and other industrial works.
- C.5.6 Three further units of this landscape type are located in the Eden Valley: between the Ochil Foothills to the north west of Cupar (LH31); east of Cupar, between the town and the coastal areas (LH32); and in a narrow section of the Eden Valley south of Cupar at Tarvit Mill (LH33).
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C.5.7 Unit LH34 is a large area which extends from the Eden river basin at Collessie westwards to the north of Auchtermuchty around Strathmiglo and up the Eden Valley to the Fife boundary. Units LH43 and LH44 comprise a large area of hills with shallow valleys (including the Cameron Burn and Cameron Reservoir) on the landward (south) side of St Andrews to Kinaldy Den (LD50). Finally, there is a relatively narrow belt of Lowland Hills and Valleys between the Howe of Fife (LR56) and the Upland Slopes of the Lomond Hills, at Falkland (LH45).

Land Cover

C.5.8 Over such extensive areas it is to be expected that land cover is highly variable. However, all the areas are dominated by arable land including grass leys in rotation. Permanent pasture is locally dominant but the overall impression is one of a regular, medium-scale field pattern of mixed but mainly cultivated farmland. There are infrequent areas of peat, the resulting acid soils being very poor and supporting patches of gorse, tufted grass and birch trees.

C.5.9 Woodlands are variable in extent, but rarely absent. There are extensive areas of afforestation, plantations and policy planting to the west and some to the east (e.g. to the south of Cardenden, around Fordell and in the Eden Valley). Regularly shaped shelterbelts have been planted, e.g. on restored land to the east of Loch Ore and in the west of the Black Devon unit which are out of keeping with the rest of the area.

C.5.10 Small woodlands, roadside trees, linear belts, hedgerow trees, tree groups around steadings and individual trees form important components in the landscape.

C.5.11 The field pattern is also a strong characteristic, defined by a variable pattern of post and wire fences and hedges. Hedges are generally left to grow unchecked, although some roadside hedges are trimmed regularly.

Settlement Pattern and Other Land Use

C.5.12 The low hills and valleys are a busy landscape, bisected by many roads, railways (some dismantled) and overhead power lines and pylons. There is a regular pattern of steadings generally well related to landform and often with shelter planting. In some areas the steadings and small numbers of dwellings are grouped into small hamlets, e.g. Gowkhill and Kingseat. Elsewhere, there are individual residential properties standing in substantial grounds, some of high architectural merit, e.g. Valleyfield and Inzievar in the west and Fordell. Other individual buildings and steadings are more closely associated with agriculture, such as West Grange, Middle Grange and East Grange, taking advantage of the areas of prime agricultural land.

C.5.13 This part of the study area also includes most of the larger towns (except those on the coast). To the west of Dunfermline lie the towns of Blairhall, Crossford, Cairneyhill, Pattiesmuir, Carnock, Comrie, Oakley, Saline, Wellwood, Milesmark and Parkneuk. To the east of Dunfermline lie the towns of Townhill, Halbeath, Hillend, Cowdenbeath, Crossgates, Lochgelly, Cardenden/Auchterderran and Kinglassie. Cupar too lies mainly within this landscape type. Thus most of the larger settlements lie within Unit LH35, to the north-east of Dunfermline, and these have developed mainly as a result of the coalfields. This unit has more urban-fringe type landscapes and either unused, despoilt land or areas used for recreational purposes such as playgrounds, horse riding and golf courses.

Linear and Points Features

C.5.14 The predominant linear features throughout most of this landscape character type are the numerous tracks and roads, including the motorway. The area to

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the east of Dunfermline also includes the main railway lines, and numerous overhead power lines, which also cut across the southern part of LH37, radiating out from Longannet and Kincardine Power Stations on the coast. These are most obvious on the higher ground and where not screened by woodland. They generally run across the valleys containing the burns, and not on the lower ground parallel to them, and are thus for the most part, conspicuous features. Where power lines pass through the Devilla Forest (LH42) they are generally screened by the trees. In the Eden Valley the river is a noticeable but not conspicuous feature.

- C.5.15 Single point features, which draw the eye in this busy, rolling landscape, are few. Most obvious examples are the large chimneys with plumes of gaseous emissions at the power stations and the other chemical works such as the Mossmorran plant. Otherwise, views of individual buildings, plantations, groups or individual trees can be locally important.

Characteristics of Landscape Experience

- C.5.16 Generally the landscape of the Lowland Hills and Valleys is typically of a medium or large-scale, open, regular landscape with linear and geometric field patterns overlaying a rolling or undulating topography with linear, curving roads. Particularly in the very rural eastern units it is generally a tended, safe, quiet and calm landscape with a variety of seasonal colours and textures. It is generally a balanced and simple or diverse landscape. However, the central more urbanised areas, being more affected by mineral working and industrialised, result in a busy, random, disturbed and noisy landscape in some parts.

- C.5.17 Typically the low hills are seen with the Uplands, Upland Slopes, Foothills or volcanic hills in the background, bringing vertical relief and a tiered impression of the landscape. Characteristics can vary greatly from one area to another, depending on the location and direction of view. These are the most varied of the units within one landscape character type, but the landform and land use and landscape patterns are sufficiently similar to consider the Lowland Hills and Valleys in a single landscape type. Furthermore, the low hills are strongly influenced by the other landscape types. Middle and long distance views to the Upland Slopes and Foothills, and the Uplands themselves are invariably present. From many parts of the low hills there are also clear views of and across the Loch Basins.

- C.5.18 Thus, the landscape experience of the low hills is probably the most complex and variable in the study area. These are subtle landscapes with variety being a key characteristic that should be valued. The relatively high density of settlement and the busy nature of the landscape, with many people living, working and travelling in the area, mean that the intrinsic landscape value of the Lowland Hills and Valleys is very high. They are the background and context to much of every day life in Fife, for most of the area's residents. They are landscapes familiar to many people and the landscapes which provide individuals and communities with their sense of belonging. The variety, continuity, maturity and subtlety of the landscape, with its long history of settlement and rural land use, is the essence of the landscape type.

