



Scottish  
Forestry / Coilltearachd  
na h-Alba

# Forest Landscape Design Training Course

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## Abbotsford





## Purpose of the course

To introduce the principles of forest landscape design

To practice applying the principles to designing forests

This is not a forest planning course

Hands on, but no tests and no critiques

Course material available on line.



## Background

### **UK Forestry Standard (UKFS 2017)**

Sets out sustainable forest management

### **Forests and Landscape**

Sets out requirements and guidelines for the management of the forested landscape.



## Background

### European Landscape Convention

A UK obligation

It states that all landscapes are important, whether they are *recognised as being of outstanding beauty* or are *everyday areas*

*Landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere...*



*‘Landscape’ means an area, as perceived by people, whose visual features and character are the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*

(From: European Landscape Convention, ratified by UK Government in 2006)



## What is landscape?

Landscape combines:

- Natural components, such as geology, soils and watercourses
- Human influences, such as settlement and land use with
- Cultural perceptions, such as history, social associations and aesthetic values.



## What is landscape character?

We all know that landscapes change from one area to the next

We can even recognise some landscapes - they are so well known and distinctive.





## What is landscape character?





## What is landscape character?





## What is landscape character?

geology, geomorphology and climate  
= topography, landform, waterbodies

+

elevation, exposure, soils and hydrology  
= vegetation pattern

+

human influences and activity  
= settlement, infrastructure and landuse.



## What is landscape character?

Landscape character is created by the way the physical elements come together

One element usually influences the location and extent of another

This arrangement, known as *pattern*, has to be repeated and consistent for it to be recognised as character.



## What are landscape characteristics?

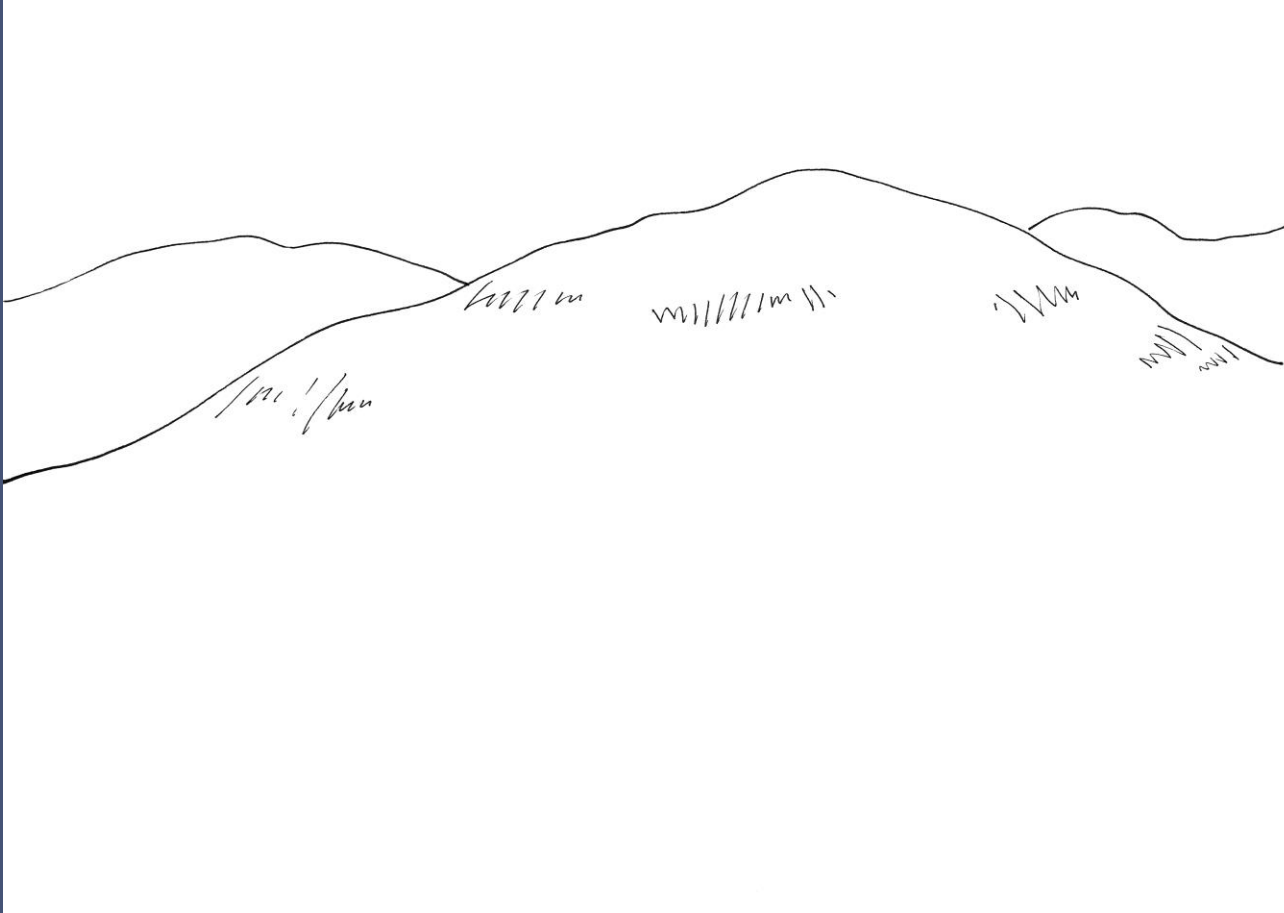
Landscape characteristics are the **repeated** and **consistent** elements that recur across a landscape

