

Landscape Characterisation

This section presents the landscape characterisation for each of the twenty two settlements, summarises the key characteristics and includes photographic illustrations of each of the Local Landscape Character Types.

The Landscape Character maps include references to photographic viewpoints. 'Thumbnail' copies of the photographs taken from these viewpoints are included in the Appendix.

Field work viewpoints, photographic viewpoints and 'long views' are also illustrated on the Landscape Character maps and provide an indication of the areas covered on foot during the fieldwork stage of the landscape characterisation.

1 Avoch



Avoch 1904

Local Landscape Character Types:

- 1a Avoch Village
- 1b Open Farmed Slopes With Occasional Shuterbelts (FEF)
- 1c Enclosed Estate Farmland (FEF)
- 1d Open Farmed Slopes (FEF)

Background

Avoch is a substantial village on the Black Isle peninsula developed in the 18th Century from three separate settlements; Seatown, Kirktown and Milnwen. Planned expansion on a gridiron layout to the east began in the early 19th Century, when the harbour was built. Later in the same century the High Street acquired its small town commercial character. Cottages within the village, many of which remain unspoiled, are typical of 19th Century vernacular architecture. Much of the village is a conservation area, designated in 1980. Fishing is still important and the harbour remains a focal point, although many boats use other ports as their main base. Avoch is a popular commuting base for Inverness.

Character Type 1a Village

A typical Enclosed Firth settlement situated where the steep-sided valley of the Avoch Burn cuts through higher ground to join the Moray Firth, forming a small delta. The original compact linear core of the village relates strongly to the fishing harbour, and to the narrow raised beach which extends to the north and south of the river mouth, backed by steeper ground. More recent 20th Century development has extended inland upstream along the valley bottom, constrained by rising ground to north and south. Within the core, traditional low cottages line the firth shore and form an intimate grid-iron pattern immediately west of the harbour.

The A832 forms the main thoroughfare running east-west through the village, linking Bridge Street and High Street, with smaller streets and roads leading from it climbing the steep inclines out of the glen. The war memorial adjacent to the A832 at the western edge of the village, and the Parish Church on rising ground to the north, are among the most prominent landmarks. Other important buildings and structures include a school, community centre, stone harbour wall, small bridge, shop and garage. The eye is continually drawn to the firth, and there are good open views over the village from the hilltop to the northeast.

Key Characteristics

- *Moray Firth forms focus of external views from areas on the coast.*
- *Strong relationship between valley landform and original settlement core.*
- *Conservation Area with fishing harbour and good examples of unspoiled 19th Century cottages laid out on grid iron pattern.*

Character Type 1b Open Farmed Slopes with Occasional Shelterbelts.

This landscape type includes the higher ground to the south west of the village, bounded by steep ground at the firth edge to the southeast, and by the A832 to the north. The topography is generally smooth, and slopes are even and convex. The characteristic landcover is a mix of arable farmland and pasture. Although the landscape has a predominantly open feel, the few vertical elements are distinctive and prominent. They include single lines of mature deciduous trees forming field boundaries in the north, and a dense beech hedge adjacent to the A832. Several geometric farm building groups also form strong point features.

Key Characteristics

- *Topography dominated by even convex slopes.*
- *Farm building groups form strong point features.*
- *Mainly deciduous shelterbelts on lower parts of slopes.*
- *Mix of arable and pastoral farmland.*

Character Type 1c Enclosed Estate Farmland

This type includes the flat valley bottom of the Rosshaugh Burn glen and its northern valley slopes. It is characterised by extensive deciduous tree belts, often forming field enclosures, and by the mixed policy woodlands of Rosshaugh Mains. There is a dense network of small tracks within the estate, linking frequent cottages and associated buildings. A lochan hidden by adjoining woodland forms part of the area's distinctive character. Visually, the area is strongly introverted - generally views within, into, and out of the area are limited by the extent of woodland and by the valley topography.



Key Characteristics

- River valley landform.
- Strong visual enclosure.
- Frequent shelterbelts and policy woodlands.
- Scattered estate buildings linked by network of tracks.

Character Type 1d Open Farmed Slopes

Encompasses the higher ground north of the village, extending east of the Shaltie Burn to the Meezy Firth shore. The landform is characterised by steep, convex slopes trending generally north-east/south-west parallel to the shoreline. The fields, bounded predominantly by thorn hedges with occasional trees, support mixed agricultural uses. Frequent gaps in the hedges mean that they generally form much weaker visual features than in the equivalent area to the south of the village. Steep, narrow farm lanes, often enclosed by banks of gorse, give access to scattered stone and white painted dwellings and outhouses. The area forms a highly visible rural backdrop to Avoch with extensive views over the village and Firth.



Key Characteristics

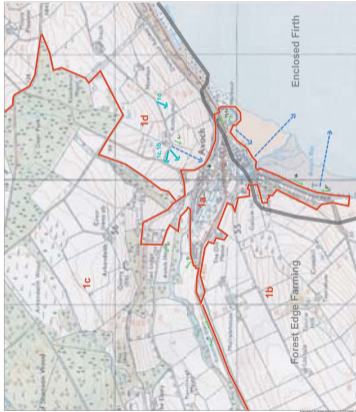
- Steep convex slope with north-westerly aspect.
- Field enclosures visually weakened by discontinuous hedges.
- Narrow lanes accessing scattered farm buildings.
- Open outlook over firth and corresponding high visibility in views from south-west.

KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Fieldwork view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Scottish Natural Heritage Characterisation

NOTE
Although some areas developed in relation to the 1950s, it features related to the 1950s and early 20th century periods.

Scale 1:10,000
Scale 1:20,000
Scale 1:40,000



2 Munloch

Munloch 1904



Local Landscape Character Types:

- 2a Munloch Village*
- 2b Narrow Firth Corridor (NFC)*
- 2c Forested Valley and Hillside (FEF)*
- 2d Coastal Farmland (FEF)*
- 2e Area to north-east of village (FEF)*

Background

Munloch is a linear settlement strung out along the road at the head of Munloch Bay. The 19th century buildings which form the historic core include Munloch Mains farmhouse and Knockbain Parish Church which is one of a series of ecclesiastical buildings in the surrounding fertile valley.

Character Type 2a Munloch Village

Munloch is a compact village serving an important farming area on the Black Isle peninsula, situated on south-facing hill slopes at the head of the narrow, steep-sided inlet of Munloch Bay. The historic core was laid out by the late 18th Century and takes the form of a single street on the frontage of the B9161. Here buildings are now mostly 19th Century vernacular stone cottages and villas, with some discreet 20th Century infill. A mill has a marriage stone dating from 1740. To the north, on the slopes between the B9161 and the A832, more extensive 20th Century residential development now forms the bulk of the settlement area. Modern commercial development is limited to several shops, agricultural sheds and a garage on the A832. The elevated position of the village allows extensive views south-eastwards, channelled along the line of the bay, with the eye constantly drawn to the steep headlands which frame the entrance to the Moray Firth.

Key Characteristics

- *Distinctive historic core following B9161*
Extensive area of more recent development to north of core area
- *Outward views channelled south-eastwards by topography and coastline.*
- *Headlands at entrance to Moray Firth form focus of external views.*

Character Type 2b Narrow Firth Corridor

In contrast to the fault-controlled north-east/south-west trend of the main Moray Firth coastline, Munloch Bay runs east to west, confined by valley sides forming a classic U-shaped glacial landform. At the head of the bay, post-glacial uplift and deposition have formed a flat delta which merges with extensive inter-tidal mudflats, giving a distinctive small landscape unit dominated by the flat planes of water and mud. There is a seawall at the head of the bay which forms and artificial barrier between the intertidal mudflats and the arable fields to the west. Inland, the delta is characterised by open arable fields, bounded by drainage ditches. The steep, forested slopes of the adjoining areas are often reflected in the waters of the bay at high tide, whilst low tide reveals the mudflats, dissected by the meandering river channel and attracting many species of feeding waders. Scrub vegetation, including birch and alder, has frequently colonized the zone immediately above High Water, and there is also some marshland at the mouth of a feeder stream.

Key Characteristics

- *Strong glacial valley landform contrasting with deltaic mudflats.*
- *Arable fields with drainage ditches and little significant screening vegetation.*
- *Semi-natural vegetation communities close to shoreline.*

Character Type 2c Forested Valley and Hillside.

This type occupies two discrete areas: the valley of the Big Burn and its adjoining slopes west of the village; and the hillside to the south of Munlochry Bay. The topography is gently undulating. Landcover, both in the valley bottom and on the adjoining hillsides, is dominated by coniferous forestry, planted in straight-edged blocks. Felled compartments have created discrete "rooms" within and on the edges of the blocks, which are currently mainly under rough grazing. These often contain one or two dispersed dwellings, accessed by narrow, angular tracks. Visually, the sense of enclosure in this unit is very strong, and views are limited to the extent of openings in the trees. The woodland blocks create a very strong repetitive rhythm of vertical elements in the landscape.

**Key Characteristics**

- *Gently undulating topography.*
- *Geometric blocks of coniferous forestry.*
- *Clear visual contrast between enclosing forestry and open grazed areas.*
- *Woodland blocks create strong vertical rhythm.*

Local Character Type 2d Open Farmed Slopes

This area forms the lower northern hillsides of Munlochry Bay and is gently convex. The area is bordered by coniferous plantation blocks to the west and north, and the bay to the south. Large, angular, arable fields are bounded by post and wire fences and lanes. The landscape is open with occasional mature deciduous trees associated with roads and farms. Tullich Farm and a mature yew tree form a distinctive landmark on the horizon. There are clear views to and from this character type across the settlement and bay.

**Key Characteristics**

- *Sloping, convex landscape.*
- *Large, angular arable fields.*
- *Occasional, mature deciduous trees associated with roads and farms.*
- *Large yew tree forms distinctive landmark.*

KEY

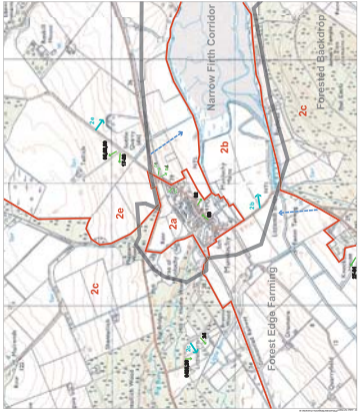
-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Network view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Significant Natural Heritage Characterisation

NOTE
Photograph reference numbers are not shown on this OS based map because inclusion in the document will require subsequent permits

NSI 100 400 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100



Settlement 2 - Marlooby
Figure 2a - Landscape Character



31 Fortrose

Fortrose 1871*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 3a Coastal Spit (EF)
- 3b Open Farmed Slops (FEF)
- 3c Fortrose Village
- 3d Detached Residential Growth (EF)
- 3f Coastal Farmland (EF)

Background

Fortrose succeeded Rosemarkie as the centre of the early church and the town was for long known as Chanonry from its having been the property and residence of the canons of its Cathedral, their manse being built around the church. The town became a royal burgh in 1590 but trade did not flourish as a result. A new harbour was built in 1813 and it was the terminus of the Black Isle railway but by the late C.19 Fortrose was best known as a holiday resort. Today visitors tend to pass through the town on their way to Rosemarkie or to Cromarty. The opening of the Kessock Bridge in 1982 has put the services of Inverness within less than half an hour's drive of the town and the consequence for existing local retailers is apparent. Fortrose is a conservation area having been designated as such in 1971. The Conservation Area was declared 'outstanding' in 1978.



Character Type 3a Coastal Spit

The triangular peninsula of Chanony Ness projects south-eastwards from the land shore of the firth in the form of an impressive coastal spit, with Chanony Point as its apex. Built by the accretion of coastal sediments, the peninsula is nowhere more than 5 metres above sea level, but the remnants of old stable dune ridges create frequent small-scale undulations. Twin beaches of cobble and shingle have formed at the coastal edge. The majority of the area is currently used as a golf course, with patches of gorse dividing mown grass fairways. Trees are scarce, and most show the wind-clipped growth habit typical of exposed coastal sites. A perfectly straight single-tracked road links the A832 to a distinctive lighthouse at the Point, emphasising the linearity of the spit. Other built elements include several dispersed detached dwellings, a stone pier and a visitor's car park. The flat topography and exposed location allow dramatic uninterrupted views, both inland to Fortrose and Rosemarkie, and seawards across and along the Moray Firth.

Key Characteristics

- Distinctive coastal landform showing direct relationship with geomorphological process.
- Dominant golf course land use preserving open landscape of grassland and gorse scrub.
- Straight access road leading to landmark lighthouse
- Dramatic open views.

Character Type 3b Open Farmed Slopes.



To the west of the coastal spit, rising ground trending south-west/north-east marks the older fault-guided shoreline of the Moray Firth. The slopes face south-eastwards towards the firth, and are generally steep and concave. The predominant landcover is pasture grassland enclosed by field boundaries mainly formed by gappy hedgerows with occasional trees. Dispersed clusters of farm buildings, predominantly of stone/white rendered hailing, are accessed by steep, narrow lanes, often enclosed by banks and gorse. In common with similar landscape types in the area, the slopes form a highly visible countryside setting which acts as an attractive backdrop to the adjoining settlements. Their elevated position allows extensive outward views over the villages and Firth.

Key Characteristics

- Landform dominated by south-east facing concave slopes.
- Pasture grassland enclosed by discontinuous hedgerows.
- Prominent light-coloured farm building groups.
- Elevated position gives open outward views and corresponding high visibility from adjoining areas.

