

8. Monifieth Landscape Capacity Study

8.1 Landscape Assessment

Natural Heritage Zone (SNH 2002):
Eastern Lowlands

Regional Landscape Character Type (LUC 1997):
Coast with Sand
Dipslope Farmland

Landscape Character Unit (LUC 1997):
Barry Links
South East Angus Lowland

8.1.1 Landscape Character Assessment

The landscape and visual analysis is shown on figure 8.1.

Monifieth straddles two contrasting landscape character types – on the lower ground it is situated within the Coast with Sand type where agricultural land is relatively poor. Where arable farming is possible, fields are of medium size and rectilinear. They tend to be bounded by hedges and dykes, and are often supplemented by fences. Hedgerow trees are also commonly found. Golf courses are a characteristic feature in these landscapes, with Monifieth golf course immediately abutting the settlement to the south east.

As the ground rises to the north, Monifieth is situated within the Dipslope Farmland type where agricultural land is generally very fertile. This landscape is almost entirely arable with fields being medium to large in size, larger than on the Coast with Sand type, being medium to large in size. Field boundaries are commonly absent with others marked by hedges or post and wire fences.

Within the Dipslope Farmland type, woodland in the landscape is scarce due to the intensive nature of farming. Woodland is restricted to hilltops and around larger houses in the landscape, some of which are now within the urban area such as The Grange in the north-west of the settlement. Within the Coast with Sand type, woodland is again limited and is only found on Monifieth Golf Course and Barry Links.

8.1.2 Landscape Setting

Monifieth is situated on the northern shore of the Firth of Tay to the north east of Dundee. It is now part of the larger Dundee conurbation, joining together with the urban areas of Barnhill and Broughty Ferry which are situated to the south west. The former separation between Dundee and Monifieth is marked by the Dighty Water. To the north and south, Monifieth is strongly bounded by its two main transport routes. The A92 to the north and the railway line to the south connect the settlement to other towns along the coast. The northern half of Monifieth is abutted by open agricultural landscape and the southern half by coastal dune links.

The agricultural landscape around the north-eastern edge of Monifieth is strongly undulating and sloping, with the Monifieth Burn, smaller drainage channels and some well defined hedgerows. These undulating landforms are interrupted by the linear escarpment slope, a geomorphologic feature related to a raised beach originating from the last ice-age, which marks the transition between the Dipslope Farmland and the relatively flat coastal plain of the Coast with Sand type.

Monifieth has extensive recreational grounds on the south-eastern edge, as the open flat area around the escarpment and the sea front and dunes areas, which are largely used as a golf course.

Environmental improvements to the seafront were completed in 2002. Monifieth Bay and Barry Links both designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Monifieth Bay is designated for supporting internationally important numbers of Eider Duck. Consequently, it is also a proposed Special Protection Area. Barry Links is noted for its botanical, ornithological, entomological and geological interest. The site is the largest sand dune complex in the United Kingdom and contains unique landforms. Barry Links is also a designated as a Special Area of Conservation.

8.1.3 Settlement Form and Pattern

The old settlement has been built on the geologically flat areas of marine deposited and windblown sand around the area known today as High Street. Up until the end of the eighteenth century Monifieth remained significantly smaller than today. Thereafter, Monifieth grew steadily, supplying agricultural produce to Dundee and later through the spinning of cotton.

The development of Monifieth up the hill to the north began in the early twentieth century but accelerated significantly from the 1960's onwards. Monifieth now occupies almost the entire south-west, south and south-eastern faces of the hill with the urban area now extending north to the brow of the hill. Although Monifieth expanded gradually and over various phases, the town has remained remarkably compact, being densely built up within a well defined outer limit.

A defining feature of the town is the railway line which bounds the settlement to the south and separates the town from the coast. It creates a major obstacle between the town and the seafront. The northern settlement edge is well defined as it relates to a break in topography. It coincides with the ridgeline, which marks the end of the rising ground facing to the south and the sea. North-west of this ridgeline and settlement boundary the ground slopes down and northwards.

The present northern boundary is also marked by the boundaries of the former estate which was originally out of town but is now part of Ashludie Hospital. The estate is now integrated with the town and the original policy woodland and shelterbelts of large mature trees of the estate are preserved and contribute to the strong visual edge to the northern side of the settlement towards the A92.

The older and more central part of the town is an area of rectangular street pattern which has evolved around the High Street. The second oldest part of town to the south has a similar pattern though a slight shift in angle and is aligned with the seafront. Both patterns have streets which are at a perpendicular angle to the seafront and which allow views to the sea as the ground rises.

