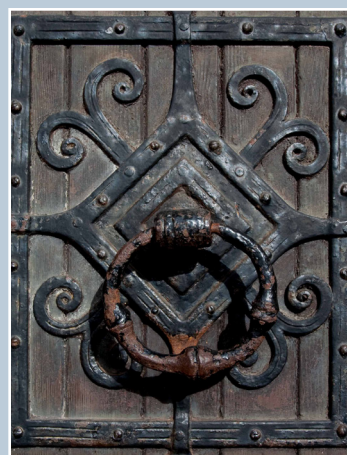


Doorways



Key Issues

- 1. The doorway and associated features of a historic building, or groups of historic buildings, form important elements in defining their character. Listed building consent is required for any works affecting the character of a listed building and planning permission may be required in a conservation area.**
- 2. Age, design, materials, and associated features are amongst the numerous factors that contribute to the interest of historic doorways.**
- 3. In planning works to doorways it is important to understand and protect their key characteristics.**
- 4. Maintenance and repair is the best means of safeguarding the historic character of a doorway. This also reduces the requirement for new raw materials and energy.**
- 5. Where elements of a doorway cannot be repaired, the replacements should match the original design as closely as possible.**
- 6. Significant improvements in energy efficiency can be achieved by discreet draught-stripping.**
- 7. Planning authorities give advice on the requirement for listed building consent, planning and other permissions.**

1. INTRODUCTION

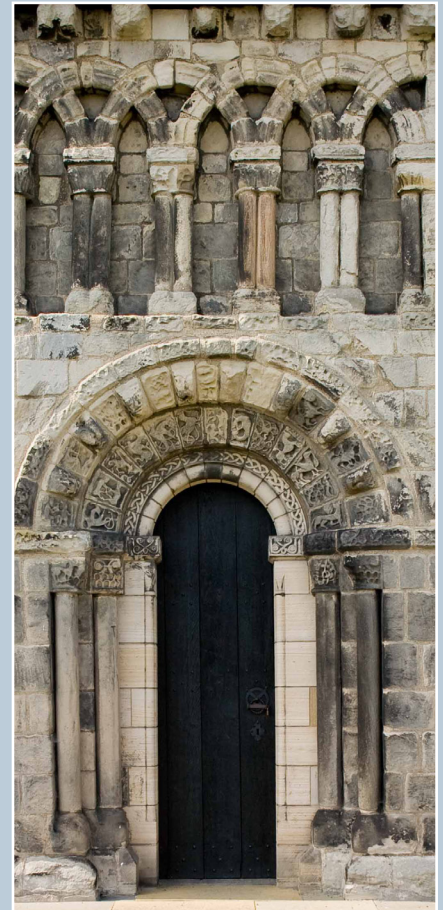
- 1.1 This is one of a series of guidance notes on managing change in the historic environment for use by planning authorities and other interested parties. The series explains how to apply the policies contained in the *Scottish Historic Environment Policy* (2009) ([SHEP](#), PDF 312K) and *The Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) ([SPP](#), PDF 299K).
- 1.2 This note sets out the principles that apply to altering the doorways of historic buildings. It should inform planning policies and the determination of applications relating to the historic environment, and replaces the equivalent guidance in *The Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas* (1998).
- 1.3 Monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979 require scheduled monument consent for any works. Where a structure is both scheduled and listed, the scheduling controls have precedence. Separate advice is available from Historic Scotland's website: [Scheduled Monuments: Guidance for Owners, Occupiers & Land Managers](#) (PDF 718K).
- 1.4 Separate guidance in this series is provided on improving accessibility.

2. WHY ARE HISTORIC DOORS AND DOORWAYS IMPORTANT?

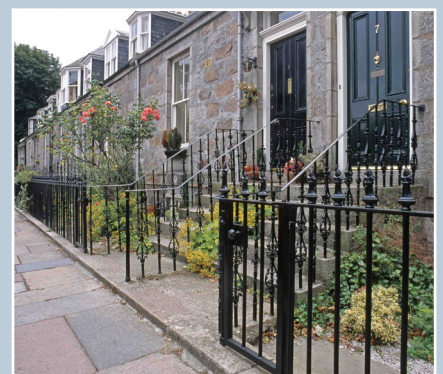
- 2.1 Doorways, and their associated features, such as entrance steps and platts, make a substantial contribution to the character and physical integrity of most historic buildings. They are usually an important element of a building's design, weatherproofing and security: their style, detailing and fixtures help us to understand when a building was constructed or altered, and how the building was used. The design and arrangement of doorways can be a notable component of groups of buildings or streets. Doorways can have symbolic or ritual importance. Many historic doors are extremely durable, remaining in use for a century or more.

3. IDENTIFYING THE INTEREST OF HISTORIC DOORS AND DOORWAYS

- 3.1 The significance of a historic doorway is derived from a number of factors. This includes its form or shape, the pattern of design, the materials and details of construction, the finish, the method of opening, the use of fanlights and glazing. Associated fixtures and features such as fanlights can also be significant.



The exceptional 12th-century Romanesque doorway at Dalmeny Parish Kirk. Like many early church doorways, it is decorated with symbolic carvings. The door and inner stone frame are 20th-century replacements. © N.Haynes.



Albert Terrace, Aberdeen, designed by the architect Archibald Simpson in about 1840. The paired doorways form part of a consistent architectural pattern throughout the terrace of houses. Additional features include the steps and decorative iron railings.



The doorway, with its stair, stone surround, decorative fanlight and heraldic panel, is the principal feature of this symmetrically designed Ross-shire house of 1760. © Crown copyright: RCAHMS. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.



Sliding boarded doors on a late 18th-century granary building in Banff, Aberdeenshire. © N. Haynes.



A late 19th-century two-leaf outer door and an inner vestibule door with decorative leaded glass panels in Falkirk. Associated fixtures include the brass letterbox and door handle on the outer door and the brass doorknob and decorative finger-plate on the inner door. © N. Haynes.

Forms of doorway

- 3.2 There are many shapes and sizes of historic doorway, from simple rectangular openings to elaborate types of arch and surround. Typically doorways are carefully sized and located as part of a broader design for a building or group of buildings. Doorway proportions and spacing frequently relate to other elements of the building, such as the overall proportions of an elevation or other features (e.g. windows). Doorways are often important components of an architectural design, perhaps expressing different parts of a building through variations in size, positioning and design.

Door materials and design

- 3.3 The materials and construction of doors can reveal much about local joinery traditions and stylistic fashions of the period and the historical status/use of the building. The predominant material of traditional historic doors and frames is timber, usually painted pine or oak.
- 3.4 The simplest historic doors are of vertical timber board construction. Early improvements in security resulted in some doors of more complex construction that incorporated metalwork to achieve their strength and decorative qualities. Variations on the boarded design were popular into the early 20th century.
- 3.5 Panelled timber doors were in common use on important buildings by the late 17th century. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries the various forms of panelled door became standard for the main entrance of most types of domestic building.
- 3.6 Apart from iron 'yetts', or security gates, early metal doors are rare. The early 20th century saw an increasing use of metal or metal-framed doors, particularly alloys such as bronze.

Method of opening

- 3.7 As a moving component of a building, a door can impact on the appearance of a building in both its open and shut positions. The method and direction of opening are important characteristics of a historic door.
- 3.8 There are three principal methods of opening: side hung, sliding and revolving. The opening methods are usually appropriate to different types of building, e.g. revolving doors are usually found on civic buildings. Most domestic side-hung doors open inwards from the outside, but some specialised situations, for example in agricultural or industrial uses, require outward-opening doors. Some doors are divided vertically to form two-leaf doors (hinged on both jambs of the doorway, opening at the centre), and some are divided horizontally (e.g. a stable door).

Fanlights and glazing

- 3.9 Glazed features frequently form part of the design of historic doorways. The introduction of glass fanlights above doors in the 18th century and ornate glass panels within doors in the 19th century increased the decorative possibilities of doorways whilst also admitting more daylight.

Finish

- 3.10 From the 18th century most timber doors were treated with a durable paint finish. Doors on a single building or groups of buildings (e.g. country estates) were often painted a uniform colour. It is sometimes possible to sample underlying layers to establish previous colour schemes.

