



preserve

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appraisal

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Planning Advice Note

conservation

Area Management

Designation alone will not secure the protection and enhancement of **conservation areas**. Active management is vital to ensure that change can be accommodated for the better



protection and enhancement

Planning series:

- › **Scottish Planning Policies (SPPs)** provide statements of Scottish Executive policy on nationally important land use and other planning matters, supported where appropriate by a locational framework.
- › **Circulars**, which also provide statements of Scottish Executive policy, contain guidance on policy implementation through legislative or procedural change.
- › **Planning Advice Notes (PANs)** provide advice on good practice and other relevant information.

Statements of Scottish Executive policy contained in SPPs and Circulars may be material considerations to be taken into account in development plan preparation and development control.

Existing National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPGs) have continued relevance to decision making, until such time as they are replaced by a SPP. The term SPP should be interpreted as including NPPGs.

Statements of Scottish Executive location-specific planning policy, for example the West Edinburgh Planning Framework, have the same status in decision making as SPPs.

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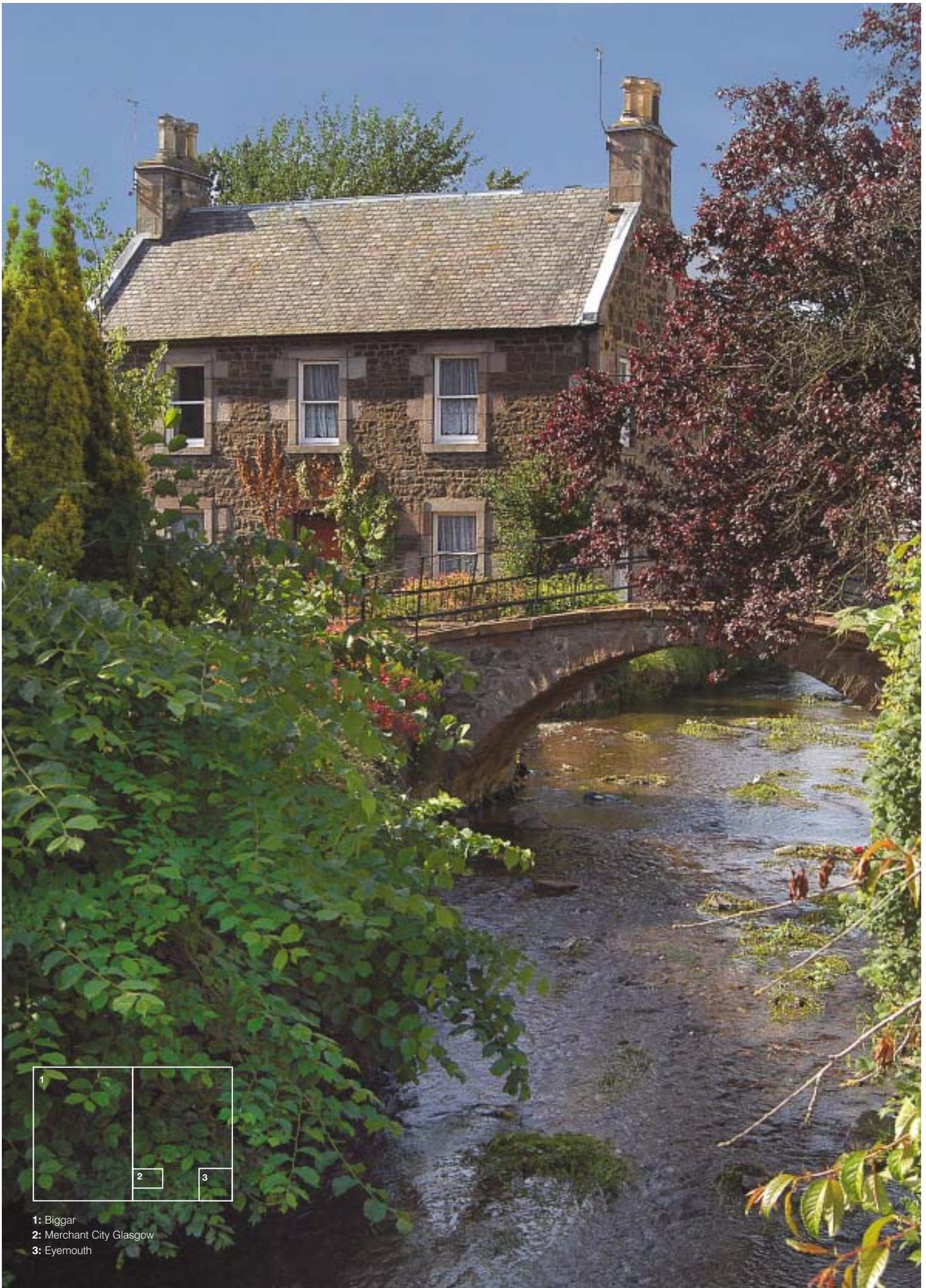
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- 1: Biggar
- 2: Merchant City Glasgow
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Introduction

