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9. Montrose Landscape Capacity Study (including Hillside & Ferryden)

9.1 Landscape Assessment

Natural Heritage Zone (SNH 2002):

Eastern Lowlands

Regional Landscape Character Type (LUC 1997):

Coast with Sand

Coast with Cliffs

Lowland Basin

Broad Valley Lowland

Dipslope Farmland

Landscape Character Unit (LUC 1997):

Montrose

Usan

Montrose Basin

Strathmore

SE Angus Lowland

9.1.1 Landscape Character Assessment

The landscape and visual analysis is shown on figure 9.1.

Montrose is situated between three distinct landscape character types: Coast with Sand, Lowland Basin and Dipslope Farmland.

The town is located on the east coast of Angus on the north shore of the River South Esk as it enters the North Sea.

To the west lies the extensive tidal Montrose Basin which represents the unique Landscape Character Area of Lowland Basin. The Basin is believed to be the remnant of a much larger coastal bay and a result of fluvio-glacial land formations after the last ice-age. It forms an extensive rounded estuarine tidal basin of largely three kilometres in diameter and it connects to the sea by a channel of the River South Esk south of Montrose.

The tidal nature of this landscape creates a diverse shoreline landscape of mudflats, salt marshes, reed swamp and shrub combined with unimproved grassland and adjacent arable land and provides a diverse habitat mosaic of high ecological value. The Basin and adjoining land have been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest for both, wildlife and geological stratigraphy associated with the post-glacial shoreline, a Ramsar Site under the Ramsar Convention, and a Special Protection Area under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

The coastal landscape extending from the River South Esk channel northwards beyond the River North Esk, is characterised as Coast with Sand. Behind the sandy beaches lies a pronounced dune line which in turn gives way to links grassland. The links grassland contains typical land uses such as the Montrose golf course and agricultural pasture. It also contains informal recreational grassland areas as well as playing fields and a former airfield. Despite its mixture of land uses the southern links area maintains its unifying character of open grassland. The northern portion of the links known as Charleton and Kinnaber Links contains extensive areas of plantation and semi-natural woodland which has created a distinct character. The Council has adopted a Shoreline Management Plan which may restrict significant industrial, commercial or residential development within the proximity of the present dune crest line.

North and south of Montrose Basin are escarpment slopes which are part of the Dipslope Farmland Landscape Character Area as also is the higher ground beyond the escarpment slopes. Exposed agricultural land with hedgerows and hedgerow trees, a rolling topography, field patterns and areas of woodland create a distinctive character. The Tayside Landscape Character Assessment has classified the area to the north of Montrose Basin as Broad Valley Lowland. The area is considered to have a character which more closely resembles that of Dipslope Farmland and has therefore been reclassified for the purposes of this study.

Especially to the north of Montrose and Montrose Basin there is a strong presence of untypical hedgerows and deciduous and plantation woodland, some of it related to designed landscapes set around historic buildings. The House of Dun is the most notable with extensive policy woodland, parklands, avenues, gardens and field boundary areas. Designed landscapes also exist around the buildings of Sunnyside Hospital, Rosemount (now demolished), the former Charleton House (now demolished) and Craig House, to the South of the Basin. Rosemount Estate is now managed as an informal recreation area and also the Charleton area is popular for recreation.

To the west of the Basin a relatively flat agricultural landscape forms the floodplain and valley of the River South Esk, dominated by relatively luxuriant hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

To the south of Montrose Basin the Dipslope Farmland graduates into a Coast with Cliffs character type at its eastern end. The coast of the Usan character unit is rockier than cliffs. Hedgerows are replaced with drystone dykes and trees and woodlands become scarce. There is a popular coastal walk east of Ferryden around Scurdie Ness to Usan (Core Path 095).

9.1.2 Landscape Setting

The town is located on the flat ground of a coastal sand bar between the basin and the sea and on the eastern end of the large bowl-shaped topography of the basin and its escarpment slopes. The town is contained by water of the basin on the west and the sea to the east side with a connecting channel on the southern edge of town around which the industrial port is situated.

The railway line and the station contain and bound Montrose to the west and obstruct the town's direct access to the Basin.

There is a large area of lower ground to the north-west of Montrose before the ground rises steeply. The landscape is rolling agricultural land and is framed by the embankments of the used and disused railway lines to the north and east.

To the north and north-east of Montrose the industrial edge of the town borders the wooded rural landscape around Charleton Farm and the coniferous woodland around Kinnaber Links, which separate the town from the River North Esk.

Immediately to the south of the River South Esk Channel the ground rises steeply where the village of Ferryden is set into the slope, with the exception of the Inchbraoch area which is a sandbar associated with the fluvio-glacial sandbar formation that the town is built on.

Between the eastern edge of Montrose and the coast a large band of links landscape forms an open recreational landscape between the town and the beach and the dunes of the coast with sand. This area is in a central location which is easily accessible from the town. It is extensively used for recreation and has established uses such as the golf links, playing fields and a caravan site. The northern part of the links landscape appears flatter than the surrounding links and might have been artificially flattened as it has a former airfield on it, which is now a re-naturalized landscape and also but more informally used for recreation.

Montrose has two adjacent settlements on the northern and southern escarpment slopes, Hillside to the north and Ferryden to the south. These villages almost merge with Montrose but still have their own identity. Ferryden, originally a fishing village and located on a narrow strip along the River South Esk Channel south of Montrose, almost merged with Montrose when Inchbraoch area south of the River South Esk channel was developed with an the industrial port and residential development. Hillside to the north is still separated by a short undeveloped stretch along the Loan Dykes Road to the north and the wooded area around Charleton Farm.