Associated fixtures

- 3.11 Door furniture often reflects the period and character of a building, from simple iron handles and latches on a cottage door to elaborate strap hinges on a church door. The range of door fixtures is enormous: whilst some are of unique artisan creation, the use of uniformly produced brass door furniture can be an important element of an area's architectural character. Historic door-bells, brass plaques and other fixtures into the surrounds of a doorway can equally contribute to the character of the entrance.

Associated features

- 3.12 The treatment of an entrance can make a powerful statement about the status of the building or elevate one entrance over others in the same building. The construction of entrance steps and platts to tenements and houses from the 18th century allowed the creation of basements and the regular spacing and positioning of doorways, even where ground levels varied. Heraldic panels, pediments, doorcases, porches, porticos, and porte-cochères (carriage porches) are among the many other features associated with entrance doorways.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR REPAIR AND ALTERATION

Character and interest of the building

- 4.1 Repairs and alterations to a historic building must protect its character. The contribution of the doors and doorways to that character must therefore be understood before considering how to alter the building. The form, pattern of design, materials and details of construction, finish, method of opening, use of fanlights and glazing, associated fixtures, and associated features are all important considerations. A brief description of the interest of the doors or doorways and an explanation of the impact of the alterations are always helpful in assessing such proposals.



Detail of a delicate cast-iron fanlight dating from the 1790s in Edinburgh. © N. Haynes.



Associated fixtures (clockwise from top left): tenement door release (1890s); brass handle and lock (1880s); door-bell (1890s); door-bell pulls (1820s). © N Haynes.



Removal of the left-hand doorcase has unbalanced this pair of entrances. © N. Haynes.



Glazed upper panels form an original feature of this Glasgow tenement door. © N. Haynes.



The door on the left is redundant following the internal amalgamation of two villas, but retained in place to maintain the character of the building. © N. Haynes.

Repair

- 4.2 In almost all cases, repair of components on a like-for-like basis is preferable to replacement of whole units, as this will best maintain the character and historic fabric of the door or doorway. More detailed advice on the repair of traditional timber doors and glazing can be found in Historic Scotland's *Inform Guide: External Timber Doors* and *Inform Guide: Decorative Domestic Glass*.

Replacement

- 4.3 Where there is no alternative to the replacement of an original or historic door, the new elements should match the original in all respects. This should include exact replication of the opening method, maintenance and reuse of door furniture and historic glass where this contributes to a building's character. Proposals to recess a door either less or more deeply within the door opening should be refused.
- 4.4 Replacement doors may be appropriate where woodwork is beyond repair or in instances where historic doors have previously been replaced using inappropriate designs or materials. Any new replacement proposals must seek to improve the situation through designs and materials that are sympathetic to the character of the building.
- 4.5 Replacement doors which are made of hardwood with a stained or varnished finish, and those which introduce asymmetrical elements, integral fanlights, inappropriate glazing or panelled patterns are rarely appropriate.

Glazing

- 4.6 Glass can make an important contribution to the character of a doorway and should not be removed. Plain, opaque, stained and patterned glass are important details, whether part of the door, fanlight or sidelight. Where replacement is required, new work to match the original should be specified.

New doorways

- 4.7 New doorways in historic buildings should only be considered where they can be incorporated into the existing architecture and designed and detailed in a way that is compatible with the existing historic fabric. Great care should be taken to retain existing design patterns, symmetrical elevation or architectural details. Doors on new small-scale extensions are usually best designed to match those of the main building.

Blocking up doors

- 4.8 The character of a listed building is usually best maintained by retaining redundant doors in situ rather than blocking them up. If they are part of a terrace of uniform design they are a particularly important element of the architectural character and can normally be fixed closed in a manner that is reversible.

Converting doors to windows

- 4.9 Conversion of doors to windows is usually difficult to achieve without disruption to the architectural character of the building. Such alteration work should only be considered in subsidiary locations and where it will not involve the loss of historic fabric of quality. In these locations it is sometimes possible to glaze the upper part of the existing door to allow the necessary light.

Reinstatement

- 4.10 Generally, restoration of a door or doorway to a particular period should only be considered when the proposed style is appropriate to the building in question, it matches a documented earlier pattern, and it does not result in the loss of existing historic fabric that contributes to the character of the building.

Security

- 4.11 Additional security measures can normally be incorporated without affecting the character of a door. Extra mortice locks, rimlocks or bolts are usually easy to fit. Permanent external security shutters or roller shutters should not be used as they are likely to damage or obscure architectural detailing.

Colour

- 4.12 Many manufacturers produce ranges of traditional paint colours that are suitable for use on historic buildings. Where consistency of colour with other features (e.g. windows) is important to the character of the building, this should be maintained in any redecoration scheme. Wood stain and varnish are not usually appropriate finishes. The choice of paint colour may be subject to Local Authority conditions.

Alterations to fixtures

- 4.13 Metal door furniture is an important feature of a historic door. Historic ironwork and brasswork should be retained and reused if the timber door is being replaced. Replacements, where necessary, should match historic details, materials and positions.

Alterations to associated features

- 4.14 Alterations to associated features must seek to maintain their character. Enclosure of open features, such as a portico or the space beneath an entrance platt, to create additional internal space should not be undertaken. Steps, platts and flyovers should always be retained.

5. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- 5.1 Energy conservation is necessary in addressing climate change. In many cases cost-effective and sustainable improvements to the energy efficiency of traditional buildings can be achieved without damage to their character. Heat loss typically occurs in



The old conversion of the right-hand doorway to a window and removal of the main entrance steps is disruptive to the character of the building and the broader pattern of entrances and windows in the street. © N. Haynes.



Dawyck Stables, Bellspool, Scottish Borders, before conversion.



Dawyck Stables, Bellspool, Scottish Borders, after conversion. The original door opening has been retained, but glazed to allow for residential use.



A timber panelled door in the Seatown at Cullen, Moray. The detailing of this door is typical of the high-quality joinery of the area. Draught-proof strips have been applied around the door.
© N. Haynes.

various parts of a building. It is important to take an overall view of energy efficiency measures.

- 5.2 It is normally possible to upgrade thermal performance of doors, for example by the introduction of discreet draught-proofing strips. In some cases, where the panels are particularly thin, thermal performance can be improved by adding a layer of insulation to the indoor side.
- 5.3 Further information is available in Historic Scotland's *Inform Guide: Energy Efficiency in Traditional Homes*, which gives further examples of measures that can be taken to improve energy efficiency.

6. CONSENTS

- 6.1 Listed building consent is required for any work to a listed building that affects its character. The local authority determines the need for consent.
- 6.2 Planning permission may be required for works to unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas. Where consent is required, an application is made to the local authority. This should include accurate scale drawings showing both the existing situation and the proposed works in context. It is normally helpful to provide detailed technical information and photographs. A brief description of the interest of the door and an explanation of the impact of the alterations are always useful in assessing change.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Details of all individual scheduled monuments, listed buildings, designated gardens and designed landscapes, and designated wrecks can be obtained from Historic Scotland (see contact details below) or at: www.pastmap.org.uk. Details of listed buildings can also be obtained from the relevant local authority for the area.

Advice on the requirement for listed building consent, conservation area consent, building warrants, and other permissions/consents should be sought from local authorities.

Historic Scotland
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E-mail: hs.inspectorate@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

Other selected Historic Scotland publications and links

[Maintaining your Home – A Short Guide for Homeowners](#) (2007) (PDF 1.4MB)

Inform Guide: Energy Efficiency in Traditional Homes (2008)

Inform Guide: External Timber Doors (2008)

Inform Guide: Decorative Domestic Glass (2007)

For the full range of Inform Guides, Practitioner Guides, Technical Advice Notes and Research Reports please see the [Publications](#) section of the Historic Scotland website.

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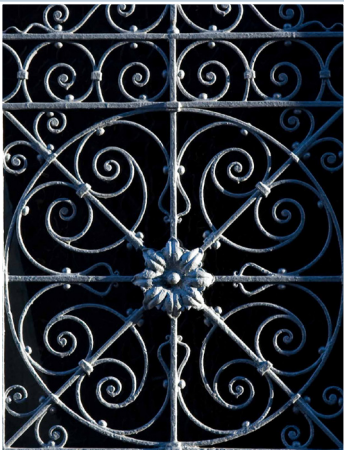
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Cottage door, designed by James Maclaren, 1889, Fortingall, Perth & Kinross.