Designing Places, published in November 2001, sets out the Scottish Executive's expectations of the planning system to deliver high standards of design and quality. This Planning Advice Note (PAN) fits with Designing Places and forms part of the design series of Advice Notes, which together strive to provide the foundations for tomorrow's conservation areas.

There are over 600 conservation areas in Scotland. They can be found in our cities, towns, villages and in some rural settings, and can play an important role in economic and community regeneration and environmental enhancement. The designation of a conservation area is a means to safeguard and enhance the sense of place, character and appearance of our most valued historic places. Buildings of character, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, trees, historic street patterns, open spaces and designed gardens and landscapes are important components of these areas. The overall layout and pattern of development may be just as important to the character as individual buildings. The activities that go on inside conservation areas are also important. Conservation areas are living environments that despite their history, will continue to adapt and develop. Designating a conservation area does not mean a prohibition on development. It does mean carefully managing change to ensure that the character and appearance of these areas are safeguarded and enhanced for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.

This PAN complements existing national policy and provides further advice on the management of conservation areas. It identifies good practice for managing change, sets out a checklist for appraising conservation areas and provides advice on funding and implementation.

This PAN should be read in conjunction with other national policy and advice. Of particular relevance are: The Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, NPPG 18 Planning and the Historic Environment, Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland, PAN 52 Planning in Small Towns, and PAN 68 Design Statements.

The advice in this PAN will be of particular relevance to planning authorities, but effective management of conservation areas requires support and input from other stakeholders. This advice is also intended as a guide for other local authority interests, developers, heritage trusts, utility companies, public sector agencies, residents, property owners, community organisations and amenity bodies. Effective co-ordination of the knowledge, enthusiasm, commitment and resources of these interests can contribute significantly to the effective conservation and enhancement of Scotland's historic environment and the quality of life of those who live in, use and enjoy these places.





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Designation of a conservation area should not be regarded principally as a means of increasing control but rather as a commitment to take positive action to safeguard and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Memorandum of Guidance, sect 4.21.

Designation and Review

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that conservation areas “are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas.

Special architectural interest can be interpreted broadly. As well as the settings of architectural set pieces and the spaces between buildings, designation can give recognition to groups of individual buildings or characteristic forms of urban development and evolution. Equally, conservation area designation provides scope for special recognition of the best examples of town planning and urban design. Special historic interest relates to areas with a connection to events or themes of historic or cultural significance.

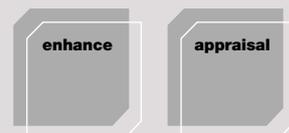
The statutory procedures for designation are well established. Proposals for designation, variation or cancellation must be publicised. The Scottish Ministers also need to be notified. Owners and occupiers of property within a proposed conservation area do not have to be specifically notified and there is no right of appeal against a designation, variation or cancellation. Wherever possible, proposals to designate, cancel or redefine the boundaries of conservation areas should first be subject to public consultation through the local plan process, thus providing opportunity for the views of stakeholders to be taken into account.

Whilst designation is a valuable tool in the protection of important areas, authorities should be careful not to assume that designation alone will secure protection and enhancement. Review of existing areas is required and provides an opportunity to assess the justification for designation, consider the validation of boundaries, identify opportunities for enhancement and set management priorities.

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| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | |
| | 2 |

1: West Wemyss
2: Inverness



Managing Change

When effectively managed, conservation areas can anchor thriving communities, sustain cultural heritage, generate wealth and prosperity and add to quality of life. To realise this potential many of them need to continue to adapt and develop in response to the modern-day needs and aspirations of living and working communities. This means accommodating physical, social and economic change for the better.

Physical change in conservation areas does not necessarily need to replicate its surroundings. The challenge is to ensure that all new development respects, enhances and has a positive impact on the area. Physical and land use change in conservation areas should always be founded on a detailed understanding of the historic and urban design context.

