

10. Edzell Landscape Capacity Study

10.1 Landscape Assessment

Natural Heritage Zone (SNH 2002):
Eastern Lowlands

Regional Landscape Character Type (LUC 1997):
Broad Valley Lowland

Landscape Character Unit (LUC 1997):
Strathmore

10.1.1 Landscape Character Assessment

The landscape and visual analysis is shown on figure 10.01.

Edzell is located within the Strathmore Landscape Character Unit of the Broad Valley Lowland Landscape Character Type of the Tayside Landscape Character Assessment.

The valleys of the Rivers South Esk and North Esk form a broad area of lowland to the south of the Highland Boundary Fault and enclosed to the south by the high ground to the east of Forfar. Although sometimes included in the broad definition of Strathmore to the west, this area drains eastwards and is separated from Strathmore by a low watershed around Kirriemuir. The landscape is distinguished from other parts of the LCT by the landscape a smaller landscape scale; more woodland; and by the well-defined river corridors of the Rivers South Esk and North Esk. The rivers are identified by lines of riverside trees, and by inner terraces.

The fertile and favourable climate in Strathmore has led to a predominance of arable farming. Rectilinear fields were typically bounded by hedges and less typically drystone dykes. These features were commonly associated with field boundary trees. Unfortunately many of these features have fallen into disrepair and/or been lost due to agricultural improvements since the 1950's.

10.1.2 Landscape Setting

Edzell is located on Strathmore, north of the A90(T), adjacent to the River North Esk, close to the Highland Foothills LCT. Edzell is the gateway to the northern Angus Glens.

Fluvio-glacial landforms from the ice-age are characteristic around Edzell. Kame terraces form when sediment accumulates in ponds and lakes trapped between a glacier and the valley side. Typically, the sediment comprises sorted sand and gravels. Kame terraces occur wherever melt-water has been ponded against hillsides. This has resulted in a number of distinctive kame terraces associated with the River North Esk and the West Water. There are two terraces in particular which are important to the setting of Edzell; a lower terrace adjacent to the River North Esk and an upper terrace upon which the village is located. The two flat terraces are separated by a pronounced escarpment north of Edzell. To the south, the escarpment is less pronounced.

Whilst the landscape to the west of Edzell is open in character and largely devoid of trees, the environs of the village in other directions are more wooded and enclosed in character. To the south lies Edzell Woods which are well used for informal recreation. To the east and north-east a path follows both banks of the River North Esk through the riparian woodland. Both the paths along the River North Esk and those through Edzell Woods offer a

close association with nature but removed from the urban environment. To the north, immediately abutting the village is Edzell Muir which provides for both formal and informal recreation.

To the south west of the village lies the golf course. A plan showing the Landscape and Visual Analysis is included as figure 10.1.

10.1.3 Settlement Form and Pattern

The remains of two celtic carved stones give an indication that people lived in the area at least as long ago as the ninth century. An agricultural site nearby has been radiocarbon dated to 3700BC.

The present village was previously known as Slateford, describing the crossing over the North Esk. At that time, the area known as Edzell centred on Edzell Castle and Edzell Kirkyard, around one and a half kilometres to the west. When the new church was built in 1818, the Edzell name was moved and Slateford became known as Edzell.

Edzell developed around the High Street and Church Street area. The agricultural revolution across Scotland which took place from the early eighteenth century onwards necessitated the removal of large numbers of people from farming and their relocation in new or extended settlement. Feuing, to extend the village, started in 1839. Edzell developed as a holiday village, a role greatly assisted by the completion of the Brechin to Edzell railway at the end of nineteenth century. This coincided the building of the Glen Esk Hotel and the extension of the Panmure Arms Hotel in addition to the Star Hotel which already existed.

One of the main attractions of Edzell was the golf course. The Edzell Golf Club was founded in 1885.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Edzell is the Dalhousie Arch which was erected in 1889 to commemorate the death of the Earl and Countess of Dalhousie. It marks the southern entrance to Edzell.