A 'Gibbs' architrave surrounding a late 18th-century doorway in South Street, St Andrews, Fife.

Decorative door handles at the former Barony Church, Castle Street, Glasgow, designed by J Burnet & J A Campbell, 1886–90.

External Fixtures



Key Issues

- 1. Historic external fixtures form an important element in defining the character of a historic building or group of historic buildings. New external fixtures can have an impact on the character of historic buildings or areas. Listed building consent is required for any works affecting the character of a listed building and planning permission may be required in a conservation area.**
- 2. The protection provided by statutory listing extends to all categories of listing, and to all parts of a building, including its external fixtures.**
- 3. Before undertaking repairs or alterations it is important to identify the interest of the fixture and seek to maintain its characteristics in the new work. This includes understanding the materials, method of construction, colour, texture and detailing.**
- 4. New external fixtures should be sited to maintain the special architectural or historic interest, integrity and fabric of the building.**
- 5. The means of new fixing should always be non-ferrous to prevent structural damage or staining.**
- 6. Planning authorities give advice on the requirement for listed building consent, planning and other permissions.**

1. INTRODUCTION

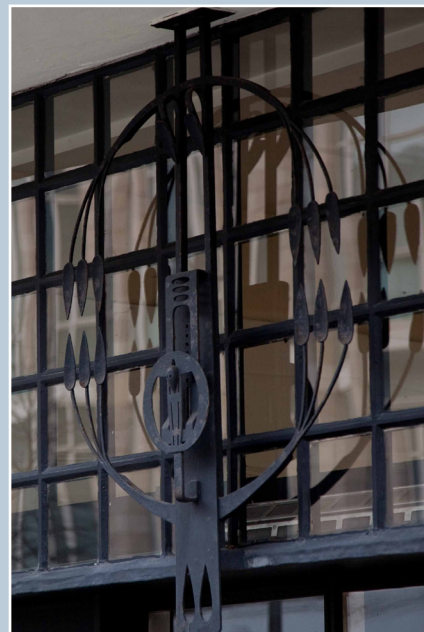
- 1.1 This is one of a series of guidance notes on managing change in the historic environment for use by planning authorities and other interested parties. The series explains how to apply the policies contained in the *Scottish Historic Environment Policy* (2009) ([SHEP](#), PDF 312K) and *The Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) ([SPP](#), PDF 299K).
- 1.2 This note sets out the principles that apply to altering the external fixtures of historic buildings. It should inform planning policies and the determination of applications relating to the historic environment, and replaces the equivalent guidance in *The Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas* (1998).
- 1.3 Monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979 require scheduled monument consent for any works. Where a structure is both scheduled and listed, the scheduling controls have precedence. Separate advice is available from Historic Scotland's website: [Scheduled Monuments: Guidance for Owners, Occupiers & Land Managers](#) (PDF 718K).
- 1.4 Separate guidance in this series is available on new micro-renewable technology fixtures.

2. WHY ARE EXTERNAL FIXTURES IMPORTANT?

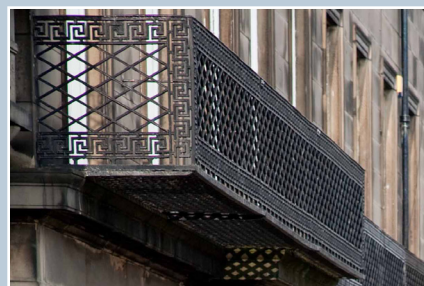
- 2.1 Historic external fixtures contribute to the architectural and/or historic character of a building and townscape. Decorative ironwork, balconies, lamps, clocks, street signs, rainwater goods, machinery, and other fixtures can be integral to the architecture and reveal information about the age and use of a building and may be examples of technological advances. Beyond their functional value they are often decorative and contribute to the visual attractiveness of a historic building. External fixtures can reveal a hierarchy of spaces within a building, perhaps indicating the location of the main entrance or principal floor or room.
- 2.2 New fixtures can have a substantial impact on the appearance of a historic building, and the means of attachment can cause damage to historic fabric. The location, size and number of fixtures and the method of fixing require careful consideration to protect the character of a historic building.

3. IDENTIFYING THE INTEREST OF HISTORIC EXTERNAL FIXTURES

- 3.1 From early times various sorts of fixtures have been applied to buildings, from simple tethering hoops to lamps. From the



Decorative ironwork by Charles Rennie Mackintosh fixed to the exterior of the Willow Tea Rooms in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.
© N. Haynes.



A cast-iron balcony marking the principal room on the first floor of a townhouse in Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, part of the development planned by William Henry Playfair in 1825 and built 1826–33. © N. Haynes.



The weather vane at New Lanark mill village was restored in 1980, made by a local craftsman with the names of the villagers stamped on the shaft.
© New Lanark Trust.



An elaborate cast-iron bootscraper at the entrance to a house in Randolph Crescent (1829), Edinburgh. Such fixtures were common in the early 19th century when road surfaces were generally muddy. © N. Haynes.



A cheese press built into the wall of a farm cottage at Reay, Highland. Although the press is no longer used, it provides insight into the type of farming of the area and past methods of cheese production.



A later 19th-century cast-iron 'barleysugar' downpipe and decorative bracket in Rothesay, Isle of Bute. © N. Haynes.

18th century the range and complexity of fixtures expanded enormously. Some fixtures were planned from the outset of a building, whilst others were added at a later stage. Fixtures can demonstrate a combination of architectural, associated and historical interest:

- 3.2 **Architectural interest:** in for example the design or style of fixtures, or the way in which they relate to the architectural form of the building.
- 3.3 **Associated interest:** a fixture, such as a clock, might be connected with a significant designer, craftsman, patron, or occasionally with historical events.
- 3.4 **Historical interest:** this derives from the potential of a fixture to provide evidence about the past, illustrating social change, revealing how an object was made, advances in technology, or how a building worked. For example the widespread provision of bootscrapers at the entrances to 18th- and 19th-century houses gives an insight into life before the advent of asphalt roads and cars.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS TO HISTORIC EXTERNAL FIXTURES

- 4.1 Alterations or repairs to historic external fixtures must protect their character and special interest. Fixtures can be valuable in their own right as major elements in the design of a historic building, broader streetscape or landscape setting. Documentary research and fabric analysis will be useful in understanding the design and material properties of historic external fixtures before undertaking alterations or repairs.
- 4.2 The potential impact of repetition of alterations to fixtures in unified designs of streets and other groups of buildings should be considered.

Maintenance

- 4.3 Cast-iron fixtures require regular re-painting to prevent corrosion. Other types of metal may need different maintenance regimes. Where corrosion is severe and the structural integrity of the feature compromised, in rainwater goods for example, a careful record should be made and its replacement made to match in material and design. In some instances there may be a variety of styles employed and proposals to unify non-matching details should be carefully considered as they may relate to a significant historical alteration.

Removal

- 4.4 Certain historic fixtures may be functionally obsolete but continue to contribute to the architectural interest of a listed building and be of historical value. They should always

be retained. Should a historic fixture require removal and reattachment, non-ferrous fittings should be used and existing fixing points used where possible. Where ferrous fittings are required, an epoxy barrier must be used.

5. PRINCIPLES FOR THE ADDITION OF NEW EXTERNAL FIXTURES

General

- 5.1 A great number of possible new external fixtures associated with contemporary living can be proposed that may have an impact upon historic buildings, from alarm boxes to security cameras. A number of these may be small in size but their cumulative effect in a historic place can be detrimental. Consideration should be given to the lifespan of a new fixture and whether or not change of ownership could result in replacement or removal.
- 5.2 The potential for incremental damage by numerous fixtures of a similar nature can be avoided by the shared use of equipment on buildings in multiple occupation or on buildings grouped closely together.

Siting of new fixtures

- 5.3 New external fixtures must be sited to minimise impact on the architectural integrity and fabric of the building. Secondary elevations, outbuildings and roof valleys or flats that are out of sight from principal views can often accommodate new fixtures without significant impact. Close attention to the routing of any associated cabling or pipework away from principal elevations and features will help to minimise the visual effect of new equipment.
- 5.4 If a new fixture is necessary and no alternative to a prominent elevation is appropriate then it should be discreetly located without damaging any architectural feature. Painting the fixture to match the colour of stonework can sometimes minimise its impact. The fitting and means of fixing should always be non-ferrous to prevent damage and staining. Fixing into joints is normally the best option.