Character Type 3c Fortrose Village

A small village with a well-preserved historic core, located at the landward end of the coastal spit facing south across Fortrose Bay. The core of the settlement forms an organic grid structure focused on the present day A832, which runs parallel to the break of slope along the line of the Highland Boundary Fault. The presence of a cathedral and two churches in this relatively small settlement reflects its strong religious origins. Many other buildings in the historic core are also of the red sandstone characteristic of the area. To date, most of the modern residential development has occurred north of the A832, extending towards the foot of the hill slopes and onto the Feddon Hill upslope. On the seaward side of the core the school, leisure centre and playing fields are prominent. The relatively dense form of the settlement gives an enclosed visual character, interrupted by intermittent framed views outwards to the firth.

**Key Characteristics**

- Settlement core distinguishable by grid street pattern.
- Historic churches and other buildings in distinctive red sandstone.
- Outer zone of residential development to north of A832.
- Typically enclosed visual character with limited framed external views.

Character Type 3d Detached Residential Growth

Although the two settlements of Fortrose and Rosemarkie have to date remained discrete, this small area of residential development dating from the 1960s, detached some few hundred metres from the base of the coastal spit, threatens to form a nucleus for future coalescence. It may have developed in response to the attractive location close to the beaches and golf course. It is purely residential, and tends to house an older population. In plan form it is typical of modern development, based on curved cul-de-sac roads. Larger distributor roads provide links to both villages and to the central "spine" road along the Chantry Point peninsula. The site is bounded by the firth, golf course and open fields to the north, and houses on the periphery generally have good open views. Internally the visual character is very intimate and small-scale, with narrow streets enclosed by gardens and the houses themselves.

**Key Characteristics**

- Modern residential development of uniform house type
- Organic layout with distributor roads and cul-de-sac
- Open views from periphery contrast with intimate internal space

Character Type 3f Coastal Farmland

A clearly defined area of mainly arable farmland currently forming the buffer between Fortrose, Rosemarkie and the detached residential development on the peninsula. Topography is subdued, with gentle overall slopes towards the firth. Post and wire fences divide the relatively large fields. There are few prominent vertical elements, and the field pattern is in the main distinguishable only by the colour and texture of the current agricultural land-uses. This is an open landscape with clear views to the firth and to each of the settlement edges.

Key Characteristics

- *Subdued topography*
- *Arable land use*
- *Weak enclosure by post and wire fences*
- *Open visual character*

KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Feedback view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Scottish Natural Heritage designation

NOTE
A range of other named development areas shown on Figure 2B (page 4) has been included in the character and development profile.

SCALE 1:10,000
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Settlement 3f Fortrose
Figure 3a Landscape Character



3 ii Rosemarkie

Rosemarkie 1891*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 3a Coastal Spit (EF)
- 3b Open Farmed Slope (FEF)
- 3d Detached Residential Growth (EF)
- 3e Rosemarkie Village
- 3f Coastal Farmland (EF)

Background

Rosemarkie was the first seat of the cathedral church of Ross traditionally said to be founded by Saint Boniface in the C7. When the cathedral was moved to Fortrose in the C13, Rosemarkie was made a burgh of the bishops of Ross, but by 1590 it was regarded only as an appendage of Fortrose; having been linked administratively to its more powerful neighbour in 1661 by an act of parliament. Despite its long history nothing earlier than C18 is now visible in the architecture of the village. It is, however, a conservation area designated in 1971. The conservation area was declared 'outstanding' in 1973. Rosemarkie has a fine sandy shore backed by attractive cliffs.



Character Type 3a Coastal Spit

The triangular peninsula of Chanony Ness projects south-eastwards from the land shore of the firth in the form of an impressive coastal spit, with Chanony Point as its apex. Built by the accretion of coastal sediments, the peninsula is nowhere more than x^2 metres above sea level, but the remnants of old stable dune ridges create frequent small-scale undulations. Twin beaches of cobble and shingle have formed at the coastal edge. The majority of the area is currently used as a golf course, with patches of gorse dividing mown grass fairways. Trees are scarce, and most show the wind-clipped growth habit typical of exposed coastal sites. A perfectly straight single-tracked road links the A832 to a distinctive lighthouse at the Point, emphasising the linearity of the spit. Other built elements include several dispersed detached dwellings, a stone pier and a visitor's car park. The flat topography and exposed location allow dramatic uninterrupted views, both inland to Fetterose and Rosemarkie, and seawards across and along the Moray Firth.

Key Characteristics

- *Distinctive coastal landform showing direct relationship with geomorphological process.*
- *Dominant golf course land use preserving open landscape of grassland and gorse scrub.*
- *Arrow-straight access road leading to landmark lighthouse.*
- *Dramatic open views.*

Character Type 3b Open Farmed Slopes.



To the west of the coastal spit, rising ground trending south-west/north-east marks the older fault-guided shoreline of the Moray Firth. The slopes face south-eastwards towards the firth, and are generally steep and concave. The predominant landcover is pasture grassland enclosed by field boundaries mainly formed by gappy hedgerows with occasional trees. Dispersed clusters of farm buildings, predominantly of stone/white rendered herring, are accessed by steep, narrow lanes, often enclosed by banks and gorse. In common with similar landscape types in the area, the slopes form a highly visible countryside setting which acts as an attractive backdrop to the adjoining settlements. Their elevated position allows extensive outward views over the villages and Firth.

Key Characteristics

- *Landform dominated by south-east facing concave slopes.*
- *Pasture grassland enclosed by discontinuous hedgerows.*
- *Prominent light-coloured farm building groups.*
- *Elevated position gives open outward views and corresponding high visibility from adjoining areas.*

Character Type 3d Detached Residential Growth

Although the two settlements of Fortrose and Rosemarkie have to date remained discrete, this small area of residential development dating from the 1960s, detached some few hundred metres from the base of the coastal spit, threatens to form a nucleus for future coalescence. It may have developed in response to the attractive location close to the beaches and golf course. It is purely residential, and tends to house an older population. In plan form it is typical of modern development, based on curved cul-de-sac roads. Larger distributor roads provide links to both villages and to the central "spine" road along the Chanosney Point peninsula. The site is bounded by the firth, golf course and open fields to the north, and houses on the periphery generally have good open views. Internally the visual character is very intimate and small-scale, with narrow streets enclosed by gardens and the houses themselves.



Key Characteristics

- Modern residential development of *uniform house type*
- *Organic layout with distributor roads and cul-de-sac*
- *Open views from periphery contrast with intimate internal spaces*

Character Type 3e Rosemarkie Village

A small village located in a corresponding position to Fortrose at the landward end of the coastal spit, facing generally eastward across the Moray Firth. The narrow wooded gorge of the Rosemarkie Burn opens into the firth forming a small delta at the northern edge of the village. To the north of this delta, the coastline rises sharply forming steep cliffs which mark the transition to the Hard Coastal Edge Landscape Type described in the Inner Moray Firth LCA. The village has retained its characteristic linear core, marked by a narrow main street lined by closely abutted cottages, and several smaller pends extending at right angles towards the bay. The core has been extended to the north-west by an area of larger Victorian dwellings, and to the south-east by a typical modern housing estate. There is also a further area of residential development along the firth shore dating from the 1950s – 60s, linked to the Golf Clubhouse on Chanosney Ness by a Caravan Site. Village landmarks include a square church tower within the historic core, and a museum. The settlement is clearly bounded by firth, hillside, field boundaries and the main road. The open views eastward from the firth shore contrast strongly with the enclosure of the wooded gorge (reflected by its local name of The Fairy Glen), and the narrow streets of the historic village core. The cliffs and steep rising ground north of the village form a strong backdrop in views from the south.



Key Characteristics

- *Close relationship between location and landform, with clear boundary definition.*
- *Characteristic linear historic core with outer areas of 19th and 20th century expansion.*
- *Landmark buildings.*
- *Contrast between open seaward views and small internal spaces.*

Character Type 3f Coastal Farmland

A clearly defined area of mainly arable farmland currently forming the buffer between Fortrose, Rosemarkie and the detached residential development on the peninsula. Topography is subdued, with gentle overall slopes towards the fieth. Post and wire fences divide the relatively large fields. There are few prominent vertical elements, and the field pattern is in the main distinguishable only by the colour and texture of the current agricultural land-uses. This is an open landscape with clear views to the fieth and to each of the settlement edges.

Key Characteristics

- *Subdued topography*
- *Arable land use*
- *Weak enclosure by post and wire fences*
- *Open visual character*

4 Culbokie

Culbokie 1904*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 4a *Culbokie Crofting Township (C)*
- 4b *Crofting (C)*
- 4c *Open Farmed Slopes (OFS)*
- 4d *Coniferous Plantation (C)*

Background

Culbokie is located at the western end of the Milbuie Ridge which forms the central spine of high ground on the Black Isle peninsula. It was originally primarily a small service centre for the local croft farming. More recently it served as a dormitory village for workers at the oil platform fabrication yards at Nigg and Ardersier, and is currently also a commuting settlement for workers in Inverness.



Character Type 4a Culbokie Crofting Township

Culbokie is strung out along the B9169 road, and consists of a number of discrete clusters of buildings separated by open farmland, in part still reflecting its origins as a series of dispersed crofts. On both the eastern and western extremities of the settlement, buildings become more widely dispersed, forming a gradual transition with the adjoining crofting landscape. Although there are some older stone cottages, most buildings are of recent age. Amenities include a post office and play area. The B9169 generally follows a break of slope which separates ground falling quite steeply northwards to the Cromarty Firth from more gentle topography on the crest of the ridge. This location affords good views north over the shoreline of the firth, and conversely, means that the settlement forms a skyline feature in views from the A9 to the north and west. By contrast, views to the east and south are enclosed by the adjoining coniferous forestry. The settlement is highly visible from the northern shores of the Cromarty Firth although the backcloth of rising landform and forestry generally means that skylining of individual buildings does not occur.

Key Characteristics

- Dispersed linear plan form consisting of discrete building clusters
- Transition zone between settlement and crofting landscape
- Close relationship between B9169 and break of slope in landform
- Skyline location with open views northwards

Character Type 4b Crofting



The area occupies gently undulating plateau-type topography on the crest of the Milbuie Ridge. It is strongly enclosed to the west and east by Culbokie Wood and Bogbuie Wood, both of which are substantial areas of commercial forestry. Frequent large boulders and stones resulting from cultivation operations litter the surface of the fields, evidence of the underlying glacial deposits and support rough grazing and scrubby vegetation. Scattered croft dwellings and associated outhouses are accessed by tracks and lanes, routed along angular field boundaries. Views are limited to the extents of the 'rooms' and 'corridors' created by the edges of the adjoining coniferous plantations. To the north, the character becomes more open, fertile and undulating as it merges with Type 4a and 4c.

Key Characteristics

- Undulating plateau topography
- Landscape dominated by rough grazing and scrub
- Distinctive dispersed croft dwellings
- Limited views enclosed by adjoining coniferous plantations

Character Type 4c Open Farmed Slopes

To the north of the B9169, north-facing slopes fall to the shores of the Cromarty Firth. Their gradient is generally even and convex, with some minor undulations caused by variations in the underlying drift deposits and by gully erosion. Fields are large and arable, divided by shelterbelts, hedges and copses. The field boundaries, lanes and patterns of cultivation tend to run either parallel with, or at right angles to the contours, forming a strong underlying rhythm. Streams incised into the slope create hidden wooded dells which conceal old stone houses and barns, leaving an apparently uninhabited rural landscape. Views are predominantly open in character, dominated by the firth and the mountains to the north.



Key Characteristics

- Even convex slope interrupted by characteristic undulation in topography reflecting geomorphology and drift geology
- Large arable fields enclosed by shelterbelts
- Strong rhythmic patterns controlled by trend in landform
- Open views to north

Character Type 4d Coniferous Plantation

Large-scale, coniferous commercial forestry plantations dominate the northern edge of the ridge landform. The topography is gently undulating and soil tends to be of poor quality. The plantations form dense uniform blocks, with rectangular edges and strong, repetitive vertical elements. 'Rooms' are created by cleared compartments within the plantations, the edges often following original field boundaries. Roads tend to be angular and narrow. The coniferous woodland is a favoured habitat of buzzards, which are consequently a common sight in this part of the Black Isle, often perched on roadside posts or on dead trees. The visual character is markedly introverted, views out being limited to the extent of any openings in the trees. The plantations form a dark backdrop to the generally light-coloured buildings of thecrofting settlement in views from the north.



Key Characteristics

- Coniferous forestry dominates landscape
- Well-defined internal spaces bounded by edges of plantations
- Angular road network
- Limited outward views
- Clear tonal contrast between buildings and woodland backdrop

KEY

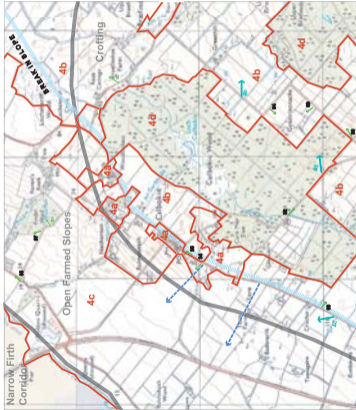
-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  It shows a view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Sites in National Heritage characterisation

NOTE
Where possible, new development is not shown on this CLS as it is not included in the CLS data and is subject to assessment process.