Edzell sits on the almost flat upper kame terrace immediately to the west of the ancient fording point on a dramatic bend of the River North Esk. A strong characteristic is that development is restricted to the upper terrace abutting the escarpment to the north-west of the village. The historic village layout is strongly rectilinear, but more recent development during the later twentieth century and post millennium is less formal. Despite relatively large plot sizes, the village retains a compact feel. This is due to the almost absence of ribbon development along its access roads. The one exception is along Dunlappie Road. The edge of the village is further defined by Edzell Woods and Edzell Golf Course to the south and by Edzell Muir to the north.

10.2 Visual Assessment

Refer to figure 10.2 for key to photographs.

10.2.1 Views Out or Across Settlement

The relatively flat topography means that only those properties on the edge of the village tend to have views out into the countryside. Views are particularly common along the western edge of Edzell.

Of greater Significance are views from public places. From Edzell Muir broken views across farmland to the east contribute towards the experience of the Muir. From the path along the west bank of the River North Esk extensive views are intermittently enjoyed to the west of the river and along the river itself.

10.2.2 Views of Settlement

The location of Edzell on a flat lowland area has generally led to the settlement being screened by trees and woodlands from within the wider lowland landscape. However, from higher ground within the nearby Highland Foothills LCT, the compact settlement is widely visible. Most notably, the White and Brown Caterthuns are around 5km to the west of Edzell. Both these hillforts are in the care of Historic Scotland and popular visitor attractions.

10.2.3 Approaches

Approach from South via B966 (towards Brechin)

The long straight road leading to Edzell from the south flanked by woodland on both sides culminating in entry to the village through the Dalhousie Arch is perhaps the most profound in Angus. The village has a strong visual edge from this direction. (See photo 10.1)

Approach from South West via U428 (Dunlappie Road)

The woodland around Hopewood significantly softens the approach. Therefore despite ribbon development along Dunlappie Road the village has strong visual edge from this direction. (See photo 10.2)

Approach from West via C34 (Lethnot Road)

As one approaches the village east of Mains of Edzell, views of the urban edge south of Lethnot Road are possible. The mixture of mature trees and shrubs on the western boundary, together with generous gardens, give a level of visual strength to this boundary. The exception is The Glebe where the houses appear uncharacteristically cramped and conspicuous. The woodland adjacent to The Muir, together with the trees adjacent to the school, on the south side of Lethnot Road, form a strong entrance to the village. Landscaping associated with approved housing development on the western edge of Edzell should visually strengthen the urban edge. (See photos 10.3)

Approach from North via B966 (toward Fettercairn)

Views of the village become possible after one passes the woodlands south of Lochside. The trees, woodland and recreational areas of The Muir visually soften the urban edge. The village has a strong visual edge from this direction. (See photo 10.4)

10.3 Detailed Analysis of Directions of Growth

Refer to figure 10.3 for key to directions analysed below.

10.3.1 South (between U428 Dunlappie Road and Inveriscandye Road)

To the south of the village are Edzell Golf Course and Edzell Woods. The woods are an important informal recreational resource on the edge of the

village. The long straight road; the flat topography lined both sides by woodland creates an unusual and distinctive approach to Edzell.

Both the golf course and the woods are of high landscape value and are considered to offer no capacity for urban extension.

10.3.2 West (between U428 Dunlappie Road and C34 Lethnot Road)

The western edge of Edzell is marked by the Wishop Burn. A linear strip of grassland and groups of trees have been planted as part of the development which was under construction at the time of the Capacity Study 2003. The trees and shrubs along the burn will progressively soften the edge of the settlement and assist integrate it with the wider landscape. There is a path along the burn which links into the urban area.

To the west, the flat kame terrace extends towards the West Water less than one kilometre away. Much of the field boundaries which existed in the nineteenth century have been removed leaving a flat open arable landscape, with post and wire fences. There are no hedges and only a few trees further west at Bonhard to provide structure. The ground noticeably starts to rise west of Blackbanks Cottages on Lethnot Road which provides a slight level of topographic containment to the north-west.