Telecoms and satellite technology

- 5.5 Telecommunication devices and satellite dishes can have an adverse impact upon the appearance of a building. These should be positioned so as not to alter a historic profile or skyline, or where impact is minimal.
- 5.6 Antennae associated with mobile phone technology can be situated within some prominent buildings where installation does not require the removal of original fabric or where timber components can be removed and stored for later restoration. A creative approach can result in successful camouflage in some



The cumulative effect of modern fixtures, including satellite dishes, air conditioning units, signage and street lighting, is damaging to the character of this 18th-century building.



These satellite dishes are positioned in a roof valley and are not visible from street level. Fixed to later service features, they do not damage architectural details. © N. Haynes.



The landmark tower of St Stephen's Church (1828), Edinburgh. Telecommunications antennae are positioned on either side of the clock face and on the parapet above behind GRP (glass-reinforced plastic) material that replicates the colour of the surrounding stonework. All the works are easily reversible if the technology changes or becomes redundant. © N. Haynes.



A small, discreet, brass plaque commemorates the reconstruction of Mitchell's Close in Haddington, East Lothian.



Discreet sprung wires are attached to the top surface of this cornice to deter birds. Miller Street, Glasgow.



Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow. The floodlights are positioned behind a cornice and on the roof, therefore making little impact in daylight but providing atmospheric lighting after dark. © N. Haynes.

locations. Planning authorities are able to condition the removal of equipment when it becomes redundant.

Signage

- 5.7 New signage should be incorporated into the overall architectural composition of a building. It should not obscure or damage any architectural detail. Traditional signage materials and palettes of colour can complement the appearance of the building. Paint should not be applied directly to previously unpainted stonework. Separate guidance on shopfronts and shop signage is available in this series.

Flagpoles

- 5.8 Flagpoles should relate to the building's character, scale, proportions and architectural detailing.

Banners

- 5.9 Banners may sometimes be fixed to historic buildings if the means of attachment does not damage any architectural details. However, they should only be allowed on a temporary basis, and not where they would have an adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the building.

Bird control

- 5.10 Bird control devices require careful consideration to minimise the impact upon historic character. Wire mesh and spikes can be visually detrimental whereas sprung wires are generally less obtrusive. A balance should be sought between conserving the visual characteristics and protecting the building and its users from bird nuisance: less intrusive bird control devices should be considered first.

Lighting

- 5.11 Street and floodlighting must be considered carefully to minimise detrimental impact on the character of the building.
- 5.12 Street lighting fixed to a principal elevation should only be considered where independent lighting poles are not appropriate. The lamp and the associated cabling should be carefully integrated within the architectural composition.
- 5.13 The innovative and imaginative use of lighting can be an important component in enhancing the distinctiveness and character of a building or conservation area. Fixtures should always be located unobtrusively, on a basement wall for example.
- 5.14 New lamps to light an entrance should be sympathetic to the design and materials of the building.

Alarm boxes and utility meters

- 5.15 Alarm boxes and utility meters should be fixed in discreet positions without damaging architectural composition or details.

Lesser elevations, basement walls or beneath a platt may be appropriate solutions.

Security cameras

- 5.16 Security cameras require prominent positions to achieve maximum surveillance but should not be permitted in positions that damage the architectural character or appearance of a historic building. Careful consideration should be given to the size of the camera. Positioning of security cameras and cabling should be discrete.

Eye bolts and brackets

- 5.17 Eye bolts for window cleaning access or the attachment of seasonal street decorations should only be permitted where they will be situated discreetly and without damaging architectural details. The material and means of fixing should be non-ferrous, preferably coloured to match adjacent stonework.
- 5.18 Temporary scaffolding should not be anchored into stonework as the fixings will leave permanent damage. Scaffolding should be fixed around architectural features, ensuring no damage occurs during construction or dismantling. Protective materials fixed between steel scaffolding ends and stonework will help prevent accidental damage.
- 5.19 The location and number of hanging baskets and their associated fixings should be carefully considered, and where possible incorporated within the composition of an elevation. The baskets and fixings should not damage or obscure any architectural detailing.

6. CONSENTS

- 6.1 Listed building consent is required for any work to a listed building that affects its character. The local authority determines the need for consent.
- 6.2 Where listed building consent is required, an application is made to the local authority. This should include accurate scale drawings showing both the existing situation and the proposed works in context. It is normally helpful to provide detailed technical information and photographs. A brief description of the interest of the external fixture and an explanation of the impact of the alterations are always useful in assessing change.



Here the corner profile of the building is broken by the brackets for a security camera, an old lamp, and modern street lamp. High Street, Edinburgh.



Discreet stainless steel eye-bolts are re-used each year for the Christmas decorations in Bo'ness. © N. Haynes.

Other selected Historic Scotland publications and links

[Maintaining your Home – A Short Guide for Homeowners](#) (2007) (PDF 1.4MB)

Inform Guide: Finials & Terminals (2008)

Inform Guide: The Maintenance of Cast-iron Rainwater Goods (2007)

Inform Guide: Maintenance of Iron Gates and Railings (2007)

Inform Guide: Boundary Ironwork - A Guide to Reinstatement (2005)

Inform Guide: Bird Control on Buildings (2008)

Inform Guide: Bronze - The Care & Maintenance of Monumental Bronze (2005)

For the full range of Inform Guides, Practitioner Guides, Technical Advice Notes and Research Reports please see the [Publications](#) section of the Historic Scotland website.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

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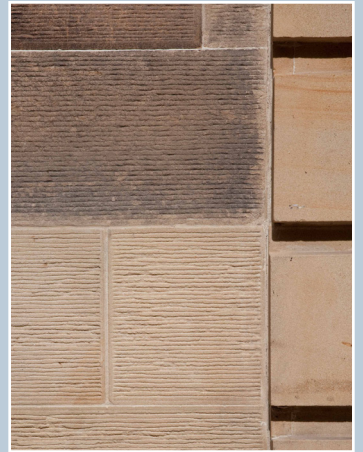
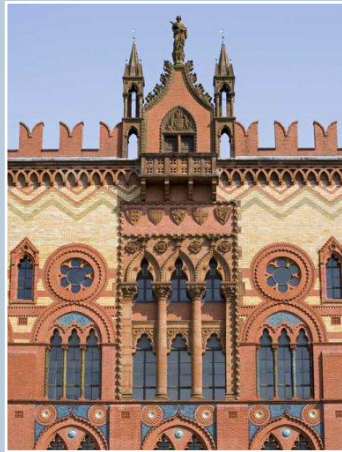
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Bronze torchère lamp (1929), Younger Hall, St Andrews, Fife.

Later 19th-century cast-iron window grille, Vicar Street, Falkirk.

Eighteenth-century sundial, Linton Kirk, Scottish Borders.

External Walls



Key Issues

- 1. The external walls of a historic building are an important element in defining its character. Listed building consent is required for any works affecting the character of a listed building and planning permission may be required in a conservation area.**
- 2. The design, materials, method of construction, colour, texture, detailing and finish typically contribute to the character of a historic wall.**
- 3. Maintenance and appropriate repair are the best means of safeguarding the historic character of a wall. This also reduces the requirement for new raw materials and energy.**
- 4. Physical or documentary evidence must inform the reinstatement or reconstruction of walls. New work to a historic wall must seek to maintain its character.**
- 5. If evidence of blocked openings or earlier phases of work is revealed, this should be documented, and where possible retained.**
- 6. Traditional walls contribute to energy efficiency through their thermal mass, which allows for natural warming and cooling.**
- 7. Planning authorities give advice on the requirement for listed building consent, planning and other permissions.**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is one of a series of guidance notes on managing change in the historic environment for use by planning authorities and other interested parties. The series explains how to apply the policies contained in the *Scottish Historic Environment Policy* (2009) ([SHEP](#), PDF 312K) and *The Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) ([SPP](#), PDF 299K).
- 1.2 This note sets out the principles that apply to altering the external walls of historic buildings. It should inform planning policies and the determination of applications relating to the historic environment, and replaces the equivalent guidance in *The Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas* (1998).
- 1.3 Monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979 require scheduled monument consent for any works. Where a structure is both scheduled and listed, the scheduling controls have precedence. Separate advice is available from Historic Scotland's website: [Scheduled Monuments: Guidance for Owners, Occupiers & Land Managers](#) (PDF 718K). Local authorities' archaeological advisers are a source of advice about potential archaeological sensitivity.