Many of the more recent extensions to the north and north-west of the settlement have devolved from the traditional pattern up to the point where road layouts are contradictory to the layouts of adjoining areas. Consequently, this has created disconnected parts of the town which are largely impermeable, such as the area around Crow Hill.

8.2 Visual Assessment

Refer to figure 8.3 for key to photographs.

8.2.1 Views Out or Across Settlement

The location of Monifieth on the south to south-east facing slopes of a hill means that the principle views out of or across the settlement are in these directions towards the Firth of Tay and Fife. The town centre or the old town on the flat ground near the bottom of the hill is visually enclosed by the railway and the links. In the areas on rising ground where the streets are perpendicular to the seafront, these create viewing corridors towards the sea. However, there are no key public places from where such views are particularly important. Some houses in north eastern Monifieth enjoy views out to the north-east but the majority of residential development faces inward and is lacking a visual relationship with the surrounding landscape.

8.2.2 Views of Settlement

The principal views of Monifieth from a distance are from northern Fife across the Firth of Tay. From this direction the settlement is viewed as part of the Dundee conurbation. When viewed from the north and north-east, Monifieth presents itself as having its own identity. From higher ground to the north-east, Monifieth presents itself within a setting of rolling green farmland in front of a backdrop of the Tay estuary. Monifieth's skyline is dominated by masses of mature urban woodland.

From the north, such as from the A92, Monifieth is set on the ridgeline and over the hill with only limited views of the settlement. From this direction, Monifieth has a strong visual edge defined by the ridgeline and the mature woodland of Ashludie Hospital and South Grange Farm. From higher ground to the north a backdrop of the sea and the Barry Links frame its setting. (See photo 8.1)

In contrast, the image presented from the west when traveling along the A930 towards Barry is of Monifieth being part of the Dundee conurbation with the continuation of built up area. Similarly, the new development which extends Monifieth northwards up to the A92 on both sides of West Grange Road creates a continuous urban edge along the south side of the A92 from Dundee.

8.2.3 Approaches

Approach from North via U305 (Victoria Street)

This approach as you leave the A92 has a strong open countryside character which suddenly becomes enclosed, leafy and urban in character as one enters the built up area. The combination of topography and the mature trees around the boundary of the Ashludie Hospital site create a strong visual edge to the settlement. (See photos 8.2, 8.3 & 8.4)

Approach from North-East via B962 (Ardestie Road)

The B962 is the most gradual and scenic way to approach Monifieth. Initial views from the higher ground south of the A92 are characterised by strongly undulating farmland with views of the sea. Travelling south-west along the B962 and after passing through a road cutting, views are then characterised by the flat ground along the coast where open green fields, hedgerows,

shelterbelts and golfing greens precede and frame the well defined urban edge which is visible in the distance. Travelling further south-west along the B962 Ashludie Farm then creates a gate or entrance building which precedes the built up area. From this lower area there are no sea views. The entrance to the settlement at this point is marked by steeply rising high ground on the right hand side and flat ground towards the links area on the left. Although the urban edge on the right hand side is marked by a clear alignment of buildings, it is weakened by its contradictory perpendicular position to the strong break in topography at this point. To the left hand side this edge is continued and strengthened by an avenue of mature deciduous trees. (See photos 8.5, 8.6 & 8.7)

Approach from East via A930 (from Carnoustie)

Limited views of the settlement are only possible after the Monifieth Burn is crossed. Even then, views of Buddon Drive and Princes Street are substantially masked by trees and hedgerows. The urban fringe character associated with the golf driving range contributes to the steady transition from a rural to urban character. The substantial number of trees and shrubs creates a strong visual edge. (See photos 8.8 & 8.9)

Approach from the West via A92

When travelling along the A92, Monifieth marks the end of the Dundee conurbation and also marks a sudden change in character from an urban built up area to an open rural landscape. After passing West Grange Road, Monifieth is perceived as being surrounded by countryside. (See photo 8.10)

8.3 Detailed Analysis of Directions of Growth

Refer to figure 8.3 for key to directions analysis below.

8.3.1 North-West (South Grange Care Home to U305 Victoria Street)

This area consists of the remaining agricultural land between the current residential edge and the A92 west of Victoria Street. At present, the most western part is of low value for recreational use and has low landscape character and landscape value sensitivity. This area of land is situated on high and relatively flat ground, as opposed to the strongly undulating, sloping and valley farmland which characterises the surroundings of Monifieth to the north-eastern side.

