Landscape Character Areas: Daugh of Cairnborrow

Landscape Character Type: The Farmed Moorland Edge; a transition landscape between the Moorland Plateaux and the Agricultural Heartland, sharing many characteristics of both. The landscape is essentially an agricultural one.

Overview
An area of rough upland farmland found between Keith and Huntly, with the trunk road, the A96 running through the centre of the area. The area is located between the moors of the Clashindarroch Forest and the summit of the Scalp. The area contains a mixture of wild unkept grasslands with scrubby patches of willow, birch and pine, and occasional small fields of pasture. The Bin and the Balloch form small wooded hills which enhance the upland character of the landscape and dominate the skyline. The area exhibits a sense of remoteness.

Daugh of Cairnborrow Location:

Key Landscape Features
Landform A rocky, upland area of with a fairly shapeless landform of shallow rolling hills and shallow valleys. An open landscape with long views often a feature.
Vegetation Coniferous plantations cover wooded hills, particularly the Bin Forest to the southwest of the area and Balloch Wood to the north of the area. Commercial forestry is a feature of the area, although scrubby birch, willow and pine does occur.
Field Pattern Small fields of lush pasture.
Settlement Settlement is not a feature of the area, with only the hamlet of Cairnie. Sporadic grey stone farmsteads appear throughout the area, and numerous derelict buildings create a sense of remoteness.
Specific Guidance

**Dwellings**
- Isolated farmsteads scattered along glens are sensitive to neglect and dereliction.
- Dwellings and farmsteads are usually sited off the road and dispersed along hillsides, with the occasional dwelling located in dips and hollows.
- Dwellings almost always associated with woodland.
- Isolated cottages and farms provide focal points and features of interest.
- Some derelict buildings
- Renovation of existing buildings, or establishment of new buildings on sites associated with woodland cover and rock outcrops will reinforce the role of these settlements in the landscape.

**Woodland**
- Commercial forestry is a feature, it can conceal views.
- Broadleaf shelterbelts and copses will provide localised enclosure and enhance landscape diversity.
- Small plantations with a mix of species, including broadleaves will be more appropriate in the small scale landscape of some of these upland areas.
- Woodland planting within hollows and straths, especially where the area meets the moorland Plateaux, will emphasise landform and link visually with upland plantations.

**Boundaries**
- Post and wire fencing is the most common boundary treatment.
- Stone dykes add a robust and textural element to the farmed edge of the landscape.
- Scrubby gorse bounds fields and roadsides.
Landscape Character Area: Lumsden Valley

Landscape Character Type: The Farmed Moorland Edge; a transition landscape between the Moorland Plateaux and the Agricultural Heartland, sharing many characteristics of both. The landscape is essentially an agricultural one.

Overview
The Lumsden valley describes a tract of upland that, while having a profile of a valley, contains no large river course. Instead it marks the division between the watersheds of the River Bogie to its north and the River Don to its south. The majority of the area is characterised by a convoluted landform of small hummocks and depressions which gives rise to a small scale landscape pattern of paddocks and rough pasture enclosed by gappy dykes, fences and sheltered farms and cottages.

Key Landscape Features

Sensitivity Area of increased landscape sensitivity due to the characteristics described below. The area is coincident with what was historically identified as an Area of Landscape Significance.

Landform A compact landform, winding roads and small fields produce a small-scale landscape pattern which contrasts with the open character of surrounding areas. Numerous glacial features such as moraines and eskers are present. There is a transition to moorland in the west characterised by waterlogged peat and expansive bog.

Vegetation Woodland is largely in the form of shelterbelts and small plantations.

Field Pattern The transition from open productive farming in the east to remote exposed moorland in the west. Small fields well defined by drystone dykes.

Settlement Small evenly spaced grey stone houses and farms, generally vernacular in style.

