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11. Friockheim Landscape Capacity Study

11.1 Landscape Assessment

Natural Heritage Zone (SNH 2002)

Eastern Lowlands

Regional Landscape Character Type (LUC 1997)

Dipslope Farmland

Landscape Character Area (LUC 1997)

SE Angus Lowland

11.1.1 Landscape Character Assessment

The landscape and visual analysis is shown on figure 11.1

Friockheim lies within Dipslope Farmland Landscape Character Type. Dipslope farmland is an extensive area of land, generally sloping from north-west to south-east. It is dominated by productive agricultural land, characterised by large rectilinear fields, interrupted by woodland blocks and farmsteads as well as rural clusters. Woodland cover is low, except on large estates and along river corridors. Similarly, semi-natural woodland is limited to steeper valley sides such as along the Lunan Water. The landscape is semi-enclosed to open. Many of the fields have been enlarged during the twentieth century and the structure of hedges and hedgerow trees is declining.

The Lunan valley lies between higher areas and has scattered smaller settlements or clusters and an extensive road network. It is more enclosed and smaller scale than the higher Dipslope Farmland areas. The key landscape feature for Friockheim is the Lunan Water corridor which passes through a flatter larger scale landscape which expands southeast of the settlement.

11.1.2 Landscape Setting

Friockheim is situated within a low broad valley plain with hill systems rising on the north-west to Guthrie Hill and the east to Compass Hill while Dunbarrow and Dunnichen hills form a backdrop to views from the north-east and east.

This open rural landscape around Friockheim is relatively flat with gentle gradient sloping in all directions and from Friockheim itself toward the Lunan Water. The surrounding farmland is principally arable with large rectilinear fields bounded by posts and wire or occasionally drystone dykes creating expansive vistas.

To the north, the settlement is bounded by the course of the Lunan Water, a water course used since at least medieval times for flour and linen mills. Its channel is relatively narrow and shallow. Despite the significance of the river for its industrial beginnings, the village turns its back to it with all properties facing away. The artefacts of the mill harnessing the river are abundant mainly on the south bank comprising of feed channels, dams, revetments often rusted winding gear. This riparian landscape has higher levels of tree cover and pasture than more typically found across Dipslope Farmland.

The mill pond area is an important part of the history of the village and has been recently reinstated as a pond and an informal recreational area. The path alongside the mill pond has scenic views along the Lunan Water corridor.

North of the Lunan Water, the landform rises from the shallow river channel rounding as its crests to form higher gently rolling ground. Further east, this is interrupted by a low escarpment which forms a sharp edge to the higher gently rolling ground. The fields are large and transected in the north-west by the heavily vegetated embankment of the disused railway in a south-west to north-east axis. The field boundaries are mostly defined by either post and wire or rows of trees.

To the west the settlement is bounded by the A933 which slices through the disused rail branch lines. Beyond this lies old Friock in the form of the former church and manse remains of historic Friock and the Middleton estate, a designed landscape. The landform is predominantly flat, fields large and bounded by substantial woodland belts and luxuriant hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

To the east, the settlement is exposed with the rear of properties and the school perimeter fence forming the eastern edge. Land to the east of Friockheim has been artificially lowered as a result of sand and gravel quarrying. The land is at first flat thereafter rising to form Compass Hill at the road to Kinnell. Fields are large and open bounded by post and wire fencing. The only trees evident are an incongruous line of young mixed amenity and species trees planted along an old track which leads to the river bank opposite the sewage works (see photo 11.6).

The southern edge defined by the single row of amenity trees at Gardyne Street, a straight thoroughfare with an open aspect to arable fields which are open bounded by post and wire fencing. The landform is relatively flat becoming more undulating to the east. Beyond the fields lies Friock Wood and Border Wood further to the east. The core paths and recreation grounds east of the fields are well used. The path network passes at first through an open fields system then

through enclosed, sheltered and at times dense woods with both landscapes affording panoramic views back towards the village (see photos 11.3, 11.4 and 11.7).

11.1.3 Settlement Form and Pattern

There is evidence of ancient prehistoric settlement in the forms of crop marks across much of the surrounding landscape. Friockheim, itself, is a relatively recent settlement designed and built in 1814 by the Laird of the Lands of Friock, Thomas Gardyne of Middleton and feued (leased) as Friock feus to Mr John Andson of Arbroath to build and run a flax mill. The settlement became home to many textile workers. After the collapse of the milling industry following a fire the village plunged into decline. Today, Friockheim has a population of 960, slightly less than during the industrial milling boom.