The existing settlement edge is not very clearly defined, as the new residential development to the west of the South Grange Care Home and the South Grange Care Home itself, protrude from the clearly aligned boundary further to the east. Unlike further to the east, there are no mature trees here which constitute a bounding feature.

This area of land suffers from a lack of connections to its surroundings as it is bounded by the A92 to the north and the South Grange Care Home and the backside of the impermeable and inward facing residential area around Crow Hill to the south. Opportunities to integrate any new development with the existing urban fabric are very limited which in turn would create another detached residential area. However, any new development will have excellent access to the A92.

The western part of this area is also visually impermeable from most sides and there would be no detrimental effects on landscape or settlement features, character or setting arising from development in this area. There are no views of the area from the A92 or cycle and walking paths within the area to the west of the roundabout which is situated to the south of Ethiebeaton. Development which would extend eastwards, as far as up to

the roundabout, would not obstruct any views from this high ground over the sloping valley and undulating fields. Any new development up to the roundabout would also be within the current ridgeline boundary, which defines the edge of the settlement further to the east, and which contributes to the distinct character of the landscape setting.

The area of land to the east of the roundabout is more visible, more permeable and better connected. Furthermore the existing urban edge at this point is more consolidated. The further any new development moves east within this direction of growth, the bigger its landscape impact would be. This is due to increasing visibility from the A92 and due to the walking and cycle paths which run along the terrain on the northern side. Any new development east of the roundabout would not only be more visible but would also obstruct opening views onto the surrounding countryside and eventually the sea.

Design guidance for this area should strive to create a settlement layout that keeps open viewing corridors and creates a visual connection to the hills to the north-west and the lower lying open landscape to the north-east. The creation of a landscape structure should be defined by other elements than the noise and visual protection wall towards the A92, such as a vegetation pattern or network of green corridors. Furthermore, it is recommended that the landscape structure should also create strong access links with the surroundings.

Capacity for development is considered to be high at the western end of this area, decreasing progressively further east.

8.3.2 North (East of U305 Victoria Street)

The edge of the settlement in this direction is well consolidated as it is formed by the edge of the former estate which is now Ashludie Hospital, its large mature trees on the estate boundary and its old policy woodland. This edge also coincides with the ridgeline of the landform, which is one of the characteristic features of the landscape setting of the settlement. In contrast to the terrain of the existing settlement which is south facing and the flat area to the north-west, the terrain adjacent to Monifieth is north facing towards the A92 away from the sea.

A roughly triangular area of land immediately east of Victoria Street (and north of Ashludie Hospital) is relatively flat. The triangular area is visually prominent and would necessitate the settlement being extended beyond the strong edge defined by the trees and woodland at Ashludie Hospital

However, beyond this the area of land to the north of Monifieth is defined by a strong topographical dip which forms a v-shaped valley with drainage channels and the Monifieth Burn which divides the land parcels. This landform and the Monifieth Burn are continued but softened further towards the north-east of Monifieth. Any new development extending the settlement in this direction would protrude from this edge and beyond the triangular area of land, would move the new settlement boundary downhill towards the A92. Any new development in this area would have a strong impact on the topographical setting of the settlement. Extending the settlement beyond the triangular area of land would lead to the development of north facing slopes resulting in an additional change in landscape character.

The entire area is open to views from the A92, the cycle and walking paths and from Victoria Road. These views are important as the location marks the point where the Dundee conurbation visually opens up into the countryside and towards the sea. Any new development, especially on the northern part of the v-shaped valley, would obstruct these views.

The adjoining residential areas such as Broomhill Drive and the grounds of Ashludie Hospital would have better potential than the north-west for a

permeable urban interface with any new development and the creation of links into the existing town centre.

There is a Core Path 188 with an avenue of mature trees along the north-eastern side of this area of land which connects the edge of the Broomhill Drive area to Ardownie Farm and the A92. This pathway along with the mature trees has existed since the very early stages of Monifieth's development. Together with the v-shaped valley and the Monifieth Burn, these would be landscape elements which would constrain any potential new development as they should be conserved and enhanced. However, these landscape features also have the potential to define and consolidate a new permanent settlement boundary whilst also constituting the structural backbone of a future green network. (See photo 8.11)

There would be strong topographical constraints for any new development on this area of land. In the case of developing this area of land, the removal of a very characteristic landform by levelling works should be avoided.