Pressures for Change in the Landscape

- C.5.19 The variety, continuity, maturity and subtlety of the landscape, with its long history of settlement and rural land use, which is the essence of the landscape type is changed but not necessarily destroyed by built development. Where new building retains the close relationship between the landscape and the settlement

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pattern, as is generally the case now, the landscape type is not diminished; the interrelationship of built and natural heritages continues. It is lost where mineral extraction removes the record of human activity and the maturity and subtlety of the landscape which is then replaced neither by the permanent change to a built heritage or to a compatible natural heritage. The variety, continuity, maturity and subtlety of the landscapes so far disturbed by mineral operations has not been restored.

- C.5.20 Parts of this landscape character type are relatively stable and remain largely unchanged, whilst others have seen extensive changes. Units LH36 (Fordell) and LH40 (Black Devon Valley) remain relatively unaltered. Fordell exhibits the characteristics of its estate, although this was probably larger than that which remains today. Pressures from open-cast mining to the north, up to Crossgates, have resulted in changes to the landscape. Black Devon Valley is also relatively unspoilt, although again previous open-cast mining to the west of this area has resulted in the landscape being restored in a less than sensitive way, with regularly shaped, straight sided plantations.
- C.5.21 Devilla Forest and Bath Moor Plantation are also relatively stable now, having been planted around 1900. However, they are commercial forests in various ownerships, liable to continued change in the future.
- C.5.22 Unit LH37, to the west of Dunfermline, is a predominantly agricultural landscape, but with locally significant changes due to changes in agricultural management and in several parts by mineral working. Units LH31, LH32, LH34, LH38, LH39, LH41, LH43 and LH44 have seen fewer changes and exhibit a more stable agricultural landscape, less influenced by industrialisation and mineral working. Minor planting schemes have occurred under the WGS. There have been generally small and sensitive extensions to settlements and none of the settlements are planned for any significant expansion in the foreseeable future. Overhead transmission lines passing through the area from the power stations on the coast, and the coal extraction activities (including a number of skyline bings) are obvious features detracting from the otherwise rural setting.
- C.5.23 The area to the north-east of Dunfermline, LH35, has seen much more change, both in scale and kind. Open-cast mining, and industrial and chemical plants have brought with them road improvements and increases in the size of towns. Further expansions are planned to the east of Dunfermline, around Cowdenbeath and Kelty, with minor expansions to Lochgelly. Other areas around Cowdenbeath and Auchterderran/Cardenden are planned for restoration from coal mining to recreation/leisure or agricultural use.
- C.5.24 Unit LH33 at Tarvit Mill lies mainly in the flood plain of the River Eden and is less vulnerable to the effects of urban expansion. Unit LH45 contains the settlements of Falkland and Freuchie and has seen some changes to agricultural land use patterns with larger arable fields more like those of the adjacent river basin (LR56).

C.11 Coastal Hills

See Figure 10 (page 185) and Figures 14 and 15 (sheets 1-5) at the back of the report.

Key Characteristics and Features of the Coastal Hills:

close association with the coast, either through views of the sea, the Firths or the estuaries or indirect coastal experiences of sounds, smell, etc.;

predominantly large, open, undulating arable fields, often with no field boundaries or with mainly wire fences, low hedges or some stone dykes and little other vegetation cover;

isolated farms and extended or converted farmsteads amongst open, exposed fields;

extensive seaward views across the North Sea or the Firths and land beyond, but generally views to landward are contained by hills in the near distance;

distinctive edges to the character type, created either by distinct breaks of slope or by rivers, roads, built development or the Coastal Cliffs or Braes;

general lack of tree cover, with relatively few plantations and shelterbelts;

some pasture and rough hill grazing on the poorer hill soils;

infrequent, small, often exposed and conspicuous settlements of stone or white or pale colourwashed render and grey roofs and single storey or two storey houses with small windows to the sea;

a medium to large-scale, often open or exposed coastal landscape where the character is always influenced by the sea and can be particularly affected by the weather conditions and views of the sky and the sea;

generally a simple, sloping, balanced, active, organised, tended, farming landscape with regular or geometric patterns.

Distribution

Thirteen landscape units located all around the coast of Fife including: on the north coast, Tayport (CH63), Balmerino (CH64) and Ballinbreich (CH65); on the east coast at North Strathkinness (CH66), and south of St Andrews (CH67); and on the south coast at Kincardine to Culross (CH68), Valleyfield to Charlestown (CH69), Limekilns (CH70), Castlandhill (CH71), Ferry Hills (CH72), Letham Hill (CH73), Aberdour Hills (CH74) and Wemyss (CH75).

Natural Systems and Processes

Lowland coastal hills above the Coastal Terraces and shores with mainly glacial hills and loams drained by small burns running to the coast.

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Physical Characteristics and Land Cover

- C.11.1 Areas of undulating hills, similar to the Lowland Hills and Valleys but directly influenced by the coast. In some locations, e.g. Valleyfield to Charlestown (CH69) and part of Kincardine to Culross (CH68), the hills come to an abrupt end before the coast, by falling gently towards the steep, densely vegetated coastal braes. In other locations, e.g. Limekilns (CH70) and Aberdour Hills (CH74), the Coastal Hills fall gradually towards the coast itself, with no Coastal Braes in between. Castlandhill (CH71), Ferry Hills (CH72) and Letham Hill (CH73) are more individually distinctive hills to the west, south and east (respectively) of Inverkeithing, with relatively steep slopes rising to a distinctive peak or plateau. The western part of Kincardine to Culross falls gradually to the flat coastal platform containing the Longannet Power Station.
- C.11.2 The heights of the Coastal Hills vary from around 35m AOD at Limekilns, 50m at Aberdour, 60m at Valleyfield to Charlestown, 70m at Ferry Hills, 85m at Castlandhill and up to 95m at Letham Hill. South of St Andrews and along the north coast they exceed 100m in places.
- C.11.3 Letham Hill is a steep sided hill between Inverkeithing and Dalgety Bay, almost entirely covered by deciduous woodland at Letham Hill Wood. The woodland has been brought into management under the WGS and opened for public access and recreation. Letham Hill ridge runs approximately north-south, but the less steep arable fields to the west of the ridge fall gently to the coast at Inverkeithing Bay. The A921(T) forms a distinctive break between Letham Hill and the Lowland Hills and Valleys and this characteristic is similar to the other southern coastal hills, where the A985(T) is the recognisable edge to the landscape character sub areas.
- C.11.4 Apart from the densely wooded ridge at Letham Hill, all the southern coastal hills except Ferry Hill comprise agricultural land in predominantly arable production. All except Castlandhill are prime agricultural land, Castlandhill being an outcrop of igneous rock with poor, thin soil cover over boulder clay. The lower slopes of Ferry Hill are built over within North Queensferry, and the railway passes beneath, in a cutting through the highest part.
- C.11.5 The coastal hills of St Andrews rise gradually from the Kinkell Braes, above the rocky coastline east of St Andrews at around 25m AOD, to the coast road and further south to a prominent peak at Easter Balrymonth Hill, at 109m AOD. The gently falling fields to the north-west of the hill directly influence the setting of the town, and are visible from many locations within it. The Kinkell Caravan Site is particularly obvious at the top of the Braes amongst the open fields. The north facing slopes further east are more directly associated with the coast, allowing some stunning views down from the coast road when travelling from Boarhills and the east. Only dense woodland planting around Kingask and Pitmullen House, and occasional blips in landform, prevent views out to the North Sea.
- C.11.6 On the north coast the hills tend to be steeper with more woodland cover. On the east coast they are noticeably more open with arable land predominant.
- ##### **Settlement Pattern and Other Land Uses**
- C.11.7 Apart from the developed lower slopes of the Ferry Hills, the southern coastal hills include only isolated farmsteads, lying between larger settlements either side of this landscape character type. Thus Kincardine to Culross coastal hills lie between Kincardine and Valleyfield, with Culross on the coast. Other land uses