Dunlappie Road forms the southern edge of this area. During the twentieth century a line of ribbon development has developed along its north side. The woodland on a knoll at Hopewood forms a strong visual stop to this ribbon development at its western end. The woodland extends northwards of the houses, which along with the houses provides a level of containment to the undeveloped land immediately to the north-east.

To the north, Lethnot Road is again open in character with a ruinous and easily missed drystone dyke along the south side of the road, now supplemented by a post and wire fence.

In general, a westward urban extension has the benefit of being on the same kame terrace upon which Edzell is located. This helps maintain this distinctive aspect of Edzell’s character. The greatest capacity for urban extension in this direction is westwards of the southern part of the western boundary, where the ribbon development and the woodland at Hopewood provide a good level of containment. Further north, the slightly rising topography helps create a natural stop point, but it would require significant structural planting to strengthen this edge. Capacity for urban extension is therefore high to the south-east becoming medium towards the north-west.

Connectivity with Edzell is possible via paths which cross the burn from The Glebe and Castle Gardens. Vehicle access would likely to be via Lethnot Road and Dunlappie Road. There is an opportunity to further develop the green network which links The Muir to the north with the golf course and Edzell Woods to the south by enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of the Wishop Burn. Core Path 013 passes along the east side of the burn which connects to Core Path 014 which connects to Dunlappie Road before the woodland at Hopewood is reached. (See photo 10.5)

10.3.3 North-West (north of C34 Lethnot Road)

Lethnot Road strongly demarcates the northern extent of the urban area on the western side of Edzell. To the north, and north-west, the topography is flat but less than a kilometre from the village to the north-west, the gradient steepens dramatically at the edge of the Highland Foothills LCT. The Muir immediately to the north of Lethnot Road is a large recreational area, with mixed woodland to the north and along its western edge. The Edzell Parish Church, set south of centre in the open area is the focal point of the Muir. On the western edge of the Muir is a now disused curling pond. There are also two parking areas and public toilets. The Muir is an important recreational resource for the village and an important part of its history.

To the south-west of the Muir are the remains of Edzell Mart. Buildings have been removed and the site is progressively being colonised by trees and becoming woodland. Trees on the eastern part of the site are protected by a tree preservation order. A planning appeal in respect of proposed housing development was dismissed because of its position north of Lethnot Road. Planning permission was later approved for a visitor centre but this has subsequently lapsed.

The Muir has high landscape character sensitivity and landscape value and has no capacity for urban extension. The eastern part of the mart site would be similarly classified. The western and more open part of the mart site has high visual sensitivity due to its gateway location at the entrance to the village. There is considered to be no capacity for urban extension north of Lethnot Road.

10.3.4 North-East (between B966 and River North Esk)

The most dramatic and visible change of kame terrace levels is to the north-east of Edzell. The change in levels is marked by a steep escarpment. From the dramatic bend in the River North Esk, east of the village, the escarpment snakes its way northwards, passing immediately behind the Panmure Arms Hotel , before meeting with the river again around one kilometre north of Edzell. Edzell is built up to the eastern edge of the upper kame terrace, above the lower terrace and River North Esk.

Between the escarpment and the River North Esk, is a flat area of agricultural land. On the lower terrace below the Panmure Arms Hotel was a small farmstead which, until the twentieth century, was named Hole. More recently it was known as East Mains Farm. It has since been demolished and has planning permission for a small courtyard housing development. This has been designed as a stand-alone rural development rather than an urban extension.

The River North Esk forms the eastern boundary of this lower terrace, flowing at a slightly lower elevation than the adjacent agricultural land. The river banks on both sides are lined with ancient woodland and Core Path 010 is within the woodland strip between Edzell and where the B966 crosses the river. Core Path 012 connects north Edzell to the path via East Mains Farm. The path along the river (Core Path 010) is an important recreational route which relies heavily upon its rural character and scenic undeveloped character. The area of countryside between the B966 and the River South Esk (north of Edzell) is important to the setting of the river, with the land between the escarpment and the river being of particular importance. The River South Esk and the adjacent agricultural land have high landscape value and landscape character sensitivity.