Overall, capacity for urban extension to the north is considered to be low, with the greatest capacity existing on the triangular area immediately to the east of Victoria Street (and north of Ashludie Hospital). Capacity is lowest in relation to the the v-shaped valley.

8.3.3 North-East (North-East of Buddon Drive and North of B962 Ardestie Road)

The landscape to the north-east of Monifieth is of high landscape value, due to its characteristic undulating topography and the distinct escarpment of the raised beach. This area of land has picturesque landscape features of agricultural heritage such as planted drainage channels and the Monifieth Burn, well defined tree avenues and hedgerows.

When viewing this area from the north-west it is part of the visual opening over the countryside and towards the sea after leaving the Dundee conurbation. Any new development within this area would largely obstruct views to the sea from the higher ground to the north-west.

As this area is situated on fairly high ground, any new development would be highly visible and fairly prominent for views from the higher ground and the approach road to the north east. Any new development within this area would have a strong impact on the setting of the settlement and would compromise the generous countryside setting of the settlement from this viewpoint.

The existing settlement edge in this direction is defined by modestly sized residential development which, depending on the height of the viewpoint, allows for a view of the Monifieth skyline with its large trees and the Firth of Tay beyond. Any new development in this direction would obstruct this setting with a view of buildings in the foreground rather than the settlement on the horizon. If this area was to be developed then any new development should ideally not protrude an alignment with Ashludie Farm and be low in height. Capacity for urban extension is therefore considered to be low.

8.3.4 East (between B962 Ardestie Road and A930)

The area to the south-east of Ardestie Road (B962) is characterised by flat ground, slightly enclosed by the escarpment of the higher ground to the north and the links to the east. The area has high recreational value as it is intensely used for golfing and walking. The area is also of high landscape value with landscape features of agricultural heritage like the Monifieth Burn, existing tree avenues and hedgerows, and a very distinct topography which is very characteristic and special to the area.

Due to the low ground in this area any new development would be less prominent when the settlement is viewed from higher ground to the north

and north-east, obstructing less of the horizon of the whole settlement. However, from closer locations on lower ground such as approaching on B962 or the A930, the visual and landscape impact would be highly detrimental and would compromise the generous character of the open green fields which characterise the setting of Monifieth on this side of the settlement.

However, one advantage of the east as a direction of growth would be that the location would allow for a better integration of the new urban extension with the original settlement core and could link into its pattern and the original geometry of the settlement.

There is high capacity for new development on the field closest to the junction of Ardestie Road and A930 which represents an area of un-urbanised ground almost within the general settlement boundary. This area is well bounded by an avenue of mature trees along a track. This feature is of high landscape value and constitutes a boundary which is aligned with the surrounding settlement edges. Otherwise, capacity for urban extension to the east is considered to be low.

8.4 Conclusion

The highest capacity in terms of landscape would be clearly the north-west of Monifieth, where landscape and visual impact arising from settlement extension would be very low. This applies to the area west of the roundabout which is situated to the south of Ethiebeaton.

Settlement extensions which would be located further to the east would be increasingly visible from the north-west and north-east and would gradually compromise the strong visual edge of the settlement. The higher flat ground includes a triangular area adjoining the grounds of Ashludie Hospital which marks a threshold within the topographical constraints for development. North-west of this line development would untypically cross the ridge-line and spread downhill. This would strongly compromise the established setting of the settlement and its landscape features. Any development eastward should ideally not be considered before capacity to the west is exhausted.

Although a development extension into the v-shaped valley of the Monifieth Burn would mean a sacrificial approach in landscape and visual terms, it seems a likely long-term scenario if continued urban extension is required.

The v-shaped valley of the Monifieth Burn and the ancient path with mature trees which links the settlements edge to the A92, are landscape features with strong potential to form a new permanent edge and form a major structural component of the settlements future green corridor and open space network.

The agricultural landscape to the north-east of Monifieth is of high landscape value. Its characteristic undulating topography and its picturesque hedgerows and tree avenues are an important part of the settlements setting and its openness allows for views of the sea. The distinct escarpment of a raised beach and the flat ground beneath are characteristic geomorphologic features which are special to the area. The generous green openness creates a counterweight to the densely built-up area to the south-west of the settlement. Development on higher ground in this direction would prominently affect this landscape setting, especially the skyline with the Tay beyond. If urban extension is intended it should be subject to scale restrictions and align with existing landmarks such as Ashludie Farm. Furthermore, on lower ground development would compromise the spacious and open character of the flat landscape, which is highly valued for recreation by the inhabitants of Monifieth.