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in this area include the overhead power lines emanating from both Longannet and Kincardine Power Stations, and minor roads running from the A985(T) to Culross. The B9037 coastal road forms part of the southern boundary to this area. An avenue of trees lines the access road from the A985(T) down to Dunimarle Castle.

- C.11.8 The Valleyfield to Charlestown hills lie between these two settlements, and along the northern edges of the coastal hamlets of Newmills and Torryburn. Crombie lies adjacent to the main road. Minor tracks and roads lead down from the main road to the two main farms in this area (Bankhead Farm and Bullions) and to the Torry Bay coast. Limekilns Hills are sandwiched between Limekilns and the Rosyth naval base. Minor, unsurfaced tracks lead down to the ruins of Rosyth Church on the coast, past an area of broadleaved shelterbelt planting.
- C.11.9 There are large MOD buildings and telecommunications masts on Castlandhill, which acts as an important break between the built up areas of Rosyth town, the naval base and Inverkeithing. On the lower, arable slopes to the west of Letham Hill lies Spencerfield Farm, the fields being an important gap between the hill and Inverkeithing. Built development within Dalgety Bay is encroaching right up to the eastern edge of Letham Hill. Aberdour Hills stretch from the eastern edge of Dalgety Bay to Aberdour, and east of Aberdour to Silversands Bay. The gradually sloping hills between Dalgety Bay and Aberdour include a golf course, extensive areas of mixed plantations, and a sewage works and gas terminal on the coast.
- C.11.10 Settlement pattern within the eastern Coastal Hills comprises irregular or locally regular, frequent farmsteads and farm cottages, and individual large houses. Some of these have become the centre of minor new developments, involving either the conversion of outbuildings or the addition of half a dozen or so new homes. This has occurred at Pipeland, East Grange, Balmungo Farm and Brownhills. Balmungo Farm has an extensive garden and designed landscape, and The Grange, Kingask and Pitmullen House are also relatively well screened by tree planting. Some other farmsteads and cottages are screened by topography, but generally they are noticeable, with the newer conversions often being conspicuous due to the use of inappropriate materials and styles.
- C.11.11 Boarhills is the only large settlement within the eastern Coastal Hills. Parts of Strathkinness and St Andrews itself are visible from, but lie outside, the open Coastal Hills. Other land uses include a Chapel to the west of Boarhills, close to the main road, the prominent caravan parks at Cairnsmill and Kinkell Braes and the development of Allanhill for extended agricultural uses. There is a disused quarry at Kingask, which is well screened by vegetation and topography.
- C.11.12 By contrast the hills on the north coast are generally free of significant settlements except for Balmerino (CH64). The hills at Tayport (CH63) form an important open break between Tayport and Newport on Tay.
- Linear and Point Features**
- C.11.13 The most significant linear feature seen from the Coastal Hills are the shores, a key characteristic of this landscape character type.
- C.11.14 Other predominant linear features are the main A and B roads running alongside or through the areas, and the numerous other minor roads and tracks linking the farmsteads and other dwellings to them. Some low voltage power lines and telephone lines are also obvious linear features throughout this open, generally featureless landscape. Hedgerows, where remaining, are often noticeable linear

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features, as are stone dykes which are characteristic features. Post and wire fences have replaced many hedgerows, but are not so obvious.

C.11.15 Within the Kincardine to Culross hills, the power lines are obvious linear features against the Forth, and the Longannet Power Station is a distinctive point feature for miles around. Major roads on the edges of the hills and the minor roads and tracks running across them are conspicuous linear features in an open landscape when even minor, subtle changes in topography are clearly visible.

C.11.16 On the east coast the most noticeable single point features are steadings and other buildings where not well screened, and features close to the edge of Boarhills including the chapel and dovecot. Where present, views of the medieval skyline of St Andrews provide important features and underline the importance of the open Coastal Hills to the setting of the town. The conspicuous caravan parks unfortunately detract from the overall view, but these are only prominent in certain views and are often screened by intervening hills, especially Wester Balrymonth Hill and Easter Balrymonth Hill.

Characteristics of the Landscape Experience

C.11.17 The main characteristics experienced from within the Coastal Hills are those associated with the coast and dominated by the weather and the sky. Thus views are often large-scale, open or exposed, of a simple, generally smooth textured, sloping landform. However, where Coastal Braes are present, these form a distinctive break of slope to the undulating arable fields, giving a more diverse, rough edge to the landform. They add colour to an otherwise muted scene, which is generally balanced, active, organised, regular, well tended farming landscape with regular geometric patterns. On days when the weather is bad, with high winds and cloud cover, the rough firth and fast moving clouds transform the experience into a disturbed, moving, unsettled one.

Pressures for Change in the Landscape

C.11.18 This landscape character type is one of the least changed within the study area. Changes have generally occurred on lower ground towards the coast, or either side of the Coastal Hills by the encroachment of development. This is the greatest threat to these areas in the future.

