

Statement of Importance

South Esk Valley and Carrington Farmland Special Landscape Area

Name and location

The Special Landscape Area (SLA) comprises the **South Esk Valley and Carrington Farmland**. It is located at the core of Midlothian, and broadly follows the river from the hamlet of Rosebery in the south to the outskirts of Bonnyrigg and Newtongrange in the north. The SLA then extends south-east and, to a greater extent, north- westwards from the river valley to incorporate adjoining farmland and estate policies.



Overview

Key reasons why this area is a SLA are:

- The densely wooded South Esk Valley which accommodates a number of designed landscapes and is of high nature conservation interest.
- The surrounding farmland is largely open, gently rolling and sparsely settled, patterned with extensive policy woodlands and field trees.

The valley of the South Esk is a lushly wooded, well-contained landscape that accommodates extensive designed landscapes which provide the setting to mansion houses and estate settlements. The area is well-accessed and is rich in cultural, landscape and nature conservation interest. The influence of the estate landscapes extends to the surrounding farmlands which are patterned with extensive policy woodlands and field trees and have a strong rural character.

Landscape description

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Key components of this landscape are:

- The intimately scaled, densely wooded and deeply incised valleys of the South Esk and its tributary Redside Burn.
- The nationally important designed landscapes of Arniston and Dalhousie Castle but also the wooded policies of other notable estates which contribute to the character of this SLA.
- The small, tightly clustered historic settlements of Temple and Carrington.
- The secluded Edgelaw Reservoir, contained by dense woodland.
- Broadleaved woodlands and mature oak and ash trees aligning field and roadside boundaries, and stone walls within well-managed surrounding farmland.
- The largely open, gently rolling, sparsely settled and strongly rural character of the farmlands.

The dominant focus of the SLA is upon the valley of the River South Esk and its major tributary the Redside Burn, both of which lie towards the southern and eastern sides of the SLA. In the south the two watercourses mark a transition in character from the higher, more exposed adjoining SLA landscape around Rosebery and Gladhouse Reservoirs to that of the more settled and intimately scaled South Esk Valley. They follow narrow, deeply incised valleys, which tend to be tightly defined and enclosed by landform and dense woodland. Neither valley is an especially visible element within wider views of the hillier landscape in the southernmost part of the SLA, in which also nestles the secluded Edgelaw Reservoir. North of the village of Temple the river and its tributary merge to create a meandering, still well-contained, but more visually prominent feature as the river flows northwards.

Extensive estate landscapes are set along the length of the valley and feature mixed woodlands, parkland and occasional groups of ornamental trees. The influence of the estates extends onto adjacent gently undulating farmland which is patterned by mature oak and ash aligning field and roadside boundaries and also by stone estate walls and historic buildings. The route of the South Esk is almost entirely covered by ancient/semi-natural woodland and ecological designations, marking the diversity and value of habitats along the valley. The historical richness of the area is similarly acknowledged by the overlapping Conservation Area and Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes designations that cover much of the length of the valley landscape,

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along with a concentration of Listed Buildings. These include the historic village of Temple, the Adam-designed mansion house at Arniston, the mainly 13th-15thC Castle at Dalhousie, and associated buildings such as the distinctive steading and clocktower at Rosebery. The SLA includes the designed landscapes associated with Arniston House and Dalhousie Castle.

Extending north-west from the valley, the higher farmland area between the villages of Carrington and Rosewell forms part of the watershed between the South Esk and North Esk rivers. The landform is cut through by several small burns, with the densely wooded Dalhousie Burn and the associated policy landscape of Whitehill House being the most notable to the west. The estate village of Carrington with its prominent church spire is visible from several parts of the South Esk valley. Although there are fewer formally designated areas of landscape, ecological or cultural note within this adjacent farmland, the strong estate influence and richness of woodlands and mature trees means that this landscape forms a complementary backdrop to the South Esk river valley.

Both the valley and adjacent farmland are well-accessed through a network of roads and footpaths, following the valley and criss-crossing the farmland between settlements.

Choice of boundary

Where possible firm boundaries have been chosen for their longevity and robustness to define and identify the SLA. The boundary is defined by the A7 to the east, with the remaining boundaries marking the extent of designed landscapes together with streams, shelterbelts, and minor roads.

Opportunities for change

Management

The South Esk valley is almost entirely covered by ancient/semi-natural woodland and ecological designations. The historical richness of this SLA is similarly acknowledged by the overlapping Conservation Area and Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes designations that cover much of the length of the valley. Good management of the existing parkland, woodlands, field and roadside trees is important to the value and appearance of this landscape.