9.1.3 Settlement Form and Pattern

Development began as a fishing and agricultural centre in twelfth century Montrose and was centred along what is now known as High Street and the port area on the north shore of the River South Esk. Around the fifteenth century development had linked the port area to the town. Expansion into the links area to the east started in the eighteenth century and culminated in the development of The Mid Links with its gardens, trees and Georgian terraces between 1875 and 1925. The original bridge across the River South Esk was built around 1800. In the 1880's a large section of the eastern Montrose Basin was 'reclaimed' to facilitate the building of the railway. The West End Park was created at this time along the line of the burgh wall.

The absence of other options has meant that the expansion of Montrose during the twentieth century has almost entirely been to the north, with new housing areas such as Borrowfield and large scale industrial development filling in the land between the A937 and A92 northern approach roads. Montrose was formerly bounded by the railway to the west but recently residential development has protruded this traditional boundary and colonised part of the open fields to the north-west.

Hillside is situated on the edge of the northern Dipslope Farmland as the ground rises away from the Lowland Basin to the north. The policies of larger buildings and gardens of smaller houses together contain a large number of trees. Thus despite the prominence of the location of Hillside, its luxurious appearance complements the rural landscape. Hillside generally has a south-facing outlook and landscape setting on the escarpment slope. It is separated from Montrose by undeveloped land which together with its distinctive character gives it a separate identity from Montrose.

On the southern bank of the River South Esk the village of Ferryden is located on the transition between Coast with Cliffs and Dipslope Farmland. The eastern end of Ferryden has preserved the coastal character of the traditional fishing village of a compact alignment of residences terraced up the hill, facing over the sea. This part of Ferryden relies upon the topography for its landscape setting. Western Ferryden on is located on gentler slopes and consists of larger scale more recent development. Ferryden is only separated from Montrose by the River South Esk channel and linked to the town by the Inchbraoch area, which is built on the sandbank south of the River South Esk.

9.2. Visual Assessment

Refer to figure 9.2 for key to photographs.

9.2.1 Views Out or Across Settlement

Whilst the location of Montrose on flat ground may limit the opportunities for views out, where views are possible, both across the Basin and across the links, the flat topography enables extensive views. The coastal outcrop of Scurdie Ness and the escarpment slope with the village of Ferryden across the South Esk River channel are visible from several locations around the port area and the beach of Montrose.

9.2.2 Views of Settlement

The town of Montrose and its immediate landscape setting have a very large area of visual influence as the openness of the Basin allow for distant views of Montrose and its landscape backdrop from the high ground to the north and south, from a large area of lower ground around the Basin and the open areas around the links along the coast.

Panoramic views of Montrose are possible from a number of vantage points in recreational locations such as Montrose links, Ferryden lighthouse path and the walking path around the western edge of the Basin. From most of these viewpoints Montrose appears to be contained at the eastern end of the Basin with the steeple dominating the skyline. (See photos 9.1 & 9.2)

9.2.3 Approaches

Approach from West via A934 (Forfar)

Whilst views of Montrose and Hillside become possible after Carcary some eight kilometres from Montrose, panoramic views Montrose on the east end of the Basin and its characteristic steeple skyline open up after Bonnyton. The approach is open and rural with small groups of farms and cottages, stretches of roadside hedges, tree avenues and woodland along the road. The aspect to the north and the Basin is generally low-rise and open whereas on the rising ground to the south of the approach road there are stretches of woodland. Views of the Basin become partly obstructed when entering the suburban village of Rossie Mills, where the A934 Forfar Road joins with the A92 (Arbroath Road). On this stretch low houses and gardens alternate with stretches of open banks whereas the south side of the road remains relatively rural and open. A thick woodland corridor separates Rossie Mill from the entry of Montrose where the road passes under the viaduct bridge. (See photo 9.3)

Approach from South-West via A92 (Arbroath)

The A92 approaches Montrose from the high ground to the south-west. The agricultural landscape is open and exposed, opening up panoramic views over the Basin and its backdrop. Then an increasing drop and a turn in the road which from here is enclosed by vegetation along with a bungalow to the left side of the road mark a change from the open rural character and suggest the proximity of the town. Views over the Basin are then mostly screened by a large hedge along the left side of the road and in the distance glimpses of the town and the steeple framed by trees and hedges to either side of the road become visible. Thereafter an estate entry to the right and bungalow roofs on lower ground to the left side frame a clear view of the town, the bridge and the steeple in the view ahead, before the A92 is joined by the A934 in the village of Rossie Mill. The relatively low bungalows with open gardens of Rossie Mill enable open views over the Basin and the town. Although the hedge; garden planting and the bungalows create a suburban character on this stretch, and some features like a larger spruce plantation obstruct some views, the developments are generally low in height and widely spaced; enabling views across the Basin before a dense woodland corridor forms a separation with the entry to the town of Montrose. (See photo 9.4)

Approach from South via C45 (Craig Road)

The C45 approaches Montrose from the high ground to the south-west. The agricultural landscape is open and exposed with a convex topography, roadside hedges and tree avenues. After passing the small villages of Kirkton of Craig and Barns of Craig, panoramic distant views over the Basin and the town open up. Ferryden appears to be tucked below on the lower slopes of the north facing scarp slope. The railway cutting with the vegetation alongside it creates a strongly defined visual edge to Ferryden and creates a distinct transition between the open rural landscape and the village. (See photo 9.5)

Approach from South via U477 (Scotston of Usan)

The U477 approaches Montrose from the high ground to the south. The agricultural landscape is open and exposed with no roadside vegetation and with distant panoramic views of the Highland Boundary fault in the distance. Panoramic views over Montrose, the harbour, the steeple and the Basin with the roofs of Ferryden in the foreground become visible when approaching the Barns of Craig crossroad. The railway cutting with the vegetation along side it creates a defined visual edge to Ferryden and a distinct transition between the open rural landscape and the village. (See 9.6)

Approach from South-East via U478 (Usan Road)