Whilst the scope for new development may be limited in many conservation areas, all will present some opportunities for enhancement. Most will contain buildings, vacant sites or inappropriate street furniture that have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area. These represent opportunities for improvement and when managed effectively, can act as a catalyst for economic, community and environmental regeneration.

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Understanding and Evaluating

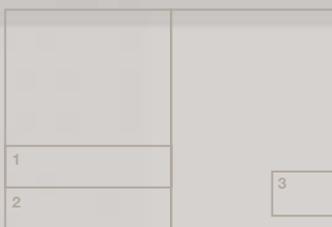
Past approaches to conservation area management have too often been based on a limited understanding of the heritage resource involved. In some cases there has also been an overemphasis on regulation and a lack of clarity over priorities for improvement. 'Facelift' schemes which offer short term visual gain rather than more enduring, sustainable conservation, are common. Opportunities for positive planning and enhancement may be missed as a result. A pro-active approach is required.

An overall strategy or vision for each conservation area will help to determine priorities. Townscape audits and conservation area appraisals are useful tools for developing and implementing a management strategy.

Townscape audits do not just apply to the historic environment but provide an analysis of the physical characteristics of the entire settlement. An understanding of the wider area is vital in the management of conservation areas. Townscape audits will identify the context, use and function of a conservation area and its relationship and importance to the surrounding settlement. Further information regarding townscape audits can be found in NPPG 18 and PAN 52.

Conservation area appraisals focus on areas which lie within existing or proposed conservation area boundaries. They analyse what makes a place special and assist managers in: defining and reviewing boundaries; identifying opportunities and priorities for enhancement; assisting policy formulation; ensuring consistent decision making and supporting funding bids. An appraisal is a vital tool to enable the active management of conservation areas. Authorities should prepare one for each conservation area to assist the management process. Further guidance on conservation area appraisals can be found in NPPG 18 and an appraisal checklist is set out in the annex to this PAN.

The management strategy for each conservation area should have shared ownership, involving all the stakeholders in an open and inclusive way. There should also be an understanding of what is achievable and what can be delivered in the short, medium and long term.



1: Beith: 1950's to present
 2: Beith: 1950's to present
 3: Glasgow



Policy Framework

Once an understanding of the special characteristics, pressures and priorities of a conservation area has been established, it is vital that they are fed into the development plan or supplementary guidance.

NPPG 18 sets out the requirements for structure and local plans. In the past, authorities have tended to rely on general local plan policies for the protection of conservation areas. Whilst these are important, NPPG 18 also requires that local plans go a step further and set out opportunities and priorities for enhancement. These need not be overly prescriptive but should identify sites of opportunity and areas where the Council and other stakeholders will be taking action. The detail of this, which will be informed by a conservation area appraisal, should be set out in action plans or supplementary guidance. Such detailed guidance will provide more certainty to the decision making process. Local plan policies should promote positive development.

Whilst NPPG 18 states that development which would have a neutral effect upon the conservation area should be treated as one which preserves the area's character or appearance, this should be considered as the minimum standard. Local plan policies and supplementary guidance should promote and reflect this commitment to quality.

Supplementary planning guidance also plays a fundamental role in the protection and enhancement of conservation areas. Appraisals are likely to be the main form of conservation guidance and will identify issues which require further supplementary guidance.

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Development Control

Development control has a fundamental role in the management of conservation areas. It is vital that decision makers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to ensure high design quality in conservation areas. Clear information and guidance is essential for planners, politicians and local communities to come to a quick and considered view on the merits of proposals for change. A clear policy framework and supporting guidance will encourage the submission of quality proposals and promote consistent decision making.

Design statements are a way to explain how specific proposals will enhance the quality of an area. For significant applications within conservation areas, local authorities should encourage applicants to submit design statements based on conservation area appraisals.

Planning applications in outline will rarely provide the level of detail required to assess whether the proposal will harm the character of a conservation area or not. It is important to avoid outline consents for large residential or commercial developments without any understanding or realistic assessment of whether they can be accommodated sensitively within the setting of the area. The submission of a design statement will aid the assessment and consideration of proposals in outline and can be used to inform the preparation of planning conditions. Appropriate conditions and effective enforcement should provide confidence that the desired level of quality can be secured.

Conservation area consent for demolition will not normally be granted in the absence of a detailed application, approved in parallel, for the replacement development. This is to avoid the formation of gap sites and to ascertain that the development will enhance or preserve the character of the area, as defined in the conservation area appraisal.

