

INTERIM GUIDANCE ON THE DESIGNATION OF CONSERVATION AREAS AND CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT

APRIL 2019



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT

SCOTLAND

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This guidance was published by Historic Environment Scotland as part of the Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (2016). This edition is an interim document published by Historic Environment Scotland in 2019 to provide detailed guidance on the application of Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS, 2019). It sets out the principles HES recommends are followed in implementing the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 141 and 142 and is a material consideration in the planning process. It should be read alongside HEPS and the Managing Change Guidance Notes series. We will be reviewing and updating our Managing Change Guidance series and any new guidance will be subject to public consultation.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND GUIDANCE ON THE DESIGNATION OF CONSERVATION AREAS AND CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT

1. Conservation areas are designated under the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Scotland) Act 1997.
2. Conservation areas are areas which have special architectural or historic interest that are considered worthy of protection. Conservation areas are varied in character, encompassing the urban and the rural; they range from the historic core of our cities to isolated rural settlements or landscapes.
3. It is the character of an area, either architectural or historic, created by buildings and open spaces and their relationship with one another which the designation of a conservation area seeks to preserve. Elements such as the street layout, open spaces and the public realm all contribute to an area's special character.
4. To be designated as a conservation area it must meet the criteria of **'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance'**, as set out in Section 61 of the 1997 Act.
5. National planning policy sets out that local authorities are expected to ensure that local development plans and supplementary guidance provide a framework for protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing all elements of the historic environment. In this regard, local planning authorities should designate and review existing and potential conservation areas and identify existing and proposed Article 4 Directions. This should be supported by Conservation Area Appraisals and Management. As part of this process, planning authorities are encouraged undertake a thorough appraisal of any area before designation to ensure that its character or appearance is understood.
6. By law, Historic Environment Scotland has the power to determine, after consultation with the planning authority, that an area should be a conservation area and may designate it. This is a power which will be used only exceptionally.
7. As set out in Section 62 of the 1997 Act, once a planning authority has decided to designate a conservation area, notice of the designation must be published in the *Edinburgh Gazette* and at least one local newspaper.
8. Scottish Ministers and Historic Environment Scotland, at the same time as the designation is advertised, must be formally notified of the designation of the conservation area. They must also be provided with a copy of the published notice, together with a copy of the designation map and a list of street names which will usually be submitted in an open GIS format.
9. Planning authorities may also amend or remove a conservation area that is already designated. Notification of this will be in the same way as for new designations. Amended conservation areas should normally be re-designated in their entirety.
10. Every planning authority is required to compile and keep available for public inspection a list containing appropriate information about their conservation areas.
11. Planning authorities have a duty to submit their proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas for consideration to a local public meeting and should, when preparing schemes, seek the advice and views of local residents and amenity groups. Wherever possible, proposals should first be subject to public consultation through the Local Development Plan process, thus providing opportunity for the views of stakeholders to be taken into account. Owners and occupiers of property within a conservation area do not have to be specifically notified

and there is no right of appeal against a designation, variation or cancellation.

12. Once an area has been designated it becomes the duty of the planning authority and any other authority concerned, including Historic Environment Scotland, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area when exercising their powers under planning laws.
13. Some types of development which would not otherwise require permission may require permission through the planning process.

Selection guidance for designating a conservation area

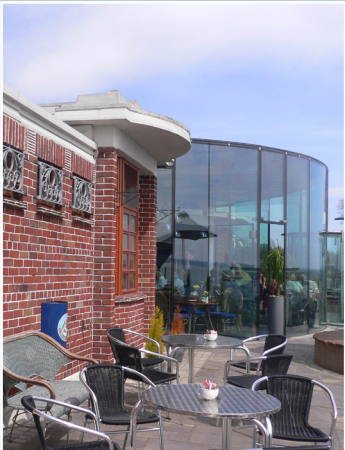
14. Areas of 'special architectural or historic interest' will be selected based on a range of factors which may include:
 - areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of specific listed buildings and/or scheduled monuments;
 - areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of building groupings, which may or may not include listed buildings and/or scheduled monuments, and open spaces which they abut;
 - areas with features of architectural or historic interest such as street pattern, planned towns and villages and historic gardens and designed landscapes; and
 - other areas of distinctive architectural or historic character.
15. The characteristics and values that contribute to a conservation area's special architectural or historic interest are:
 - its special architectural or historic importance;
 - its distinct character;
 - its value as a good example of local or regional architectural style;
 - its value within the wider context of the village or town; and
 - its present condition, and the scope for significant improvement and enhancement.