Neolithic house, Skara Brae, Orkney. From the earliest times walls were designed to provide shelter and security, to contain warmth, and to meet the functional requirements of domestic and ritual life. Local materials and skill traditions established different patterns of wall construction and building design in different parts of the country, and adapted to new types of building and usage over time.

2. WHY ARE HISTORIC EXTERNAL WALLS IMPORTANT?

- 2.1 External walls are usually the defining feature of a historic building or monument. They not only incorporate the bulk of the historic fabric and perform structural or weather-protection tasks, but through their design they can also express some of the cultural and intellectual context in which the building was created.

Design qualities

- 2.2 Many of the formal qualities of a historic building, such as scale, proportion, colour, texture or style, are largely derived from the design and construction of its walls. The dimensions, types of materials and finishes, and the position and size of openings within the wall may all be important indicators of the building's age, purpose, status, or development through time.

Material qualities

- 2.3 Often design considerations were determined by the technological capabilities of the period, local building materials and traditions, topography and climate, stylistic intent, and social or economic circumstances.

Structural qualities

- 2.4 External walls generally have a structural function in supporting floors and roofs as well as providing a protective envelope



Central block of the former Fife Arms Hotel, Banff, 1843–5. The classical design places emphasis on the symmetry, proportions and detailing of the walls and reflects the functional hierarchy of the interior. Corniced windows indicate the principal rooms on the first floor; smaller windows relate to private or subsidiary rooms. The design maximises the architectural impact of the walls by hiding the shallow pitched roof behind a parapet.
© N.Haynes.



The mid-18th-century Old Schoolhouse at Cottown, Perth & Kinross. The uneven character of the wall surface is derived from the local materials used in its straw-bonded mudwalls. The colour reflects the use of local clay as a pigment in the modern coating of lime harl and limewash applied during repairs by the National Trust for Scotland. The different window sizes reflect the internal hierarchy of rooms. © N. Haynes.



High Street, Arbroath. Rich pink-red sandstone, typical of parts of Angus. Here the stone is laid in regular courses. © N. Haynes.



Harling being carried out at Dymock's, Bo'ness. © N. Haynes.

around the internal spaces. Other external walls act primarily as a weatherproof skin, with structural support provided by a framework of timber, iron, steel, or reinforced concrete (depending on the age of the building). Whether structural or non-loadbearing, external walls are critical to the long-term stability and technical performance of the building.

3. IDENTIFYING THE INTEREST OF HISTORIC WALLS

- 3.1 The walls of historic buildings have a wide variety of forms and materials, ranging from relatively simple local vernacular to highly crafted opulence, reflecting their ownership, location, purpose, and the period(s) of their construction.

Earth and clay

- 3.2 From early times, walls were constructed from local natural materials such as clay, timber and stone. While stone rubble walls remain the most obvious legacy from the past, buildings were constructed into the 19th century from walls of clay mixed with straw or from clay and boole (uncut stone), often with a sacrificial layer of lime or clay render to provide further protection. Double-skinned stone rubble walls with earth packed between were a common form of construction until the 19th century.

Stone

- 3.3 Stone is the predominant building material in Scotland's historic buildings and often reflects the local geology: e.g. red sandstone in the South-West, paler sandstone in the East, granite in Aberdeenshire. Advances in technology in the 19th century freed stone from being the main structural element of building, although it continued to be used in wall construction and cladding to protect the structural frame. The size of the stones, their position and the style of jointing contribute significantly to the character of a wall and can demonstrate distinctive local traditions. The finish of stone ranges from roughly shaped or simply squared rubble to tooled and finely polished ashlar. Jointing can vary from broad 'slaister' pointing in lime mortar to wafer-thin joints filled with lime putty. Decorative carved stone details were employed on walls from the medieval period into the 20th century.

Harling

- 3.4 Harl or render was extensively used as a surface coating to protect friable construction materials or to provide the illusion of a fine masonry finish. Traditionally lime harling was used. This was mixed with local aggregates, from which it gained its pigmentation.

Brick

- 3.5 Brick began to be manufactured in Scotland in the 17th century but did not gain significant production and use until the 18th century. Garden walls, farm offices and farmhouses saw the

early adoption of brick. In the 19th century, improvements in production quality and volume led to a widespread use of brick for industrial purposes and housing, particularly in mining areas. Brick was also widely used for housing between the wars, and was put to good use by 20th century modernist architects.

Concrete

- 3.6 From the 1850s, mass concrete was used for building sheds and houses, often using similar construction techniques to clay walling. Reinforced concrete was used extensively in the 20th century, initially for its structural properties but in the post-war period for the aesthetic value of its finishes. The aggregate employed could result in a very coarse surface, and the imprint of rough wooden shuttering resulted in a highly textured surface.

Other materials

- 3.7 From the mid 19th-century, many firms produced catalogues of prefabricated buildings ranging from cottages, barns, meeting halls and churches to whole factories made of timber frames clad with corrugated iron. The profile, pitch and gauge of the metal and the choice of finish establish the distinctive character of these walls. Technological advances have resulted in cladding in a variety of metals in the 20th century as well as materials such as ceramic tiles, terracotta, faience, vitrolite and glass.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS

- 4.1 The following should be read in conjunction with Historic Scotland's Technical Advice notes. Details are given at the end of this guidance note.

Character and interest of the building

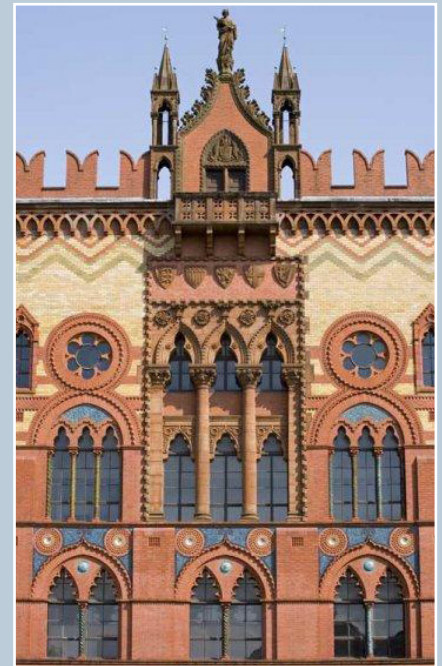
- 4.2 Every effort should be made to repair the external walls of a historic building and alterations or repairs should protect its character. Walls are valuable in their own right as major elements in the design of a historic building and for their practical performance and appearance. Documentary research and fabric analysis is useful in understanding the design and material properties of historic walls before undertaking alterations or repairs.

Maintenance

- 4.3 Regular inspection, maintenance and appropriate repair are essential to maintaining the structural and visual integrity of historic walls.

Alterations

- 4.4 All alteration proposals should take into account the design and material characteristics of the historic wall. Most buildings have one or more principal elevation, which is usually particularly



Former Templeton's Carpet Factory, City of Glasgow (1889). The decorative brick alludes to the pattern of an Axminster carpet and to the form of the Doge's Palace, Venice. © Crown copyright: RCAHMS. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.



Mass concrete tenements in Dundee, cast insitu in 1874–5 by the Concrete Building Company for the Working Men's House Building Association. The buildings were renovated and a buff render applied in 1982–4. © Crown copyright: RCAHMS. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.



Structural instability requires the rebuilding of this wall in Peterhead. The granite stones have been numbered ready for reinstatement.



Dymock's Buildings (late 17th century), Bo'ness, were restored by the National Trust for Scotland in 2004. A cement render was removed, the archaeology of the wall recorded, and then a lime harl and limewash were applied. Evidence of former openings remains visible.
© N. Haynes.

sensitive to alteration. There are often ways of accommodating alterations, perhaps in alternative locations, without detriment to the character of a principal elevation. The design, materials and construction of alterations should seek to complement the original.