The overall form is triangular with its streets forming strong divergent lines and block or plot pattern forming an imperfect grid. The settlement seems to lack a clear concept with its founding industrial development focused on the river and its main thoroughfare radiating out from station road. Its key buildings are scattered without any formal civic square or centre. This lack of a coherent core is somewhat unusual for Angus, in that it is triangular extending eastward from the A933 with its principle streets of Millgate and Gardyne Street forming an acute angle in the west and its original east side by Lunan Street. The original industrial complex was along the river with the key mill and bleaching works situated on the southern bank since replaced by Old Mill Place housing. Key community facilities originally were the kirk at the apex of the acute angle, a public house, a free church and a hotel along Gardyne Street and the school just off centre to the triangle on Eastgate. An additional congregational church was situated on Andson Street. The settlement has spread eastward as evidenced by recent housing, the modern primary school and recreation ground. Additional housing infill has closed the gap between the original extent and these facilities. Gardyne Street is the original thoroughfare, a one sided street with an open clear aspect to the south across open fields towards Friock Wood. Historically, development south of Gardyne Street has been limited to development at both the western and eastern ends of the village. These have included a quarry; the railway sidings (now a coach yard), a small supermarket, manses, houses and the cemetery. More recently, the field south of the western part of Gardyne Street is allocated for housing within the Angus Local Plan Review (2009). This will change the character of Gardyne Street, but will create a more defined village centre.

Today, the principle landscape or green infrastructure assets are the river; its associated revetments and the old mill pond area north of Millgate; the various adopted core paths and informal tracks and paths; together with Friock Wood and Border Wood to the south and south-east (see photos 11.1, 11.2, 11.5, 11.3 and 11.4).

Local distinctiveness in architecture is still evident in the older workers houses, the key attributes being single storey cottages or dormer houses built from locally quarried sandstone with defined stone block window frames. On Gardyne Street the main commercial end is to the west and defined by buildings abutting the pavement while further east and for Millgate, Westgate, Middlegate, Lillybank Street, Lunan Street and secondary streets, housing tends to have small frontage gardens which help to soften the townscape. The urban design also allows for narrow alleys or wynds and unbounded tracks leading to cottages tucked away from the main routes such as Napier Place. The materials palette include drystone dykes, mortared rough coursed low stone walling for boundaries, old sandstone and brick for traditional housing, and cottage gardens.

11.2 Visual Assessment

Refer to figure 11.2 for key to photographs.

11.2.1 Views Out or Across Settlement

From Gardyne Street, views across the relatively flat arable fields to the south are contained by various woodland blocks and the trees of the cemetery and recreation ground (see photo 11.7). There are glimpsed views southeast toward Compass Hill and toward rounded low hill, The Hill, to the south-west with the main southward views terminating at Friock Wood. To the west of the woodland block an open vista extends past the co-op to the buildings nestled on the horizon line, at Legaston just off the B961.

From the mill pond and the northern edge of Friockheim there are scenic views across the river corridor of the Lunan Water. Rising landform to the north often restricts views further north, but views towards Guthrie Hill are possible from Old Mill Place.

From the B965 and the eastern part of the village there are important views across the farmland to the east. The pasture and arable fields allow open clear views with the principal view towards low rounded hillside of Compass Hill which is in pasture to the north and is worked and scarred from quarrying for sand and gravel on its southern flank. The view north-west extends beyond the gorse and broom clothed low embankment on the north bank of the river toward Wuddy Law with its patchwork pattern of cultivation and partially woodland capped northern promontory. The horizon is defined by a loose distribution of trees forming a backdrop to the scattered farmsteads and sheds. In the mid-ground Kinnell Mill is shrouded in its own mature wooded cluster (see photo 11.6).

11.2.2 View of Settlement

The location of the settlement on relatively flat and low lying land, the embankments of the disused railway, together with woodland typically limits more distant views of Friockheim from higher ground. Partial views are available from Dunnichen Hill and Dunbarrow Hill to the west and partially from Wuddy Law to the north-east. The settlement appears semi obscured by vegetation and nestled within a rich tapestry of woodland, trees and raised topography.

11.2.3 Approaches

Approach from South via A933

The landform generally prevents direct views until the gradient falls northward at B961. From here the landform falls toward the village though the view is partially obscured by extensive woodland with only the immediate area around the church and east end of Gardyne Street which is not included in the current development boundary being visible.