8.1 Monifieth from Ardownie



8.2 Approach via U305 (Victoria Street)



8.3 Approach via U305 (Victoria Street)



8.4 Approach via U305 (Victoria Street)



8.5 Approach via B962 (Ardownie Road)



8.6 Approach via B962 (Ardownie Road)



8.7 Approach via B962 (Ardownie Road)



8.8 Approach via A930 (from Carnoustie)



8.9 Monifieth and Ardestie Links from A930



8.10 Monifieth from A92 Cycle Path (Core Path 187)



8.11 Approach by Core Path 188



8.12 Approach by Core Path 188

Figure 8.1 Monifieth Landscape and Visual Analysis

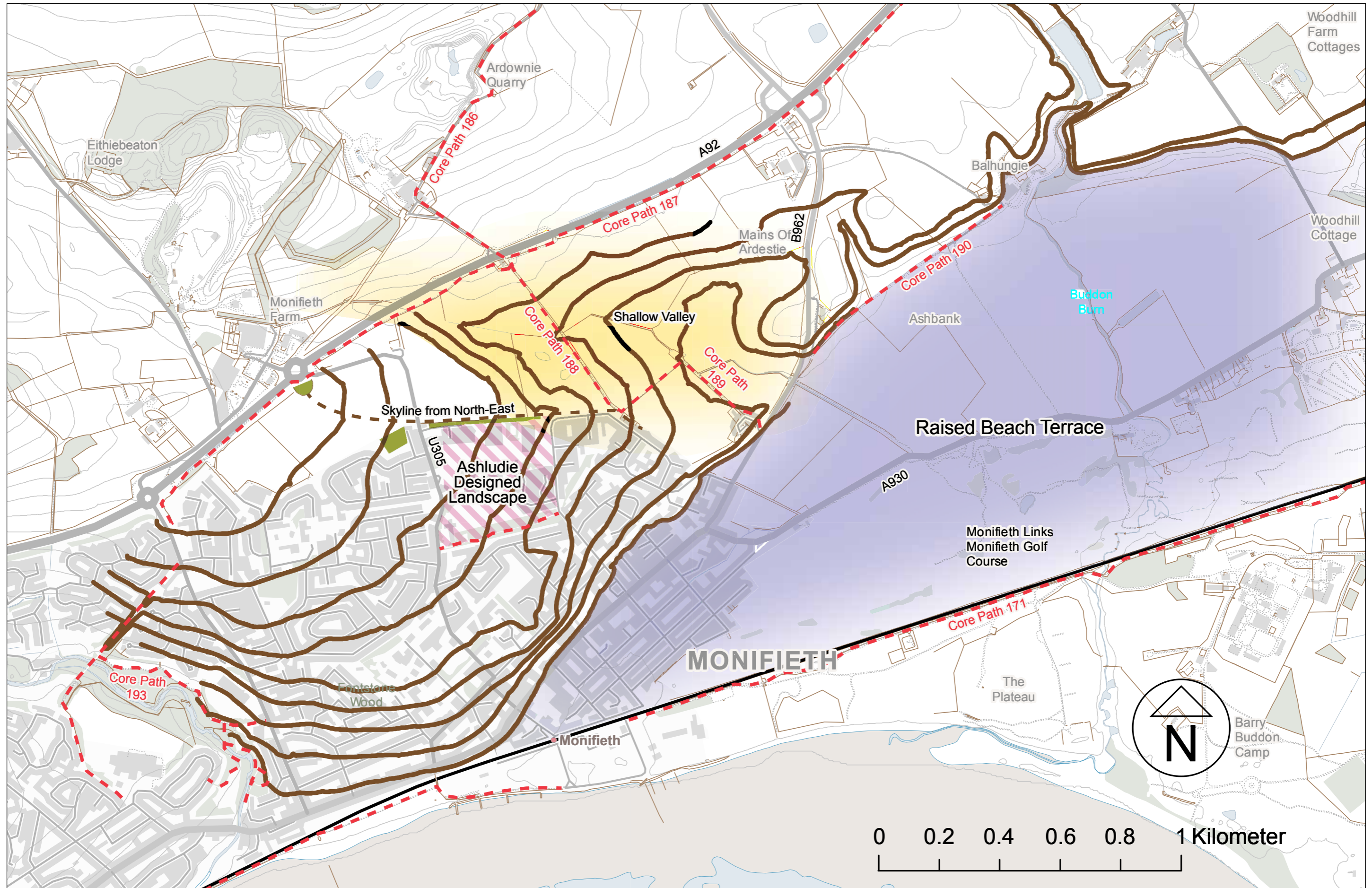


Figure 8.2 Monifieth Key to Photographs

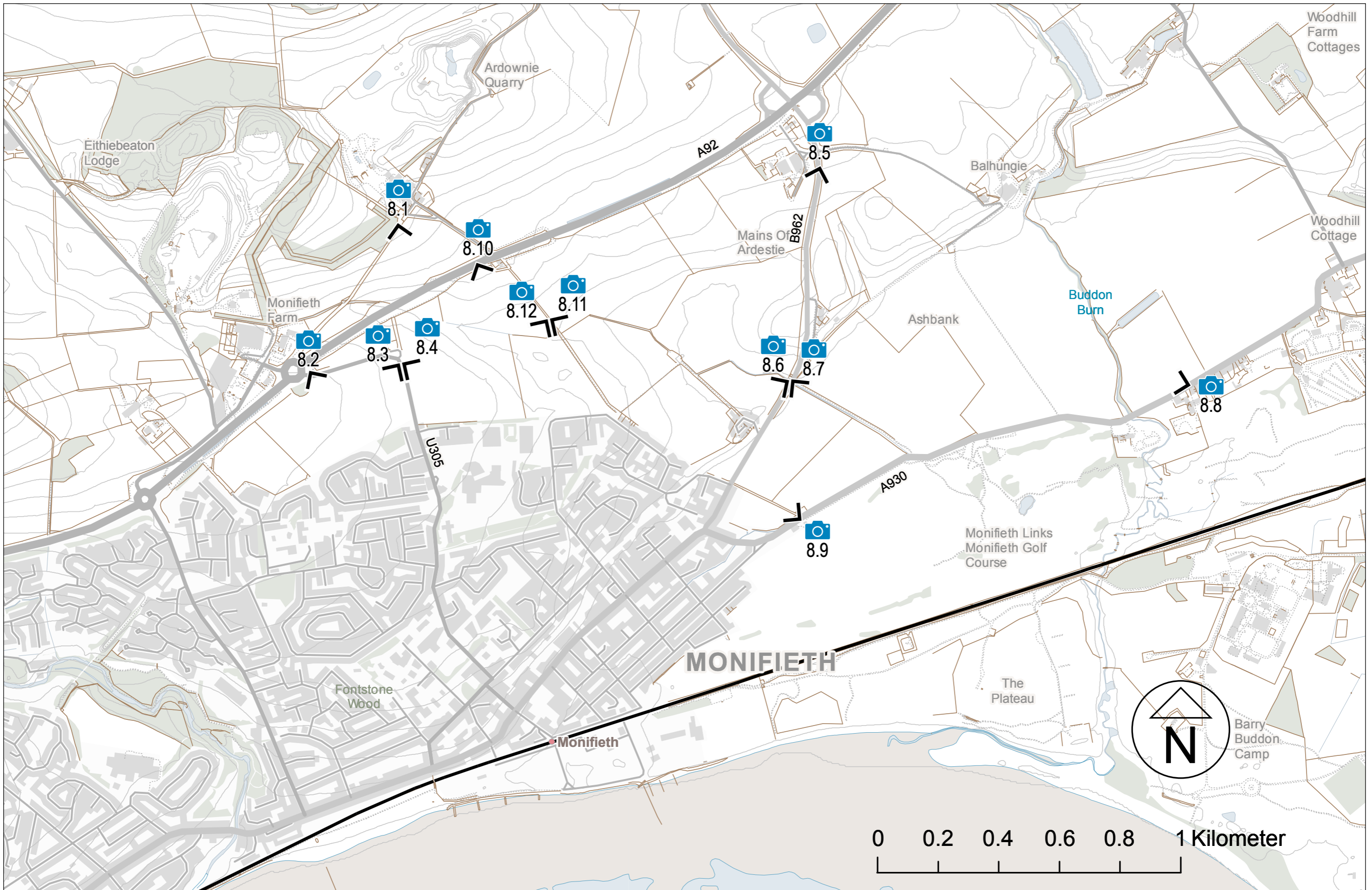


Figure 8.3 Monifieth Key to Analysis of Directions of Growth