The U478 approaches Montrose from the high ground to the south. The agricultural landscape is open and exposed with glimpses of the Highland Boundary fault in the distance. The village of Ferryden is preceded by longer walled stretch of a grouping of large residential modern properties to the left hand side of the road including Inchbrayock and Craigview House. Before the crossing with the Barns of Craig road, these are temporarily obstructing any distant views. Panoramic distant views towards the Highland boundary fault open after north of the Barns of Craig crossroads. The roofs of Ferryden become visible in the foreground but views of the town are largely screened by Ferryden Farm and the large trees around it. After the farm, panoramic views of Ferryden, Inchbrayock Parish Church, the viaduct, Montrose and its harbour open up. The more distant views are possible due to the undeveloped open field north-west of Ferryden farm. (See photo 9.7 & 9.8)

Approach from West via A935 (Brechin Road)

The A935 approaches Montrose from the lower ground to the east along the northern edge of Montrose Basin. The landscape is open and rural and the west end of Montrose Basin becomes visible after passing Balwylo Cottages and Farm at Bridge of Dun. Views are often screened and not as extensive and panoramic as views from the higher ground. Closer to Montrose, the Basin is screened completely. From Tayock onwards the stretch between the road and the Basin is occupied by a series of different uses such as Tayock Farm, a small group of suburban residences facing onto the road, a caravan storage park enclosed by spruce-planting, and two cemeteries one very wooded, facing onto the road with a long stonewall and large overhanging trees. Along this stretch, the north side of the road is rural and open with the houses of Hillside and Montrose visible on the horizon between the fields and patches of woodland, with the new housing development at the angle of the railway line and Brechin road being visually more prominent and in the foreground compared to the rest of the settlements. The residential area of Dunrossie appears to the right after the cemetery and shortly after a series of houses with gardens to the left side of the road. These are followed by a caravan park, single residences, new housing estates and stretches of vegetation to both sides of the road until it crosses over the railway to enter the residential areas of suburban Montrose.

Development westwards of the railway is mostly limited to the south of Brechin road and contained in the stretch between Tayock Farm and the railway bridge. Only after the cemetery some development appears to the north of the road which until this point remained rural and open. The beginning of development on the northern side of Brechin road is framed by the vegetation of gardens and Littlemill House and aligned with the Tayock Burn. (See photo 9.9)

Approach from West via C39 (Dubton Road)

The C39 road approaches Montrose on the lower ground south of Hillside parallel to the north of the remaining embankment of the former railway. The approach road crosses a very rural area through patches of deciduous woodland and past farms and single properties. Whereas from near Kirkhill there are distant views of the town and the church steeple across the fields, views south of Hillside are screened by the embankment of the disused railway line. The well bounded southern edge of Hillside overlooking the fields is visible to the north and gradually joins the road in the distance where the Dubton road joins with the C37 (Main Road). (See photo 9.10)

Approach from North-West via C37 (Main Road)

When approaching Hillside from the high ground to the north-west the landscape is rural and exposed with fields and woodland. The woodland of Rosemount Estate lies to the north of Hillside and is joined by the Main road running along its edge. From this stretch there are panoramic views over Montrose and the Basin, thereafter trees and residences to the right hand side of the road obstruct these views when Hillside is entered. The entry to Hillside from this approach is marked by the Rosemount Estate woodland vegetation with its stone wall enclosing the road to the north and the panoramic views over Montrose and the Basin to the south. After passing through Hillside, the road joins with the C39 (Dubton Road) and the A937 (Marykirk Road). Thereafter a passage under the railway-line marks the end of Hillside, where the road turns into Loan Dykes Road (see below). (See photo 9.11)

Approach from North via U439 (Hospital Road)

Hillside begins when reaching the top of the hill; the entry is marked by a line of country cottages looking over a field framed by woodland. The rest of Hillside is not visible but the residences are continued along the left side of the road with a modern housing estate before reaching the entrance of Sunnyside Hospital. There is a long woodland corridor between the Hospital and the grounds of Rosemount School before entering the centre of the village. There is a rural and exposed character to this end of Hillside. Only a line of houses on the left hand side and a single house across the field are visible between fields and woodland, before entering the woodland enclosed street between the hospital and the Rosemount School. Only after this stretch, has one the feeling of being in the village of Hillside. The exposed summit also marks the end of the village topographically as none of the buildings cross the ridge. The rural and exposed character is more impressive when leaving Hillside as crossing the summit opens up panoramic distant views over Aberdeenshire and across the North Esk valley to the north-east. The edge of the village is assymmetric with the frontages of the cottages facing onto the open field to the west of the road. These cottages are of particular architectural quality and have rural character which makes them a suitable and special feature in this rural exposed context. With the exception of a former reservoir which is surrounded by trees now to the east side of the road, development stops before the ridgeline. (See photo 9.12)

Approach from North via A937 (Marykirk Road)

When approaching from the north the road passes through rural landscape before curving around and mounting the hill on which hillside is built. On the approach there are roadside hedges and tree avenues on both sides of the road. At the east-end of the Sunnyside grounds the road passes through woodland and then re-descends as the woodland opens up and some residences appear on the woodland edge to the left hand side. After exiting the woodland views over the wooded farmland on the northern edge of Montrose, the prominent industrial landmark of the distillery and the sea open up to the left hand side across the open field to the east of the road which allows for these unobstructed views. The road at this edge curves around the residential area to the right hand side, to the northwest of the road. The road here marks the end of development and creates a well aligned edge to Hillside whilst the open field to the south-east of the road allows for these unobstructed views over Montrose and the sea creating a sense of visual drama when coming over the Hill and out of the woodland into Hillside by the approach road. (See photo 9.13)

Approach from North via A92 (Charleton Road)