Guidance on Conservation Area Consent for demolition of unlisted buildings

16. The demolition of even a single building and the construction of a new building or buildings in its place could result in harm to the character or appearance of a conservation area, or part of it.
17. In deciding whether conservation area consent should be granted, planning authorities should therefore take account of the importance of the building to the character or appearance of any part of the conservation area, and of proposals for the future of the cleared site.
18. If the building is considered to be of any value, either in itself or as part of a group, a positive attempt should always be made by the planning authority to achieve its retention, restoration and sympathetic conversion to some other compatible use before proposals to demolish are seriously investigated.
19. In some cases, demolition may be thought appropriate, for example, if the building is of little townscape value, if its structural condition rules out its retention at reasonable cost, or if its form or location makes its re-use extremely difficult. In instances where demolition is to be followed by re-development of the site, consent to demolish should in general be given only where there are acceptable proposals for the new building.
20. Decision makers are required to have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the appearance of the conservation area in exercising their responsibilities under the planning legislation, and this statutory duty should always be borne in mind when considering demolition applications (Scottish Planning Policy, paragraph 143).

**Managing
Change
in the Historic
Environment**

Extensions



Key Issues

- 1. Most historic buildings can be extended sensitively. 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. Extensions:**
 - **must protect the character and appearance of the building;**
 - **should be subordinate in scale and form;**
 - **should be located on a secondary elevation;**
 - **must be designed in a high-quality manner using appropriate materials.**
- 3. 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 extending 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).



Esk Net Mills, Musselburgh in 1996 before refurbishment and extension.



The extension to Esk Net Mills, Musselburgh, East Lothian. The glass extension of 2006 makes a deferential contrast to the solid masonry of the surrounding courtyard buildings of the 19th-century net-making complex. The design draws on the symmetry and scale of the old buildings, whilst creating a distinctive new component in its form and materials.

2. ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

- 2.1 The history of use and ownership of a historic building is reflected in the cumulative changes made to it. They can themselves form an aspect of a building's special interest. New alterations or additions, which are of high design quality sympathetic to the character of the building, form part of this continuum. Most historic buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses.
- 2.2 Yet historic buildings vary in the extent to which they can accommodate change without loss to special interest. Some present the opportunity to promote design intervention that would not have been possible without the historic building as a creative spark. Others are sensitive even to slight alterations. This is especially so of buildings with important interiors - not just great houses, but also, for example, churches with historic pews or factories with surviving machinery. Then an extension rather than internal change may be a way to safeguard the special interest of the building.
- 2.3 Some buildings have interest as little-altered examples of a modest building type. These are harder to extend sympathetically than many more substantial pieces of architecture (see *Small Buildings*, below).
- 2.4 An extension to a historic building can have a wider impact on the historic environment. For example, archaeology and the



A complementary addition to a 19th-century country house in the Scottish Borders, in which brick takes its cue from walled gardens.



Restoration and replication: Ca D'Oro, Union Street, Glasgow. Designed by John Honeyman in 1872 in the style of a Venetian palazzo, this former furniture warehouse was extended by two replica bays (right-hand side of image) in 1989 and the roof was restored to its original profile.



Complementary: Stanley Mills, Perth and Kinross. A new lift tower was added to East Mill that echoes a semicircular stair tower on nearby Mid Mill. The location had been scarred by an earlier lift and rudimentary toilets. A glass strip separates the new-build from the historic masonry.



Complementary: Dundas Home Farm, South Queensferry, an 1881 steading converted and extended for residential use from 2001 to 2006. Here a new range takes its cue from the scale and rhythm of the original. © Simpson & Brown Architects.

layout of lang rigs, important features of the historic fabric of some older towns, should be respected in any new development.

- 2.5 Extensions have the potential to impact on the setting of adjacent historic buildings, which should be taken into account when considering a proposal.