Landscape characteristics give the landscape its **identity**, which is sometimes called ‘distinctiveness’

**Key characteristics** are those which are most persistent, most dominant and most influential in defining identity.



## Understanding landscape character





## Understanding landscape character







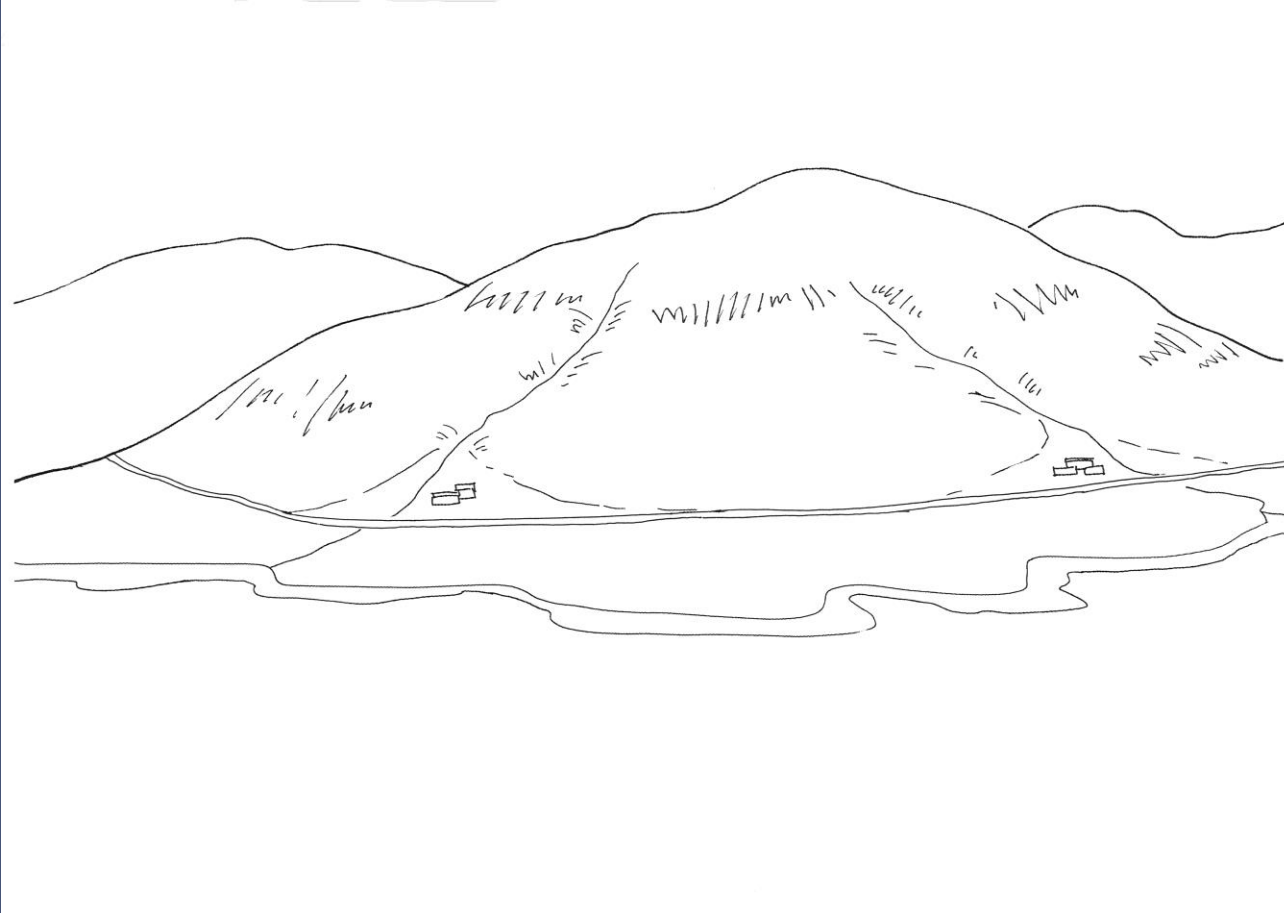
## Understanding landscape character





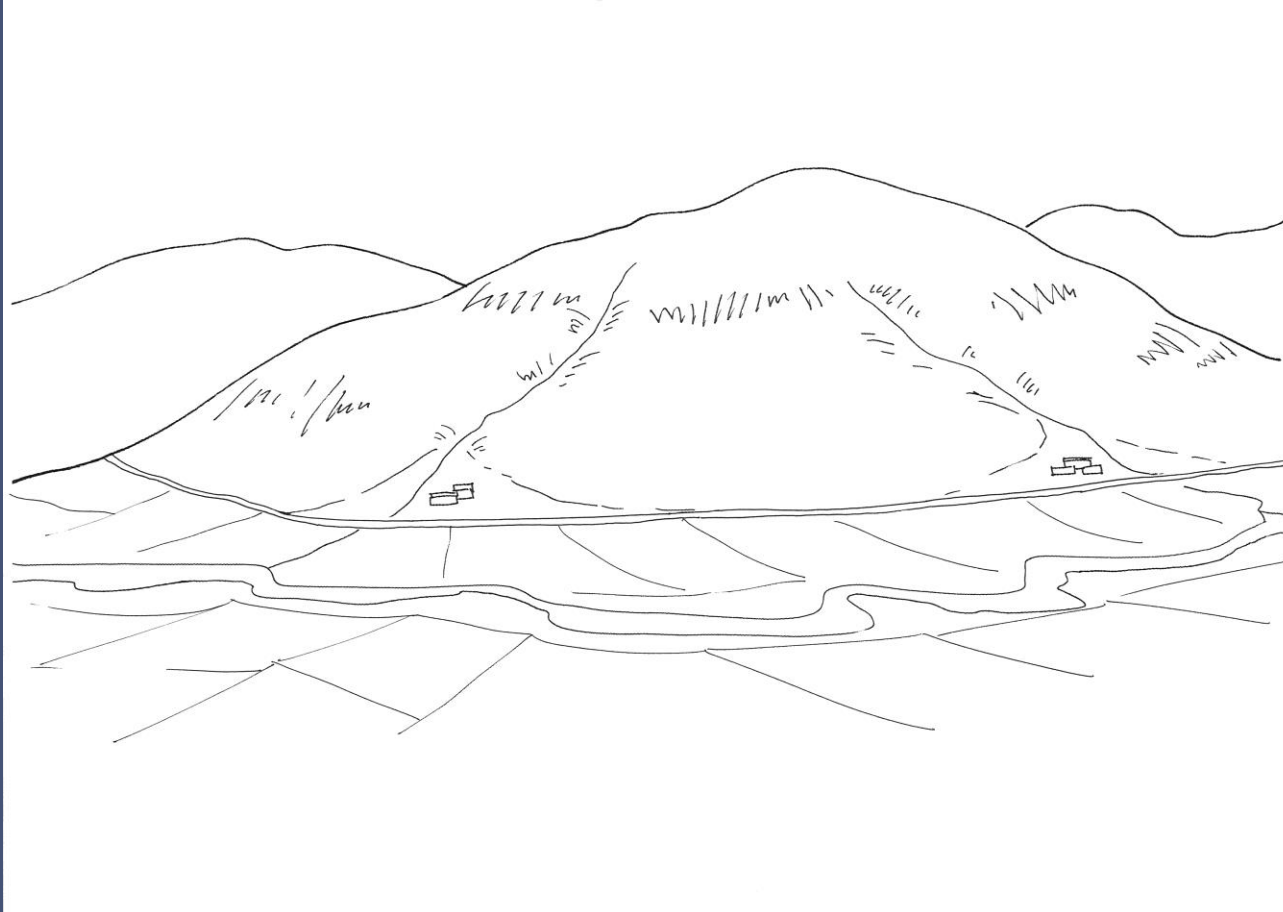