Charleton Road approaches Montrose over flat lower ground parallel to the coast from the north. The landscape is agricultural and notably wooded, the road is mostly part or fully enclosed by deciduous and some plantation woodland. The area around Charleton Farm to the west of the road stands out for its large amount of deciduous woodland that covers the area forming corridors and large areas, enclosing fields. Together with a long stone wall on the west side of the road, these elements form a fairly unspoilt rural wooded character to this stretch of the approach. South of the former estate entrance for Charleton, the area to the west of the road becomes industrial in character. The area to the east of the road becomes increasingly open with links vegetation, whereas the industrial character on the west-side of the road increases, with large structures cranes and blue sheds being visible from far. The blue vertical shed of the oil and gas industry has become a landmark of this approach to Montrose. North of the blue shed the road separates industrial development to the west from the open landscape to the east and forms a clear and linear boundary to development. The sewage works are located in the links area to the east, making an unobvious low rise exception to this division. Then a long stretch with hedge-screened industrial uses to the east side and the backsides of suburban residential developments leads finally into town where the road meets the A92 and the Victoria Bridge. (See Montrose approach via A937 - Loan Dykes) (See photo 9.14)

Montrose Approach via A937 (Loan Dykes)

Loan Dykes Road is a long undeveloped stretch which separates Hillside from Montrose.

To the west-side there is an open field which is bounded by the railway embankment running parallel to the road, to the east side there is a continuous stonewall for most of the stretch with a wide band of large deciduous trees behind it, limiting visibility in this direction. When coming from Hillside there are views of Montrose and the steeple in the distance across the field. After this stretch a row of suburban residences on the left seems to indicate the arrival in Montrose. These are followed by a long stretch of larger scale retail and industrial plots. A long stretch of hedge planting screens an industrial site to the left with the backside of a residential area on the right side of the road. The stretch is dominated by fencing and vegetation. The area eventually becomes a bit more open and residential and then crosses the Victoria Bridge over the former railway line. More large scale retail and parking on the left side, walls and backs of residences maintain a transitional and fragmented urban character until the crossing with Broomfield Road where the older town begins and uninterrupted housing frontages form a more coherent urban streetscape. (See photo 9.15)

Hillside Approach via A937 (Loan Dykes)

When coming from Montrose into Hillside the railway embankment and trees along the approach road screen views of Hillside. There is an open undeveloped stretch separating Montrose and Hillside. To the west-side there is an open field which is bounded by the railway embankment running parallel to the road, to the east side there is a continuous stonewall for most of the stretch with a wide band of large deciduous trees behind it, limiting visibility in this direction. At the end of this stretch country cottages face over the fields to the left, followed by a few bungalows. Hillside is then entered by passing under the railway bridge. This undeveloped more rural stretch along with the gate-like feature of the railway underpass create a well defined entrance to Hillside and clear separation between Hillside and Montrose. (See photo 9.16)

9.3 Detailed Analysis of Directions of Growth

Refer to figure 9.3 for key to directions analysed below.

9.3.1 North-West

To the north-west of Montrose the landscape is open and agricultural on slightly rolling but relatively low ground between the edge of the Basin and the northern escarpment slope. The area consists of open agricultural fields and being highly modified. Despite this, it has some remaining landscape features such as the small Tayock Burn; the overgrown abandoned railway embankments, a pump house with a pond with a small woodland around it. There are also a few single buildings and farmsteads with groups of large trees around them, such as Borrowfield Farm Cottage. (See photos 9.17 & 9.18)

When considered on a large scale, the area forms part of the remaining open landscape corridor between Montrose and Hillside maintaining a rural landscape between the northern edge of the Basin and the coast, stretching from the area north-west of the railway across the area around Charleton Farm and the links landscape.

Montrose was historically contained by the railway at the east end of Montrose Basin. Some development has spread around the north-eastern edge of the Basin, but was generally limited to the area on the edge of the Basin south of the A935 (Brechin road). Sleepy Hillock Cemetery forms a large part of this developed band along the northern edge of the Basin. With large mature trees and stone walls around it, it is an enclosed, highly maintained park landscape it marks the end of the residential suburbs directly adjacent to the town along the A935. More recently the settlement has expanded beyond the railway into the open rural area, north of the A935 to the north-west of the railway.

With existing development along the northern edge of the Basin and the expansive flat ground to the north of this developed stretch, there is capacity to accommodate residential development in the area west of the railway. The advantage of development on this relatively flat lower ground is that it would have less impact upon the landscape setting of both Montrose and the Basin then development on the escarpment slopes to the north and south of the Basin.

However the landscape is open and rural and does not offer predefined pocket areas for development to fill. It is sensitive to urban development sprawling out into open fields without containment. The new edge of the incomplete residential development is lacking definition by landscape features, with buildings and newly created landforms protruding into the open fields of the agricultural surrounding landscape. From several viewpoints the large new suburban houses are highly visible on the rural edge of Montrose.

For both, the framing and integrating of the new development into the landscape and also to contain and avoid development spreading around the northern edge of the Basin, a new and more permanent physical settlement edge should be established within the existing landscape context.

Although the main sensitivity of the rural landscape to the north-west of Montrose is its openness there are a number of rural landscape features which are sensitive and need preservation such as small woodlands, green corridors, wetlands and watercourses. There are no highly sensitive landscape features which could not be integrated with development to the east side of the Tayock Burn.

The eastern edge of the Sleepyhillock Cemetery, which marks the end of suburban houses along the A935 (Brechin road), coincides with the arrival of the Tayock Burn from the north. The Burn forms a continuous landscape feature that crosses the open fields to the north-west of Montrose with potential to form a landscape edge and contain future development. The Tayock Burn could benefit from being restored as part of a green network increasing its ecological and recreational value, creating the necessary transitional landscape feature between the built area and the open fields.

The setting of the Basin would experience negative visual impact if development protruded the western limit of the Tayock Burn and spread north of the cemetery. The preferred direction of development after reaching this boundary would be an extension northward, whilst respecting established landscape features such as the pond and small woodland near the pump house and the green corridors that have established such as the disused railway embankments. It is considered that there medium capacity for urban extension east of the Tayock Burn and low capacity west of the Burn.