3. CONTEXTUAL DESIGN

- 3.1 New work must acknowledge the old in every case, whether that work will be:

- a restoration
- a replication
- a complementary addition
- a deferential contrast
- an assertive contrast

- 3.2 New work should be based on a thorough understanding of the existing historic building. A design statement which describes the interest of the building and an explanation of the impact of the alterations is always useful when assessing proposals for change.

Restoration

- 3.3 A building may have lost its original form, and a well-documented reconstruction of a missing element may be proposed. The original frontage to a building may have become partially or completely hidden behind later extensions. The appearance of the building and its setting could be improved by their removal and the restoration of the facade. Planning authorities will often seek to promote restoration, provided there is sound evidence on which to base the work. Where an extension has architectural merit in its own right, or has through time become part of the character and interest of the building, it should be retained.

Replication

- 3.4 Replication is where new work is designed specifically to match the original building and does so in all respects, not only in the use of the same materials in the same style. The dimensions and finish of the materials used and details such as coursing, pointing, tooling, window proportion and profile, roof pitch and slate must all be accurately modelled upon the existing building or they will not sit comfortably beside the original.

Complementary additions

- 3.5 Complementary new work takes as design cues the profile, massing, bay rhythm, scale and proportion of the existing building, but without replication of the details.
- 3.6 Quite substantial additions can be made to some buildings without detracting from the character of the original work.

The same added to other buildings would result in imbalanced design or a straggling composition. In those cases, a well-designed modern addition that will not read as part of the original building will affect its appearance less radically.

Deferential contrast

- 3.7 Deferential contrast is where the new becomes a self-effacing backdrop against the old. Even if it is large, it seeks not to be assertive. It might be achieved by reflective glass, for example.

Assertive contrast

- 3.8 Assertive contrast means affirmation of the new as a more or less equal partner to the old. New and old combined should be of greater lasting value than either on its own. This demands higher-quality new work than would often be found in an isolated new building. The presence of the existing building 'raises the game' for the new build.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules for new work when much will depend upon the site, the landscape, the scale and form both of the existing building and of the addition or extension proposed. The following basic principles will, however, apply:

- An addition or extension should play a subordinate role. It should not dominate the original building as a result of its scale, materials or location, and should not overlay principal elevations.
- Where an extension is built beside a principal elevation it should generally be lower than, and set back behind, that facade.
- An extension that would unbalance a symmetrical elevation and threaten the original design concept should be avoided.
- An extension should be modestly scaled and skillfully sited.
- Fire escape routes may be internal wherever space can be created without damaging important interior work. Where an external escape stair is necessary, it should be located as reversibly and inconspicuously as possible, and not on principal elevations.

5. SMALL BUILDINGS

- 5.1 Small buildings such as tollhouses and lodges present challenges of scale but may need extension to give them purpose. One way to maintain the visual integrity of the original building may be to construct a lower link block, perhaps in glass, between it and the extension. Very small structures such as garden buildings not intended for permanent occupation will seldom be capable of extension. A proven need for additional accommodation



Former Arctic Tannery and Harbour Workshops, Dundee. A fire destroyed the upper part that had originally been of timber louvres to cure sealskin hides, replaced in brick. The development of housing (see below) echoes in a new form the timber and brick previously used here.



Deferential contrast: Harbour Workshops, Dundee, following redevelopment as housing in 2008.



Assertive contrast: the rear extension of the former India of Inchinnan Tyre Factory (1930). The aerodynamic curve reflects earlier use of the site to make aircraft and dirigibles.



An extension to a house in a conservation area, set back from the front elevation, of glass and timber that echoes conservatories in the area.



Fairfield House, Dalkeith, built for an iron founder. The cast-iron vine house on the right was repaired as part of the development as offices for Midlothian Council. The house is still the focal point although smaller than the new-build addition. The pink building is the rear of a separate structure.
© Royal Fine Art Commission.



Former nurses' home of 1938–47, Salisbury Road, Edinburgh. The additional rooftop storey is set back from the wallheads, minimising its impact on the original design.

might instead be met by a new free-standing suitably scaled and designed structure, nearby or elsewhere. A condition might be set to phase the new work after the repair or restoration of the small building.

6. ROOF EXTENSIONS

6.1 A planning authority will consider the special interest of the existing roof and the visibility of the extension in views, and take into consideration the amenity of adjacent buildings. See also Historic Scotland's *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Roofs*.