Other Frequent dereliction adds to remoteness of area. Views of Moorland Plateau pronounced, notably Tap o’Noth.
### Specific Guidance

<table>
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<th><strong>Dwellings</strong></th>
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| - Compact, nucleated settlements are distinctive and susceptible to expansion and uncharacteristic styles.  
- Dispersed development around settlements or nucleated groups should be avoided as it can detract from the settlement setting.  
- Individual isolated properties can be appropriate in the right setting - where associated with woodland shelter or within low lying areas.  
- Outwith settlements or groups, dwellings are evenly spaced and this spacing should be taken into account when siting new dwellings so as not to disrupt the landscape pattern.  
- In some parts of the character area dwellings are set back from the road and in these areas this pattern should be continued. In other areas dwellings are grouped evenly around a farm and again where this pattern occurs it should be continued.  
- Linear sprawl disrupts compact settlement shape; physical containment of new housing helps to establish or preserve community identity.  
- Renovation of derelict properties will help to preserve local character. This character area has several brownfield opportunities.  
- Grey colours are traditional. |

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<th><strong>General</strong></th>
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| - The intricate landform of this character area provides opportunities to successfully screen small scale development with minimal impact on the landscape character. The convoluted landform of small hummocks and depressions provides opportunities to sensitively locate small scale development.  
- The small scale landscape pattern is susceptible to imposition by large scale structures and features such as substantial built development.  
- The settings of archaeological features, notably stone circles, are susceptible to neglect.  
- New agricultural buildings should be located in folds in the landscape alongside existing farm steadings complexes.  
- Larger scale agricultural buildings will require careful siting to avoid being overly intrusive within this small scale landscape pattern. |

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<th><strong>Boundary Treatments, Trees and Woodland</strong></th>
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| - The enhancement and maintenance of drystone dykes will reinforce the field pattern and rural landscape character.  
- Boundaries around new development should where possible be drystone dykes as these are a key character feature of the area.  
- Deciduous or mixed woodland should be used to screen development and tie in with existing woods. |
Landscape Character Area: The Cromar Uplands

Landscape Character Type: The Farmed Moorland Edge; a transition landscape between the Moorland Plateaux and the Agricultural Heartland, sharing many characteristics of both. The landscape is essentially an agricultural one.

Overview
The character area is located amongst the Grampian Outliers and the moorland ridges have a strong influence on the Cromar Uplands by forming an imposing backdrop. While characteristically a farmed moorland edged landscape, at its centre the character area exhibits a gradual transition with the surrounding character areas and a mixture of features as it merges with them. These transitions mean the area shows greater landscape diversity than a typical farmed moorland edge. It also has more open areas presenting wide visibility and long views.

The Cromar Uplands Location:

Key Landscape Features

**Landform** Variable relief, including compact landform of small valleys and mounds, as well as wide open basins. The area is encroached by ridges of Moorland Plateaux which form an imposing backdrop. It is a generally small scale landscape, enhanced in pockets by small hills and valleys. The small scale landscape means that attention is drawn to key features.

**Field Pattern** Farmland patchwork is diverse in land cover, texture and pattern.

**Vegetation** There is in some areas a stronger more coherent landscape structure with screened buildings, dykes and clumps of broadleaf trees.

**Settlement** Large farms are spread evenly throughout area; large stone farmhouses contrast with occasional newer developments. There is little evidence of new development.

**Other** Some signs of neglect; stone dykes are broken and reinforced or replaced by post and wire fencing; gorse has invaded some field edges causing wilder upland character. Long views are a characteristic. In addition, the area to the south around Torphins is coincident with what has historically been identified as an Area of Landscape Significance.
Specific Guidance

General
- The landscape is quite resilient to change due to the diversity of landuses it supports and its well wooded framework. However, the diverse landcover and pronounced structure are susceptible to neglect and loss of features such as trees, copse and drystone dykes.
- Farming communities are small and contained within the generally compact landform.
- Extensive archaeological remains are sensitive to deterioration of setting.
- Minor roads are characteristic of the area and improvements which accommodate existing landform and respect the frequently small scale of the landscape will fit better in the landscape.

Dwellings
- Whilst dwellings appear larger than in the neighbouring Deeside character area they continue to be relatively modest with only a handful of dwellings over 2 storeys.
- New dwellings should generally be 1½ storey situated in dispersed groups on valley slopes to reflect the predominate pattern found in the character area.
- In more central parts, for example Tornaveen, the settlement pattern is of scattered individual dwellings and consideration should be given to this pattern where it prevails.
- Dwellings should be partially screened by broadleaf trees with boundaries of stone dykes or hedging.
- Pressure from built development may result in loss of settlement shape and character. Dispersed development on the edge of settlements should be avoided and any development proposed should seek to replicate the settlement pattern. Woodland edges can help to emphasise community identity and contain expansion, but planting should avoid masking landmark buildings.