Approach from North via A933

The settlement is entirely screened by the woodland clothing the banks of the Lunan Water and the wooded embankments of the disused railway.

Approach from East via B965 (Gardyne Street)

There is a clear sense one is approaching a village before one reaches the final straight approach at Balneaves Cottage across agricultural flatland. The built form is visible to the right of the road as a strong edge on the horizon of a low vertical scale while a tree belt on the left side screens the main play and recreation facility.

Relatively recent housing on the eastern boundary is unduly prominent with limited boundary trees and hedges to soften and integrate the development into the landscape. This boundary has high visual strength immediately north of the B965 due to trees on the boundary, but reducing to low further north where recent development has taken place (see photos 11.11 and 11.6).

Approach from West via A932 and B965 (Station Road)

From the west the terrain is relative flat punctuated by the extensive woodland belts of the Friock Mains and Middleton which lie west of the A933. These mature trees and the embankment of the disused railway effectively screening the village.

The village is more apparent from the B965 (Station Road). Here the character is a mix of peri-urban defined by the low rough stone walling, unbound tracks, pasture and detached housing with large gardens, mature green hedging and mature full canopy trees (see photo 11.8).

On approaching the rise and brow in the road into the village, the character becomes more starkly urban and treeless with mixed uses on the approach at the rise and brow in the road (see photo 11.9). This urban framing lends a direct vista to the Church or kirk at the beginning of Gardyne Street, the principle thoroughfare. The topography and tree cover give this urban edge moderate visual strength.

11.3 Detailed Analysis of Directions of Growth

Refer to figure 11.3 for key to directions analysed below.

11.3.1 South

The field south of the western part of Gardyne Street is allocated for housing within the Angus Local Plan Review (2009). Gardyne Street is distinctive for being a single sided street. The strong linear form of the Street provided a robust edge to the village. Development south of Gardyne Street will alter the relationship of Gardyne Street and the settlement to the fields and the woodland beyond.

With the principal of urban extension south of Gardyne Street established by the Angus Local Plan Review (2009), landscape character sensitivity east of the allocated land is considered to be of medium landscape character sensitivity. An urban extension in this direction provides opportunity to consolidate development around the main street and to further develop a village centre. An urban extension in this direction could extend and integrate with existing street pattern.

The landscape south of Gardyne Street has medium to high landscape value, due to its position alongside Gardyne Street and its contribution towards the identity of the village (see photos 11.3, 11.4 and 11.7).

As with much of Friockheim, the area between Gardyne Street and Friock Wood would be likely to be visible from higher ground to the east at Compass Hill, but would be visually contained between the settlement and the woodland.

Development towards the eastern end of this area would be more visible from the east at lower elevations. Visual sensitivity is considered to be low towards the west where allocated within the Angus Local Plan Review (2009) and increasing slightly eastwards.

Further urban extension eastwards of the allocated land would also be bounded north by the village and Friock Wood to the south, but would be more open to the east. Consequently, new woodland to the east would be desirable mitigation if further urban extension eastwards south of Gardyne Street is proposed. Similarly the open aspect of Gardyne Street to the south could be in part retained by the continuation of the linear park, which would further serve to create a stronger village centre. The core paths and existing woodlands provide excellent green infrastructure which could be enhanced and linked to any new woods.

Landscape capacity for a further eastward urban extension south of Gardyne Street is considered to be medium to high.

Further east, the area between the recreation ground and Border Wood has the potential to integrate with an urban extension south of Gardyne Street. The trees of the recreation ground bound the area to the north and Border Wood provides a strong bounding feature to the south. The area would however be more visible from the east, requiring woodland planting as part of any proposed development. However, visibility in the wider landscape would be less than development to the east of Friockheim (see 11.3.2). Both landscape character sensitivity and landscape value are considered to be medium. Visual sensitivity increases from low to the west, to high further east. Landscape capacity for urban extension between the recreation ground and Border Wood is considered to be medium.

11.3.2 East (North of A933, Gardyne Street)

The eastern edge of Friockheim is the most visible in the wider landscape. An urban extension in this direction would be highly visible due to the more limited tree and woodland cover. Without successful mitigation, development would be prominent in views from the north-east and east. This direction is therefore considered to have high visual sensitivity.