New openings

- 4.5 The formation of a new opening in a wall needs to be considered in light of the overall composition of the wall and assessed as to whether or not it would be consistent with the existing design. Care should be taken to ensure that the cumulative effect of new openings does not harm the special interest of the building. Where the formation of a new opening is found to be consistent with the design of the wall, the minimum historic fabric should be removed and the opening should be detailed to match the existing openings. Where there is no obvious precedent, a clearly modern intervention of high-quality design may be appropriate. Service ducts and vents should be located on secondary elevations. Separate guidance on extending buildings is provided in this series.

Rebuilding

- 4.6 There may be occasions when a wall needs to be rebuilt for structural reasons. In most cases it is possible to rebuild the wall reusing the bulk of the dismantled original material. Dressed stone in particular should be rebuilt in its original position. It is important to maintain the proportions, depth and irregularities arising from historic methods of construction in the rebuilt wall. New materials should normally match the characteristics of the existing in all respects. The opportunity should be taken to restore any details of the wall that have previously been altered. Proposals to rebuild should normally be accompanied by a structural report and detailed survey drawings to enable a faithful reconstruction.

Reinstatement

- 4.7 Where walls have been altered inappropriately in the past, reinstatement should be based on documentary or physical evidence of missing features or materials.

Harling

- 4.8 New lime or clay harl, render or limewash should be based on evidence of previous use of the material on the building. Properly specified traditional materials allow the wall to absorb and evaporate moisture effectively. Historic cement renders should only be removed if found to be causing damage. The application of limewash should likewise be backed by evidence.

Repointing

- 4.9 Repointing should use traditional materials compatible with the wall's original construction and detailed in a manner appropriate to the character of the building. Inappropriate materials can be damaging to the surrounding stone. It is advisable to seek

professional guidance in specifying and using traditional materials.

Paint

- 4.10 The application of paint to unpainted historic walls can cause considerable damage in the long term by preventing the evaporation of moisture from the underlying fabric. Where paint has been applied in the past and is harming the performance of a wall, careful removal is recommended, guided by expert advice.

Indenting and plastic repairs to masonry

- 4.11 Stones only need to be replaced when they have decayed to such a degree that they affect the structural stability of the surrounding stonework. Indent repairs should be carried out in stone that best matches the existing stonework in mineralogical composition and carried out to the highest technical standards. Eroded stonework does not necessarily require repair. Cladding or plastic repairs in synthetic materials are likely to exacerbate decay as well as being visually detrimental. Planning authorities may ask for evidence to show that repairs are necessary and that the repair methods are appropriate.

Sculpture

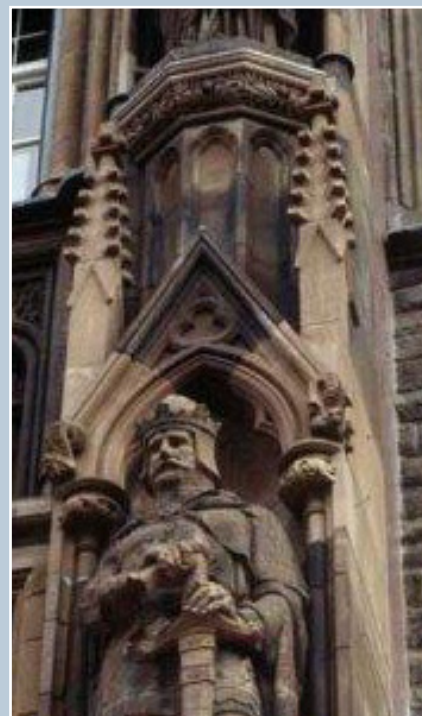
- 4.12 Replacing sculptural stonework on a wall must be considered against its significance and that of the building as a whole. Erosion is a naturally occurring phenomenon and can be part of the attractive aging process of a historic building. If decorative stonework is a significant architectural feature then the replacement of sculptural details to maintain its significance may be appropriate.

Cleaning

- 4.13 The patina that materials acquire through age and weathering can be an important part of the character and appearance of a wall. The weathering of building materials often enhances their attractive qualities. Weathering layers can form natural barriers that protect the material from erosion, and attempts to remove them can cause considerable damage and accelerate decay. Cleaning should normally only be considered where the structural integrity of the wall is threatened by surface growths. To ensure that the cleaning method will not damage the stone or brickwork, applications for listed building consent should be supported by a technical analysis and sample test cleaning of small unobtrusive areas.

Archaeology

- 4.14 Work to historic walls can often reveal features such as blocked openings or a change in material that can provide significant information about the development history and fabric of the building. Photographic or measured recording may be appropriate if the evidence will be covered over in the course of the works. Where there is a high likelihood of uncovering



Scottish National Portrait Gallery, City of Edinburgh, 1890. Decisions about whether to re-carve stonework are a matter of values. Here the artistic value of a sculpture calls for it to be conserved mostly as found, whereas the architectural elements (finials and hoodmoulds) that also function in shedding rainwater have been completely replaced where required. © Copyright: RCAHMS (William McKelvie Collection). Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.



Graffiti: The removal of graffiti requires prompt action before the paint or ink dries into the wall surface. Cleaning methods should be tested on a small unobtrusive area to determine the least aggressive treatment for effective removal of the graffiti. In extreme cases of repeated vandalism, a sacrificial wax coating might be considered for vulnerable surfaces.



The exposed wall of this 17th-century house in Cupar, Fife, reveals archaeological evidence of a number of blocked openings. The previous mixture of window sizes and levels has been regularised in the current arrangement. © N. Haynes.



Modern lime mortar pointing, Scottish Lime Centre, Charlestown, Fife. The use of lime allows the wall to 'breathe'. Traditionally, most rubble walls had lime slastered, or buttered, over the joint to achieve a fairly smooth finish that would erode with time. Where pointing does not alter the character of a listed building it would not normally require consent.

archaeological evidence in a major building, adequate provision should be made for recording as works progress.

5. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- 5.1 Energy conservation is necessary in addressing climate change. In many cases cost-effective and sustainable improvements to the energy efficiency of traditional buildings can be achieved without damage to their character. Heat loss typically occurs in various parts of a building. It is important to take an overall view of energy efficiency measures.
- 5.2 Proper maintenance of traditional masonry walls will help to maximise their thermal efficiency. This is usually achieved through mass and their performance is dependent on their ability to retain heat and 'breathe' out moisture. Preventing the build-up of excess water in external walls will help to optimise their weatherproofing and thermal performance. Measures to consider include:
- prompt repair of roofs, gutters, downpipes, wallheads, and missing pointing or harling;
 - appropriate above and below ground drainage;
 - appropriate repairs in traditional materials to maintain the breathable qualities of joints, stonework and internal painted surfaces.
 - investigation of appropriate insulation.
- 5.3 Additional energy conservation measures are best considered in the context of all component parts of a building. Further information is available in Historic Scotland's *Inform Guide: Energy Efficiency in Traditional Homes*.

6. CONSENTS

- 6.1 Listed building consent is required for any work to a listed building that affects its character. The local authority determines the need for consent.
- 6.2 Where listed building consent is required, an application is made to the local authority. This should include accurate scale drawings showing both the existing situation and the proposed works in context. It is normally helpful to provide detailed technical information and photographs.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Details of all individual scheduled monuments, listed buildings, designated gardens and designed landscapes, and designated wrecks can be obtained from Historic Scotland (see contact details below) or at: www.pastmap.org.uk. Details of listed buildings can also be obtained from the relevant local authority for the area.

Advice on the requirement for listed building consent, conservation area consent, building warrants, and other permissions/consents should be sought from local authorities.

Historic Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
EDINBURGH
EH9 1SH

Tel: 0131 668 8981 or 8717

Fax: 0131 668 8765

E-mail: hs.inspectorate@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

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www.historicscotlandimages.gov.uk

Cover images

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Daily Record Building (1900–04), Renfrew Lane, Glasgow. The tall frontage to the narrow lane is faced in white glazed brick at the lower levels to reflect and maximise light. © N. Haynes.

Decorative brickwork at the former Templeton's Carpet Factory (by William Leiper, 1888), Glasgow. The colours are paler after acid cleaning in the 1980s. © Crown copyright: RCAHMS. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.