## Understanding landscape character



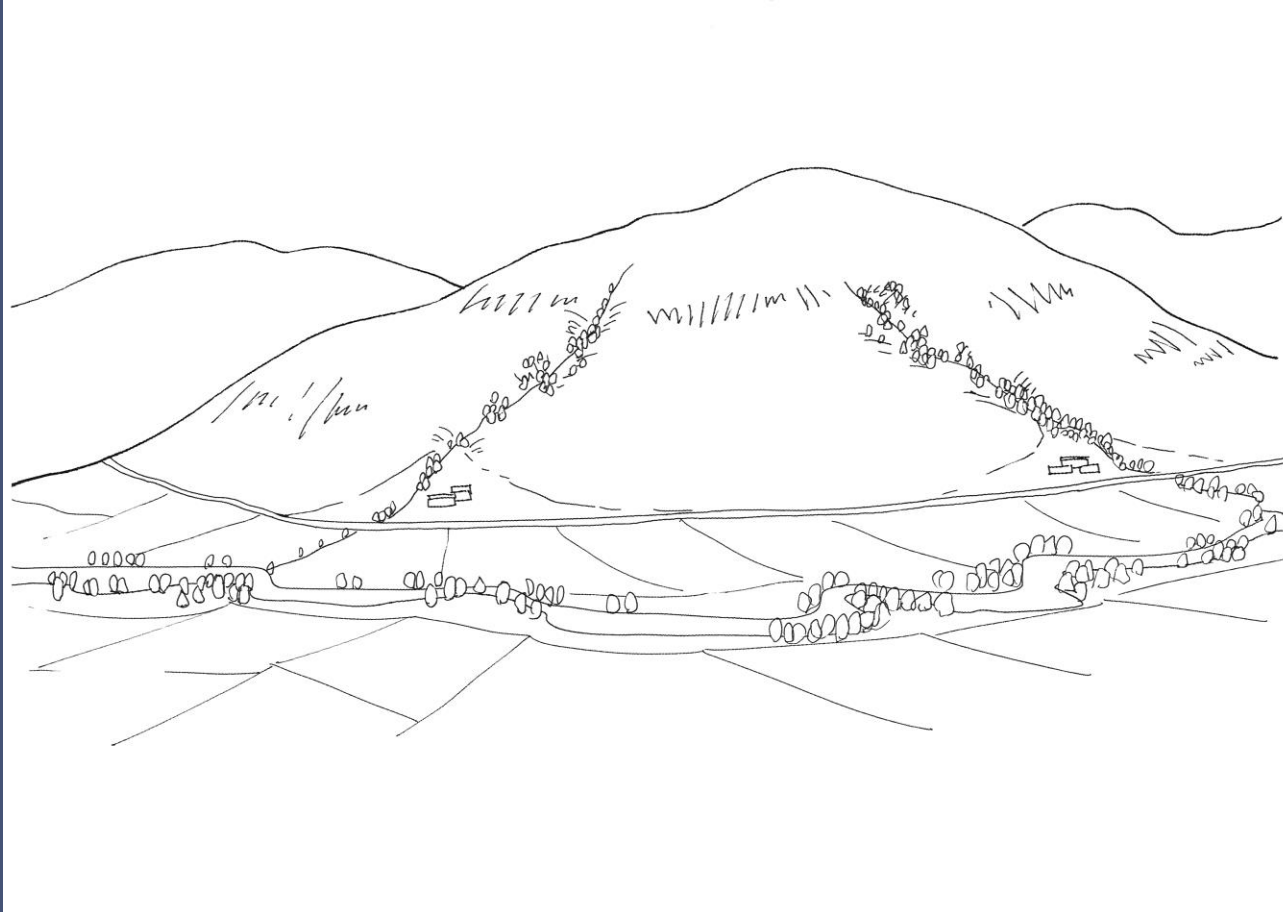


## Understanding landscape character





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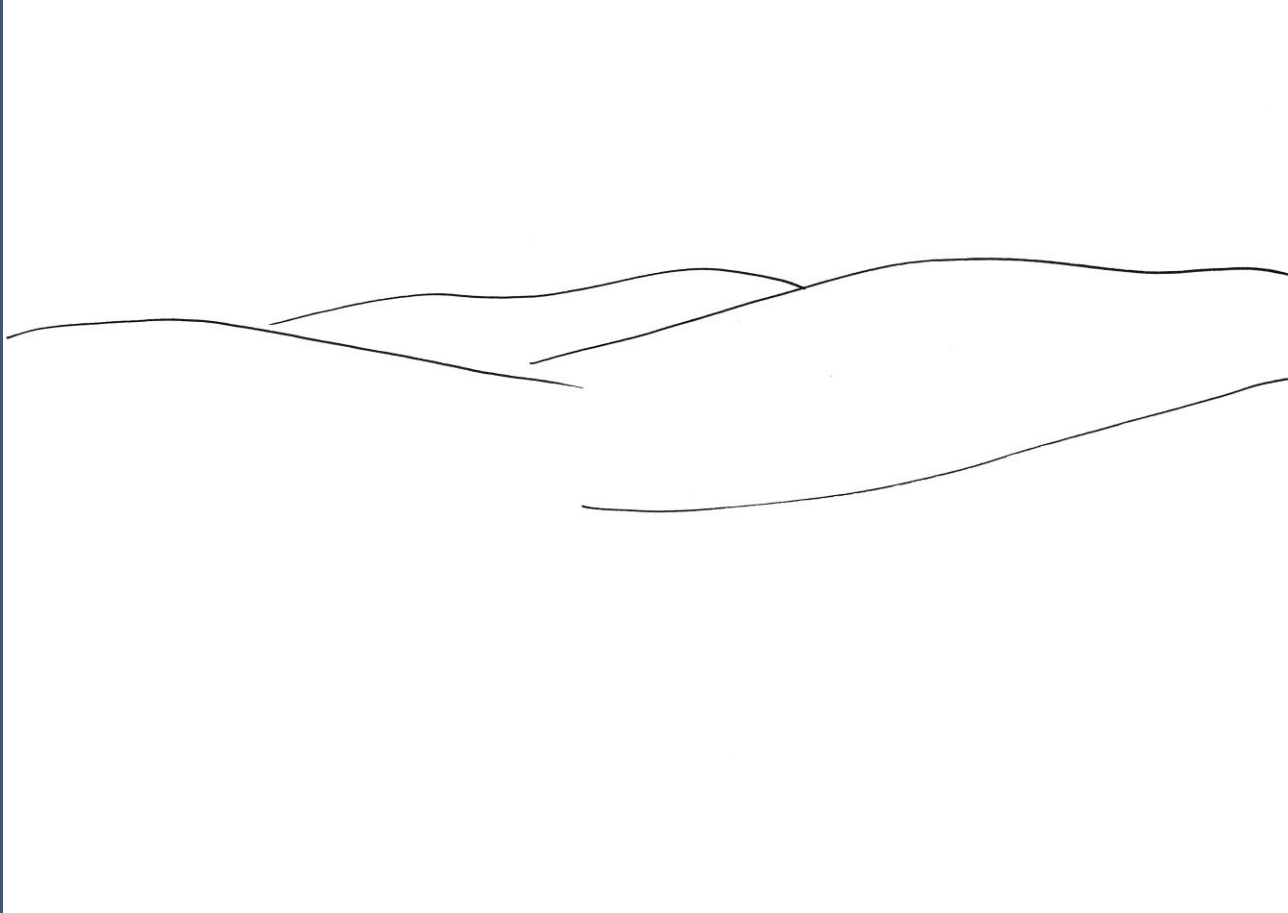