C.11.19 The Kincardine to Culross sub area has changed as a result of the Longannet Power Station on the coast, requiring access roads, power lines and other associated development. Ferry Hills has also changed due to its setting and important position in terms of transportation routes over the Firth of Forth. North Queensferry has expanded around the Ferry Hills due to the Forth road and railway bridges.

C.11.20 Letham Hill was, until recently, a high wooded ridge with open arable fields to the east and west. Its eastern side is changing rapidly as houses and other development are built as Dalgety Bay expands.

C.11.21 On the east coast the most obvious changes have been the conversion and extension of farmsteads with new buildings and materials often out of character with the historic setting of St Andrews. Consequently most of these are conspicuous and obtrusive by being poorly screened in this open landscape. The loss of field boundaries has resulted in larger fields which has increased the exposure of the new buildings. There have been few areas of new planting over the past five years, the most notable being planting under the WGS at Kittock's Den.

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- C.11.22 The removal of stone from the sides of Wester Balrymonth Hill and Easter Balrymonth Hill have left isolated scars on the landscape, and the now disused quarry at Kingask is partly visible from some locations.
- C.11.23 Again the greatest threat to the Coastal Hills in the future is that from built development, due to their location close to the edge of the town. Some encroachment has already occurred, to the north of The Grange and north of Pipeland, where the latest residential development has cut in to the hillside. The caravan sites have also resulted in unfortunate changes to the landscape, by being sited in prominent locations close to main roads at the entrances to the town, and close to areas of high scenic value i.e. the Kinkell Braes and coastline, and the Cairnsmill Burn and Den.

C.15 Coastal Flats

See Figure 12 (page 189) and Figures 14 and 15 (sheets 1-5) at the back of the report.

Key Characteristics and Features of the Coastal Flats:

flat, low-lying, open, large-scale, exposed coastal landscapes at sea level.

intensively cultivated, geometrically laid out, large to medium-scale, predominantly arable fields or forestry plantations with rectilinear, fenced enclosures or without enclosure;

a variety of other land uses, particularly industrial and other built developments, golf courses and other grasslands;

the slightly sinuous or angular roads raised above the fields with stone dykes or open sides;

isolated, scattered or regularly spaced farmsteads, conspicuous due to lack of screening, in contrast to the designed landscapes which are well screened by policy planting and shelterbelts.

straight ditches, sea walls and flood banks with small bridges;

several point features of interest that are conspicuous in the flat landscape;

a coastal landscape where the character is always influenced by the sea and can be particularly affected by the weather conditions and views of the sky and the sea;

the wide range of landscape experiences depending on the particular landscape unit and the weather conditions; typically dominated either by the areas of development or the coast;

away from the urban areas and forestry plantations it is a large-scale, open (and in high winds very exposed), simple, flat, balanced landscape with varied textures and colours and slow movement; in the plantations it is a small-scale, confined, uniform, tended, very calm and sheltered landscape with straight lines, simple patterns and little variation in colours or textures;

seaward views are invariably extensive and may be extensive across the Flats themselves

landward, views are generally towards the Cliffs, Braes, Coastal Hills or Coastal Terraces.

Distribution

Seventeen locations including 9 on the east coast at Tentsmuir Forest (CF98), from Morton to Leuchars (CF99), Earlshall Muir (CF100), Guardbridge (CF101), Leuchars Airfield (CF102), the River Eden (CF103), Edenside (CF104), The Links (CF105) and north west St Andrews (CF106). On the north coast at Newburgh (CF107) and Mugdrum Island (CF108) and on the south coast at St Ford links (CF109), Kincardine (CF110), Longannet (CF111), Valleyfield Ash Lagoons (CF112), Rosyth (CF113) and Kinghorn (CF114).

Natural Systems and Processes

Extensive flats created naturally as raised beaches or artificially by the creation of sea walls and claiming land from the Firth of Forth and the intertidal area, protected by flood banks and ditches. Mugdrum coastal flats form an island in the Tay estuary.

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Description

- Physical Characteristics and Land Cover**
- C.15.1 On the south coast the very flat, low-lying coastal landscapes include land claimed from the intertidal and maritime parts of the Firth of Forth and are at or slightly above or below sea level. Protected by flood banks the areas are dominated by industrial or dock or port related development, power stations and associated lagoons or arable farmland with large, geometric field patterns divided by fences. Roads crossing the Flats are elevated up to a metre or so above the field levels. All buildings and other structures are prominent in views across the Flats and from the Firth and the intertidal areas. From the Coastal Braes and Hills, the Flats are seen as encroachments into the estuary, now typical but not historically characteristic.
- C.15.2 At Rosyth the Flats are not intensively farmed and areas of reed beds prevail, locally, with scrub spreading from the higher land behind.
- C.15.3 The physical characteristics of the areas within this landscape character type on the north and east coasts are very similar, but their land cover varies greatly. They generally comprise land between the intertidal areas (i.e. The Tentsmuir Sands, Eden Estuary, West Sands rocky shores north of St Andrews, and the East Sands), and the Coastal Terraces. The Coastal Flats generally do not rise above 10m AOD, and are drained by a series of small burns or straight man-made drainage ditches.
- C.15.4 On the east coast, Tentsmuir Forest and Reres Wood are extensive areas of commercial Forest Enterprise coniferous woodland, lying on the sands north of the Eden Estuary. Some areas have been felled and replanted, and public access is available to a picnic area on the dunes on the east coast.
- C.15.5 In between the forest and woodland is Earlishall Muir, an SSSI first notified in 1955, due to it being the largest remaining tract of unafforested lime-poor sand dunes in south-east Scotland. It has examples of dune plant communities and includes an extensive area of dune alder-willow and birch woodland (which is now rare in Britain due to widespread reclamation and afforestation). The site also supports a number of locally rare plant species and dune breeding birds, some of which are regionally and nationally uncommon.
- C.15.6 RAF Leuchars has been developed on the coast to the south-east of Leuchars, and the airfield runways and ancillary buildings generally occupy the coastal flats. Further south, at the mouth of the River Eden, Guardbridge has developed on the flat land west of the estuary, where a large paper mill takes advantage of the position. The flats continue for approximately 2 km inland around the Moonzie Burn, and are used for arable production.
- C.15.7 A narrow flat area around the Motray Water, to the north of the Moonzie Burn, continues as a narrow, flat area between the Coastal Terraces of Leuchars, before widening out further north through Cast, to the west of Tentsmuir Forest. Through this area runs the railway line and disused railway north of Leuchars, and the Leuchars Junction Station to the south of the town. Although some expansion of the town has taken place on the flat land to the west, where the A919 turns through 45°, most development has occurred on the terrace. There are isolated, regular farmsteads including Cast, Rhynd and Pitlethie, which are conspicuous due to lack of screening.
- C.15.8 The coastal flats at Edenside is a narrow piece of flat land between the Eden Estuary and the Kincaple coastal terrace. It is generally undeveloped,
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predominantly comprising arable farmland and fields used for pig rearing. The now dismantled railway ran along the shoreline, and the A91 cuts through the area. The southern boundary includes the shelterbelt planting associated with the designed landscape of Strathtyrum House, and Easter Kincaple Farm. The Edenside flats continue between Wester Kincaple and Guardbridge as the River Eden flats, an area of large, regular arable fields.