George Square, Edinburgh. The replacement stone (at the bottom of the photograph) is carefully matched with the original 1890s stone for type, colour and tooling. Natural weathering will reduce the contrast between the new and old work. © N. Haynes.

Other selected Historic Scotland publications and links

[Maintaining your Home – A Short Guide for Homeowners](#) (2007) (PDF 1.4MB)

Inform Guide: Energy Efficiency in Traditional Homes (2008)

Inform Guide: Damp Causes & Solutions (2007)

Inform Guide: Masonry Decay (2005)

Inform Guide: Repointing Ashlar Masonry (2008)

Inform Guide: Indent Repairs to Sandstone Masonry (2007)

Inform Guide: Structural Cracks (2008)

Inform Guide: The Use of Lime & Cement in Traditional Buildings (2007)

Inform Guide: Repairing Brickwork (2007)

Inform Guide: Care & Maintenance of Corrugated Iron (2008)

Inform Guide: Cleaning Sandstone: Risks and Consequences (2007)

Inform Guide: Graffiti and its Safe Removal (2005)

For the full range of Inform Guides, Practitioner Guides, Technical Advice Notes and Research Reports please see the [Publications](#) section of the Historic Scotland website.



HISTORIC
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SCOTLAND

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ALBA

MANAGING CHANGE IN THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Setting





Above: Kilmartin Glen, Argyll and Bute. An important prehistoric linear cemetery composed of a number of burial cairns and standing stones. Intervisibility between elements of the complex, and views along the line of monuments, through and along the valley, are key to understanding each monument and the complex as a whole. © Kilmartin House Trust'

Cover image: Bronze-Age stone circle at Tomnaverie, Aberdeenshire. Many recumbent stone circles are located on elevated positions and are positioned to have wide-ranging views over the landscape. Views towards these monuments are also an important part of their setting as many appear skylined against the horizon.

MANAGING CHANGE IS A
SERIES OF NON-STATUTORY
GUIDANCE NOTES ABOUT
MANAGING CHANGE IN THE
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT.
THEY EXPLAIN HOW TO APPLY
GOVERNMENT POLICIES.

The aim of the series is to identify the main issues which can arise in different situations, to advise how best to deal with these, and to offer further sources of information. They are also intended to inform planning policies and the determination of applications relating to the historic environment.

INTRODUCTION

This note sets out the principles that apply to developments affecting the setting of historic assets or places, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings, Inventory historic gardens and designed landscapes, World Heritage Sites, conservation areas, historic battlefields, Historic Marine Protected Areas and undesignated sites.

Planning authorities usually make the initial assessment of whether a development will affect the setting of a historic asset or place. However, this may also be identified through other mechanisms such as an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). If a planning authority identifies a potential impact on a designated historic asset, it may consult Historic Environment Scotland, who act as statutory consultees in the planning process.

World Heritage Site status brings a commitment to protect the site's cultural significance and the Outstanding Universal Value for which the site is inscribed. This may include reference to aspects of setting.



Clava Cairns, Highland. An important Bronze-Age cemetery complex of burial cairns and standing stones. Intervisibility of elements of the complex is key to understanding the scheduled monument. © Crown copyright: Historic Environment Scotland. Licensor canmore.org.uk

Below: Fort Augustus lock flight, Caledonian Canal, Highland. Running from Inverness to Banavie, near Fort William, the scheduled Caledonian Canal represents the culmination of 18th-century canal construction in Scotland. The modern village of Fort Augustus developed along the locks, and views along the lock flight clearly reveal the relationships between the urban topography and the canal. © J. Malcolm



KEY ISSUES

1. Setting can be important to the way in which historic structures or places are understood, appreciated and experienced. It can often be integral to a historic asset's cultural significance. Planning authorities must take into account the setting of historic assets or places when drawing up development plans and guidance, when considering environmental and design assessments/statements, and when making decisions on planning applications.
2. Where development is proposed it is important to:
 - identify the historic assets that might be affected
 - define the setting of each historic asset
 - assess the impact of any new development on this
3. Setting often extends beyond the property boundary or 'curtilage' of an individual historic asset into a broader landscape context. Both tangible and less tangible elements can be important in understanding the setting. Less tangible elements may include function, sensory perceptions or the historical, artistic, literary and scenic associations of places or landscapes.
4. If proposed development is likely to affect the setting of a key historic asset, an objective written assessment should be prepared by the applicant to inform the decision-making process. The conclusions should take into account the significance of the asset and its setting and attempt to quantify the extent of any impact. The methodology and level of information should be tailored to the circumstances of each case.
5. In the light of the assessment described above, finalised development proposals should seek to avoid or mitigate detrimental impacts on the settings of historic assets.
6. Advice on whether a planning application should include an assessment of the development's impact on setting should be sought from the planning authority.

1. WHAT IS 'SETTING'?

'Setting' is the way the surroundings of a historic asset or place contribute to how it is understood, appreciated and experienced.

Monuments, buildings, gardens and settlements were almost always placed and orientated deliberately, normally with reference to the surrounding topography, resources, landscape and other structures. Over time, these relationships change, although aspects of earlier settings can be retained.

Setting can therefore not simply be defined by a line on a map, and is likely to be unrelated to modern landownership or to curtilage, often extending beyond immediate property boundaries into the wider area.

Baltersan Castle, South Ayrshire. A category A listed 17th-century tower house, viewed from the 15th-century gatehouse of the adjacent Crossraguel Abbey. The medieval burgh of Maybole lies beyond, marked by the bell tower of the tolbooth. These elements of the late medieval / early modern Maybole area have clear visual and spatial relationships. © J. Malcolm

2. WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO SETTING?

The setting of a historic asset can incorporate a range of factors, not all of which will apply to every case. These include:

- current landscape or townscape context
- views to, from and across or beyond the historic asset or place
- key vistas (for instance, a 'frame' of trees, buildings or natural features that give the historic asset or place a context, whether intentional or not)
- the prominence of the historic asset or place in views throughout the surrounding area, bearing in mind that sites need not be visually prominent to have a setting
- aesthetic qualities



- character of the surrounding landscape
- general and specific views including foregrounds and backdrops
- views from within an asset outwards over key elements in the surrounding landscape, such as the view from the principal room of a house, or from a roof terrace
- relationships with other features, both built and natural
- non-visual factors such as historical, artistic, literary, place name, or scenic associations, intellectual relationships (e.g. to a theory, plan or design), or sensory factors
- a ‘sense of place’: the overall experience of an asset which may combine some of the above factors

Defining the setting of a historic asset or place is case-specific and will ultimately rely on informed judgement, based on a range of considerations, including those set out above.

Cullen Seatown, Moray. In this conservation area the layout of the buildings is closely linked to the landscape context: on the north side of the village, gables face the sea to maximise shelter; here, on the south side, the houses are aligned to maximise light. © N. Haynes



3. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CHANGE

There are three stages in assessing the impact of a development on the setting of a historic asset or place:

- **Stage 1: identify the historic assets** that might be affected by the proposed development
- **Stage 2: define and analyse the setting** by establishing how the surroundings contribute to the ways in which the historic asset or place is understood, appreciated and experienced
- **Stage 3: evaluate the potential impact of the proposed changes** on the setting, and the extent to which any negative impacts can be mitigated (see Section 4)

Stage 1: identify the historic assets

A desk assessment of historic environment records and other relevant material will provide the baseline information, identifying which assets will be affected and what is significant about them.

The initial approach should include all the potentially affected historic assets and places (including those relatively distant from the proposal) and their settings. It may be necessary to engage a suitably qualified historic environment consultant to undertake this identification and assessment.

Neist Point Lighthouse, Skye, Highland. The remote location and open views are important elements in the function and setting of the category B listed lighthouse. Seaward views are important, and views towards the lighthouse from shipping channels also form part of the setting.



Stage 2: define and analyse the setting

The setting of a historic asset comprises our present understanding and appreciation of its current surroundings, and what (if anything) survives of its historic surroundings combined with subsequent historic changes. Answering the following questions often helps define a setting:

- How do the present surroundings contribute to our ability to appreciate and understand the historic asset or place?
- How does the historic asset or place contribute to its surroundings? For instance, is it a prominent or dominant feature in the landscape?
- When the historic asset or place was developed or in use (both originally and subsequently):
 - how was it intended to be viewed? From a distance? From other sites, buildings or specific points in the landscape?
 - what views was it intended to have? Wide views over the landscape or seascape? Confined views? Narrow alignment(s)?