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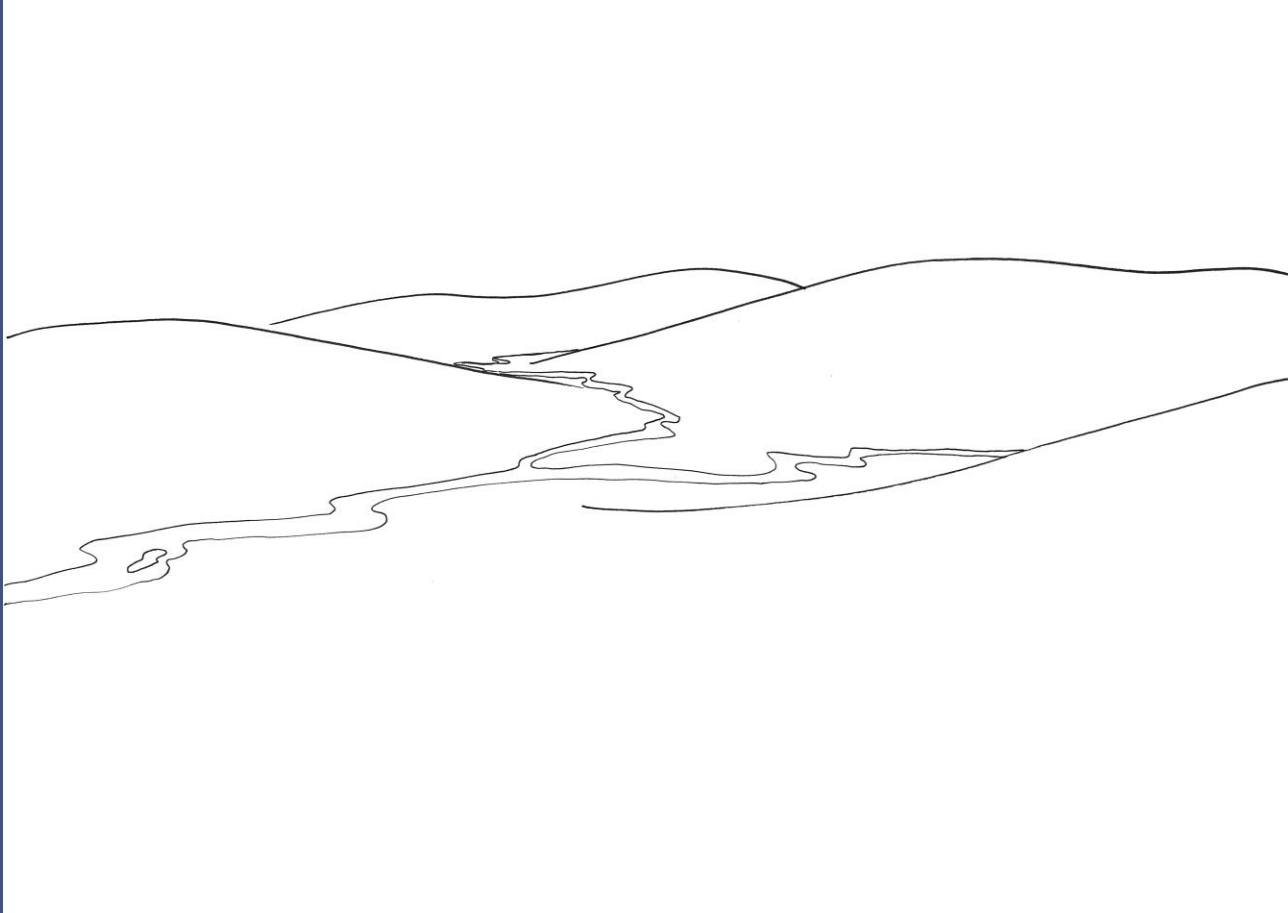