The next landscape features which offer punctuation are the Lunan Water corridor to the north and the road to Kinnell further east. However this is the most exposed side of the settlement being visible from Bolshan and beyond. Any growth even incremental would require substantial mitigation in terms of tree belts or woodland blocks to reflect the positive role woodland plays in other directions. Archaeological interests may further reduce the potential for urban extension in the northern part of this easterly direction. An urban extension east of a line north of the recreation ground and beyond would create a new, edge of village single-sided street significantly weakening the approach to the village from the east.

Proposals need to respect the river and its integrity as is typical for many vantages it would be especially advantageous to provide woodland screening. The existing road towards Kinnell (U469), could be terminating bookend though it would be visually better to provide woodland belts before reaching the road. In addition, there is scope for improving the contribution of the Lunan Water corridor as part of a green network, with woodland planting which would also help create a defined edge to the settlement.

The corridor of the Lunan Water and archaeological interest increase landscape character sensitivity and landscape value to high towards the north reducing to medium closer to the B965.

An eastward urban extension would further elongate the settlement with only limited connectivity with the existing village. Notwithstanding this, a smaller urban extension north of the school and accessed from the urban area to the west, could provide opportunity to visually strengthen that part of the urban edge through the inclusion of woodland planting as part of any proposed development. If access was necessary from the A933 east of the school, to access the land to the north of the school only, it would be likely that landscape benefits would be cancelled out by the adverse landscape and visual effects which would result from road development east of the school.

An urban extension which required access from the A933 would be most likely to overcome adverse effects, through mitigation, if it extended to the east of the school and incorporated new woodland planting along the eastern boundary in line with the eastern boundary of the recreation ground. Notwithstanding this, the resulting development would also have poor connectivity with the existing village.

There is considered to be medium landscape capacity for urban extension to the east with low capacity for a more significant eastward extension (east of the eastern edge of the recreation ground) (see photo 11.1, 11.6 11.10).

11.3.3 West (North of A933, Station Road)

The A933 creates a definitive barrier. Any development west of it would be effectively cut off from the settlement. There are however smaller peri-urban fields just north of Station Road.

The land is mostly at a lower level to the road and has a sense of being hidden being lower and over a crest in the road from the rest of the village. This area has a small scale character with a trees and watercourses and low density development. This distinctive area has high landscape character sensitivity and landscape value, but visual enclosure formed by the railway embankment and trees leads to low visual sensitivity. High density development lacking in space to allow rich vegetation in terms of high canopy trees and medium to large shrub cover is likely to damage the integrity of

this area which already possesses a substantial amenity tree cover. In addition a westward urban extension would further elongate the settlement with only limited connectivity with the existing village.

Accordingly, there is considered to be no to low landscape capacity for urban extension to the west.

11.3.4 North (North of the Lunan Water)

North of the Lunan Water, the landform from Pitmuies Mill end rises in the west until there is a steep slope from the river bank before becoming shallower as one moves east until a low escarpment rises up at the steps of core path 116. The escarpments and slopes along the corridor of the Lunan Water together with riparian trees create a strong bounding feature along the northern edge of the settlement. This river corridor is highly scenic and part of the setting of the millpond area. Accordingly, this area has high landscape character sensitivity and landscape value with visual sensitivity being medium. There is considered no landscape capacity for urban expansion within the river corridor (see photo 11.5).

Development on the elevated landform beyond the river corridor would be visually prominent in the wider landscape with no landscape structure to absorb development. Development on this elevated position could potentially dominate the existing settlement and fundamentally change the relationship of the settlement with both the Lunan Water and landform. It would be visually and physically detached from the village. Therefore both landscape character and visual sensitivity are considered to be high. There is considered no landscape capacity for urban expansion on the elevated land to the north of the river corridor.

11.4 Conclusion

Friockheim is contained on its northern edge by the Lunan Water and further severed from land to the west by the A933 and the embankment of the disused railway. These features provide a strong landscape context for the village, but substantially restrict landscape capacity for urban extension in those directions.

The greatest capacity for urban extension lies to the south. To the south, the area between Gardyne Street and Friock Wood would be visually contained between the settlement and the woodland. The principal of urban extension south of Gardyne Street was established by the Angus Local Plan Review (2009). An urban extension east of the allocated land provides further opportunity to consolidate development around the main street and to develop a village centre. An urban extension in this direction would extend and integrate with existing street pattern. However, this is an important and prominent part of the village and it is important that any new development fronting Gardyne Street reflect and compliment the distinctive character of its northern side.

Towards the east, landscape capacity for urban extension reduces from west to east. An eastward urban extension would further elongate the settlement with only limited connectivity with the existing village.