Scale 1:50,000 (1:50,000)



Statement 4 - Cuboblie
Figure 4a - Landscape Character



5 Cromarty



Cromarty 1871

Local Landscape Character Types:

- 5a Cromarty Town
- 5b Enclousd Estate Land (OFS)
- 5c Hill Grassland (OFS)
- 5d Open Farmed Slops (OFS)
- 5e Hard Coastal Edge (HCE)

Background

Cromarty acquired the status of a royal burgh in 1275. After an initial period of prosperity, trade suffered a decline and the town eventually lost this status in 1685, becoming instead a burgh of barony under the feudal superiority of the Viscount of Tarbat (later the first Earl of Cromarty). In 1772 George Ross of Pickering brought the Cromarty estate and founded a rope works and brewery, and also built the first pier. The town subsequently prospered as a fishing port and major trading centre for flax, linen and rope; - many of the old commercial buildings from this period still survive. Cromarty remained prosperous into the early 19th Century, when substantial new houses were built to the north west of the old town, but by 1850 the rope works had closed, and the development of Invergordon as the principal port for the Firth accelerated its decline. By 1882 the town was reported to have an appearance of picturesque decay and desolation. In the 20th Century both World Wars brought naval and military activity, the harbour was extended, and substantial fortifications were constructed on the Sutors, the steep headlands overlooking the entrance to the firth. The most recent development is at the west end of the town where, in the 1970's, houses were built in response

to the developing north sea oil industries. Since the opening of the Keosock Bridge 1982 the fabric of the town has been extensively restored, helping it to become a desirable residential location within commuting distance of Inverness. Part of the town was designated a Conservation Area in 1969. The old Fishertown part of the village was designated a Conservation Area in 1969 and this was declared outstanding in 1974. In 1975 the Conservation Area was extended to cover the area it does today and the 'outstanding' designation was also extended to cover the enlarged area.

Character Type 5a Cromarty Town



Located at the northern tip of the Black Isle, Cromarty is a typical firth edge settlement which has developed on a small peninsula projecting into the narrow channel at the mouth of the Cromarty Firth. The town occupies the flat ground formed by the peninsula itself and an adjoining area of raised beach, backed by the steep, wooded slopes of the former cliffline. A well-preserved, organic grid of narrow streets lined by a mix of traditional fishing cottages and handsome townhouses forms a dense, historic core which is still largely intact. Most buildings have been constructed from the local pink sandstone [DETAILS²], a particularly good example being the old Rope Works. Open space within the settlement area is rare, due to the continued pressure for building land on the limited flat ground. The resulting dense structure of the settlement gives a strong sense of enclosure, with intermittent views out over the firth framed by the adjoining buildings. These outward views are currently dominated by the massive forms of numerous oil drilling platforms moored in the firth awaiting repair. Cromarty is large enough to support a good range of services, and there is a strong local community atmosphere. Modern residential development is restricted to a small area to the south-west of the centre.

Key Characteristics

- *Clear relationship between settlement form and coastal landform.*
- *Intact historic core consisting of dense grid of narrow streets.*
- *Distinctive building stone.*
- *Strong visual enclosure with limited framed outward views.*
- *Restricted area of modern residential expansion*

Character Type 5b Enclosed Estate Land

Cromarty House and its associated farmland and policies form a distinctive character type. Situated on the higher ground above the fossil cliffline, the house itself is hidden from general view, although parts of the boundary walls and a gated tunnel are visible from the adjoining minor road. The steep slopes support mature deciduous woodland cover, and the fields within the environs of the house are also enclosed by dense shelterbelts. Two streams draining into the firth have eroded steep steep-sided wooded valleys. Views and access within this character type are limited by the dense trees and steep slopes.

**Key Characteristics**

- Policy woodlands
- Raised coastal platform with deeply-incised stream valleys.
- Strong enclosure by valley woodland and shelterbelts.
- Mansion house, walls, tower with adjoining farmland.
- Intrinsical visual character.

Character Type 5c Hill Grassland.

This character type occupies the ridge above the town, which trends north-east from the summit of Gallow Hill to form the southern of the two Sutors headlands at the mouth of the Cromarty Firth. It is delineated to the north by the road and track to the headland viewpoint, running parallel with the contours. This route currently marks a boundary between arable land and grassland sheep grazing. The fields in this area are separated by low gorse hedges or post and wire fences, the line of the boundaries following the shape of the headland landform. Several Scots pine shelterbelts form strong linear elements. The area also includes a small area of native pine and heath. Buildings are limited to a farm group or hamlet comprising a stading and a terrace of labourers' cottages, which is currently being expanded by large, obtrusive modern dwellings. Much of the area is highly visible from the north and, in turn, affords very long views over the firth and mountains beyond.

**Key Characteristics**

- Clear relationship with ridge landform.
- Characteristic upland grassland landscape, with low gorse hedges.
- Prominent Scots Pine shelterbelts.
- Small remnant area of semi-natural heathland.
- Distinctive farm settlement/hamlet undergoing expansion.
- Open views with correspondingly high visual sensitivity.



Character Type 5d Open Farmed Slopes

This type forms the lower north-facing slopes of the headland, characterised by open, predominantly arable fields with some deciduous shelterbelts. The slopes are generally of an even convex gradient with some gentle undulations. Fields are large and are currently under arable cropping. They are divided by occasional lines of deciduous trees, and a few small copses. The field boundaries, the alignments of the two roads, and the patterns of cultivation all tend to run parallel with or at right angles to the contours. Buildings in this unit are limited to a single farmstead and associated dwellings. This is an open landscape type with frequent outward views to the north, dominated by the firth and the distant mountains.

Key Characteristics

- *Convex slopes with northerly aspect.*
- *Large arable fields.*
- *Linear woodland features and copses.*
- *Strong rhythmic pattern controlled by trend in landform.*
- *Open views to north across firth.*

Character Type 5e Hard Coastal Edge



A zone of steep slopes formed by the erosion of resistant rock types forms the coastal edge east of Cromarty, extending beyond the headland into the open Moray Firth. The landform is at its most dramatic at the headland known as the Sutors of Cromarty, where the slopes fall continuously steeply from a height of around 140 metres to the narrow channel below. A viewpoint and car park have been built to take advantage of this view. The slopes are too steep and precarious for cultivation, supporting a cover of salt-tolerant scrub and rough grasses. A small section of flat raised beach with a grassland landcover occurs immediately adjoining the town, with several handsome buildings at its eastern end.

Key Characteristics

- *Dramatic erosional landform with very steep slopes.*
- *Contrasting small section of low-lying flat raised beach.*
- *Semi-natural landcover of scrub and grassland.*
- *Extensive panoramic outward views.*

Contin 1902*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 6a* *Contin Village*
- 6b* *Agricultural Flood Plain (IF)*
- 6c* *Wooded Hill-side (FB)*
- 6d* *Forest Edge Farming (EFL)*
- 6e* *Enfold Glen (FB)*

Background

A linear roadside village. The 18th century church (heightened in 1832) and former manse (1794) stand apart on an island in the Black Water. Contin Bridge, now superseded by a recent concrete structure was built by Thomas Telford between 1812 and 1813.



Local Character Type 6a Contin Village

Contin is a dispersed, linear village, which has developed along the Black Water river, as it exists higher ground to the Northwest. Earliest dwellings were built above the flood plain while more recent development has occurred at a slightly lower level and higher up the eastern strath side. Development is generally bounded by the river with distinctive island, church and manse (west) and wooded slopes (east) into which pockets of housing protrude. The busy A835 dominates the village, accessing most of the houses directly with small roads to the housing estate and scattered dwellings on the slopes. Distinctive structures and buildings include a monument at the southern end of the village, a road-side hotel, a garage and large forecourt, the modern bridge, and an unusual group of red stone terraced cottages. Strong traffic calming road markings and signs create characteristic entrances to the village.

Key Characteristics

- Linear, dispersed village with more recent development on hill side.
- Bounded by Black Water river and strath side.
- A835 dominates village with heavy traffic and traffic calming measures.
- Distinctive buildings and structures include pink stone langalows, a war memorial and modern bridge.
- Island, Church and former manse.

Local Character Type 6b Agricultural Flood Plain



The river flood plain forms an open tract of land bounded to the east by Contin and the Black Water river, and wooded ground rising to the west. The area is simple, flat and open, and predominantly grazed. Fields are large, rectangular divided by post and wire and some mature sycamore trees. There are some small coniferous blocks close to a well screened quarry. Scattered dwellings and farmhouses tend to be built on higher ground to the side of the strath floor, and are accessed by narrow roads and tracks. Views across the area to Contin are unrestricted. The enclosing valley sides tend to reflect the sounds of traffic and the quarry into the area.

Key Characteristics

- Flat, open flood plain.
- Simple landscape with little detail, rectangular fields and few up standing elements.
- Clear views across area to Contin.
- Dwellings are scattered and built above the flood plain.

Local Character Type 6c Wooded hill sides

Torrachille Forest occupies the strath sides to the north and west of Contin, and delineated by clear boundary of the Black Water strath flood plain. Much of the forest is coniferous commercial forestry although the bluff west of the strath is covered in more informal deciduous woodland. Forest walks and tracks access the forest to the north. This character area is generally undeveloped and typically dense and inaccessible. Views are limited to clearings within the trees although the occasional views out across the strath are good. A small group of houses and a hotel are the only dwellings.



Key Characteristics

- Forest to the north and west of Contin.
- Strath side slopes and surrounding hill tops.

Local Character Type 6d Forest Edge Farming

The high ground between Contin and Strathpeffer is bounded by forestry on most sides. The landform is undulating, sloping towards the river in to the south. Shelterbelts, copses and forestry edge form large 'compartments' of open land. Although there is some arable farming to the south, most of the area is rough grazing. Lanes and tracks access the area and there are few dwellings. Views are limited within the area by undulations and shelterbelts on higher ground, whilst there are clear views out across the river valley to the firth to the south.



Key Characteristics

- High undulating landform
- Open fields bounded by woodland and separated by shelterbelts and copses.
- Views within limited by undulating landform and shelterbelts.
- Very few dwellings.

Local Character Type 6c Enclosed Glen



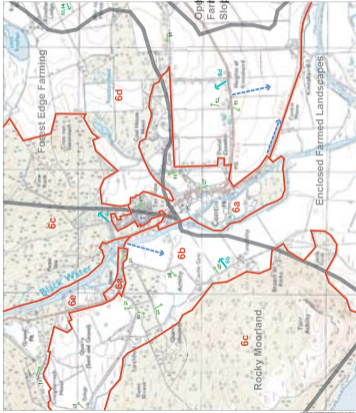
This character type comprises the Black Water to the north of the bridge crossing and is bounded largely by Coniferous forest to the east and the A835 to the west. The area is flat and forms the bottom of the glen. Although there are some openings, the area is predominantly covered by deciduous woodland and river edge scrub. The noise and movement of traffic on the A835 dominates the character type. There are some dwellings dissociated from Contin on the main road and a side road. Views within this area are limited by the dense tree cover.

Key Characteristics

- *Linear area following bottom of glen.*
- *Fairly flat.*
- *Dominated by traffic of A835.*
- *Deciduous woodland and river edge scrub form dominant land cover.*
- *Views limited by trees.*

KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Field's view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Social History of Hill edge characterisation



NOTE: This map shows a recent development near the town of COLETON. This has been included in the character analysis to ensure accuracy.



Settlement 6: Confin
Figure 6a: Landscape Character

7 Muir of Ord

Muir of Ord 1876*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 7a *Muir of Ord Town*
- 7b *Crofting (C, FEF, EFL)*
- 7c *Intensively Farmed Plains (EFL)*

Background

A large village, built on the site of the settlement of Tarradale, Muir of Ord was an important focal point in the days of the cattle drovers. It developed in the C.19 after the opening of the Inverness to Dingwall railway in 1863 and became the junction of the Black Isle line to Fortrose in 1894. The Ord distillery is located close to the village.

Local Character Type 7a Muir of Ord Town



Muir of Ord is a nuclear town situated in a break in the northeast/southwest trending hills north of the River Beauly. The town also connects the low ground between the Beauly and Conon flood plains. The settlement is star-shaped, having developed around the central nodal point where the A862, A832 and railway converge. A linear spur of industrial development follows the A862 south of the town, while the Ord distillery occupies an area to the north west, removed from the main core of the town. The oldest development is located in the centre with more modern architecture to the periphery. Recently houses have been built on the hillsides to the east. There is a small retail centre with some light industrial development. Notable structures include the central railway bridge, a cast iron railway footbridge, a memorial and the distillery to the north which often sends up a plume of steam. Straight roads form long views with mountains and hills beyond. In and around the town are many lochans and surrounding wetlands which support semi natural woodlands.

Key Characteristics

- Town occupying low ground in break in hills.
- Lochans with associated semi natural woodlands.
- Star-shaped town which has developed at the nodal crossing point of roads and a railway between Beauly and Conon valleys.
- Traditional centre with modern peripheral development.
- Distillery forms a focal point.

Local Character Type 7b Crofting



The upland between which Muir of Ord has grown, divides the River Beauly and Conon flood plains. Boundaries with lower ground are transitional, as land form becomes flatter, more open and fertile. Land form is undulating and soil poor in association with glacial deposition. The rolling land form is emphasized by the lines of boundaries and roads. Land uses comprise fairly poor quality grazing with mixed stands of trees and some commercial forestry on higher slopes. Fields are small and often divided by dry stone walls. Dwellings and small farms are frequent and scattered, and accessed by angular fields which follow field boundaries. Trees and the rolling topography form fairly small, enclosed spaces. This is a diverse, cluttered landscape typical of crofting. There are filtered and window views out to mountains and over Muir of Ord.

Key Characteristics

- Undulating upland land form, emphasized by lines of boundaries and roads.
- Poor quality grazing with some mixed stands of trees and commercial forestry.
- Small fields with dry stone wall boundaries.
- Frequent, scattered dwellings and farms.
- Diverse, textured landscape.
- Lower slopes clearly visible from Muir of Ord.