In order to maintain the open landscape corridor between the Basin and the coast, but also to maintain a separation between Hillside and Montrose, the preservation of an area of open rural landscape to the north of Borrowfield Farm Cottages would be desirable. This rural stretch south of Hillside forms an important part of the separate identity of Hillside and also of the rural setting of the town of Montrose when seen from higher ground to the north and south. The successful integration of development with the towns rural setting depends on the quality of the new settlement boundary towards the open rural landscape. If development expands in this general area it should strive to make reference to the existing landscape features as a framework of containment and integrate them as boundaries, screens, green corridors and recreational features.

9.3.2 North

To the North of Montrose the ground is relatively low and flat, gradually more undulating towards the north. The landscape is mainly agricultural with remains of former Charleton Estate such as long stretches of stonewalls and large patches of deciduous and some plantation woodland. The area between the approach roads A937 and A92 has gradually been built up with some residential development but thereafter mainly industrial development has expanded northward, almost merging into the woodland area around Charleton Farm and the former Charleton Estate.

North of Charleton Farm the landscape is open and rural with the exception of the Glenesk Distillery south of Hillside, which creates an outpost to the otherwise contained industrial areas south of Charleton Farm. It creates a large scale industrial landmark in this otherwise rural character area. The south-eastern area around Charleton Farm is characterised by groups and patches of large deciduous mature trees of high landscape value, which form pockets of enclosed fields within the loose woodland framework remaining from the former estate. The area has rural landscape qualities which contrast with the nearby industrial development and create an undeveloped wooded landscape buffer zone between Montrose and Hillside. This allows for a landscape corridor between the Basin and the coast to the north of the town. It

forms a rural woodland frame and buffer containing and screening industrial development towards the rural north, absorbing and back-clothing industrial structures for example when looking west from the links.

The open fields surrounding Charleton farm and the distillery form part of the rural setting of Montrose within scenic views when approaching the town on the A937 road. The open field to the east of the A937 (Marykirk Road) allows for unobstructed views from this approach.

Charleton Farm is a popular visitor attraction with a shop, a restaurant with a terrace, a large playground, fruit picking and other activities. The farm is partly enclosed by mature deciduous woodland and partly opening onto the surrounding undulating fields with an open view of the distillery. This farm as a visitor attraction relies on its rural context and setting of the surrounding woodland and fields.

The A937 (Loan Dykes) between Hillside and Montrose is lined by a long stone wall and large mature trees on the east side, which create a visual filter to the field beyond but also constitute a strong landscape feature. On the west side of the road is an open field bounded by the railway embankment. Although this stretch is mostly undeveloped its character is slightly suburban and enclosed. It creates a distinct separation between Hillside and Montrose which would be compromised if the stretch would be developed. It is also part of the landscape corridor between the Basin and the sea. For these reasons, the area has high landscape character sensitivity. The area is however visually contained by the railway embankment, road, wall and trees and therefore of lower visual sensitivity. Overall, capacity is considered to be low west of the A937.

Development within the fields to the east of the A937 (west and south-west of the Charleton Farm) would be significantly screened from by the stone wall and trees which line the east side of the road. However, the raised topography; central location; and lack of screening to the north makes them prominent when seen from the higher ground to the north around Hillside towards the sea and Montrose. Development would erode the sense of containment which the rural woodland buffer provides to the northern fringe of Montrose. Whilst the built area of Montrose would appear closer to Hillside, there would nevertheless remain sufficient visual separation to retain the separate identity of Hillside. The eastern of the two fields is more visually prominent when viewed from the north, but it may be more capable of being accessed from within the existing business development. The western field, whilst less visually prominent, may require the breaching of the wall and trees along the A937 for access which may lessen the perceived separation between Montrose and Hillside. Visual sensitivity is greatest on the more elevated and northern parts of both fields. The visual sensitivity of these areas reduces capacity for urban expansion to moderate.

The fields between the A92 and Charleton Farm, form the grounds at the entrance of the former Charleton estate and are entirely enclosed by large mature trees and a stone wall towards the road. This entrance is located across the A92 road from the beginning of the more natural Kinnaber Links north of the former airfield, where the Kinnaber Links mark a change from a more modified developed links area to the south, forming part of the landscape corridor linking sea and northern edge of the Basin. Development within these fields would risk eroding the qualities of this green network, which increases landscape character sensitivity to built development. However, the woodland, topography and walls provide a level of visual containment. It is therefore considered that whilst there is capacity for business development, it would be desirable that existing trees, woodland and walls are retained and further strengthening of the green network be incorporated into any development of these areas. The landscape character sensitivities of this area reduce capacity for urban expansion to medium. Development further north of these enclosed pockets would dissolve a defined transition from urban to rural, the containing function of the woodland buffer around Charleton and Kinnaber Links and the preservation of a landscape corridor between Montrose and Hillside.

9.3.3 East (Montrose Links)

The extensive links landscape separates the eastern edge of Montrose from the sea and merges into the scenic and highly sensitive landscape of the dunes and coast. The links landscape has two distinct parts, the more maintained landscape to the south nearer to the town centre which is occupied by a golf course, playing fields and caravan park and the more remote character of the northern part which includes the former airfield bordering the industrial area to the north of Montrose. (See photos 9.19, 9.20 & 9.21)

Both parts of the links are characterised by openness and a sense of space and sky. The Links of Montrose have a sense of place which is unique in Angus, resulting from the predominance of grassland, the lack of visual obstruction and its vastness. The links forms an important part of the town's setting and its relationship to the coast. The skyline of Montrose and the Montrose St Andrew's Church steeple in particular is widely visible from across the Links area. Therefore the links have high landscape character and visual sensitivity to built development.