Special interest

6.2 Where the external form is significant to the character of the building, or where the internal structure and decoration have historic interest, a roof extension will not be appropriate that destroys this or requires such a high degree of new supporting structure that only the facades of the historic building remain.

Visibility

6.3 A roof extension may not comfortably fit where long views are important to the profile of a building. Where streets are narrow and buildings are tall, the visual impact to pedestrians in the street of a roof extension will be less but must not have an adverse impact.

Height

6.4 The presence of a neighbouring high building should not be taken as a reason for an inappropriate roof extension to a historic building.

7. BUILDING STANDARDS

7.1 Rather than force the existing building to adapt to meet modern requirements, the new extension will normally be the place to provide:

- accessibility to existing floor levels through lifts and ramps (see accessibility guidance in this series)
- new services that might be difficult to route through the existing building
- high thermal performance
- fire separation
- rainwater collection and disposal (consider Sustainable Drainage Systems)
- independent foundations that do not compromise the foundations of the existing building

7.2 Many historic buildings are capable of alteration that is of its time, respects and defers to what has gone before, and may be

justified as supporting the continued conservation and use of that building. A Design and Access Statement, if required, should bring this out within these guidelines and with reference to a statement of significance or conservation plan specific to the building.

8. ARCHAEOLOGY

8.1 It is possible that archaeological resources survive within or beneath a listed building or unlisted building in a conservation area. Planning authorities should seek to manage archaeological issues, such as recording or preservation in situ, through the use of conditions or agreements under Section 75 of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Advice on archaeological sensitivity should be obtained from the planning authority's archaeological adviser at an early stage.

9. RECORDING

9.1 When proposed extension works to a listed building will result in significant loss of fabric or changes to the building's character, it is suggested that the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland's (RCAHMS) is given the opportunity to record the historic structure prior to works commencing. This becomes a statutory requirement only when demolition of the historic structure is proposed. However, RCAHMS is always pleased to consider recording changes to historic structures whenever the opportunity arises. Contact details for RCAHMS can be found overleaf.

10. CONSENTS

10.1 Listed building consent is required for any work to a listed building that affects its character. The local authority determines the need for consent.

10.2 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 building and an explanation of the impact of the alterations are always helpful in assessing change.



Kilncraigs Business Centre, Alloa. Above: cast-iron columns are retained internally behind the glazed curtain wall constructed in 2000. Below: A 19th-century woollen yarn store was skilfully extended in contrasting concrete and steel (left-hand side of photo) in 1938 by William Kerr. Most of the very deep original but multi-phase block (right-hand side of photo) was cut back and a new curtain wall added to the existing structure in 2000, making an assertive but revealing contrast of new and old, and achieving a visual link between Alloa Tower and the town. Junctions are clearly formed in red and white.



Other selected Historic Scotland publications and links

[Guide for Practitioners 6: Conversion of Traditional Buildings](#) (2007) (Historic Scotland online shop: DVD available for purchase).

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.

Other selected publications

Scottish Government, [A Policy on Architecture for Scotland](#) (2001) (PDF 608K) and [Building Our Legacy: Statement on Scotland's Architecture Policy](#) (2007) on Scottish Government website.

Other selected contacts

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)
John Sinclair House
16 Bernard Terrace
EDINBURGH
EH8 9NX
Tel: 0131 662 1456
Fax: 0131 662 1477
E: info@rcahms.gov.uk
W: www.rcahms.gov.uk

Architecture & Design Scotland (A+DS)
Bakehouse Close
146 Canongate
EDINBURGH
EH8 8DD

Tel: 0131 556 6699
Fax: 0131 556 6633
web: www.ads.org.uk
e-mail: info@ads.org.uk

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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Beach Shelter (1934), Broughty Ferry Esplanade, City of Dundee, extended and refurbished in 2005.

Castlemilk Stables (circa 1800), Glasgow, were converted in 2003–7 for the Glasgow Building Preservation Trust, requiring a glazed extension into the courtyard to give reception and circulation space to the narrow stable buildings around the perimeter of a square.

Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney, refurbished and extended in 2007. The scale and massing of the extension complements the adjacent traditional waterfront buildings that provide the conservation area with much of its character.