Local Character Type 7c Intensively Farmed Plain

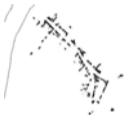
The low flood plains of the rivers Beauly and Conon extend towards each other at the Muir of Ord junction. Their boundary with higher ground is gradual as the landscape becomes more enclosed and starts rising. The areas are flat and open. Large, fertile, arable fields are divided by post and wire fences and there are few upstanding elements. Occasional stands of trees create formal shelter belts while small streams cutting into the plain are edged by scrub. Drainage of the agricultural land has resulted in angular surface drains. Buildings tend to be large and angular, comprising farms and industrial buildings. Roads and the railway are angular. Views across the area are open with clear views to the industrial estate and movement of the vehicles on the A862. The landscape is simple, with subtle patterns and texture being provided by agricultural practices.

**Key Characteristics**

- *Low, flat flood plain.*
- *Open, fertile, agricultural.*
- *Simple landscape with few vertical elements.*
- *Blocky forestry and large, angular forestry and industrial buildings.*
- *Open views to industrial estate.*

81 Conon Bridge

Conon Bridge 1904

*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 8a *Conon Bridge Villages*
- 8c *Enclous Farmed Slopes (EFL)*
- 8d *Mixed woodland and Forestry (FB)*
- 8e *Strath and Enclous Firths (EFL, NFC)*
- 8f *Open Farmed Slopes (OFS, NFC)*

Background

This village is sited at the lowest bridging point of the river. A single street was laid out in 1829 which has now been supplemented with C20 housing. The village has a variety of small industries and is a dormitory town for commuters to Inverness and Dingwall



Local Character Type 8a Conon Bridge Village

Conon Bridge is located on the A862 south of the River Conon bridging point. It is bounded by the river and railway to the northwest and the A9 to the northeast, spreading south eastwards following field boundaries. The valley side on which Conon Bridge has developed is gently sloping. The village originally developed in a linear form along the A862 and its junction with the B9163 where traditional stone buildings remain. The village has developed progressively with housing estates higher up the valley sides. Distinctive buildings and places include a memorial, large yew bushes in front of the church and a cream coloured 1950s housing estate. There are attractive views down the main street of the village core.

Key Characteristics

- Village south of River Conon crossing.
- Compact village with linear core, dominated by A862.
- Fairly extensive modern residential development to southeast.

Local Character Type 8c Enclosed Farmed Slopes



This area occupies the south facing slopes of the River Conon valley and is clearly bounded by the river, woodland and Maryburgh. Large, arable fields are open and split by a lane which runs mid way up the valley side. A small hamlet comprising a farm and cottages is situated on the road. Field boundaries and ploughing lines run parallel with and at right angles to the river. Vertical elements are restricted to telegraph poles and a few single mature trees on the road. Although the area is open, the woodland above and opposite valley sided give a sense of enclosure. There are clear views across the area and to Maryburgh and Conon Bridge.

Key Characteristics

- Long tract occupying south facing valley of the river Conon.
- Open, agricultural fields.
- Single track lane, footpaths and field boundaries run parallel with or at right angle to valley side.
- Clear views across valley to settlements.

Local Character Type 8d Mixed Woodland and Forestry



Located on the higher ground of the north side of the Conon valley, this area is gently convex. It encompasses the open A9 corridor but is largely wooded. Trees to the north of the A9 are coniferous while mixed woodland to the south is part of Brahan House estate. The angular edges of woodland and large shelter belts form 'rooms' within the area, which are cultivated. Dwellings are infrequent and scattered on the edge of clearings, and accessed by a number of small tracks and footpaths. The woodland provides a habitat for a wealth of bird life. Views are limited to within openings in the woodland structure.

Key Characteristics

- Higher, convex ground of the Conon valley.
- Heavily wooded with coniferous forest, mixed deciduous woodland and some shelter belts.
- Open 'rooms' created by angular edges of woodland and shelter belts.
- Network of footpaths and tracks.
- Limited views.

Local Character Type 8e Strath and Enclosed Firth

The Conon River is in its last stages here before reaching the Cromarty Firth. Situated in a wide valley, gentle gradients result in braiding of the river and silt deposition. To the west of the settlements, islands have formed within the river. These tend to have edges vegetated by scrub and alder. Dunglass Island is large enough to sustain arable farming. The river is tidal upstream of Conon and Maryburgh and to the east of the settlements, the river broadens with mudflats exposed at low tide. The river banks remain largely vegetated throughout the area. There are views along the river from all the bridging points including the A9.

**Key Characteristics**

- River Conon and its banks before it enters the Cromarty Firth.
- Widespread deposition has formed islands and rivulets within the river profile.
- The river becomes tidal to the east of the A9 crossing, exposing mudflats at low tide.
- River banks are lined with trees and scrub.

Local Character Type 8f Open Farmed Slopes

To the north of the B9169, north-facing slopes fall to the shores of the Cromarty Firth. Their gradient is generally even and convex, with some minor undulations caused by variations in the underlying drift deposits and by gully erosion. Fields are large and arable, divided by shelterbelts, hedges and copses. The field boundaries, lanes and patterns of cultivation tend to run either parallel with, or at right angles to the contours, forming a strong underlying rhythm. Streams incised into the slope create hidden wooded dells which conceal old stone houses and barns, leaving an apparently uninhabited rural landscape. Views are predominantly open in character, dominated by the firth and the mountains to the north.

**Key Characteristics**

- Even convex slope interrupted by characteristic undulations in topography reflecting geomorphology and drift geology.
- Large arable fields enclosed by shelterbelts.
- Strong rhythmic patterns controlled by trend in landform.
- Open views to north.

KEY

- 8f Local Landscape Character Type
-  Network view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph evidence
-  Scottish Natural Heritage designation

NOTE
A large scale aerial photograph has been used to create this map. It has been subject to the standard map reprojection process.

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 Kilometres



811 Maryburgh

Maryburgh 1876

*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 8b *Maryburgh Village*
- 8c *Enclousd Farmed Slops (EFL)*
- 8d *Mixed woodland and Forestry (FB)*
- 8e *Strath and Enclousd Firth (EFL, NFC)*
- 8f *Open Farmed Slops (OFS, NFC)*

Background

The village of Maryburgh is situated close to Dingwall and was laid out as the village of the Brahan Estate on a triangular plan in the early C19 by Lord Seaforth. It was named after his wife, Mary Proby, the daughter of Mary, Lady Hood. Late C20 development along the main road to the south joined the settlement of Maryburgh to Conon Bridge. The village is mainly a dormitory town for workers who commute to Dingwall and to Inverness.

Local Character Type 8b **Maryburgh Village**

Maryburgh is a smaller village than Conon Bridge, and has developed in a similar fashion. The village mirrors Conon Bridge across the river. It is bounded by the railway and flood plain to the south east and a band of forestry and A9 corridor to the west. The south facing valley side slopes upwards gently. The traditional core is again centred on the A862 with rows of stone cottages still remaining, although a triangular large grassed area behind also formed the focus for historical development. Modern housing estates have developed on available peripheral ground. Shops are limited to a post office in the centre. A red timber clad house on the main road forms a distinctive landmark. There are clear views to the settlement from the A9

Key Characteristics

- *Small village north of River Conon crossing.*
- *Compact village with linear core and village green.*
- *Dominated by A862*

Local Character Type 8c **Enclosed Farmed Slopes**

This area occupies the south facing slopes of the River Conon valley and is clearly bounded by the river, woodland and Maryburgh. Large, arable fields are open and split by a lane which runs mid way up the valley side. A small hamlet comprising a farm and cottages is situated on the road. Field boundaries and ploughing lines run parallel with and at right angles to the river. Vertical elements are restricted to telegraph poles and a few single mature trees on the road. Although the area is open, the woodland above and opposite valley sided give a sense of enclosure. There are clear views across the area and to Maryburgh and Conon Bridge.

Key Characteristics

- *Long tract occupying south facing valley of the river Conon.*
- *Open, agricultural fields.*
- *Single track/ lane, footpaths and field boundaries run parallel with or at right angles to valley side.*
- *Clear views across valley to settlements.*

Local Character Type 8d Mixed Woodland and Forestry

Located on the higher ground of the north side of the Conon valley, this area is gently convex. It encompasses the open A9 corridor but is largely wooded. Trees to the north of the A9 are coniferous while mixed woodland to the south is part of Brahan House estate. The angular edges of woodland and large shelter belts form 'rooms' within the area, which are cultivated. Dwellings are infrequent and scattered on the edge of clearings, and accessed by a number of small tracks and footpaths. The woodland provides a habitat for a wealth of bird life. Views are limited to within openings in the woodland structure.

**Key Characteristics**

- Higher, convex ground of the Conon valley.
- Heavily wooded with coniferous forest, mixed deciduous woodland and some shelter belts.
- Open 'rooms' created by angular edges of woodland and shelter belts.
- Network of footpaths and tracks.
- Limited views.

Local Character Type 8c Strath and Enclosed Firth

The Conon River is in its last stages here before reaching the Cromarty Firth. Situated in a wide valley, gentle gradients result in braiding of the river and silt deposition. To the west of the settlements, islands have formed within the river. These tend to have edges vegetated by scrub and alder. Darglass Island is large enough to sustain arable farming. To the east of the settlements, the river broadens and becomes tidal, exposing rivulets in the mud flats at low tide. The river banks remain largely vegetated throughout the area. There are views along the river from all the bridging points including the A9.

**Key Characteristics**

- River Conon and its banks before it enters the Cromarty Firth.
- Widespread disposition in the form of islands and rivulets within the river profile.
- The river becomes tidal to the east of the A9 crossing, exposing mud flats at low tide.
- River banks are lined with trees and scrub.

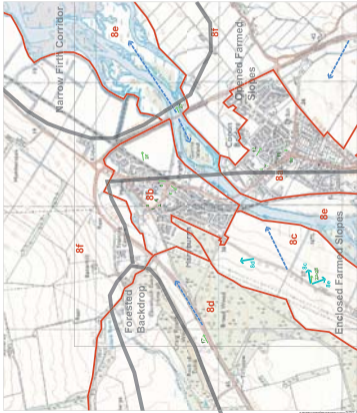
Local Character Type 8f Open Farmed Slopes

To the north of the B9169, north-facing slopes fall to the shores of the Czermary Firth. Their gradient is generally even and convex, with some minor undulations caused by variations in the underlying drift deposits and by gully erosion. Fields are large and arable, divided by shelterbelts, hedges and copses. The field boundaries, lanes and patterns of cultivation tend to run either parallel with, or at right angles to the contours, forming a strong underlying rhythm. Streams incised into the slope create hidden wooded dells which conceal old stone houses and barns, leaving an apparently uninhabited rural landscape. Views are predominantly open in character, dominated by the firth and the mountains to the north.

Key Characteristics

- *Even convex slope interrupted by characteristic undulations in topography reflecting geomorphology and drift geology.*
- *Large arable fields enclosed by shelterbelts.*
- *Strong rhythmic pattern controlled by trend in landform.*
- *Open views to north.*

KEY



NOTE: Some recent development is not shown in this OLS map. A location indicated on this map may not currently exist.

Scale: 1:10,000

Settlement 01 - Mearns /
Figure 06 - Landscape Character

9 Dingwall



Dingwall 1876

Local Landscape Character Types

- 9a *Dingwall Town*
- 9b *Narrow Firth Corridor (NFL)*
- 9c *Enclous Farmed Landscapes (NFS, EFL)*
- 9d *Farmed Straths (EFL)*
- 9e *Flat, grazed firth valley flood plain. (NFC)*

Background

Dingwall is situated at the head of the 50 kilometre (19 mile) long Cromarty Firth. It was made a Royal Burgh in 1226 and later, with good road and rail links became the county town of Ross and Cromarty. Dingwall was always overshadowed in importance and prosperity by the larger burghs of Inverness and Elgin and in 1691 trade in Dingwall was virtually non-existent. A harbour built by Thomas Telford in 1815-17 gave rise to some expansion in the early C19 to which the arrival of the railway in 1862 and improved road communications added further impetus. More recently, the central area redevelopment which took place in 1963 provided ample parking but deprived the town of much of its character. Dingwall is a market town and a service centre. The town was designated a conservation area in 1974.

9a Dingwall Town



A large town situated on low lying ground at the mouth of the Peffer Glen and the head the Cromarty Firth. Development is fairly nuclear; its eastern edges defined by the extent of the firth flood plain, and its northern and southern boundaries restricted by rising hill sides. The settlement is of mixed ages with the earliest development forming along what is now the high street. The most recent residential development is in the form of large estates rising up the wooded hill side to the north. The town has a well developed commercial/retail centre with areas of light industry and businesses in the centre and to the west along the Peffer flood plain. The town forms the nodal point for three railway lines, and the A862 and A835. The town, as a result, is characterised by a numerous bridge and road crossing points. Numerous stone towers and monuments dominate the roof-scape, whilst the tower on top of the coastal slope to the south of the town, is visible from most points. Open space and tree planting are limited, with a large playing field north of the centre and pockets of woodland between housing estates on the northern hillside.

Key Characteristics

- rising hills to north and south
- River Peffer flood plain
- nodal point for roads and rail
- numerous bridges and crossing points
- stone towers and monuments dominate roofscape
- tower on coastal slope visible from most areas
- patches of woodland between housing on northern hillside

9b Narrow Firth Corridor



The Peffer exit has formed a small bay near the 'end' to the Cromarty Firth with associated alluvial deposition which is exposed as expansive mudflats at low tide. The river has now been canalised, however, entering the firth further to the south-east. The effect of the tide forms an ever changing landscape of channels cut through the mud with associated bird life. The edges are characterised by marginal vegetation including reeds and grasses. Views are open and broad.