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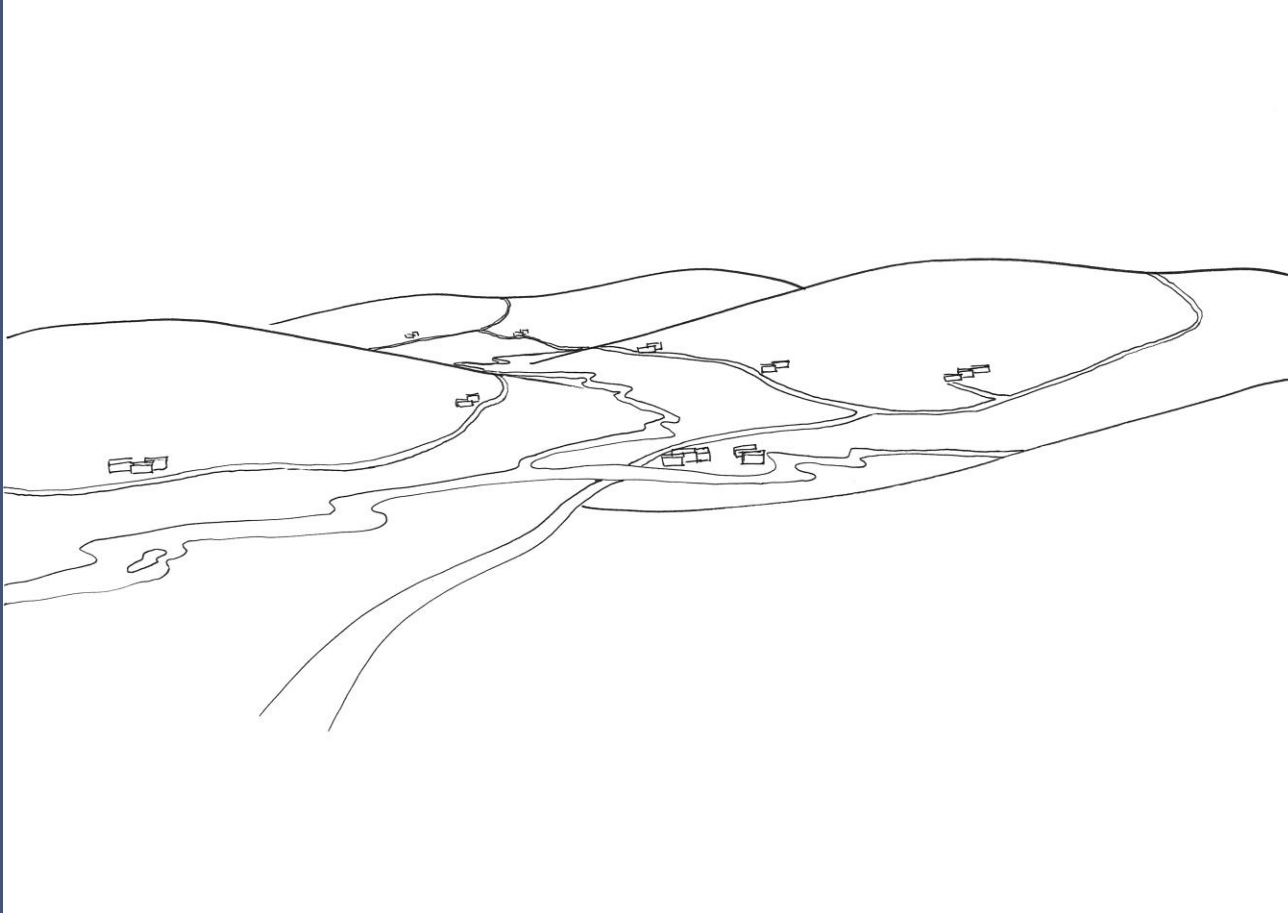