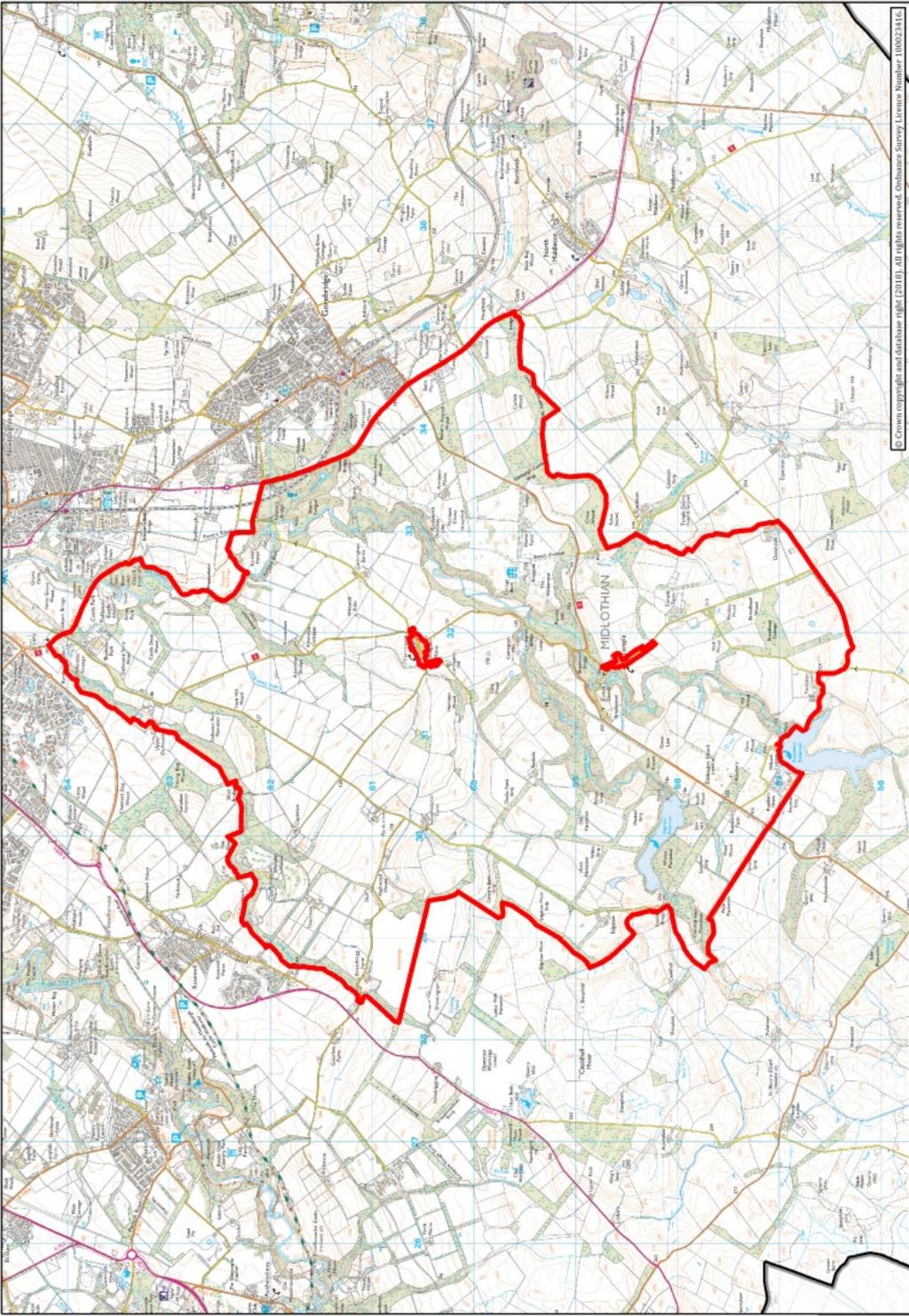
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The focus for landscape improvements should be on management of mature field boundary trees and trees aligning roads with replacement planting where they are moribund or gaps have occurred. Woodlands and specimen trees within the Whitehill House area also require management to ensure longevity and screening of consented housing development.

Development

Development proposals include:

- Potential for intrusion on designed landscapes and any impacts on their key components.
- Impacts on the character and setting of historic settlements and buildings.
- Impacts on the character of the richly patterned farmland which makes a strong contribution to the SLA.



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