Key Characteristics

- bay on Cromarty firth
- alluvial deposition
- expansive mudflats
- canalised river
- broad, open views

9c Enclosed Farmed Landscapes

This area includes the hillsides at the mouth of the Peffer Glen, which are steepest on the south side. Fields tend to be arable on the lower slopes (at the indistinct boundary with 9a) with grazing higher up. Large fields are divided by hedges or contrast in cultivation practices but generally open. The hillside forms a back drop to Dingwall with clear views from Dingwall. The northern slopes are more wooded with remnants of estate deciduous trees, with moorland and rough grazing on the higher slopes. Steep lanes are bounded by trees and hedges and follow field boundaries.



Key Characteristics

- *hillside at mouth of Peffer Glen, steepest on south side*
- *arable lower slopes, grazing higher*
- *large fields divided by hedges*
- *generally open*
- *forms backdrop to town*
- *wooded northern slopes*
- *remnants of policy woodland*
- *steep, tree lined lanes*

9d Farmed Strath (EFL)

The Peffer strath is flat and wide to the west of Dingwall, and characterised by large, fertile, largely arable fields. These are generally open, with some overgrown hedges and post and wire boundaries. The A834 and railway hug slightly higher ground at the base of the hillside to the south. These are lined with trees and hedges. The new business park next to this character area dominates the landscape.



Key Characteristics

- *flat and wide strath*
- *large fertile arable fields*
- *tree lined roads and railway*
- *business park adjacent*

9e Flat, grazed firth edge flood plain. (NFC)



This area occupies the pockets of flat, low land between the firth and the eastern boundary of Dingwall. Although generally undeveloped due to flood risk, a bund protects the southern area, where an MOD compound, some dwellings and a sewerage works have been established. This area is accessed by a distinctive straight, oak lined road, leading to a viewing point and visitors carpark at the end. Much of the character area, although open and close to Dingwall, is separated by the railway line embankment making it feel insular.

Key Characteristics

- low lying land between firth and town
- bunding
- straight oak lined road
- separated from town by railway
- insular

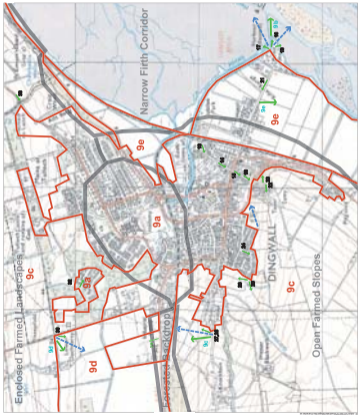
KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Field of view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Significant Heritage characterisation

NOTE
 Shaded areas unincorporated in red above
 on this Old map. A hatched area in the
 bottom right indicates additional possible

SCALE 1:5000
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

Settlement @ Dingwall
 Figure 10a Landscape Character



10 Edderton

Edderton 1904*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 10a *Edderton Village*
- 10b *Open Firth Edge (EF)*
- 10c *Open Farmed Landscape (EF, FEF)*
- 10d *Open Farmed Slopes (FEF)*
- 10e *Upland Grazing (FEF)*

Background

Edderton is a hamlet near the parish church with the Balblair distillery just to the north. In the old kirkyard (the church dates from 1794) is the Crusader's stone with another Pictish stone to the north of the village. Employment is through farming and forestry though many of the residents of Edderton are retired. In the early 1990's the opening of the bridge over the Doernoch Firth effectively by-passed the village and resulted in the closure of even the small village shop and post office. The only remaining commercial enterprises in the village are a hotel and a caravan sales outlet.



Local Character Type 10a Edderton Village

Edderton is a very small village situated on the south side of Dornoch Firth between the A836 and the railway. It comprises small dwellings, a hotel, a caravan sales outlet and a distillery, all of which are fairly scattered. Small, grazed fields link development. Landmarks are limited to a memorial and unusual thatched bus shelter on the main road, and a standing stone, a disused railway station and the distillery towers. There is little modern development.

Key Characteristics

- *Very small firth edge village.*
- *Bounded by A836 and coastal railway.*
- *Loose structure of dwellings linked by small, grazed fields.*
- *Some small landmarks.*

Local Character Type 10b Open Firth Edge



This small area comprises a distinct parcel of higher ground between the coastal railway and the firth edge. It has a steep side to the northwest and shelves towards the firth. The ground is undulating and covered by low coastal scrub and grass grazed by sheep. There is also a small stand of trees. The area is difficult to access or see.

Key Characteristics

- *Small area of high ground between village and firth.*
- *Covered by low coastal scrub and grass.*
- *Difficult to see or access.*

Local Character Type 10c Open Farmed Landscape



The flood plain of the Craigroy river is bounded by higher ground to the south and west. The A836 follows its western boundary and the railway embankment bisects the area. It is open, flat farmland which has been improved through drainage. Fields are long, rectangular and fairly small with post and wire divisions. There are scattered tree groups and a particularly distinctive pollarded beech avenue. A circular, small road accesses the area and scattered dwellings, passing under the railway through a bridge. Views tend to be dominated by the hills to the south.

Key Characteristics

- *Flood plain of the river Craigroy.*
- *Open, long, rectangular fields with mixed agricultural use.*
- *Some tree groups and lines.*
- *Views to higher ground to the east.*

Local Character Type 10d Open Farmed Slopes

The lower hillsides above the Dornoch Firth loosely containing the A836 corridor. The slopes are gently undulating and generally concave. Streams and rivers cut shallow valleys into the slopes. It is an open landscape with fairly large fields grazed by sheep and divided by dry stone walls and post and wire fences. There are some tree belts and copses and the water courses are lined by trees. Dwellings are scattered and associated with farm buildings. There are some views out over Edderton, the firth and wooded hills beyond.

**Key Characteristics**

- Low, concave hillsides above Dornoch Firth.
- Open grazed fields with dry stone and post and wire boundaries.
- River and stream channels are tree lined, cutting shallow valleys into the slopes.
- Scattered dwellings associated with farms.
- Views out over Edderton and firth beyond.

Local Character Type 10e Upland Grazing

This area occupies the higher slopes to the south of the Dornoch Firth and is bounded by the edge of its forestry planting. The land form is gently undulating, and generally sloping, with a small valley cut by the Edderton Burn. Glacial deposition has resulted in poor soils and surface boulders. Vegetation reflects poor soils with coniferous forestry blocks bordering parcels of rough grazing. Fields are open and divided by post and wire with occasional gorse and broom clumps. Deciduous scrub follows the line of the stream. The dark, hard edges of the coniferous forestry contrast with the open, pale vegetation of the fields. The hamlet of Balleigh is located on a slackening of the slope and dominated by the primary school. Development is, otherwise, scarce. Views are focused on the firth in the distance.

**Key Characteristics**

- Undulating upper slopes south of the Dornoch Firth.
- Surface lying boulders and poor soils evidence of glacial deposition.
- Tract of open, rough grazing between large blocks of coniferous forestry.
- Gorse and broom clumps.
- Small hamlet of Balleigh

KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Potential view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  5 miles in National Heritage characterisation

NOTE
Although some recent developments and those in the 0-50 years, it has been included in the 0-50 year and rapidly redeveloped provision.



11 Tain

Tain 1871*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 11a *Tain Town*
- 11b *Lowland Intensive Farming (IF)*
- 11c *Intensive Farming (FEF, IF)*
- 11d *Forest Edge Farming (FEF)*

Background

Tain is a market town which grew up around the pilgrimage place associated with St Duthac. It is a conservation village which centres on the complex of buildings around the medieval Collegiate Church and boasts many other fine buildings including St Duthac's chapel and Tollbooth. There are few houses in the town dating from before 1800 but the single most distinctive characteristic of its architecture is the high quality of stonework which has been taken from the sandstone quarries in the area. In colour, texture and treatment the masonry conveys an impression of handsome solidity throughout. Tain claims to be the oldest royal burgh in Scotland with a

charter dating to 1066. Redevelopment and expansion began in the late C18 and continued through the C19, accompanied by realignment of the notoriously irregular street pattern. The level of the High Street was raised during the C19 by bridging a number of small streams. The by-pass was built in 1979. Today the town has retail services and oil related employment and is the focus of a rich agricultural hinterland. Industries include: the Glen Morangie distillery, cheese processing and seafoods. Tain was made a conservation area in 1974

11a Tain Town



Tain is an historic town situated on the southern shore of the Dornoch Firth, above the coastal slope. It originally formed in an organic grid form, and has since developed along routes radiating from the core. The resulting footprint is that of a semi-circle, which is now being emphasised by residential infill up to the by passing A9. The traditional building material is a pale pink sandstone and a number of towers and monuments form a distinctive town centre. The town centre supports a small retail area and other land uses include a secondary school, distillery, and a new business park below the coastal slope. Development on the coastal slope is characterised by diagonal, steep roads and high walls to properties. The fabric of the town is more open to the north although there are from open fields and a playing field on the south side. The main street's situation on the edge of the coastal slope results in striking views out to the firth.

Key Characteristics

- *historic town above coastal slope*
- *organic grid core with radiating development*
- *residential infill up to A9*
- *Pale pink sandstone*
- *towers and monuments*
- *striking views to firth*

11b Lowland Intensive Farming



This character zone forms the flat, low lying firth edge area, below the coastal slope. It is divided into and area of mixed agricultural use, and firth edge scrub (north of the railway). Fields are large and open, and divided by post and wire fences and drainage ditches. A river cuts through cuts through the un-farmed area, and is marked by rough grass, gorse, bracken and a shallow valley. The area is accessed by a minor road which cuts across the coastal slope dramatically, crossing the railway with a small hump backed bridge. The railway, although bisects the area, is in cutting and un-obtrusive. A farm stead and trees form a small cluster of detail. The area is generally highly visible from the top of the coastal slope above.

Key Characteristics

- *flat, low lying firth edge*
- *mixed agricultural use*
- *minor road with hump backed bridge*
- *farmstead and tree group*
- *highly visible from the top of the coastal slope*

11c Intensive Farming

Undulating, large arable fields slope gently towards the edge of the coastal slope. Fields are open, rectangular, and divided by post and wire fences. Telegraph poles, A9 lighting columns and blocks of deciduous, coniferous and mixed trees form the dominant vertical elements. This tract contains the A9 corridor and a few farmsteads. Views are long and broad.

**Key Characteristics**

- *undulating, large arable fields*
- *gentle slope to coast*
- *open, rectangular fields*
- *A9 lighting columns*
- *Deciduous and coniferous trees*
- *Long, broad views*

11d Forest Edge Farming

Higher, less fertile ground between the ring road, two minor roads and coniferous plantations to the north west, is typified by a smaller more detailed grain than 11c. Fields are rectangular with scattered single or grouped dwellings. Two hamlets have developed close to the ring road. Wet, acid soil supports poor quality grazing and scrubby birch, gorse and conifers. Views across this landscape are limited by the scattered blocks of trees and is completely visually separated from Tain by the banks of the bypass. 9a Dingwall – large town with developed commercial and industrial areas on low lying ground at head of firth.

**Key Characteristics**

- *Higher, less fertile ground*
- *Coniferous plantation to north west*
- *Rectangular fields with scattered dwellings*
- *Grazing and scrubby vegetation*
- *views limited by vegetation*

KEY

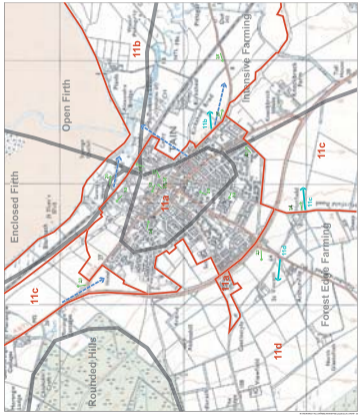
-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Potential view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Scottish National Heritage (SNC) boundary

NOTE
Although some recent development is not subject to the SNH (SNC) boundary, it has been highlighted in the landscape and capacity assessment products.

Scale 1:10,000
Scale 1:25,000
Scale 1:50,000



Settlement 11: Train
Figure 11a: Landscape Character



12 Strathpeffer

Strathpeffer 1876*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 12a Strathpeffer Village*
- 12b Stap Glen Sides (EFL)*
- 12c Forest Edge Farming (EFL)*
- 12d Forested Backdrop (FB)*
- 12e Intensively Farmed Strath (EFL)*

Background

This village, which lies in the shadow of Ben Wyvis was a renowned Victorian spa whose springs were known for their curative powers as far back as 1772. A village was proposed in 1800 but it was only after the pump room was built that work began. In 1860 George Devey produced a layout plan for the village but it was not adhered to closely. The rebuilding of the pump room in 1861, the opening of a branch line from Dingwall in 1886 and the opening of a massive hotel in 1911, all contributed to its development. Strathpeffer was Scotland's answer to the Bavarian watering place and was built in a style representative of the sumptuous excesses of Victorian Britain. At one time there were two pump rooms but only one survives, the other having been demolished in 1950. The upper pump room which remains is being restored along with the adjacent gardens. It is a conservation area designated as such in 1974. Many residents of Strathpeffer commute to Dingwall or Inverness to work.

Local Character Type 12a Strathpeffer Village

This village is located high up in an 'elbow' of the Strathpeffer glen. It centres on the lowest ground along the A834, with more recent development on the valley sides, particularly to the north. The village boundaries are limited by steepness of slope to the north, west and south, and are surrounded by open fields. The village developed predominantly as a Victorian spa town and is well preserved as such. Hotels, the Spa Pavilion and churches line the main street, with a prominent tourist information centre. The most recent development has occurred at the west and north western side of the village. Towers dominate the roof-scape, and other characteristic features include mature beech hedges and trees including monkey puzzle trees. A bus depot and new community centre are located to the west of the centre where a playing field also occupies one of the few open, flat areas. There are clear views of development on the valley sides, particularly of the recent housing estates, and long views down the glen can be obtained from the golf club to the north of the village.