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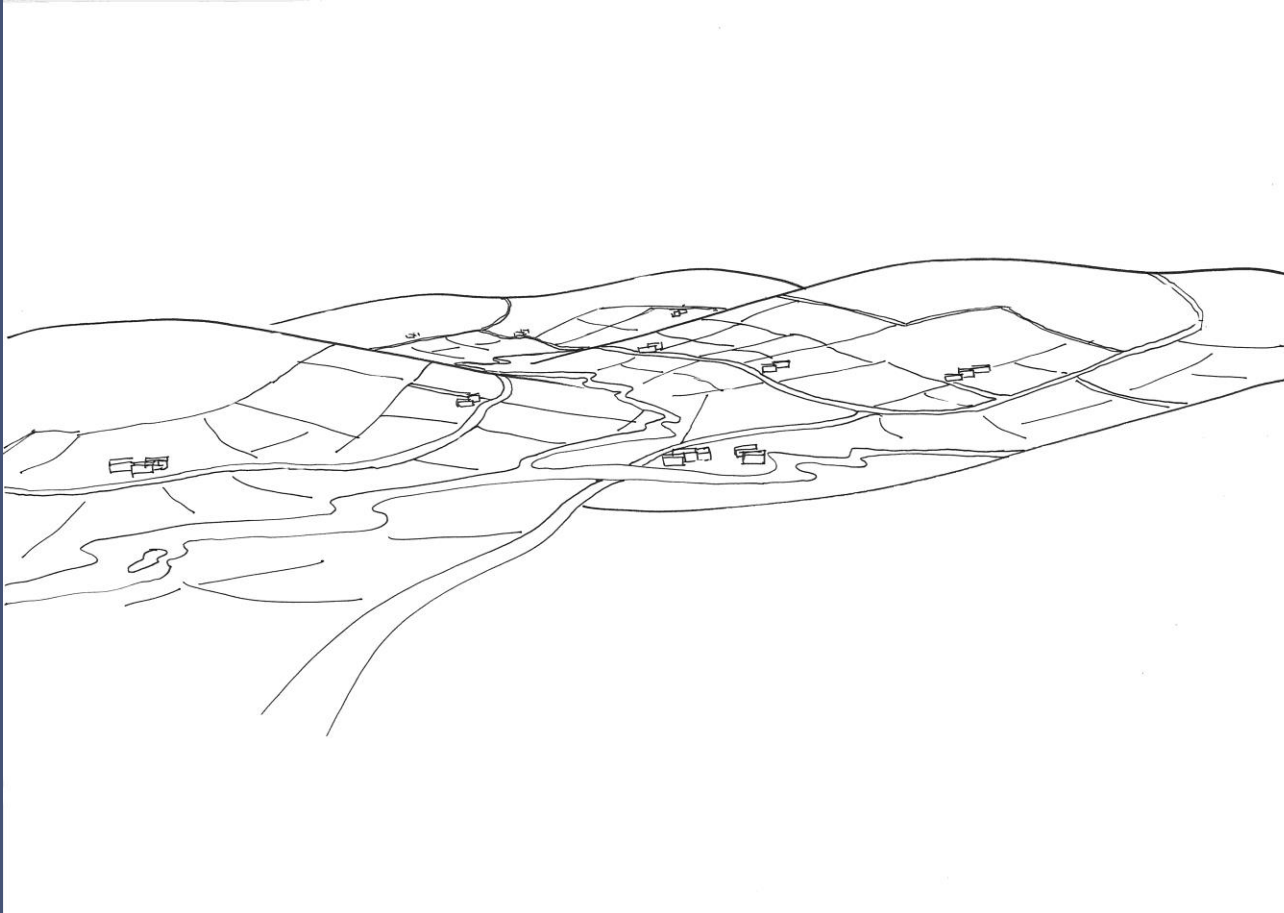
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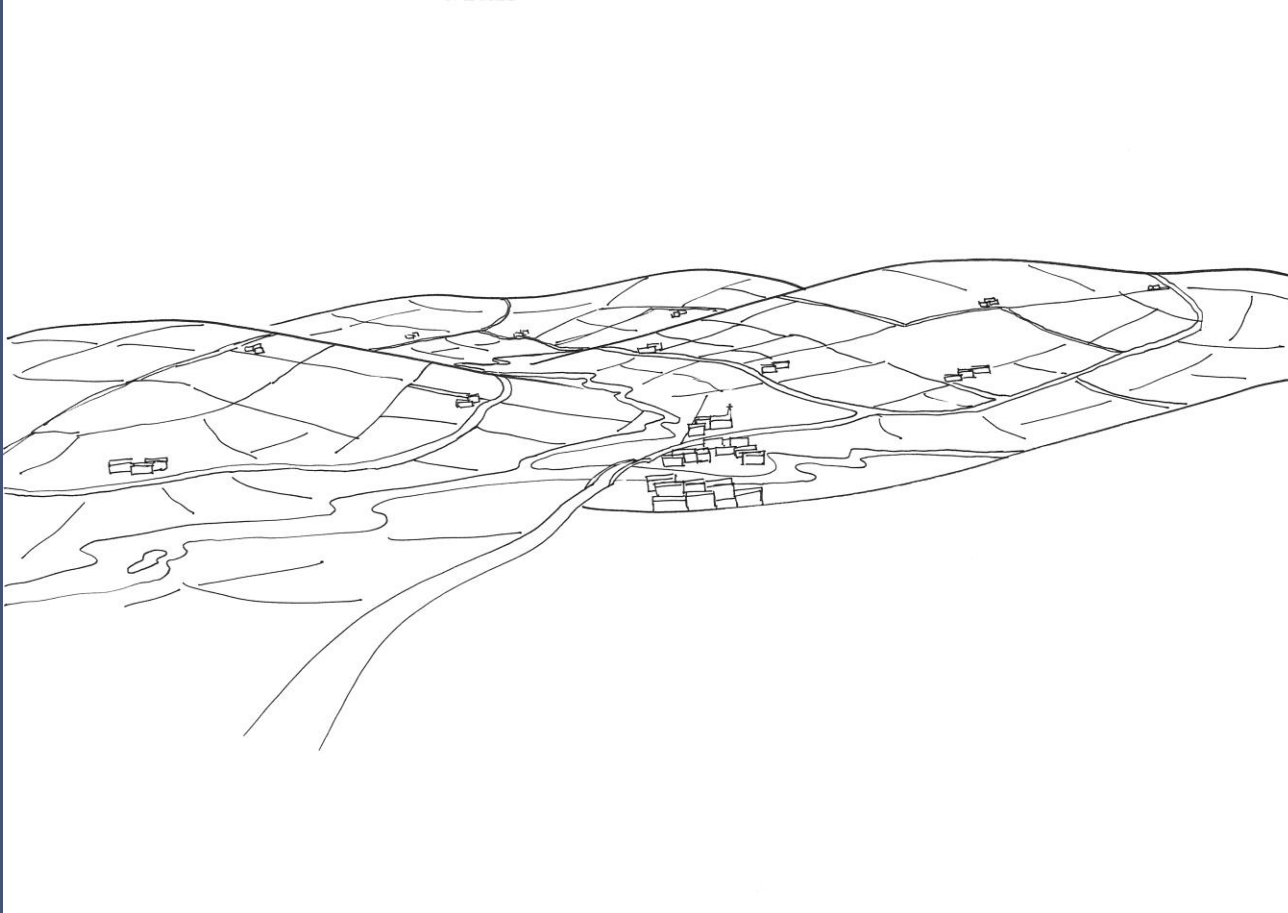