- C.15.9 The Links golf courses occupy the extensive area of flat land between St Andrews and the Eden Estuary. The area to the south of the dismantled railway line has been reclaimed from fields in arable production, and now includes two new courses and a driving range. The former railway station is now the St Andrews Old Course Hotel, whilst the area to the north of the former railway line includes the four older courses, the visitors club house and the 'Himalayan' sand dune system. A minor road leads along the dunes to the Eden Estuary Nature Reserve.
- C.15.10 The main University campus and playing fields occupy the flat land at North Haugh. With The Links to the north, Strathtyrum to the west and the North Bank terrace to the south, this coastal flats area to the north-west of St Andrews extends towards the Royal and Ancient Golf Club House and includes the shops, hotels and properties between the club house and the University.
- C.15.11 The flat areas around the Kinness Burn provide areas of important open space through St Andrews. Extensively undeveloped and treed from Carron Bridge in the west to Cockshaugh Park, the remainder of the flat area through the town is developed on both sides of the Kinness Burn, although less densely towards the northern end around Abbey Park and the harbour. The Kinness Burn marks the southern boundary of the St Andrews Outstanding Conservation Area, most of which lies on the coastal terrace to the north.
- Settlement Pattern and Land Use**
- C.15.12 Historically, settlements on the south coast have located at the foot of the Coastal Braes, on the wave cut platforms and raised beaches. The flats are occupied by the farmland and now the industrial, dock, port and energy land uses they were created for. Occasional steadings appear in the fields.
- C.15.13 The power stations at Kincardine and the dock yards at Rosyth are prominent features across the Firth of Forth.
- C.15.14 Settlement pattern within the coastal flats on the east coast is predominantly confined to built development in the centre of St Andrews, western expansion close to The Links (including the University halls of residence) and western expansion of Leuchars. There are large isolated farmsteads at regular intervals on the coastal flats at Cast, where there are also farm cottages with shelterbelts and one or two small woods. Easter Kincaple Farm lies on the edge of the Edenside coastal flats, and the designed landscape at Strathtyrum House between Edenside and North Haugh. Kinshaldy farm and stables lie well hidden within Tentsmuir Forest.
- C.15.15 Within Tentsmuir forest there are areas of pasture where tree felling has occurred, and where horse grazing is now well established with stables at Kinshaldy. The adjacent Morton Lochs Bird Sanctuary and the picnic area attract both locals and tourists to the area.

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- Linear and Point Features**
- C.15.16 High voltage powerlines are dominant features in the Kincardine area radiating from the power stations and even crossing the Firth itself. Though less conspicuous the often straight or slightly curving or angular roads, with fences, overhead wires and, in places, drystone dykes, are characteristic and noticeable features. Some roads have had all boundaries removed and internal field boundary loss has led to very large, featureless arable fields at Longannet, in contrast to the area immediately behind the power station which has overgrown hedges, low grazing levels, hedgerow trees and pockets of wetland habitats. The sea walls and banks are also noticeable.
- C.15.17 Point features tend to be the chimneys, stacks, towers and cranes of the power stations, factories and docks on the industrial areas. On the agricultural land the steadings are conspicuous point features, so too are the few remaining trees.
- C.15.18 On the north and east coast, linear features evident from the coastal flats include such features as the sand dunes and braes and cliffs where visible. Roads, tracks, shelterbelt planting and the extensive coniferous forest and woods at Tentsmuir and Reres Wood are linear features visible from most locations, whereas the airfield runways, disused railway line and operational railway are evident from limited locations. Field boundaries are generally absent, but where present, such as at Edenside and around The Links and University, they are obvious linear features in an otherwise flat landscape. The medieval wall around the old town is a linear feature of particular interest.
- C.15.19 Point features within St Andrews include individual buildings or ruins of note, and features of interest at the harbour such as the boats. Within The Links, the large buildings such as the hotel and club house stand out within the flat area surrounding them, and the Swilken Bridge is a famous feature over the burn. At RAF Leuchars, the brightly coloured wind sock is visible for some distance to the south. Carved wood sculptures provide points of interest at the picnic area in Tentsmuir Forest.
- Characteristics of the Landscape Experience**
- C.15.20 The agricultural areas tend to be large-scale, still, open or exposed, uniform, textured, flat, angular landscapes, with discordant features, muted colours, regular patterns and disturbed or neglected areas between the large, intensively cultivated fields. Near Rosyth the reed beds are more colourful, with varied textures, movement and a more natural appearance.
- C.15.21 The industrial and dock areas are urbanised but the scale of buildings and infrastructure is very large and noisy, dominating the nearby areas.
- C.15.22 From the coastal flats on the north and east coasts, different experiences are gained due to the variety of visual horizons. These range from middle distance to the coastal and volcanic hills, where confined by vegetation and topography, to long distance over other flat areas near the coast and over the sea and Eden Estuary, as far as the Grampian Mountains to the north on a fine, clear day.
- C.15.23 In general, the landscape is large-scale, open and exposed, uniform and smooth or textured, flat with curved lines. It is a mostly balanced, still, organised, tended and quiet landscape. Where the Coastal Flats are more confined, either by buildings or vegetation, experiences tend to be of a smaller-scale landscape that is more diverse, rough and discordant, busier and more disturbed.
- C.15.24 On the coastal flats at Leuchars and surrounding areas, the activities on the airfield make these particularly noisy landscapes. The landscape of the airfield is
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obviously quite different to any other area, but the large green/grey utilitarian buildings are generally scaled down by surrounding vegetation within Reres Wood and Tentsmuir Forest, and thus relatively inconspicuous except from the closest of viewpoints.