Trees and Woodland
- The generally open character of the landscape contrasts with the densely forested upland slopes. Enhancement and extension of the woodland structure will benefit the landscape, for example by extending shelterbelts and linking these with the wooded hills. Large scale afforestation however is inappropriate to the scale of the landscape.

Boundaries
- The maintenance of drystone dykes will strengthen the upland character and should be used to define boundaries of new development.
- Around Craigievar and the more northern parts of the character area hedging is common and this boundary treatment should be used for new development where this reflects the predominate boundary in the area.

Agricultural Buildings
- New agricultural buildings should generally be associated with the original farmstead. The landform and shelterbelts should be used to help screen large buildings.
Landscape Character Area: Grampian Outliers

Landscape Character Type: Uplands and Moorland Plateaux; an extensive remote area of “Highland” character, with rolling hills predominantly covered with heather and rough grassland. These areas are sparsely populated.

Overview
The Grampian Outliers lie in the transition between the high mountains of the Cairngorms and the low farmland of the north east coastlands. The character area comprises a series of moorland spurs that extend into the farmed landscape. The spurs form an interrelated system of highland ridges and peaks each integral to Aberdeenshire’s landscape identity such as Bennachie, and Tap o’Noth. Whilst each spur has its own character they exhibit almost uniform landcover of heather and forest. When viewed from the low lying farmland they seem to coalesce into an almost continuous dark backdrop.

Grampian Outlier Locations:

Key Landscape Features
Sensitivity This character area is of increased landscape sensitivity due to the characteristics described below. This area is coincident with what was historically identified as an Area of Landscape Significance and abuts the Cairngorms National Park (CNP).

Landform Moorland spurs that extend into the farmed landscape Smooth undulating landform which forms dark ridges across the skyline when viewed from lowlands. Outcrops stand proud of surrounding low farmland. Occasional dramatic outcrops e.g. at Bennachie and Tap o’Noth.

Vegetation Almost uniform landcover of heather and forest. Extensive tracts of conifer plantation covering much of the slopes, mixed to varying degrees with patches of heather moorland. Forms distinct edge with green fields of pasture on lower slopes.

Settlement Settlements are restricted to the edges of the areas with occasional isolated houses and derelict buildings.

General Colours and tone vary with weather and seasons. Other Promontories present spectacular views over surrounding lowland. Communication masts are a dominant feature within skyline views.
Specific Guidance

General
- The character area is sparsely populated and has few roads. New development should reflect this pattern and the wide expanses with a handful of dwellings/small holdings should be maintained.
- The diversity of landcover should be increased to enhance visual diversity and interest and the distinct moorland edge should be conserved.
- Maintenance of a continuous tract of moorland with views into lowland areas provides a valuable recreational resource linking distinctive upland features. Development should be limited within these areas and should not impact on views to the lowland area.
- Maintenance of open views at points along upland roads provides a good opportunity to experience the landscape and new development restricting these views should be avoided.

Dwellings
- Derelict stone cottages can enhance the landscape, providing a sense of remoteness within the moorland setting.
- Dwellings in this area should reflect the remote and windswept character by generally being of a small scale and no more than 1½ storey. They should be low lying and not occupy prominent positions such as on the top of ridges. Small single storey cottages with a small range of outbuildings are characteristic of the area.
- Dwellings should be located well off main roads and will benefit from shelter belts.

Trees and Woodland
- Small patches of conifer are generally inappropriate, being out of character with the large scale of the upland forms. Loosely scattered stands of conifer and native pine on lower slopes add a more natural feel to the upland edge.

Boundaries
- Post and wire fencing can form an appropriate boundary in these areas allowing unchecked views.
- Drystone dykes add structure to the landscape and should be maintained where they occur, particularly around small holdings.

Sparsely scattered development in wide expanses
Landscape Character Area: The Mounth

_Landscape Character Type: Uplands and Moorland Plateaux; an extensive remote area of “Highland” character, with rolling hills predominantly covered with heather and rough grassland. These areas are sparsely populated._

**Overview**

The area is characterised by a great expanse of moorland plateaux, where the foothills of the Grampians extend almost to the coast at Stonehaven. The lower slopes are forested but the plateau itself is covered by heather moorland which extends west into the Cairngorms revealing a strong, rolling relief whose ridges recede into the distance. This smooth landscape is dissected by shallow carved gullies often lined with mossy clumps of birch and rowan. The plateau foothills contain a more diverse mix of farmland and grazed moors and the landscape assumes a smaller scale and more intricate character. The area has a wild and exposed character with commanding views into tranquil farmed lowland of Howe of the Mearns.