The lower terrace is clearly bounded by the escarpment to the west and the woodland of the river to the east creating a visually contained oblong area extending north-east of Edzell. Only around 200m of the boundary of the lower terrace would be close to the current edge of the village. The escarpment, because of its gradient and tree cover would prevent full integration of new development with the village.

Connectivity with the existing village would be poor with the only point of connection being via the access road to East Mains Farm at the northern tip of the village. Development of the southern part of the oblong area would need to take account of shading from adjacent trees which are often on higher ground.

An urban extension in this direction would potentially create an elongated settlement form with limited connectivity to the village. The position on the lower terrace would be a deviation from a defining characteristic of the village. Development would impact upon areas of high landscape value. It is therefore considered that there is low capacity for urban extension to the north-east. (See photo 10.6)

10.3.5 East (between Inveriscandye Road and River North Esk)
West of the dramatic bend in the River North Esk, the upper kame terrace upon which Edzell is located, extends to the edge of the river. This terrace extends east of Edzell before dropping to the lower terrace towards the western end of the sewage works to the north and Duriehill further south. The arable landscape is flat and open to the south-east.

The area is visually contained between Edzell Woods and the woodland along the River North Esk. The access track to the sewage works passes along the edge of the river woodlands and, to the south, a farm track separates the farmland from Edzell Woods. There is no path along the southern bank of the river to the east of Edzell.

The River North Esk has high landscape character sensitivity, but the absence of a riverbank path; the sewage works and the track leading to it lessens its sensitivity to development. Nevertheless, it would be appropriate that built development be held back from this boundary. Environmental health considerations in the vicinity of the sewage works may additionally restrict development near the river. Recreational activity within the Edzell Woods would be little affected by development to the east.

Connectivity with Edzell along a contiguous boundary of around 400m with good access connections available from Duriehill Road and Duriehill Place, relatively close to the central part of the village.

Whilst the escarpment between the upper and lower terraces at the east of Edzell is less steep, relative to the north of Edzell, it nevertheless is a distinctive landscape feature and would be a suitable stop line for future development east of the village. This stop line would have the benefit of containing future expansion to the same kame terrace upon which Edzell is located. This would help maintain this distinctive aspect of Edzell’s character. It would however be desirable that the escarpment which would demarcate the new eastern edge of Edzell be landscaped with woodland and hedges to strengthen, frame and consolidate the urban edge providing a green network between the River North Esk and Edzell Woods.

It is considered that there exists high capacity for urban extension on the upper kame terrace to the east of Edzell. Capacity reduces to the east of the escarpment as this would extend the village onto the lower terrace. (See photos 10.7 & 10.8)

10.4 Conclusion

Edzell has a distinct character and relationship with the landscape within which it is located. Its location on a single flat kame terrace adjacent to the River North Esk; its grid iron layout and the dramatic approach from the south are all part of its character.

The greatest landscape capacity for significant urban extension lies on the upper kame terrace to the east. The area has a good level of visual containment and has opportunities for good connectivity to the core of the village.

There is however also capacity for significant extension to the west. This area benefits from a location on the upper terrace. The existing landscape structure is strongest adjacent to the southern part of this boundary, extending westwards towards Hopewood. Development in this direction however has fewer opportunities for connectivity to the existing settlement.

It is suggested that development in other direction only be considered after both the above have been either implemented or discounted for non-landscape reasons.