Pressures for Change in the Landscape

- C.15.25 Although ground levels on the claimed land of the south coast may change absolutely and relatively to the changing sea level these are not perceptible. There is evidence of loss and neglect of field boundaries and abandonment of farming at least near Rosyth. Without intensive agricultural activity and the maintenance of sea and flood defences these areas would rapidly succumb to inundation and may even revert to saltmarsh or other semi-natural coastal habitats. In most parts they lack the sense of history, permanence and endurance of the landward areas. The potential threat of the sea is present and will not be diminished by rising sea levels. Declining field hedgerows and stone dykes and scrub invasion of embankments and ditches indicate that these landscapes are vulnerable to changes in management as well as to changes in land use through development pressures.
- C.15.26 On the north and east coasts, changes within the enclosed landscapes generally relate to management of the woodlands (tree felling and replanting) and new building or alterations to existing buildings. Where development has been allowed to encroach into the higher areas surrounding the flats, this has affected some views out by changing the character of the surrounding landscape. Some new buildings within the flat landscapes are particularly conspicuous and out of scale with their surroundings, such as those on The Links. The impact of people, vehicles, etc. can be intensive and can cause problems due to overuse, particularly during the busiest periods.
- C.15.27 Some of the Coastal Flats may come under increasing pressure from built development, especially north-west of St Andrews, Edenside, and around Guardbridge and Leuchars. RAF Leuchars would be subject to similar pressures if it was closed. Tentsmuir Forest and The Links are unlikely to be altered detrimentally due to their protection and historical significance.

C.18 and C.19 The North Sea and the Firths of Forth and Tay

See Figure 13 (page 191) and Figures 14 and 15 (sheets 1-5) at the back of the report.

Key Characteristics and Features of the North Sea and the Firths of Forth and Tay:

a very large-scale, flat, horizontal and natural landscape dominated by the weather conditions and the colour of the sea and the sky and the movement of waves;

the many small off-shore islands;

the navigation and shipping artefacts on the water;

the frequent but very slow movements of vessels of a variety of types;

a maritime landscape where the character is always influenced by the sea and can be particularly affected by the weather conditions and views of the sky and the sea;

the effects of lights reflecting on the Firths at night;

the Tay Road and Railway Bridges, and the Kincardine, Forth Rail and Forth Road Bridges;

often a calm, bright, colourful and smooth, exposed landscape with extensive views.

Distribution

Two major Firths forming the southern and northern limits of the study area. The North Sea at St Andrews Bay from Tentsmuir point to Fife Ness.

Natural Systems and Processes

Tidal estuaries of the Firths and to the east the open sea dominated by maritime influences, the Firths crossed by bridges and further modified by extensive land claim on the shores.

Description

Physical Characteristics and Land Cover

C.18.1 The landscape is flat, expansive and maritime in character but it is not featureless. Many small off-shore islands are studded across the Firths. There are navigation and shipping artefacts on the water and frequent movements of vessels ranging from large tankers and cargo ships to diminutive dinghies and other small craft. Although busy, the landscape has slow moving features. Weather conditions and time of day can radically change the character.

- Settlement Pattern and Land Use**
- C.18.2 Self-evidently, there are no settlements on the maritime Firths but the shores tend to be dominated by towns and industrial development. The Firths are a focus for settlement, transport and industrial activity and the flat, open sea is consequently dominated by these features on the coast. Substantial areas of the Firth of Forth have been lost to land claim, e.g. at Preston Island and Rosyth on the North shore and Grangemouth/Kinneil/Bo'ness on the south shore. These artificial land bodies reduce the area and intrude into the Firth. They interrupt the natural, sinuous lines of the coast. They contain, in places, a clutter of industrial infrastructure which can extend into the open sea.
- Linear and Point Features**
- C.18.3 The off-shore islands form the main pattern of point features on the Firth. All are small and vary from low lying, rounded or linear domes to rocky protrusions with shallow bluffs and braes. Some are featureless, several are wooded and some contain buildings including lighthouses. All are prominent and important features in the landscape. With the bridges, they provide a strong sense of place and distinctive identity. At low tide, shallow sand bars may also be exposed, causing the waves to break and adding complex patterns to the ripples on the surface caused by the wind and tides. Numerous small buoys and other navigational aids can be noticeable features on a calm sea.
- C.18.4 Whilst, at the western end of the Forth, the Kincardine river bridge is an important visual feature the main linear features on the Firth are the two bridges at Queensferry. These outstanding engineering structures give the Firth a landscape recognised across the world and provide Fife with two of its most distinctive features. By day, and when lit at night, the close relationship of the two bridges and their respective landings dominates the Firth. The contrasting designs and materials of the two structures enhance the inter relationships. The elegant, simple shape of the road bridge with its high towers and graceful curves of the suspension cables contrasts with the solid, geometrical, balanced, latticework of the rail bridge which has three massive piers linked by seemingly fragile sub-bridges forming two flat arches over the Firth, each some 518 metres long.
- C.18.5 Similarly the Tay rail and toll road bridges form distinctive, well known features linking Dundee to the north Fife coast.
- C.18.6 The presence of the bridges as landscape features is enhanced by their considerable cultural, social and economic importance. Built to supplement the traditional ferries that experienced difficulties with the Firths' currents, winds, high seas and haars, the bridges represent the best and biggest engineering structures of their respective ages and each has an important historical and cultural dimension as well as the engineering and economic dimension.
- Characteristics of the Landscape Experience**
- C.18.7 The Firths and the sea can be calm, bright, colourful and smooth with extensive views dominating the coastal scenery from north and south shores. They can also become stormy, dark, rough, almost monotone grey with low cloud, rain and high winds transforming the estuary into a forbidding deterrent to human activity. Haars can conceal the shores and blanket the Firths in a dense featureless mist disorientating even those people familiar with its banks and features.
- C.18.8 This landscape is experienced in four important ways:
- a) from the shores;
 - b) from ships and other vessels on the water;
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- c) from the bridges; and
- d) from the air.