The southern part of the Links is used for a combination of formal and informal recreation. This northern part with the airfield appears to have been artificially flattened. It also has a grass airstrip, perimeter concrete road and other structural remains on it. Although large parts of the surface area have re-naturalised, the area appears less natural and more developed than Kinnaber Links immediately to the north. In the northern end of the former airfield next to the A92 road the sewage treatment works are located. It nevertheless shares the underlying characteristics of the wider links area. The northern part is more popular for informal recreation including walking and cycling. Both areas have high landscape value.

When viewed from the coast some, of the newer industrial buildings to the north of Montrose appear out of scale with the location and dominate the image of the town. Opportunities to mitigate these effects by sensitive landscaping would help screen and soften views of the development from the links.

The high landscape character, visual and landscape value sensitivities of this landscape result in an overall low capacity for built development. Landscape character and visual sensitivity dramatically increase from west to east. The area with greatest scope for built development is the area south and west of the sewage works adjacent to existing industrial development, where impacts upon landscape character and views would be less than other parts of the Links. This area has capacity industrial structures, but capacity reduces with increased building heights. Development would also be dependent upon a suitable landscaped boundary treatment of dune-like mounding and shrubs similar to that at sewage works.

Built development east of the sewage works would be likely to have major impacts upon landscape character and views across the Links, whilst progressively encroaching onto areas of high landscape value. Mitigation would be unlikely to substantively overcome major impacts upon these sensitivities. Accordingly, it is considered that there is no capacity for urban extension east of the sewage works.

Kinnaber Links, north of the sewage works is semi-natural grassland, heath and scrub which is enclosed by plantation woodland and marks the beginning of the rural undeveloped landscape to the north of Montrose alongside the wooded Charleton Farm area to the west of the A92, forming a landscape corridor and rural buffer zone between Montrose and the River North Esk valley. There is considered no capacity for development in this area if the current distinction between rural and urban fringe area to the north of Montrose is to be maintained.

9.3.4 Hillside

The entry into Hillside is marked by the railway bridge and the settlement is separated by an undeveloped stretch along the A937 between Montrose and Hillside. North of Lamondfauld Cottages the entry to Hillside is framed by high hedges and walls and is clearly separated from the collection of buildings around Lamondfauld Cottages.

The open fields between the C39 and the southern edge of Hillside form an important part of the rural setting of Hillside and the settlement's outlook over the countryside. The sloping fields are also visible from distant viewpoints to the south and the building facades and gardens create a picturesque and well defined edge to Hillside. New development south of Hillside would degrade this rural and tranquil setting of Hillside and its well defined settlement edge which distinguish Hillside from the suburban residential areas of Montrose. Development further west would be on steeply rising ground which is visually exposed and forms a widely visible part of the rural backdrop of Montrose Basin. There is considered no capacity to the south and west of Hillside.

To the east of the A937 (Marykirk Road) the open field is crossed by the railway line which, parallel to the A937, forms a curving edge to Hillside in this direction. However, there is some development to the south of Kinnaber Road with the large distillery buildings north of Kinnaber Road marking the edge of the escarpment towards the River North Esk valley which is marked by the Mill Lade Burn. The western part immediately north of existing housing is visually contained by existing housing and the railway embankment with trees. However, despite housing on Kinnaber Road, Hillside continues to be strongly defined as located north-west of the railway. Therefore, whilst there exists visual capacity, development south-east of the railway would erode settlement coherence.

There is a higher landscape sensitivity to development on the higher ground to the west of the distillery and very high along the escarpment slope towards the River North Esk marked by the Mill Lade Burn, north of the distillery. This site would be prominently visible within the landscape setting of the river South Esk valley such as the view from the river crossing and the viaduct.

There is an undeveloped band between Marykirk Road and the railway. Developing this field would result in the loss of the scenic open views of Montrose and the sea which open up when coming over the Hillside hill from the north. Accordingly, it is considered that there is no capacity for urban expansion.

Towards the north, the current settlement edge is contained by topography, north of the long woodland corridor between the Hospital and the grounds of Rosemount School the open summit marks the end of the village. There are some cottages along the east side of the road but none of the buildings are located beyond the summit. There is a rural and exposed character to this end of Hillside. The cottages near the summit have rural character matching the field and woodland setting. When crossing the summit, panoramic distant views over the North Esk valley to the north-east open up. An extension in this area would degrade the containment of Hillside on the south-facing slope and not be coherent with the settlements original south-facing outlook and setting. Large modern residential buildings of suburban style across from the existing cottages along Hospital Road would degrade the sense of place resulting from the exposed situation, the rural setting and landmark of the cottages. In addition to this any development north of the summit would not only compromise the openness resulting from the existing relationship between topography and settlement but also obstruct the panoramic landscape views over the North Esk river valley.

The highest capacity lies within the undeveloped pockets on the lower ground between the Rosemount Road and Hospital Road and in the area of Sunnyside. If further development was unavoidable due to pressures there would be a

low capacity for small scale sympathetic development to the south of the open field north-east of Rosemount estate. Development should be of small scale and design take account of the rural exposed setting and the existing architectural features. Height and new boundary of development should respect the topography and consider that large scale residential development on top of the summit would have a highly adverse landscape and visual impact on the landscape value and character of the location.

The area of Rosemount estate has a high landscape and recreational value as it has a large amount of mature deciduous trees creating a woodland walk around a central clearing and is surrounded by an original dry stone wall. Given the high recreational, scenic and landscape value of this mature deciduous woodland, there is no capacity for development within the former Rosemount estate.

9.3.5 Ferryden

The village of Ferryden is a highly valued visitor and tourist attraction, as it is not only a traditional Scottish fishing village but also it is the starting point of a very popular coastal walking path to the Scurdie Ness Lighthouse. Although some newer development has largely extended Ferryden to the west, the old village of Ferryden is still recognisable and has a strong identity.

From locations in Montrose such as the port area but also likely from the higher ground further north such as the dunes of the northern escarpment slope of the Basin, the village is typically seen in two rows of terraced traditional fishing houses which are facing onto the River South Esk one above the other, without protruding above the rural skyline of fields and trees on the rising ground behind the buildings. Further west the newer residential area is reaching further up the slope but is framed by fields and trees.