Key Characteristics

- *Large village situated high up the Peffer Glen.*
- *Well preserved Victorian spa village.*
- *Characterised by towers, hotels, mature trees and beech hedges.*
- *Recent modern development to the west of the village centre.*

Local Character Type 12b Steep Glen Sides

This character type is located higher up the glen sides, acting as a buffer between the clear boundaries of the village and the coniferous woodland. The land form is fairly steep, convex and slightly undulating, with gradients easing higher up the southern slopes. To the north, rough grazing has no field boundaries and there is some gorse scrub on the steepest ground. On the south side the lower slopes are largely under arable use, whilst the higher slopes tend to be grazed. On this side, fields are formed by post and wire divisions which run perpendicular to, and parallel with the slope. This character type is open with few vertical elements which include some trees, scrub and scattered farms. Small tracks which follow field boundaries, access these properties. There are clear views to and out of the area across the village and Peffer strath. Despite the area's open, elevated nature, a sense of enclosure is achieved by the narrow glen and the woodland blocks above.

Key Characteristics

- *Tracts at mid level up the Peffer glen sides.*
- *Boundaries clearly defined by edges of the village and the coniferous plantations above.*
- *Open, mixed agricultural use with few vertical elements.*
- *Tracks and field boundaries run perpendicular to and parallel with the slopes.*

- *Scattered farms.*
- *Open views from and to the area.*

Local Character Type 12c Forest Edge Farming

The high ground between Contin and Strathpeffer is bounded by forestry on most sides. The landform is undulating, sloping towards the river in to the south. Shelterbelts, copses and forestry edge form large 'compartments' of open land. Although there is some arable farming to the south, most of the area is rough grazing. Lanes and tracks access the area and there are few dwellings. Views are limited within the area by undulations and shelterbelts on higher ground, whilst there are clear views out across the river valley to the firth to the south.



Key Characteristics

- *High undulating landform.*
- *Open fields bounded by woodland and separated by shelterbelts and copses.*
- *Views within limited by undulating landform and shelterbelts.*
- *Very few dwellings.*

Local Character Type 12d Forested Backdrop

The highest ground above the head of the Peffer glen is largely forested with clear, angular boundaries with the open agriculture of local character type 6c. Land form is generally convex with the occasional knoll. Trees form a monoculture area of commercial coniferous plantation with narrow, deciduous edges. Although generally densely planted, steep, rocky knolls and harvested compartments form clearings and allow views out over the valley. The forested hill tops form a dark backdrop of overlapping 'fingers' to the skyline. Some tracks within the forestry provide access. The proximity of such a large area of forestry to Peffer creates an unusual, wooded context to the settlement.



Key Characteristics

- *Hill tops above the head of the Peffer glen.*
- *Densely planted with coniferous forestry with angular edges.*
- *Forested hill forms dark backdrop and wooded setting to Strathpeffer.*

Local Character Type 12e Intensively Farmed Strath

The Peffer river follows an unusual right angled change in direction as it exits high ground to the north and enters a wide strath, east of Strathpeffer. The strath floor is flat and divided into large, predominantly arable fields. Lines of field boundaries, tracks and tree belts cross the strath creating overlapping bands and 'rooms'. The A834 runs through the centre of the strath with small roads and tracks accessing scattered dwellings and farms. Views across the area are open within the 'rooms' created by the shelter belts.

Key Characteristics

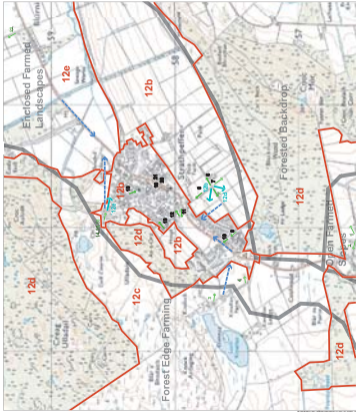
- Broad strath below Strathpeffer.
- Flat, open arable fields.
- Lines of field boundaries, tracks and shelterbelts form bands across the strath.
- Views with 'rooms' are open but limited by shelterbelts.

KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Fieldwork view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Scottish Natural Heritage creation/alteration

NOTE
Although some areas developed in relation to the OS back, it is not included in the study area and is not a priority for the study.

1:25,000 Scale



13 Evanton

Evanton 1875**Local Landscape Character Types**

- 13a *Evanton Village*
- 13b *Flat fertile wet-wash plain with large scale structures associated with disused airfield. (EFL, EF)*
- 13c *Low lying agricultural landscape, incised by rivers with large residences in wooded grounds. (EF)*
- 13d *Mixed policy woodland and commercial forestry. (EFL, FEF)*

Background

A planned village laid out in 1807 but with almost all the older buildings that remain dating from the Victorian period. There is a sizeable but well hidden late C20 development to the village. Evanton was a dormitory settlement for the oil related industry and is a settlement for farming. Close to the village is the spectacular Black Rock gorge and on Fyrish Hill a curious Indian gateway replica was erected by Sir Hector Munro in 1782.



13a Evanton Village

The largest, historical part of this village was built on an unusual triangular grid with a church and spire as a focal point. It has since developed along the B817 and with more dispersed, larger dwellings along a minor road to the west. The settlement is split by the forested River Glass glen which accommodates a caravan park. Landmarks include a war memorial at the southern entrance to the village, a church tower on the main street, the previously mentioned church and an old dovecote to the south west of the village. The village centre supports a few shops and a garage. Prominent open spaces are a the primary school playground and a green surrounded by fairly modern houses to the north east.

Key Characteristics

- *Unusually structured historical core.*
- *Settlement split by River Glass Glen.*
- *Modern development in 'fingers' to the west with small estates east of the river.*
- *Very small commercial cores.*

13b Flat firth out-wash plain with large scale structures associated with disused airfield.



This broad expanse of flat, firth edge ground is bordered by the B817 and the river Glass. There is some arable land use but the area is dominated by a disused air field with its runways and green and blue painted hangars, which is now partly re-used as a business park and for industry. The area has a large scaled grain with simple, bold forms. The movement of heavy traffic within the airfield and on the A9 which is raised above, is a dominant feature. Views a clear across the area although a forested backdrop screens views to Evanton.

Key Characteristics

- *Firth edge bordered by B817 and river Glass.*
- *Flat and open with views over firth.*
- *Predominantly a disused airfield with large, bold forms.*
- *Heavy traffic of the A9 and on the airfield dominates.*

13c Low lying agricultural landscape, incised by rivers with large residences in wooded grounds.

To the south of Evanton, a slightly undulating, broad tract of agricultural land slopes gently to the firth edge. It has a large scale grain of open, arable fields with occasional vertical elements of trees and farm buildings. Two river gorges cut through the areas to the east with associated woodland. Overgrown hedges and ditches emphasise roads and the railway line. Views are contained only by undulating landforms and the backdrop of wooded hills to the north. Buildings are limited to dispersed houses and farmsteads. A grain silo with a castellated top forms a particularly distinctive landmark of the area.



Key Characteristics

- *Firth edge agricultural land.*
- *Large scale grain of open fields.*
- *Bisected by two rivers.*
- *A few dwellings and farms.*
- *Hedges and ditches emphasise roads and railway.*

13d Mixed policy woodland and commercial forestry.

Occupying the mid to higher slopes of the firth, this area is densely wooded. Coniferous commercial plantations become more diverse, mixed woodland in association with an estate to the east. Blocks of trees also become narrower, separating into shelterbelts, and are interspersed with open, rough grazing fields lower down the slope. Streams in steep valleys form fingers of scrubby vegetation, running down the slope. The area is accessed by narrow lanes and forestry tracks. Views are limited by mature, heavy tree planting.



Key Characteristics

- *Mid to higher level hill side above the firth.*
- *Densely wooded with coniferous plantations and mixed, policy woodland.*
- *Tree planting on lower slopes becomes more dispersed with shelterbelts dividing open fields.*
- *Streams in steep valleys form fingers of scrubby vegetation.*
- *Views limited.*

KEY

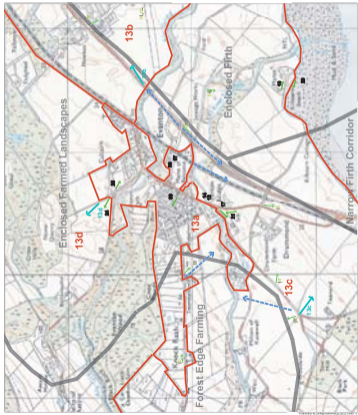
- 13a Local Landscape Character Type
-  Potential viewpoint
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Scottish Natural Heritage designation

NOTE
Although some rural development land shown on the OS maps, it has been included in the character and development process

Source: Ordnance Survey, 2015. Ordnance Survey is a registered trademark of Ordnance Survey Limited.



Settlement 13 - Bovan
Figure 13 - Landscape Character



Alness 1874*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 14a *Alness Town*
- 14b *Mixed Woodland and Enclous Farming (EFL, FB)*
- 14c *Enclous Farmed Landscapes – Depleted (EFL)*
- 14d *Lowland Firth Edge (EF)*

Background

Alness is situated on the banks of the river Avoon. It is linear settlement and was created originally from two villages on either side of the river. Bridge end, which was one of the villages, was created by Munro Teaninich, and on the east side was a larger village which was laid out on either side of a wide main street. Alness underwent major expansion in the 1970's when it became the chief dormitory for workers at the Invergordon aluminium smelter and the oil rig construction yard at Nigg. Alness has two distilleries, Dalmore and Teaninich.



Local Character Type 14a Town Alness

This medium sized firth edge town is located on flat ground below the slopes to the north of the Cromarty Firth and developed originally along what is now the B817. It is still fairly compact and divided by the River Alness, with a large area of traditional houses built on a grid to the east of the river and modern housing estates to the north and western peripheries. A relatively large industrial estate has developed to the south of the railway. Alness is now bypassed by the A9. The town centre has a fairly large retail area. Landmarks include the Bank of Scotland, a red stone cross, the historical linear cone and stone and new river and railway bridges.

Key Characteristics

- *Medium sized town close to the firth edge.*
- *Compact form, divided by the river Alness.*
- *Traditional centre with extensive modern residential and industrial expansion.*
- *Landmarks include road and railway bridges, red stone cross, Bank of Scotland.*

Local Character Type 14b Mixed Woodland and Enclosed Farming



This area is located on the slopes above northwest Alness and to the east of the River Alness. Surface water drainage has eroded channels in the slope. The area is heavily commercially forested with sitka spruce and larch, with deciduous species along watercourses. A number of small roads follow the small valleys with tracks within the forestry. Openings are created by harvested areas and the routes of pilons, and the woodland forms angular edges to arable fields in the west. Dwellings are occasional and scattered. Views are limited to openings in the forest fabric with occasional views to the firth.

Key Characteristics

- *Slopes northwest of Alness.*
- *Incised by streams and river.*
- *Heavily commercially forested with some deciduous vegetation to edges and streams.*
- *Limited open space.*

Local Character Type 14c Enclosed Farmed Landscape Despoiled

A tract of land bordered by Alness to the south and a minor road to the north. Undulations in the land form create a slight 'bowl' in the slopes to the firth. The southern part of the area has been or is currently being mined for sand and gravel, accentuating undulations in the topography. It is generally a despoiled landscape with scrubby vegetation in the form of birch and alder. The ground is wet and littered with disused buildings associated with mining. To the north, fields are predominantly arable and open. Views are contained within the area, and much of the mined area is screened from the road by banks.



Key Characteristics

- Slight 'bowl' at the base of higher slopes above the firth.
- Dominated by past and present sand and gravel extraction activities.
- Scrubby vegetation and wet ground in places.
- Views contained within area, with most views from the road screened by banks.

Local Character Type 14d Lowland Firth Edge

The flat, low ground between Alness and the firth edge. Large, open arable fields are semi-enclosed by shelter belts and overgrown hedges, with mixed woodland towards Alness. Fields are divided by post and wire fences and drainage ditches. This tract forms the transport corridor for the A9, the B817 and the coastal railway. The A9 crosses River Alness here, with busy traffic dominating views. To the business park to the north, and oil rigs in the firth to the south.

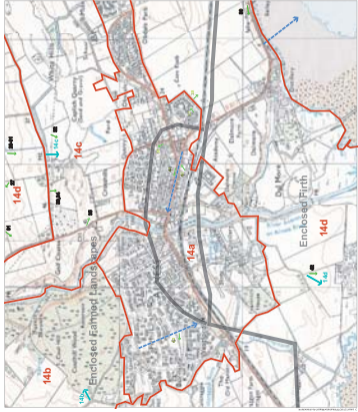


Key Characteristics

- Flat, low firth edge.
- Arable fields semi-enclosed by deciduous shelterbelts.
- Fairly large grained landscape.
- Transport corridor.
- Clear views to Firth and business park dominated by busy traffic.

KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Footpath viewpoint
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Scottish Natural Heritage designation



NOTE
Although some natural development land classes are shown on this map, these have been excluded from the final landscape capacity assessment process.

Source: Ordnance Survey, 2015



Settlement 16 - Ainesis
Figure No. Landscape Character

15 Invergordon

Invergordon 1872**Local Landscape Character Types:**

- 15a *Invergordon Town*
- 15b *Enclosed Wooded Farmed Landscape (ELF)*
- 15c *Open Farmed Landscape (EFL)*

Background

This small town, originally founded as a fishing village on the site of an early castle, was built in the mid C.18 by the Gordons of Invergordon and was enlarged in the mid C.19. Although the foundations of the settlement are centuries old the town is quite modern. The main structure of the town was set out in the 1780's with the laying out of ninety eight plots along the present High Street forming the pattern of streets that survives today. The sheltered harborage that Invergordon provided made it an important centre for the export of cattle and grain. It was also the ferry terminal for the short crossing to Balblair on the Black Isle. Because of it's excellent deep water facilities it was made a naval base (with oil and grain services) in both World Wars. In the early 1960's a grain distillery, the largest in Europe, was established. The aluminium smelter opened in 1971 with great expectations of major industrial development but closed ten years later.