11.1 Friockheim from U469 (towards Kinnell) ([click here to return to text](#))



11.2 Friockheim from Core Path 118 ([click here to return to text](#))



11.3 Friockheim from Core Path 119 ([click here to return to text](#))



11.4 Friockheim from Core Path 120 ([click here to return to text](#))



11.5 Friockheim from Core Path 116 ([click here to return to text](#))



11.6 View East from B965 (towards Inverkeillor) ([click here to return to text](#))



11.7 View South from Gardyne Street ([click here to return to text](#))



11.8 Approach from West via B965 (Station Road) ([click here to return to text](#))



11.9 Approach from West via B965 (Station Road) ([click here to return to text](#))



11.10 Approach from East via B965 (towards Inverkeillor) ([click here to return to text](#))



11.11 Approach from East via B965 (towards Inverkeillor) ([click here to return to text](#))

Figure 11.1 Friockheim Landscape and Visual Analysis (click here to return to text)

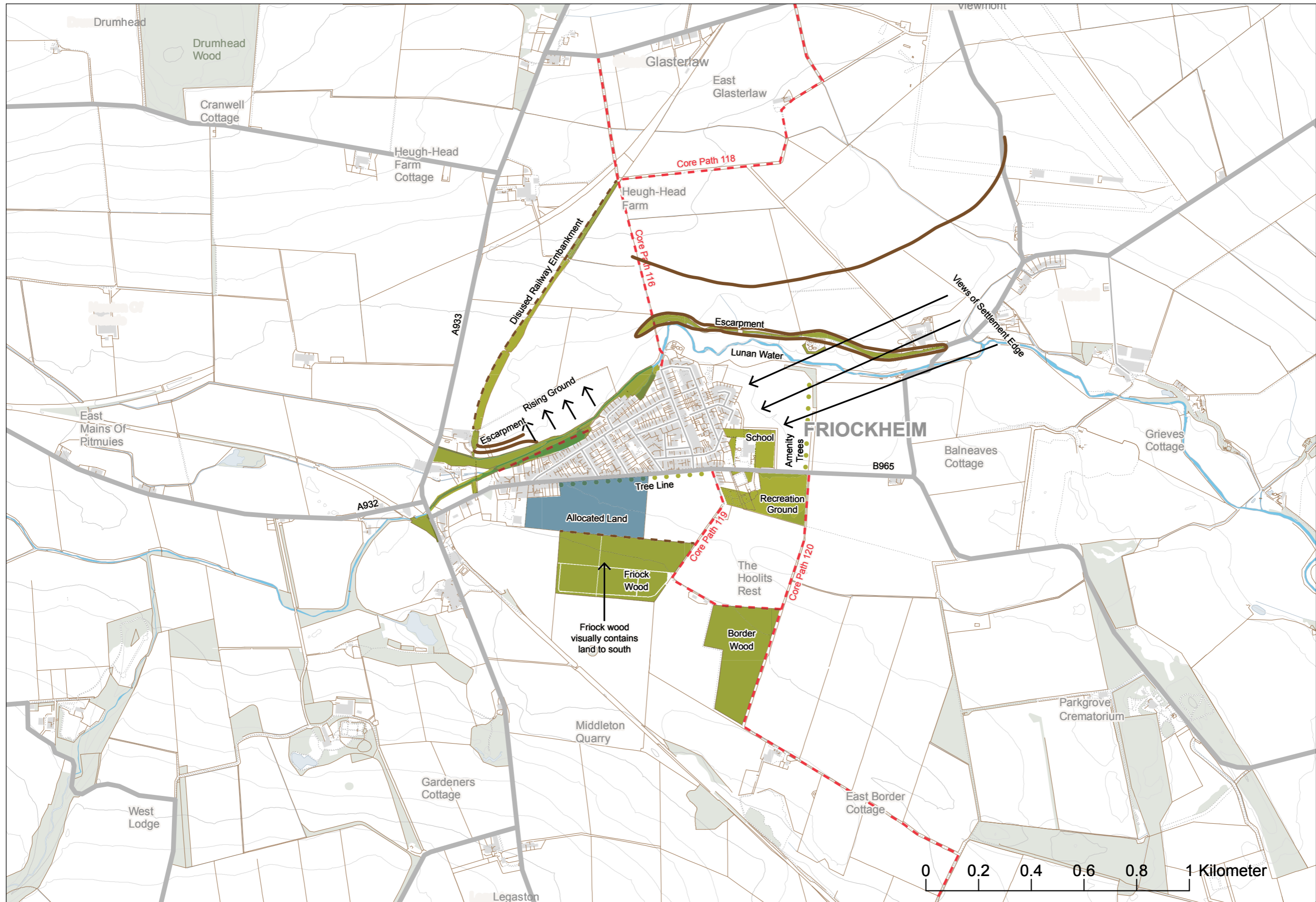


Figure 11.2 Friockheim Key to Photographs ([click here to return to text](#))