The part to the east of Usan Road is characteristic of the traditional fishing village and its coastal steeply sloping landscape context. Traditional buildings are arranged in a very compact layout in on a narrow strip of lower slope along the coast, with the main street facing onto the sea and another street terraced further up the slope. The part of the village to the west of Usan Road faces onto the Inchbraoch industrial port area but maintains the linear form along the bottom of the slope and the banks. Several buildings between Ogilvie Terrace and Usan Road are also part of the older village. Other features of the old village are the Parish church, visible on the edge when approaching from the north and Ferryden Farm which is slightly further up the hill along Usan road.

Whereas in the eastern half the linear layout has largely been preserved, the more recent development to the west has expanded up the hillside and up to the railway line which forms the boundary between the residential and the open rural landscape. This newer area is largely separate and contradicts the traditional layout and also rises higher up the slope, however the visual impact of this is largely mitigated by the framing of fields and trees when seen from the north.

The open fields adjacent to Ferryden to the south-west of the railway line and to the west and east of Ferryden Farm are on more elevated ground than the traditional village and form an important part of the rural backdrop of the town and the Basin.

Development filling the gap between the new and the old part of Ferryden and to the south of Ferryden at Ferryden Farm would, step above the escarpment which contains the village onto a more gently sloping plateau. Due to the elevation, it would be highly visible from the higher ground on the northern side of Montrose and from locations on lower ground around the Basin. It would dominate the modest scale of the traditional village and would create a more urban character to the rural skyline south of Montrose. From the high ground to the south of Ferryden, when approaching the village there are distant panoramic views over Montrose and the Basin, and directly north of Ferryden views of the harbour and the viaduct. Development expanding southwards above the escarpment would obscure these views.

The sensitivity of the landscape setting of the traditional village to the east is high and the adjacent recreational and tourist walk to the Scurdie Ness lighthouse is equally sensitive to changes in the rural and exposed coastal character for which the landscape is valued.

The south-west and west of Ferryden are bounded by the railway, which forms a strong well defined boundary. The ground beyond the railway is elevated and therefore development would obscure the rural skyline and create an impression of a heavily urbanised landscape around the southern edge of the Basin. It would also obstruct panoramic views of Montrose and the Basin from the higher ground, which are the main scenic quality of this exposed coastal landscape.

Whilst there may be opportunities for small-scale infill development, there is not considered to be scope for urban expansion around Ferryden.

9.3.6 Rossie Mills and Northern Edge of Montrose Basin

The approaches along the north and south side of the Basin are open and rural and generally low-rise where irregular suburban development becomes a transitional along the edge of the Basin when approaching Montrose.

Views of the Basin become partly obstructed when entering the villages of Rossie Mills and Tayock. In Rossie Mills the low houses and gardens alternate with stretches of open banks allowing for views of the Basin and the town, whereas the

south side of the road remains relatively rural and open. Similarly, the approach along the northern edge of the Basin the southern edge has a low density and low rise of scattered development interspersed with openings onto the Basin.

The setting of the Basin is sensitive to development spreading around and encroaching on the Basin which would represent a major change and urbanisation of the rural Lowland Basin Landscape Character Type and the setting of the Montrose Basin.

An increase in the density of built development would diminish the semi-rural character of these areas and adversely affect the setting of Montrose Basin. Accordingly, it is considered that there exists no capacity for further urban expansion in these sensitive areas.

9.4 Conclusion

With Montrose being enclosed by water on two sides, this limits options for expansion of the town. The rising ground of the escarpment slopes which form the rural setting of to the north and south of the Basin and the sensitivity of the coast and dunes are some of the main constraints.

The setting of the Basin is sensitive to development spreading around and encroaching on the Basin which would represent a major change and urbanisation of the rural Lowland Basin Landscape Character type and the setting of the Montrose Basin.

The maintaining of an open rural landscape to the north between Montrose and Hillside would avoid a merging of the two settlements and also preserve a larger scale landscape corridor which would reach from the flat rural landscape to the north of the Basin across the Charleton area and the links to the coast.

The south-western area around Charleton Farm has rural landscape qualities which contrast with the nearby industrial development and create an undeveloped wooded landscape buffer-zone between Montrose and Hillside, allowing for a landscape corridor between the Basin and the coast to the north. The small woodland areas frame and contain industrial development spreading towards the north and are part of the rural setting of the town when approached from the north.

However this area has a potential to absorb some development as it has pockets which are well framed by surrounding landscape features such as large mature trees and stone walls. Development further north of these enclosed pockets would dissolve a defined transition from urban to rural.

To the north-west the landscape is open and rural, the relatively low ground and the close vicinity to the town centre are favourable conditions for further development. However, if development is not clearly contained towards the west, it would risk creating an impression of the town sprawling out over the flat open rural landscape north of the Basin. For both, the framing and integrating of the new development into the landscape a new and more permanent settlement edge should to be established within the existing landscape context. Capacity for development further west than the Tayock Burn is low as development would encroach onto the Montrose Basin and create a built-up urbanised landscape setting around it. In order to maintain the open landscape corridor between the Basin and the coast, forming a separation between Hillside and Montrose, the preservation of an area of open rural landscape to the north of Borrowfield Farm Cottages would be important.

Montrose Links has high landscape character; visual; and landscape value sensitivity. There however exists capacity for industrial development adjacent to existing industrial uses, to the south and west of the sewage works, if building height was limited and appropriate landscaping along the eastern edge was incorporated. Sensitivity across the links increases towards the east.