Conditions attached to a planning permission can assist the effective regulation of development. They should meet the tests set out in Circular 4/1998 The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions. Use of standard conditions may not be sufficient to maintain and enhance the special character of the conservation area.

Enforcement

Enforcement has a key role to play in the protection of conservation areas. Local authority enforcement strategies are generally reactive, resulting in investigation only when a formal complaint is made. For conservation areas, local authorities should consider a more proactive approach including monitoring development activity and ensuring compliance with the terms of planning permissions. A positive and active approach to enforcement will help to reduce the number of contraventions and secure sustained improvements in environmental quality.

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1: Inverness
2: Dunkeld



Case Study

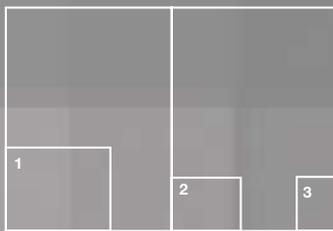
Burgh Yard, Dollar, is a quality development on a key site within an outstanding conservation area. The success of the development is attributable to Clackmannanshire Council's active management process, which was recognised in 1997 with a Scottish Award for Quality in Planning.

The brownfield site provided a rare opportunity for new build within the conservation area. Clackmannanshire Council recognised that wider benefits could be achieved by collectively considering the site along with two neighbouring sites which were considered to have a negative impact on the conservation area.

A detailed development brief was prepared and a design competition launched. A panel of conservation experts (including the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland, The Scottish Civic Trust, the Architectural Heritage Society and the Dollar Civic Trust) acted as judges and unanimously chose the winning scheme.

The Council's management strategy also had a number of safeguards to ensure that a quality development was achieved. This included tying detailed drawings into feuing conditions for the site and using the Builder's Licence Scheme.

Clackmannanshire Council displayed excellent management skills by considering not just the opportunity site but the interests of the conservation area as a whole. The brief set out the detailed requirements for the area and the Council were committed to ensuring that a high quality development was secured.



1: Burgh Yard, Dollar

2: Beith

3: Beith



Protecting Vulnerable Areas

Article 4 Directions

The objectives of conservation area management can for the most part be met through an effective policy framework and the positive use of existing development control and enforcement powers.

There will, however, also be a place for further regulation to ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area is not eroded through incremental change.

Proposals for Article 4 Directions to remove or reduce permitted development rights should be advertised or progressed through local plans. Local authorities should be clear about the classes of development they want to bring within planning control and provide appropriate justification. They should not resort to blanket restrictions of regulation but should relate to the character defined in the specific conservation area appraisal. Further policy guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions is set out in NPPG 18.

Buildings at Risk

Where appraisals identify listed or significant properties which are at risk from neglect, authorities should alert the Scottish Civic Trust, which maintains the Buildings at Risk Register on behalf of Historic Scotland. The register aims to unite owners of neglected properties with those who have the resources to restore them. Further information regarding buildings at risk can be found in NPPG 18, the Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and from the Scottish Civic Trust. A dedicated website which provides information on many of the properties on the Register can be accessed at www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk

Urgent Works Notices

Urgent works notices allow local authorities to carry out works which they feel are necessary to preserve a historic building suffering from neglect. The notice may be used to deal with listed and unlisted buildings in conservation areas. Notices should, however, only be served on unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Any costs incurred in carrying out the works can be recovered from the owners. Urgent works notices are confined to those parts of a building which are unoccupied.

The scope of the works covered by the notice should be restricted to the minimum necessary to secure the building rather than comprehensive repair and restoration. For example, it may be adequate to install a temporary roof covering over a building rather than undertake the full repair of the roof.

The use of urgent works notices should not be reserved solely for buildings in an advanced state of disrepair. They can also target relatively inexpensive works where a building is at an early stage of decline. Addressing relatively minor issues such as blocked gutters or rhones can halt deterioration to a more serious and expensive condition. Further advice on the procedures for urgent works notices can be found in the Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.





effective

Effective management of the public realm is not just an issue of funding, it is equally about the skills deployed, the way in which regulations are used and the way in which the design process is managed



- 1: Dundee
- 2: Biggar
- 3: Eyemouth

Enhancing the Public Realm

Many of the challenges for local authorities lie with changes to the public realm. The focus in conservation areas must be on the careful maintenance of public space, and the use of appropriate signage and materials for traffic management and street furniture. Conflicts between the interests of residents, local businesses and visitors must be sensitively managed, with solutions tailored to the specific circumstances of the place. Good working relationships between council departments and with relevant external agencies, especially public utility companies, are vital.