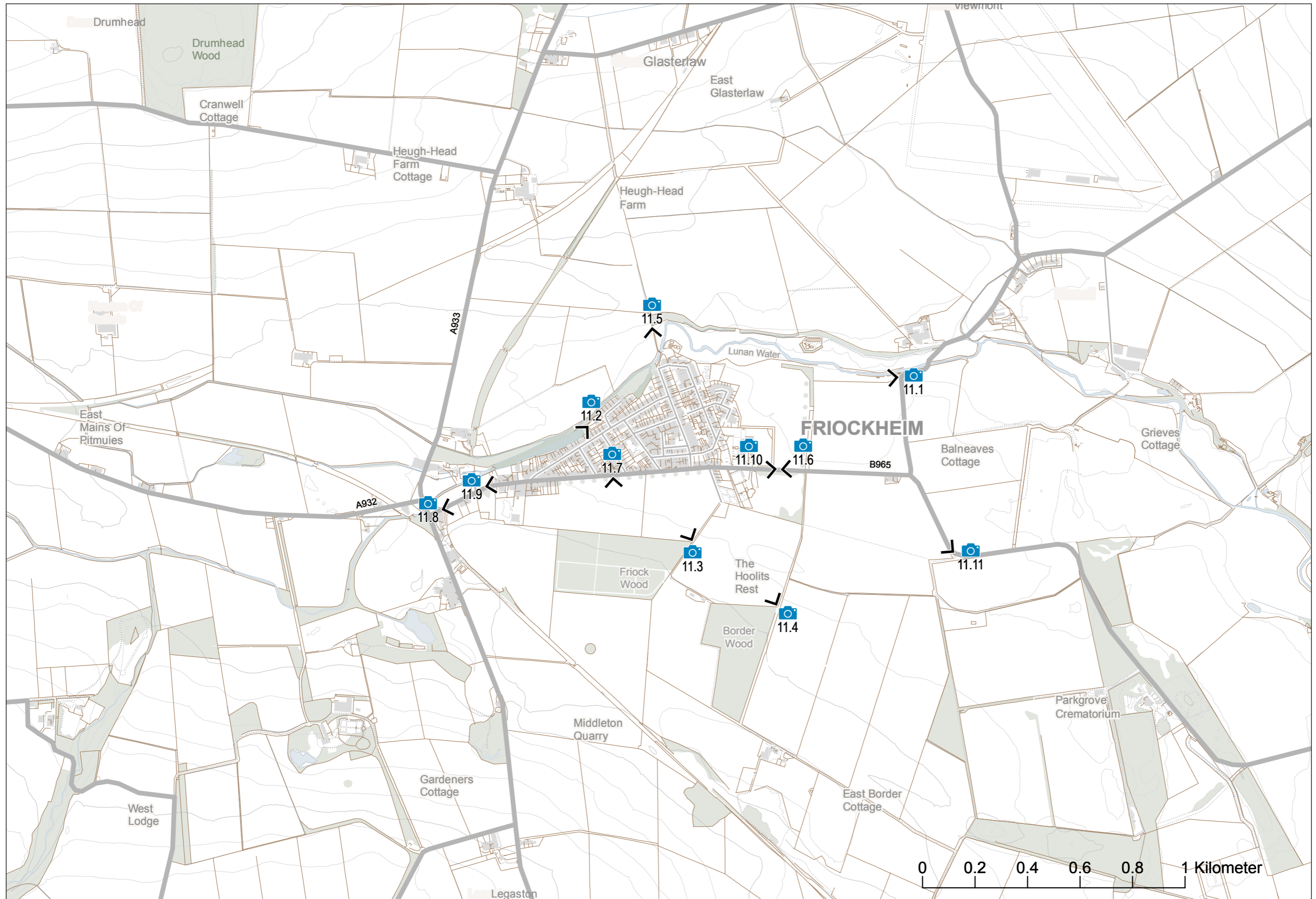


Figure 11.3 Friockheim Key to Analysis of Directions of Growth ([click here to return to text](#))