Local Character Type 15a Invergordon Town



Invergordon is a large settlement on the north side of the Cromarty Firth. Its original core followed the firth edge in a grid-iron form but its recent expansion to service the oil industry has enlarged the settlement into a town. The settlement is now bounded by the firth edge to the south, open agricultural fields to the north, has merged with Saltburn to the east. Due to its recent expansion, a large area of petrochemical industry is now sandwiched between the historic core and modern housing estates on the west side. A large oil rig servicing platform of reclaimed ground has been added to the firth edge. The town is situated on a gentle slope, becoming flatter to the north. The town's potentially attractive core is now over-shadowed by the large cylindrical and rectangular forms of industrial development behind. The centre is bypassed by the B817 which follows the coastal strip. Landmarks include the towers and terminals on the firth edge, tanks and towers of industrial buildings, the stone library (which has a 'bottle' shaped frontage). Open ground is limited to a playing field and scrubby derelict land between industrial areas. The gentle slope which becomes steeper to the west allows some clear views from railway bridges. There are clear views along the coastal edge from the coast road.

Key Characteristics

- *Large, firth edge town.*
- *Mainline, recent expansion in order to service the oil industry.*
- *Historic core dominated by large industrial areas behind.*
- *Large areas of modern housing.*
- *Town characterized by large, imposing industrial structures.*

Local Character Type 15b Enclosed Wooded Farmed Landscape



The fairly flat ground to the north of Invergordon rises gradually northwards towards the hills to the north of the firth. The land form is gently undulating with the occasional knoll. Most of the area is open arable farmland, with large fields divided by post and wire fences. There are a number of scattered farmsteads including a large stone farm situated in grazed fields within the structure of the northern boundary of the town. There are a number of shelterbelts in association with roads and field boundaries, and the House of Roskven is surrounded by mature deciduous woodland. These elements screen much of Invergordon from the A9 which follows the lower slopes of the hills beyond. Generally views across the landscape are filtered and semi-blocked by groups and belts of trees. The traffic of the A9 and the minor road accessing Invergordon Industrial Estate dominates an otherwise peaceful landscape.

Key Characteristics

- *Undulating slopes, rising gently.*
- *Arable farmland with large rectangular fields.*
- *Shelterbelts and deciduous policy woodland block views across area.*
- *Traffic of the A9 and road to Invergordon Industrial Estate dominates landscape.*

Local Character Type 15c Open Farmed Landscape

Gently undulating ground to the east of Invergordon, 10m above the firth behind the coastal slope at Saltburn. The area dips again to the north before rising to the hills in the north. Large, open, rectangular fields characterize this area, with very few upstanding elements. The railway cutting through the area has little impact on the area despite associated scrubby vegetation. The fields between Saltburn and the railway have been reclaimed since use as a pipeworks. To the north, open, engineered ditches drain the fields. There is continuous screening to the boundary of the Cromarty Firth Industrial Park, some shelter belts to the northeast and a few mature deciduous trees around the farm. Large industrial sheds dominate views to the west. Although the area is very open, subtle undulations in land form provide some screening to the reclaimed area.

**Key Characteristics**

- *Gently undulating area above the coastal slope.*
- *Large, open, rectangular arable fields.*
- *Wet lower ground drained.*
- *Vertical elements limited to a few coniferous tree belts.*
- *Subtle undulations across area behind Saltburn.*

KEY

- 15a Local Landscape Character Type
-  Feedback viewpoint
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Scottish Natural Heritage designation

NOTE: Where recent development is not shown on this OS basis it has been indicated in black and capacity indicated in purple.

OS Grid: SJ5770242, SJ5770242



Settlement 15 - Invergordon
Figure 15a - Landscape Character



16 Milton and Kildary

*Milton and Kildary 1904***Local Landscape Character Types:**

- 16a *Milton and Kildary Village*
- 16b *Policy Woodland Backdrop (FB, EFL)*
- 16c *Enclous Farmal Landscape (EFL)14 Alness79*
- 16d *Low Fertility Farmal Landscape (EFL)*

Background

Milton of Kildary was established as a flax spinning village in the 18th century with vernacular houses arranged informally around a triangular village green on which still stands the market cross. The Drovers' Inn remains with Milton house to the right and, at back, is the Mill built in 1858 and reconstructed after fire in 1900. The original village core is almost swamped by late 20th century housing.



Local Character Type 16a Milton and Kildary Village

These two small villages are located on either side of the A9, the railway to Invergordon, and the Balnagown river on the north side of Nigg Bay. They are both compact, and Milton has been substantially increased in size by a modern housing estate. The historic core of Milton is particularly notable with its cottages aligned around an informal village green. The modern housing estate is in stark contrast although well screened from the road. Kildary is less dense with small fields in the village core. It has a small shop and garage. Both settlements are situated in woodland settings.

Key Characteristics

- Small villages on the north side of Nigg Bay.
- Developed near river Balnagown and railway bridging point.
- Notable historic core in Milton.
- Woodland settings

Local Character Type 16b Policy Woodland Backdrop



This character type slopes upwards to the hills above the firth, and extends to the south of Milton. It is split by the A9 corridor west of the settlements. It includes the estate of Balnagown Castle, gravel pits and commercial coniferous woodland to the north, and Tarbar House to the south of Milton. The density of the trees varies between dense coniferous planting, deciduous policy woodland and mature trees spaced singly in open fields. The area is gently undulating and incised by the Balnagown glen. Road boundaries are typified by large gated entrances with gatehouses and wing walls. The road to the south of the site accesses a number of large properties. Views into the area are limited by the dense trees and frequent high walls to the estate.

Key Characteristics

- Sloping ground to the north and south of the settlement areas.
- Coniferous plantation, deciduous woodland and parkland landscapes.
- Properties are large and sparse.
- Gate houses, wing walls and boundary walls along roads.

Local Character Type 16c Enclosed Farmed Landscapes

This character type is located to the southeast of the settlement area and along the A9 corridor to the west. It tends to be bounded by policy woodland. Landform is gently undulating and slopes towards the firth. The landscape is open, predominantly arable, and divided into fairly large fields. Clusters of buildings associated with farmsteads are scattered across the area and accessed by small roads and tracks. The church at Kilmur is typical of many churches in the area which are remote from neighbouring villages and located close to the firth edge. Occasional shelterbelts and the surrounding woodland give a broad sense of enclosure. There are clear views across this character type from the A9 with some views to the firth and oil rigs.

**Key Characteristics**

- Gently undulating ground to the east and west of Milton and the Balmagnon glen.
- Open, predominantly arable with a large, geometric field pattern.
- Occasional shelter belts and surrounding policy woodland give sense of enclosure.
- Scattered farmsteads accessed by tracks.
- A9 and railway corridor.
- Open views within character type, with some views to firth.
- Church at Kilmur typical of churches in the area being remote from the settlement and close to the firth edge.

Local Character Type 16d Low Fertility Farmed Landscape

This type extends from the eastern edge of Kildary in an easterly direction with boundaries being defined largely by the Kildary – Arabella minor road to the south and by the Inverness to Wick Railway line to the north. The topography of this type is generally level with localised undulations, knolls and gentle slopes around 25m AOD. Mature forestry is the dominant vegetation type in the northern parts with policy woodland around Shandwick House, and scattered trees and scrub with rough grazing in the southern areas reflecting the poorer quality of the underlying soils. Parts of the area are highly visible from adjacent sections of the A9 but beyond the road corridor this type comprises a series of small scale self contained pockets which are enclosed by a combination of vegetation and subtle variations in topography.

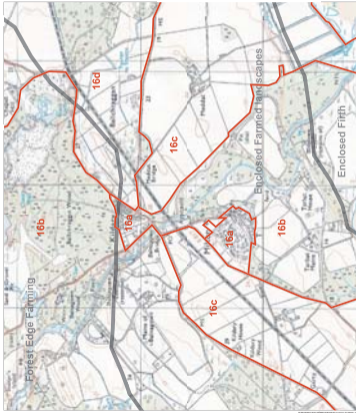
**Key Characteristics**

- Bounded by coniferous forestry to the north and open arable fields to the south.
- Fairly level area with local undulations.
- Poor soils are reflected by vegetation type, quarrying activity andcrofting.
- Scrubby vegetation and rough grazing with some small field divisions.
- Scattered rigs associated buildings and access tracks.
- A small scale, textured, enclosed landscape.
- A9 and traffic dominate views.

KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Field of view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Sites of National Heritage characterisation

Note: Although some recent development is not shown on this OS base map, it has been included in the character and capacity assessment process.



17 The Seaboard Villages

Balintore 1904**Landscape Character Types:**

- 17a *Balintore, Shandwick and Hilton of Cadboll Villages*
- 17b *Open Farmed Plain (OFS)*
- 17c *Open Farmed Slopes (OFS)*

Background

In the predominantly rural peninsula of Tarbet Ness the settlement pattern established in the 19th century remains although the seaboard villages have expanded as a result of improved communication links. These villages are typical of the fishing villages which punctuate the coastline from North Kessock to Inver and include terraced rows of cottages with sheds and open spaces which had essential functions in seafaring communities. Balintore was established as a fishing port with salmon fishery. Many of the original buildings have been extended and recent housing is located inland of the 19th century core of Balintore. Inland of the village lies the remnants of Fearn Airfield which is one of the few virtually intact examples of a WWII Fleet Air Arm Airfield. Many of the buildings and structures on the airfield itself still exist, to the north much of the accommodation camp buildings still survive and in many of the fields around evidence of former, temporary occupation is present in the form of foundations for timber barracks and other buildings.

Local Character Type 17a

Balintore, Shadwick and
Hilton of Cadboll Villages

The seaboard villages are located on the eastern coast of the Tarbet Ness peninsula and occupy a level area the western edge of which is defined by the coastal slope with the foreshore defining the eastern edge of development. One main road, running approximately parallel to the coast, links all three villages and independent access to each settlement is gained from the minor road which links Chapel Hill with Lochdin. In Balintore the majority of development is located on the landward side of the main road, presumably so as to leave grass areas for net drying and other fishing related activities. In both Shadwick and Hilton of Cadboll houses are arranged on either side of the main road and the settlement pattern is quite distinct to that of Balintore. Although there are many terraces, orientated parallel to the shore, gaps in the settlement form afford excellent views out to sea while the buildings themselves provide welcome shelter from the prevailing winds. It is evident that the villages must have retained their original appearance for some considerable time until the gradual introduction of extensions and, more frequently, attic conversions with box dormers proliferating.

Key Characteristics

- Linear settlement of three villages.
- Most development is located on the firch edge road.
- More recent residential development rising up the slope behind.
- Predominantly historic buildings but many much modernised and box dormers dominate.
- Open rough grass areas with numerous timber huts and sheds.
- Small stone harbour wall, two public houses and a chapel.
- A few small shops.
- Busy maintenance area.
- Good views out to the firch.
- Visually contained from areas to the west.

Local Character Type 17b

Open Farmed Plain



This type lies inland with its boundaries defined by the minor roads which represent the approximate boundaries of the Second World War Fleet Air Arm Airfield known as Fearn or HMS Owl. As would be expected of a former airfield, this area is virtually flat, lying at approximately 5m AOD with locally higher elevations along the boundaries. Most of the three runways are still visible, together with the peripheral track linking hanger sites, torpedo sheds, engine testing buildings, offices and other buildings. Distinct built features in this type include the Control Tower which is visible for some distance around. Vegetation cover is limited to areas of gorse scrub, scrub, overgrown hedgerows and small isolated pockets of coniferous woodland with some recent deciduous woodland planting. Landuses overlying the airfield remains comprise arable and rough grazing. The area is highly visible from surrounding roads and from areas of higher ground to the north and south.

Key Characteristics

- An extension of the flat ground at the head of Nigg Bay is the southwest.
- Bounded by the B9166 and the road to Ansherville Corner.
- Square 'basin' with steep sides.
- Buildings and runways of a disused airfield.
- Clumps of gorse, rough grazing and wetland sedge.
- The area is naturally damp and extensively drained.
- Very open with vertical elements limited to ruined buildings, telegraph poles and some low gorse scrub.
- Views into and across the area from the surrounding roads.

Local Character Type 17c Open Farmed Slopes

This area lies to the north and east of Type 17b and comprises a rolling landform of steep and gentle slopes varies in elevation from 10m – 35m AOD. Part of the area around Loans of Tulloch was utilised as an accommodation camp during WWII and many brick buildings from this period still stand although most are in poor repair. To the east of Loans of Tulloch and to the North of Balintore Farm there is further evidence of temporary occupation during WWII with isolated buildings, ruins and foundations much in evidence. Archaeological features are present in this area. The dominant landuse is arable overlaid with occasional scattered trees, coniferous and mixed woodland. Much of this area is visible from surrounding roads although local topographical features and areas of woodland render parts inconspicuous from surrounding areas.

**Key Characteristics**

- Ridge of higher ground up to 35m AOD.
- Boundary with Local character type 17b is blurred.
- Generally convex, undulating topography bounded by the coastal slope behind the settlement area.
- Open and principally arable with occasional gorse patches and single Scots pine.
- Archaeological remains include a standing stone (now protected by glass housing) and a chapel.
- Clear views across this character type.

KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Fielddesk view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph reference
-  Scottish Natural Heritage designation

NOTE: Areas subject to development in the future are shown in grey. A hatched red area indicates areas of special landscape protection.