Key viewpoints to, from and across the setting of a historic asset should be identified. Often certain views are critical to how a historic asset is or has been approached and seen, or understood when looking out. These views were sometimes deliberately manipulated, manufactured and/or maintained, and may still be readily understood and appreciated today. Depending on the historic asset or place these could include specific points

on current and historical approaches, routeways, associated farmland, other related buildings, monuments, natural features, etc.

Sometimes these relationships can be discerned across wide areas and even out to distant horizons. In other cases they have a more restricted view, defined and enclosed by topographical or built features. For some historic assets and places, both immediate and distant points of visual relationship are crucial to our understanding of them.

Changes in the surroundings since the historic asset or place was built should be considered, as should the contribution of the historic asset or place to the current landscape. In some cases the current surroundings will contribute to a sense of place, or how a historic asset or place is experienced.

The value attributed to a historic asset by the community or wider public may influence the sensitivity of its setting. Public consciousness may place a strong emphasis on an asset and its setting for aesthetic reasons, or because of an artistic or historic association. Such associative values can contribute to the significance of a site, and to the sensitivity of its setting.

Whether or not a site is visited does not change its inherent value, or its sensitivity to alterations in its setting. This should be distinguished from the tourism, leisure or economic role of a site. Tourism and leisure factors may be relevant in the overall analysis of the impact of a proposed development, but they do not form part of an assessment of setting impacts.

In certain circumstances the value attributed to a historic asset by the community or wider public may influence the sensitivity of its setting. Public consciousness may place a strong emphasis on an asset and its setting for aesthetic reasons, or because of an artistic or historic association. Such associative values can contribute to the significance of a site, and to the sensitivity of its setting. However, it is important to emphasise that an asset has a setting whether it is visited or not.

Stage 3: evaluate the potential impact of the proposed changes

The impact of a proposed development on the setting of a historic asset or place can be a material consideration in determining whether a planning or other application is given consent, so thought must be given to whether new development can be incorporated

Aerial view of Kinross House (1684) and gardens and Lochleven Castle, Perth and Kinross. The category A listed house and gardens which feature on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, designed by Sir William Bruce as his main residence, used the castle and the island as a picturesque focal point in the landscape.
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Licensor canmore.org.uk

sensitively. Depending on the nature of the historic asset or place, relatively small changes in the wider landscape may affect its setting.

Certain types of development require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which might include assessing the impact on the setting of a historic asset or place. Further information and advice about EIA can be found on our [website](#).

Factors to be considered in assessing the impact of a change on the setting of a historic asset or place include:

- whether key views to or from the historic asset or place are interrupted
- whether the proposed change would dominate or detract in a way that affects our ability to understand and appreciate the historic asset
- the visual impact of the proposed change relative to the scale of the historic asset or place and its setting



- the visual impact of the proposed change relative to the current place of the historic asset in the landscape
- the presence, extent, character and scale of the existing built environment within the surroundings of the historic asset or place and how the proposed development compares to this
- the magnitude of the proposed change relative to the sensitivity of the setting of an asset – sometimes relatively small changes, or a series of small changes, can have a major impact on our ability to appreciate and understand a historic asset or place. Points to consider include:
 - the ability of the setting to absorb new development without eroding its key characteristics
 - the effect of the proposed change on qualities of the existing setting such as sense of remoteness, current noise levels, evocation of the historical past, sense of place, cultural identity, associated spiritual responses
 - cumulative impacts: individual developments may not cause significant impacts on their own, but may do so when they are combined



Rosyth Castle, Fife. Once located on an island in the River Forth, the site was incorporated into the naval dockyards in the 20th century resulting in significant change to the scheduled monument's original setting. Any changes, including enhancement, need to be considered against the current setting.

Many Geographical Information Systems (GIS) packages support useful interpretative models, such as wireframes, viewshed analyses and digital terrain models. Graphic presentations such as photomontages, and landscape data-sets such as Historic Land-use Assessment (HLA), may also assist in reaching an understanding of a historic asset or place in the landscape and how development may affect it.

4. MITIGATION OF IMPACTS AND ENHANCEMENT OF SETTING

Where the assessment indicates that there will be an adverse impact on the setting of a historic asset or place, even if this is perceived to be temporary or reversible, alterations to the siting or design of the new development should be considered to remove or reduce this impact.

The most effective way to prevent impacts on setting is during site selection and early design. Any mitigation and enhancement proposals should be discussed as part of the pre-application process.

Burghead Harbour, Moray. Early 19th century listed granaries line the quayside. Their even spacing, scale and relationship to the wet dock and to the grid-plan town are relevant to an understanding of the setting. © N. Haynes

Other mitigation measures include screening the development, for example with trees or bunding (enclosing structures). However, the screening itself needs careful consideration so that it does not cause an impact in its own right.

It is also important to bear in mind that vegetation such as trees are subject to environmental and other factors (e.g. wind blow, felling and seasonal changes which affect leaf cover) and cannot necessarily be relied upon to mitigate adverse impacts of a development. In some cases, there may be potential for improving the setting of a historic asset or place, for example by opening up views through removing vegetation.





The Inventory garden and designed landscape at Crathes Castle, Aberdeenshire. The formality of the late 18th and 19th century gardens contrasts with the farmland beyond. © N. Haynes

5. FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Historic Environment Scotland is charged with ensuring that our historic environment provides a strong foundation in building a successful future for Scotland. One of its roles is to provide advice about managing change in the historic environment.

Information for designated heritage assets can be downloaded from Historic Environment Scotland's [spatial data warehouse](#) or viewed at [Pastmap](#).

The Hermitage. An 18th-century picturesque Inventory designed landscape, Perth and Kinross. Both William and Dorothy Wordsworth featured The Hermitage in their writing. Ossian's Hall (pictured) was placed to take advantage of views over the falls, and the sound created by them. These elements also contribute to an appreciation of the nearby woodland walks, and combine to form part of the setting.



Details of listed buildings and advice on the requirement for listed building consent, conservation area consent, building warrants and other permissions/consents should be sought from local authorities.

Most works at monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 require scheduled monument consent. Where a structure is both scheduled and listed, the scheduling controls have precedence. Separate advice is available from Historic Environment Scotland's [website](#).

Planning authorities also have their own historic environment records and policies in local development plans and supplementary guidance.

Other sources of information

Mitigation measures in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) terms are explained in [Planning Advice Note \(PAN\) 1/2013](#):

Aerial photography and other records of the settings of historic structures or places can be obtained from Historic Environment Scotland, John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 9NX

Tel: 0131 662 1456,
Fax: 0131 662 1477
Email: info@rcahms.gov.uk
Web: www.historicenvironment.scot

The setting of heritage structures, sites and areas is the subject of the [ICOMOS Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas \(2005\)](#)

Historic Land-use Assessment (HLA)

The HLA, developed by Historic Environment Scotland, is a GIS-based map that depicts the historic origin of land-use patterns, describing them by period, form and function. Its purpose is to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the historic dimension of the landscape and to inform management decisions relating to it. It highlights relict archaeological landscapes, aids understanding of the landscape context of individual sites and helps identify areas where further survey could be useful. It is available [here](#).

Gardens and designed landscapes

The Gardens Trust has [Planning Conservation Advice Notes](#) on Development in the Setting of Historic Designed Landscape (Number 11 2008) and Briefs for Historic Landscape Assessments (Number 13 2008)

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has also produced [landscape guidance](#):

Wind energy development

The Scottish Government has produced [guidance for wind planning applications](#).

SNH has produced a [suite of documents](#) to assist in the process of assessing the potential impacts of wind farm proposals on Scotland's landscapes.

Historic Marine Protected Areas

Guidance is located [here](#).



Balfarg henge and standing stones, Fife. An example of a scheduled monument now surrounded by a 1970s housing development: the two photos show the site before and after redevelopment. Upper image © Crown Copyright: HES. Licensor canmore.org.uk. Lower image © K. Brophy



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