From the shores the experience is dominated by the flat openness of the sea with the noises of the waves, wind, sea birds and often traffic being important influences. The views across the Firths to the opposite shore are expansive and contain many features that are distinctive despite the scale and distance. These include the distant hills and the urban conurbations, industrial structures and the bridges.

- C.18.9 From the sea itself the experience is typically maritime but not with the infinite horizons and juxtaposition of sea and sky. Here the horizons are higher, closer and formed by the shores of the Firths. The experience is determined entirely by weather and sea conditions in a landscape dominated by the natural elements.
- C.18.10 Views from the Kincardine Bridge are low, across a mixed landscape of farmland and urban and industrial development. A large-scale landscape that is open, diverse, mainly flat and busy with many discordant elements. From the Forth Road Bridge the views are from high points looking down on to a seascape with many features. It is exposed (for the cyclist or pedestrian), surprisingly diverse, busy and often colourful for a maritime landscape. From the Tay bridges the viewpoints are lower.
- C.18.11 The Firths are often viewed from the air because, depending on wind direction, many scheduled and chartered aircraft fly out over the Firth on take off or landing from local airports. The views are seen at relatively low altitude with the Firth, the bridges, the shores and the landward areas seen in a context that is not possible from the ground.

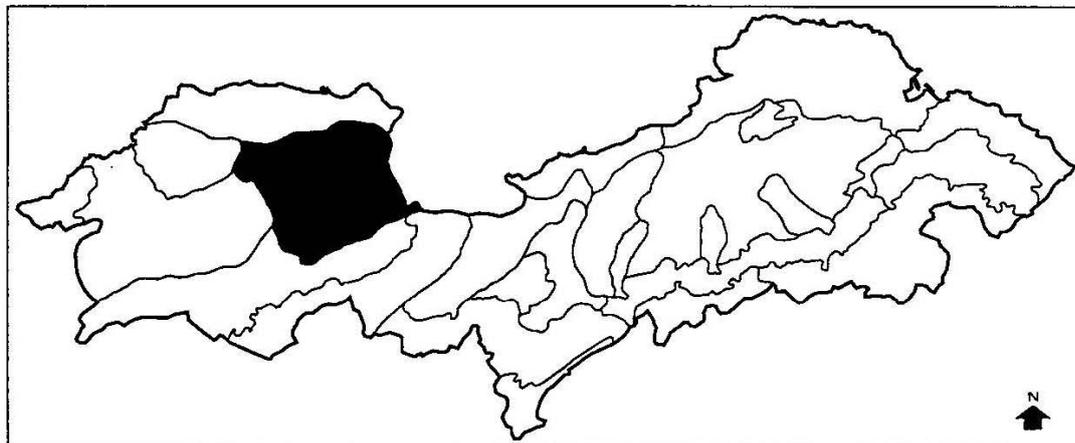
Pressures for Change in the Landscape

- C.18.12 The seascapes are unlikely to experience major changes that would alter their landscape character unless:
 - a) significant further land claim encroached on the sea (negative impact);
 - b) shipping and/or boating noticeably increased (potentially positive effects);
 - c) new structures, masts etc. were located on the sea or the islands (negative impact); or
 - d) a further bridge crossing is constructed (this potentially would have both negative and positive effects depending on the location and design).

2.1 Extracts from SNH Lothians Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA)

Landscape Type : Lowland Plains

Character Area: 21



LOWER ALMOND FARMLANDS

This Character Area forms part of the broad Lothians lowland plain. Stretching westward from the periphery of the City of Edinburgh, it rises gradually to the south, reaching a high point at Dalmahoy Hill (246m). A matrix of high quality agricultural land forms a predominantly smoothly rolling, large-scale landscape, interrupted locally by areas of higher or more rugged ground, generally corresponding to minor intrusions of igneous rock, within a predominance of Carboniferous sedimentary bedrock. Both the River Almond and the Water of Leith cut steeply incised sections of valley north-eastward through the area, forming conspicuous local variations in character. Their steep slopes are accentuated by woodland cover, or by relatively unproductive poor grassland. In its lower reaches, the Almond reverts to a shallow basin draining gradually towards the coastal plain.

The land cover is predominantly arable farmland, with medium to large-scale fields divided into a strong field pattern by clipped or bushy hedgerows, fences and occasional lengths of stone wall. Scattered areas of good quality pasture occur along valley sides and on higher ground. Many of the more deeply incised stretches of stream and river are edged by broadleaved woodland and scrub. The area is also rich in policy woodlands and shelterbelts associated with designed landscapes, which make a significant contribution to the landscape character.

The linear village of Currie and the nearby village of Balerno are situated on the main A70 road on the banks of the Water of Leith. To the north, the A89 is straddled by the settlements of Uphall and Broxburn, their growth stimulated in Victorian times by industrial developments. Elsewhere, the area is liberally scattered with small villages or hamlets, townhouses and mansions, farmsteads, cottages and other dwellings, many of which have become absorbed within more recent development. Important designed landscapes include the extensive estate of Dalmahoy, with its parkland, woodlands, golf courses and prominent boundary wall, and Newliston, set within a dense framework of shelterbelts. In addition to the development pressures on the western outskirts of Edinburgh, where the landscape is dominated by the airport and nearby industrial estates and commercial centres, the M8 motorway and several parallel major roads sever, and further lessen the integrity of, the farmland. Further disruption is added by numerous pylon lines and several visually prominent bings and quarries. The complex network of road, railway and canal routeways has led to the building of numerous aqueducts, viaducts, and road and rail bridges of various ages and styles.

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As well as being an important landscape in their own right, the Lower Almond Farmlands are visually very important in providing the setting of the city from the western aspect. In addition, high quality expansive views to the nearby landscapes of coast and hills are possible from the higher ground, becoming confined within the river valleys and lower slopes. However, industrial, residential and transport development pressures are slowly denuding the farmed landscape of its characteristic features and increasing the sense of fragmentation of undisturbed rural landscape.

Positive Attributes

- Rural matrix of predominantly arable farmland;
- Subtle topographic and woodland features;
- Surviving strong field enclosure elements.