The Mounth Location:

**Key Landscape Features**

**Sensitivity** An area of increased landscape sensitivity exists to the west of the area as shown by the shaded area, due to the qualities of the remote upland area. This area is coincident with what was historically identified as an Area of Landscape Significance.

**Landform** Smooth rolling landform and rounded summits. Substantial highland outcrop forming prominent undulating ridges that dominate views south of Aberdeen.

**Vegetation** External central and western ridges of heather moorland and grasses. Heavily forested edges particularly in the north, east and around Glen Dye. Plateaux characterised by a patchwork of heather, bracken, gorse, scrubby birch, pine wood, and pasture with meandering lines of tumbledown dykes and neat fences.

**Field Pattern / land-use** Encroaching patchwork of green pasture on some fringe slopes associated with isolated villages and hamlets.

**Settlement** Occasionally derelict grey stone cottages are features amidst open moorland, but almost all are uninhabited. Almost complete absence of habitation on upland ridges, the area is crossed by only two roads. Small clustered farms shelter on the lower slopes enclosed within broadleaf shelterbelts.

**Other** Numerous old routeways which are now used as footpaths for walkers.
### Specific Guidance

**General**
- Large open areas of upland, are rare in eastern Aberdeenshire; moorlands swathes should be preserved and maintained to preserve a valuable landscape asset.
- Small patches of conifer are generally inappropriate and should be avoided as they are out of character with the large scale of the upland forms. Any new planting should reflect and link to existing plantations. On the moorland areas planting should be limited to reflect the windswept character.
- A key characteristic of the area is exposed ridgelines. Development of wind turbines and communication masts along these are likely to be highly intrusive across the skyline and detract from the remote feeling of the upland ridges.
- Urbanising elements such as lighting, excessive signs and ornamental planting should be avoided.

**Remote Upland Area with moorland characteristics**

**Dwellings**
- Dwellings should generally be single storey cottages situated on their own. In exceptional circumstances two storeys may be acceptable where this reflects estate houses that are grouped together.
- Dwellings should generally be situated close to roads with small garden grounds. To reflect the settlement pattern with the character area dwellings should generally be in forested parts and not on the open moorland.

**Boundaries**
- Drystone dykes add local interest and structure to the landscape and should be retained. In some parts of the character area the stone walls have a more uniform appearance possibly signifying an estate boundary.

**Tourist Facilities**
- Visitor pressure in the form of hill walking and car parking can contribute to erosion of the landscape. Therefore in order to protect the landscape, small car parks and visitor facilities built of local stones and timber that fit well in the landscape are encouraged. These should generally have a “rough” appearance and retain trees where practical.

**Agricultural Buildings**
- New agricultural buildings should be associated with existing farmsteads.
Landscape Character Areas: The North-Eastern Hill Ranges

Landscape Character Type: Uplands and Moorland Plateaux; an extensive remote area of “Highland” character, with rolling hills predominantly covered with heather and rough grassland. These areas are sparsely populated.

Overview
This landscape character area covers a vast expanse of land to the east of the Cairngorm National Park. Only a small part of this landscape character area lies within Aberdeenshire. The characteristics of the area are similar to those found in the neighbouring ‘Mounth’ Character Area, although this area has even less habitation. It is an upland landscape predominantly heather clad, but with heath burning creating patterns in the landscape. The landscape is remote and mostly has an open character.

Location of The North-Eastern Hill Ranges:

Key Characteristics

Sensitivity An area of increased landscape sensitivity due to the characteristics described below. The area is coincident with what was historically identified as an Area of Landscape Significance and abuts the Cairngorms National Park (CNP). The dotted line on the map represents the continuation of the landscape character area into the national park.

Landform Low rounded summits, gentle slopes and long smooth interlocking spurs. Small burns incise the hillsides and flow into rivers within valley floors which often cut more deeply into the hillsides. An open character with extensive horizons.

Vegetation Upper slopes are predominantly heather clad, with the heather forming an even low-growing blanket. There are large areas of peat hags on upper, shallow slopes

Settlement Settlement is sparse and confined to lower floors

Other Access tracks scar the hills in many areas. The area has a strong sense of remoteness