1:25,000
0 50 100 150 200
Metres



18 North Kessock

North Kessock 1872*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 18a North Kessock Village*
- 18b Mixed Forested Backdrop (FB)*
- 18c Firth Edge Farming (FEF)*
- 18d Forest Edge Farming (FEF)*

Background

This village grew around the ferry terminal for Inverness. The two villages of North Kessock and Charlestown, at the south east tip of the Black Isle peninsula now form a single ribbon development along the shore of the Beauly Firth with recent development on the hill behind. Originally the land belonged to Sir William Fettes and it was he who built the pier to accommodate the ferry.



Local Character Type 18a North Kessock Village

Linear coastal village extending westwards from the Kessock Bridge which dominates views to the east. Traditional vernacular buildings of Charleston and North Kessock provide two historic cores joined by more recent houses on the lower lying ground along the coastal road. Further expansion has occurred on the slopes between the coastal strip and the A9. Historic buildings in North Kessock line the landward side of the main road and have uninterrupted views over the Beauldy Firth to Inverness Harbour and beyond. The traditional layout of Charleston occupies both sides of the main road to Redcastle and as a consequence view out over the firth are less frequent, giving an impression of an enclosed settlement. Twentieth century housing ranges from 1930s and 1940s bungalows with large gardens and southerly aspects to more recent developments arranged in terraces and cul-de-sacs. Vegetation comprises mature woodland on the slopes behind the Hotel together with mature and immature garden vegetation.

Key Characteristics

- Enclosed firth edge village.
- Bounded by the firth edge and the A9 running parallel.
- The original cottages line the shore.
- More recent development is located higher up and accessed by a series of cul-de-sacs.
- Three tiers of development are split by swathes of steep, vegetated ground.
- The Kessock Bridge dominates the village crossing access to the eastern end of the village.
- There are clear views from the bridge and Inverness to the village, with clear views from most areas of the village across the firth.

Local Character Type 18b Mixed Forested Backdrop



This area lies on the lower slopes of Ord Hill and rises from flatter ground to the north of the A9 from elevations of approximately 60m AOD to prominent ridge at 125m AOD and the summit of Ord Hill at 175m AOD. To the east the land falls away steeply to the Moray Firth. Vegetation is limited to blanket forestry with some deciduous woodland on the east facing slopes. The area contains a network of forest access tracks which are much used by walkers and cyclists.

Key Characteristics

- The highest ground above North Kessock with steep slopes to the Moray Firth.
- The area is characterized by dense, coniferous forestry, with hard, geometric slopes.
- Steep slopes north of the bridge are less densely covered and have higher deciduous content.
- Network of tracks.
- Clear views out over the firths.

Local Character Type 18c Firth Edge Farming

Undulating land with gentle slopes and occasional knolls lying between the A9 and the northern limits of Charlestown, extending south westerly to the coast. Elevation ranges from approximately 5m AOD to 30m AOD adjacent to the A9. The south facing slopes are in arable use with some pasture and a small lochan lies in a local depression to the west of Bellfield. Vegetation includes occasional coniferous woodland, some shelterbelts, tree clumps and gorse scrub. The aspect is open and south facing with views over the Beauty Firth to Dunain Hill and Inverness.

**Key Characteristics**

- Located between the A9 and the Beauty Firth.
- Gently undulating and form slopes towards the firth, less steep to the west.
- Predominantly open with a few coniferous shelterbelts and groups of mature deciduous trees.
- Medium sized fields sometimes divided by post and wire fencing or scrubby gorse.
- Dwellings are scattered and infrequent.
- The area is outward-looking and sheltered by the slope above. Views focus on the firth and Inverness.

Local Character Type 18d Forest Edge Farming

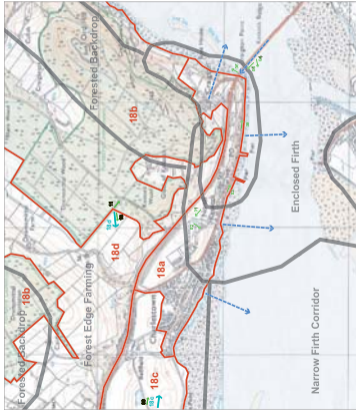
This type is located to the north of the A9 and to the south of type 18b. It comprises a relatively open landscape rolling landscape of steep and gentle slopes. Landcover is permanent pasture with some mixed woodland, coniferous woodland, shelterbelts, scattered trees and gorse. To a certain extent the eastern end of this type appears to be 'left over' land which has been severed from areas to the south by the A9. Above North Kessock this area contains a car park in a wooded setting and some interpretative material together with access paths to the network of track on Ord Hill to the north. To the west this area comprises the west facing slopes of a glen the eastern slopes of which lie in type 18b. The area is punctuated by isolated dwellings and crossed by minor roads. The eastern portion enjoys views over the A9 to Inverness and beyond while the western portion is more introverted with views being channelled by forestry plantations to the west and east.

**Key Characteristics**

- Located between the A9 and coniferous woodland.
- Undulating land form and is most steep close to the A9.
- The area is grazed and open, with occasional gorse field boundaries.
- Geometric indentations into the coniferous forestry helps to form a sense of enclosure.
- Scattered dwellings tend to be modern and fairly large, often off the metalled roads.
- The sound of traffic on the A9 pervades.
- There are clear views across the firth.

KEY

- Local Landscape Character Type
- Fieldwork viewpoint
- Long view
- Photograph reference
- Scottish Natural Heritage characterisation



NOTE:
Although some recent development is visible above the residential areas, this does not include the character and capacity assessment periods.

Scale: 1:50,000 (OS 1:50,000)



Settlement 18, North Kintock
Figure 18a Landscape Character

19 Portmahomack

Portmahomack 1872*Local Landscape Character Types:*

- 19a *Portmahomack Village*
- 19b *Open Farmed Headland (OFS)*
- 19c *Lowland Firth Edge (HCS)*

Background

The old harbour buildings indicate the former importance of grain storage and fishing in this village. There was a stone built pier constructed here by the First Earl of Cromarty in the late C17 which was in ruins by 1750 and in 1798 the village then consisted of only these houses. The present village developed after the building of a new harbour in 1815. Interesting buildings include Tarbet Old Parish Church of 1756, the ruinous C.16 castle of Ballone and two old girdels, one dating back to the C17. These large stonehouses were designed to receive and store grain crops produced in abundance on the estates of the fertile coastal districts, as payment in kind for agricultural rents. The village of Portmahomack is a conservation area, designated as such in 1972.



Local Character Type 19a Portmahomack Village

The village lies on the coastal shelf with the eastern and southern boundaries being defined by the coastal slope rising to 10m AOD to the south and 40m AOD to the east. The settlement comprises two distinct areas; the historic core centred around the harbour with more modern buildings rising up the coastal slope; and the ribbon development of traditional and modern buildings extending westwards to Balnabruach. The harbour together with the old stone warehouse at the northern end of the village provides a focal point in views on approaching the village from higher ground to the south. Within the historic core, buildings are located on the landward side of the road with small garden grounds and grassed areas lying between the road and the beach. Conversely, along the Balnabruach road, buildings are located on the seaward side of the road. Most properties within this settlement enjoy excellent coastal views. Due to the combination of topographical features and the arrangement of buildings, there are very few areas within the village where one is not aware of its coastal location. The noise of jets using the RAF Tain bombing range impinge on the village.

Key Characteristics

- Located in a small break in the hard coastal shore and a steepening of the coastal slope.
- The original village located on the shore and around the harbour.
- Modern expansion on rising ground behind.
- Line of dwellings follows the coast, to the south.
- Landmarks include towers on both churches, the harbour wall, the cast iron fountain and the pink and white buildings of Lord Cromartie's warehouse.
- Incongruous, urban, red block carpark next to Tarbat West Church.
- Original character is not diluted.
- Views along the sea front and across the firth.

Local Character Type 19b Open Farmed Headland

This type occupies most of tip of the peninsula around Portmahomack and lies in the hinterland to the coastal slope. The landform is undulating with gentle slopes rise to high points of around 50m AOD. Landuse is predominantly arable with some pasture overlaid on a pattern of sporadic shelterbelts, tree groups and shelterbelts. This type is open and exposed with views to sea in westerly, northerly and easterly directions.

Key Characteristics

- *Headland of peninsula.*
- *Undulating landform, edged by steep cliffs and gorse covered coastal slope.*
- *Arable and divided by past and wire fence into large fields.*
- *Three masts, Ballone Castle dominates views from most of the area, with clear views to the firth.*
- *Scattered farmsteads.*
- *Scattered trees.*

**Local Character Type 19c Open Firth – lowland edge**

Flat coastal shelf occupying a narrow band between the steep coastal slope and the rocky foreshore to the west of the village. Landuse is predominantly permanent pasture with vegetation limited to scattered scrub and gorse. Views from this area are focussed out to sea and the area has seems to have a closer relationship with the shore and water beyond than with the land above the coastal slope.

Key Characteristics

- *Sandwiched between the rocky beach and the coastal slope.*
- *Clearly defined boundaries.*
- *Narrow, open, flat strip up to 50m wide.*
- *Row of houses at the eastern end forms some enclosure, but most of the area is exposed to the firth.*
- *The littoral zone of pebbles, gorse and grass.*
- *Dominated by the movement and sound of breaking waves.*
- *Views focus out to the firth and distant hills.*

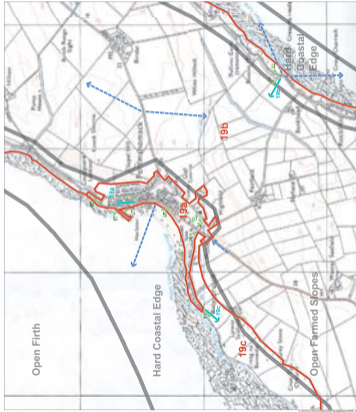


KEY

- Local Landscape Character Type
- Field's view point
- Long view
- Photograph reference
- Scottish Natural Heritage characterisation

NOTE: Although some recent development is visible on these OS maps it has been included in the character and capacity assessment process.

Scale 1:50,000 (OS Grid Reference: NT 25 75)



*Inver 1905***Local Landscape Character Types:**

- 20a *Inver Village*
- 20b *Firth Edge Slope (IF)*
- 20c *Open Farmed Slope (IF)*
- 20d *Open Firth Slope (IF)*

Background

Inver was established as a fishing village to replace a village further to the west as a result of an outbreak of cholera. The village was evacuated during the Second World War and used as a practice area for the Normandy landings. Inver is fairly typical of the fishing settlements which line the Moray and Dornoch Firth with terraces of small cottages the doors of which open directly onto the street. The vernacular buildings in the village are unusual in as much as they had or have a central passage from front to back with three rooms with fireplaces and chimneys at each gable and off centre ridge stacks. In 1707 Inver of Lochdin was identified as being an appropriate location for a school to serve the then populous surrounding area. It is thought that the meeting house is the original school building.

Local Character Type 20a Inver Village

Located on level ground below 5mAOD, Inver looks out on the Morrich More bombing range and to the Dornoch Firth beyond. The settlement is quite remote from the Portmahomack – Tain Road and appears as a self contained, remote village with its back turned to the road to face the coast. The northern portion is characterised by a linear arrangement of narrow terraced cottages facing north while the southern half of the village has a less formal arrangement with buildings following a more loose pattern around an open space to the west. As with Portmahomack, the noise of jets using the RAF Tain bombing range impinge on the village.

Key Characteristics

- *A very small village.*
- *It is bounded by the firth edge to the north and east.*
- *Modernised traditional cottages.*
- *Modern expansion on the periphery.*
- *Unstructural with no central focus.*
- *Narrow streets accessing small fibbing cottages.*
- *Terraced dwellings creating small spaces within the fabric of the village.*
- *A narrow strip of grass on the coast interrupted by a large shed-like building.*
- *Open views out to the firth and along the coast.*

Local Character Type 20b Firth Edge Slopes

Lying to the south of Inver, this area occupying gently sloping north facing ground which rises from approximately 5mAOD to between 10m and 15m AOD. The northern edge is clearly defined by the coastal margin but the southern boundary with type 20c is less well defined. Land use is predominantly arable with a pattern of medium and small scale fields. This is an open area with few punctuation features and the focus is therefore seawards.

Key Characteristics

- *Low lying gentle sloping tract of land.*
- *Southern boundary is less distinct than clear cut firth edge.*
- *Open, arable with post and wire field divisions.*
- *Fields are smaller closer to Inver and scattered dwellings.*
- *The lack of punctuation points and vertical elements.*
- *Views tend to focus on Inver and out across the firth.*

Local Character Type 20c Open Farmed Slopes

This type occupies land to the south of type 20b and is characterised by more steeply sloping topography. Pasture is the dominant landuse with some arable fields overlying a random pattern of coniferous shelterbelts, occasional tree clumps and gorse scrub. Isolated buildings exist close to the Portmahomack – Tain road. Views tend to be directed towards the coast due to more steeply sloping ground to the south at Knockahar Farm and Cockle Hill.

Key Characteristics

- *Higher slopes.*
- *Boundaries type 20c are fairly indistinct.*
- *Grazing land on lower slopes gives way to some arable.*
- *Some coniferous shelterbelts and gorse scrub.*
- *Single dwellings cluster along the road.*

Local Character Type 20d Open Firth Shore

This type occurs north of type 20b and represents the coastal fringe including Inver Links and is fairly level, lying above Inver Bay estuary. Landcover is dune grassland.

Key Characteristics

- *Level topography.*
- *Coastal fringe/estuary.*
- *Grassland.*
- *Coastal views.*



KEY

-  Local Landscape Character Type
-  Field of view point
-  Long view
-  Photograph re-entrance
-  Sites of National Heritage Characterisation

NOTE
Although some recent development is not shown on this Old Towns, it has been included in the Old Town and rapidly redeveloped areas.

SCALE 1:50,000 (OS 1:50,000 18 100 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000)