## Understanding landscape character





## Understanding landscape character



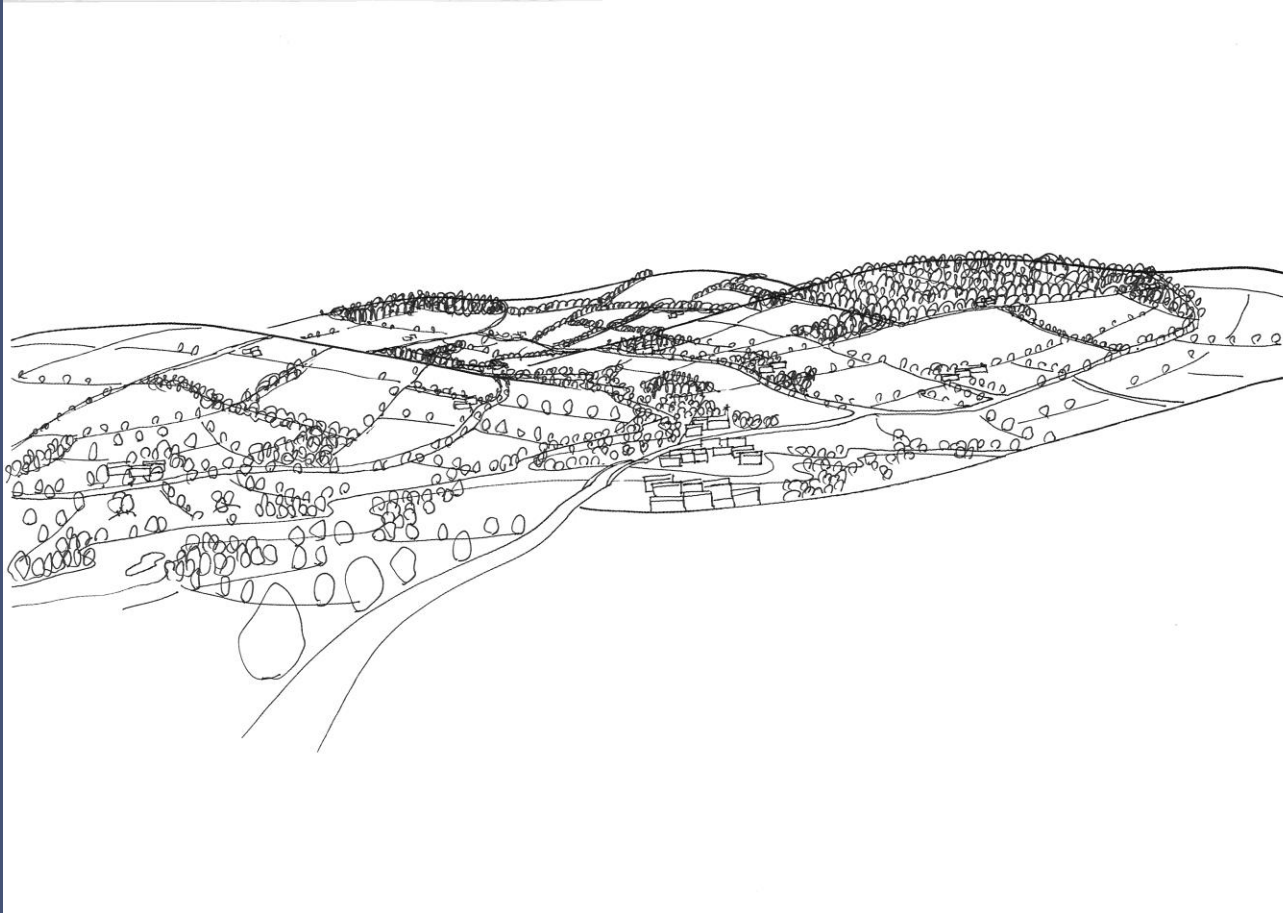


## Understanding landscape character





## Understanding landscape character





## What is landscape character?

The starting point is the landscape itself - how different elements combine to create a distinctive pattern, unique from one place to the next

Woodland often contributes to character - it can be a feature or a key characteristic

Landscape character is also about experience and sense of place.



Experience... wildness







Experience... atmosphere





## Experience... history







Experience... sense of place





## Using landscape character

We have looked at what landscape character is, and how it has been created

We have looked at the contribution made by woodland

Landscape character is described in landscape character assessments and can be used to inform spatial strategies.



## Using landscape character in spatial strategies

Landscape character assessments (LCA) can be a useful source of information

In Scotland, national coverage of landscape character is provided by Scottish Natural Heritage on their **Landscape Character Assessment in Scotland** web page (published 2019)

The digital map-based dataset outlines **Landscape Character Types** each polygon linking to a pdf document of the key characteristics and description of landform, landcover, settlement and perception.





## LCT Angular Mountain Range – Skye & Lochalsh





## LCT Angular Mountain Range – Skye & Lochalsh

### Key characteristics

- Mountains of high elevation and massive scale
- Sharp angular profile, steep mountain slopes
- Extensive areas of exposed, coarse, hard, dark rock
- Lower slopes of heather and rough grassland
- Largely uninhabited
- Prominent landmark
- Complex visual composition in close proximity
- Wild character



# Landscape character

## Using landscape character in spatial strategies

LCAs are used to inform spatial policies for siting woodland, for example in Forestry and Woodland Strategies (formerly Indicative Forestry Strategies).



## Summary

Landscape character is a recognisable and consistent pattern of elements which recurs across an area of landscape

Landscape character is made up of physical and natural elements, and modifications and influences made by humans

It is informed by landform, vegetation and enclosure pattern, settlement and infrastructure...



## Summary

Landscape character is physical, but is also experienced

We imbue it with associations - such as:  
wild, natural or historic

The dominant characteristics give landscape character its identity

Landscape character is used to underpin strategic decisions, including Forestry and Woodland strategies, as well as forest design.