10.1 Approach from South via B966 (towards Brechin)



10.2 Approach from South West via U428 (Dunlappie Road)



10.3 Approach from West via C34 (Lethnot Road)



10.4 Approach from North via 8966 (towards Fettercairn)



10.5 West of Edzell from Core Path 014



10.6 North-East of Edzell from Core Path 011



10.7 Kame Terrace Escarpment from Edzell Sewage Works



10.8 East of Edzell from Durie Place

Figure 10.1 Edzell Landscape and Visual Analysis

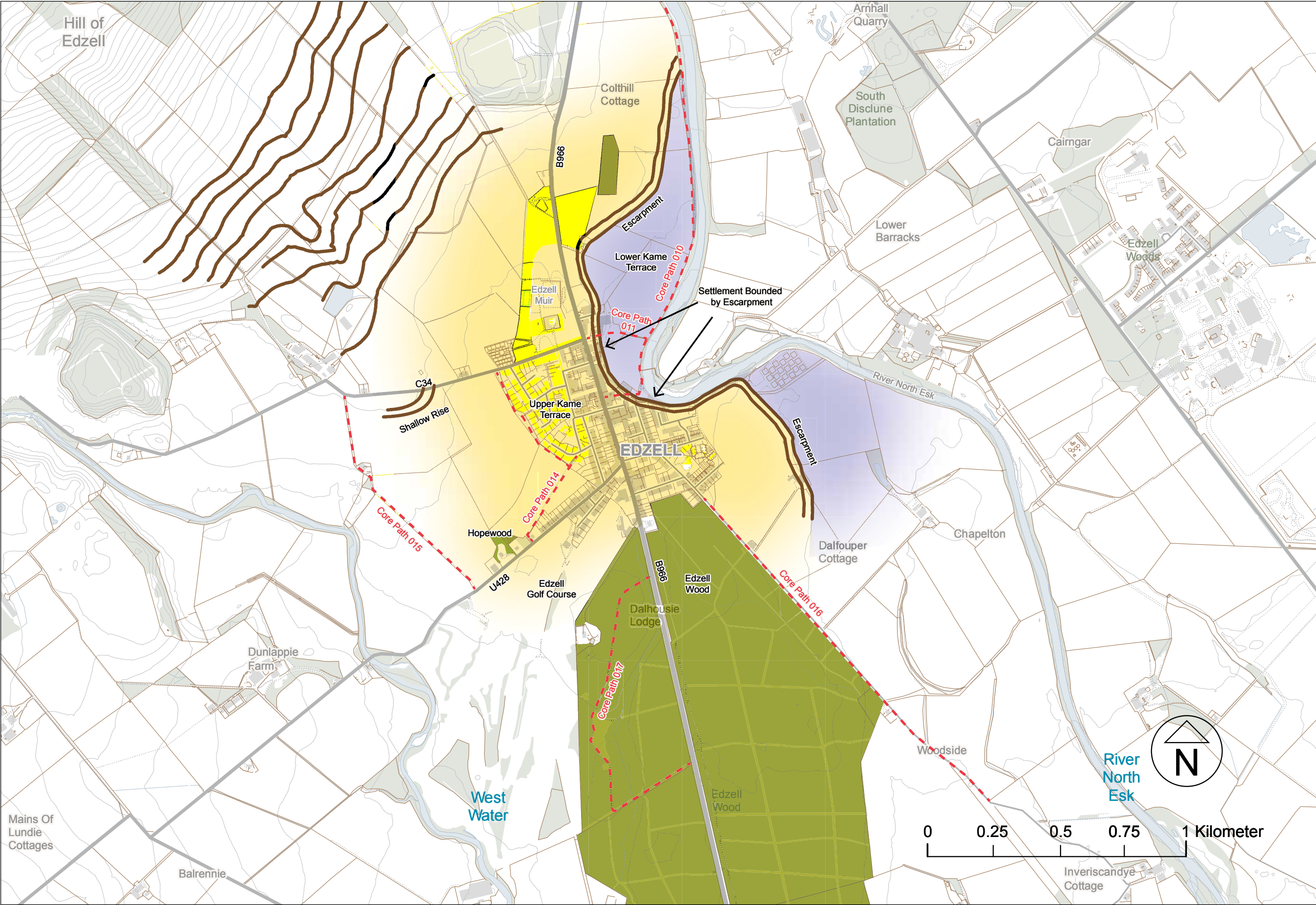


Figure 10.2 Edzell Key to Photographs

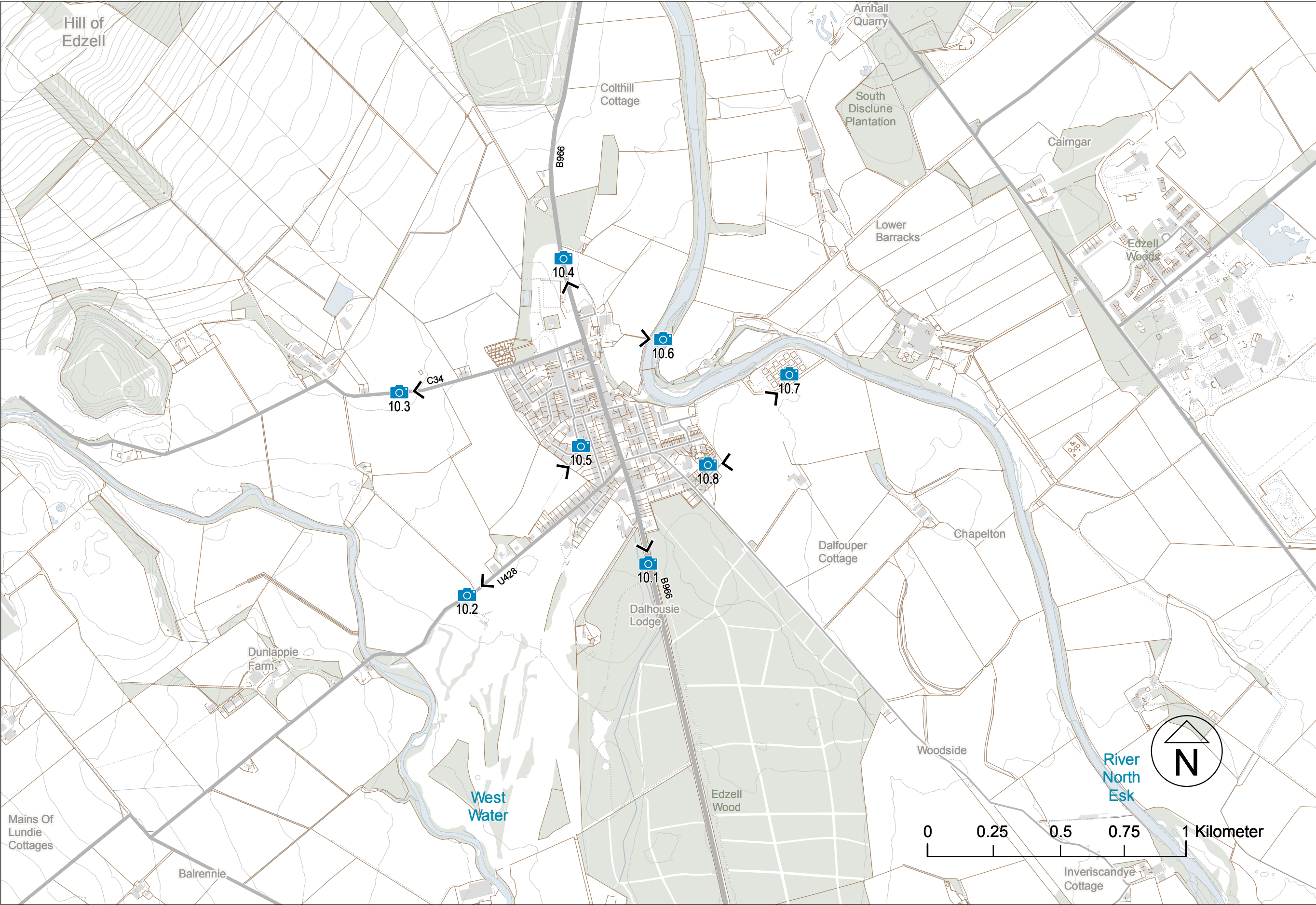


Figure 10.3 Edzell Key to Analysis of Directions of Growth