Negative Attributes

- Multiple urban expansion pressures, leading to significant cumulative impacts;
- Continuing road corridor extension pressures;
- Prominent quarrying and landfill impacts.

Key Strategic Aim

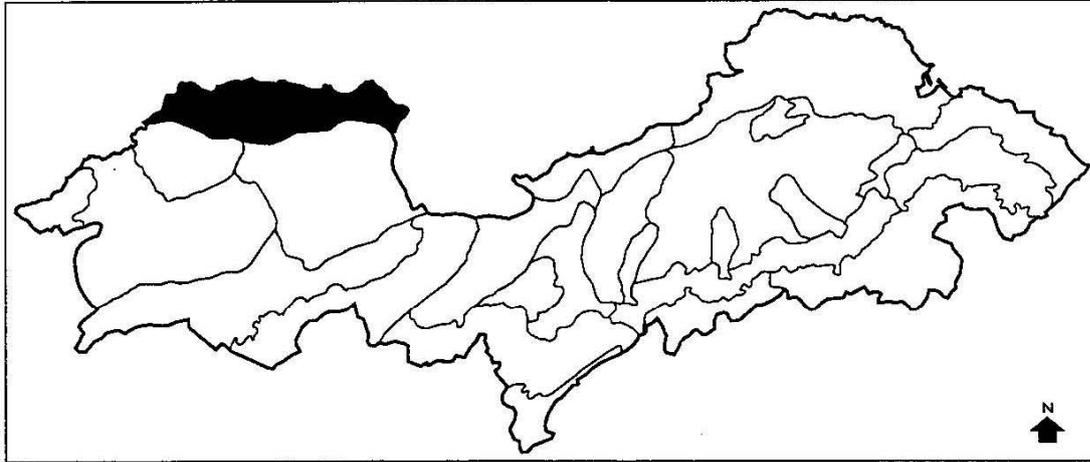
- Prevent further fragmentation of predominantly rural character.

Guidelines

- *Agree management schemes for key shelterbelts, woodlands, river valley, and hedgerow features;*
- *Reinstate and restore existing characteristic field enclosure pattern where damaged. Seek to reinforce and strengthen pattern by requiring additional planting associated with new development proposals;*
- *Promote further woodland expansion to accommodate existing and proposed development;*
- *Require extremely careful siting and design of proposed new road routes to minimise further local landscape impacts;*
- *Protect prominent topographic features from future quarrying/landfill pressures - seek opportunities to improve mitigation/integration of existing impacts.*

Landscape Type : Coastal Margins

Character Area: 26



LINLITHGOW / QUEENSFERRY FARMLANDS

Extending along the coast from the western edge of Edinburgh and inland towards Linlithgow, the gently rolling lowland terrain is interrupted by higher hills and ridges where igneous rocks have outcropped through the sedimentary bedrock. The most significant areas lie on the southern fringes of Linlithgow, where the strong ridgelines rise to merge with the Bathgate Hills, and east of Queensferry, where Mons Hill rises up from the coastal plain. The coastline west of the Forth Bridges is fringed with mudflats, backed by wooded slopes with areas of raised beach above. To the east, the piers and bridges of Queensferry give way to a sequence of small rocky headlands culminating in Hound Point, where the shoreline swings south-eastward. From here the sandy flats of the Drum Sands extend to Cramond Island and the mouth of the Almond, which marks the eastern boundary of the area. West of the Almond catchment, streams flow north-eastward feeding the Midhope Burn system. Following a gently curving route, the Union Canal is a generally unobtrusive feature in the landscape. Linlithgow Loch, enclosed by rolling slopes and settlement, is the largest freshwater loch in the Lothians; elsewhere, several ponds are associated with the designed landscapes of the area.

Clipped or overgrown hedgerows and lines of oak, ash and sycamore trees are common field boundaries, occasionally giving way to fences or, less usually, stone walls. The predominant land cover of arable ground merges with smaller areas of improved pasture on higher ground or along parts of the coast. Several extensive wooded estates, notably Dalmeny, Hopetoun, Dundas Castle and the Binns, have a major influence on the landscape character, through an abundance of deciduous and mixed woodlands, shelterbelts, and mature parkland trees.

The dominant east-west route of the M9 motorway, and the main Edinburgh to Glasgow railway line, which bisect the area are part of a busy transport network which disrupt the rural character of the farmland and estate landscapes. A high concentration of mansion-houses is sited in the area, including the 17th century Renaissance House of the Binns, Dalmeny House (built in 1814), and the outstanding Adam mansion of Hopetoun House. Associated with the policy landscapes are small 19th century estate villages at Abercorn, Newton and Dalmeny, together with features such as high walls, gateposts, lodges and farm buildings. Dwarfed by the twin spans of the Forth Road and Rail Bridges, the village of Queensferry has been encircled by more recent housing developments. On the westernmost boundary of the Lothians, the ancient burgh town of Linlithgow is sited on sloping ground, centred around its loch and medieval palace. To the south, the heritage of the Union Canal is

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evident in a line of canal cottages and a museum. Towards the southern edge of the area plateau-topped shale bings which lie between the brick cottages of Winchburgh and Broxburn will remain powerful visual features.

The tranquil, wide-reaching views of the coast are almost always dominated by the striking structures of the road and rail bridges. The landscape has a well-tended and prosperous character, due to the prominence of estate landscapes.

Positive Attributes

- Rolling terrain with some prominent igneous outcrops;
- Significant woodland cover, concentrated mainly within several major private estates;
- Well-maintained hedgerows and field boundaries;
- Predominant agricultural character;
- Diversity of coastal scenery and habitats;
- Views of the Forth and its bridges.

Negative Attributes

- Dense transport route network, with further routes including possible second Forth Road bridge proposed;
- Threat from further residential/industrial expansion linked to possibility of second Forth Road bridge;
- A few prominent remaining oil-shale bings.

Key Strategic Aim

- Conserve prevailing rural character.

Guidelines

- *Utilise topographic variation and careful visual envelope studies to identify preferred development areas with minimum landscape impact;*
- *Support long-term management of important estate woodlands, field boundary elements, and other landscape features;*
- *New woodlands and field boundary reinforcement planting in harmony with scale of landscape to be provided in association with any new developments, including roads;*
- *Protect key views of the Forth;*
- *Prevent loss of shoreline habitats.*