The villages of Hillside and Ferryden are closely linked to their traditional topographical setting on the slopes to the north and south of Montrose and are both highly visible. In Hillside a preservation of a rural edge to the south-west and west such as containment on the south-facing slope towards the north would constrain development. The lower ground to the south of Marykirk Road in Hillside is a remaining open pocket surrounded by development and the large distillery. The area is well located and suitable for residential development, whereas the areas surrounding Hillside to the south-west and north are more sensitive and are less suitable for settlement expansion. In Ferryden the village is set in the lower slope of the coastal outcrop of land south of Montrose. The compact linear arrangement of buildings and the rural horizon visible above the village together mean that there is no scope for urban expansion.



9.1 Montrose from Old Montrose Pier ([click here to return to text](#))



9.2 Montrose & Ferryden from Core Path 095 ([click here to return to text](#))



9.3 Approach from West via A934 (Forfar) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.4 Approach from South West via A92 (Arbroath) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.5 Approach from South via C45 (Craig Road) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.6 Approach from South via U477 (Scotston of Usan) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.7 Approach from South East via U478 (Usan Road)(1) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.8 Approach from South East via U478 (Usan Road)(2) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.9 Approach from West via A935 (Brechin Road) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.10 Approach from West via C39 (Dubton Road) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.11 Approach from North-West via C37 (Main Road) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.12 Approach from north via U439 (Hospital Road) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.13 Approach from North via A937 (Marykirk Road) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.14 Approach from North via A92 (Charleton Road) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.15 Montrose approach via A937 (Loan Dykes) [\(click here to return to text\)](#)



9.16 Hillside approach via A937 (Loan Dykes) [\(click here to return to text\)](#)



9.17 North-West Montrose from Core Path 080 ([click here to return to text](#))



9.18 North-West Montrose from near Dryleys Cottages ([click here to return to text](#))



9.19 Montrose Links From Trail Drive (North) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.20 Montrose Links from Trail Drive (South) ([click here to return to text](#))



9.21 Montrose Links from Dunes adjacent to Core Path 086 ([click here to return to text](#))

Figure 9.1 Montrose Landscape and Visual Analysis (click here to return to text)

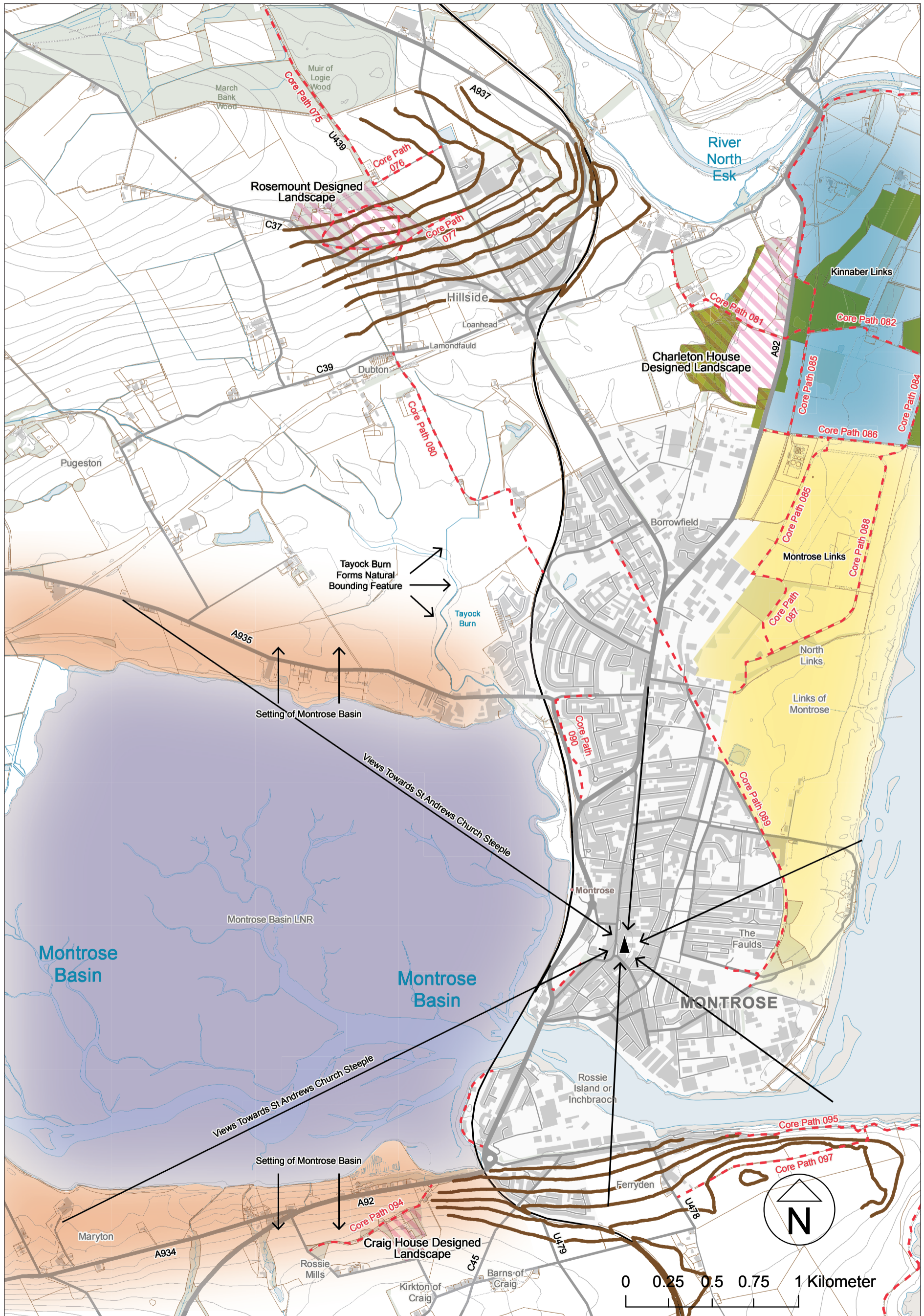


Figure 9.2 Montrose Key to Photographs (click here to return to text)



Figure 9.3 Montrose Key to Analysis of Directions of Growth (click here to return to text)