Traffic and Movement

Traffic dominates the character of many conservation areas and often poses the biggest challenge for conservation area management. Standardised transport engineering solutions rarely relate to the special character of the area and present a major challenge to local authorities in their duty to protect and enhance conservation areas.

In certain cases, the solution may be to reduce or divert traffic away from particular conservation areas thereby lessening the need for traffic calming measures, extensive parking or loading arrangements. Caution should, however, be exercised if considering

such an approach as the area may have been characterised historically by the movement of people and goods. Reducing such movement may have a detrimental effect on the special character of the area and may impact upon its vitality and viability. In order to manage traffic in the conservation area, it is important to gain an understanding, through the appraisal process, about how the area works and what aspects sustain activity and movement. Seasonal variation should also be taken into account. Conflicts may arise between the needs of residents, businesses, pedestrians and motorists. Multi-disciplinary teams will be required to consider how best to manage traffic within conservation areas. These teams must work together to provide a solution which meets the operational needs of the conservation area whilst protecting and enhancing its character.

Parking can also pose problems in conservation areas. New parking areas may have implications for visual amenity and traffic flow. Lack of parking can lead to other problems, such as illegal parking on pavements or the removal of gates, fences and walls to provide off street parking. Consideration should be given to the most appropriate location, design and materials for parking areas which will minimise the impact on the conservation area.

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Utilities

Another common problem for local authorities can be managing the impact of work undertaken by utility companies who benefit from 'permitted development rights' for various works, including the laying of underground pipes or other apparatus. This can have significant effects on the character of the conservation area, for example, a traditional cobbled street may be reinstated with tarmac. It is essential for planning authorities, roads authorities and utility companies to work together to identify sensitive areas and agree a commitment to sensitive reinstatement.

The Scottish Road Works Register system is used by utility companies to notify road authorities of their intention to carry out works. If the conservation area is identified on the system as an area of 'special designation', the local authority may, in certain cases, be able to prescribe the specification for reinstatement. This should be based on an agreed maintenance schedule. Local authorities should ensure that the Register contains up to date and accurate information.

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Street Furniture and Signage

Inappropriate street furniture and a proliferation of signs and general clutter detract from the character of a conservation area.

The provision of new or replacement street furniture represents an opportunity for local authorities to define and enhance the historic character of the conservation area. However, standard, off-the-shelf designs are usually inappropriate to the historic environment and authorities should consider the need for high quality, custom-designed solutions. In certain conservation areas, well designed modern street furniture may be the most appropriate solution.

The problem of street clutter can easily be tackled by establishing the extent of the problem through the appraisal process, removing any unnecessary objects and then ensuring that a regular monitoring programme is in place.



- 1: reinstatement
- 2: Milngavie
- 3: Wigtown



Open Spaces

PAN 65 Planning and Open Space recognises the important role of open space in setting the landscape and townscape structure of urban areas and in contributing to the character of the historic environment. Areas of open space can be a defining element in a conservation area. Appraisals should consider the different types, functions and benefits of open space and identify opportunities to extend and enhance open space networks.

Trees

Trees contribute greatly to the character and quality of many conservation areas. As woodlands, planted avenues, or individual specimens, they can enhance the landscape setting of conservation areas, soften streetscapes and bring life and colour to gardens. Trees may also have historic or cultural significance.

Trees in conservation areas are protected through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Before carrying out any work on a tree in a conservation area, owners are required to notify the local authority giving details of the intended works. Councils can serve a Tree Preservation Order if they consider a tree to be under threat, but they can also protect and promote tree planting through conditions in planning consents.

Individuals, organisations and local authorities should take responsibility for ensuring that trees and woodlands in conservation areas remain healthy through good management. Management plans and appraisals will help to determine when and where new planting is appropriate, what form it should take and the species to be planted.

Maintenance of the Public Realm

Capacity and responsibility for short, medium and long term maintenance, involving such services as street cleaning and landscaping as well as highways and public utilities, should be programmed and regularly reviewed. A range of advice on maintenance is available from Historic Scotland.



Funding and Resources

The Scottish Executive provides around £14.5 million each year to help offset the cost of the care, repair and conservation of the historic environment. This is administered through Historic Scotland and a significant proportion is targeted to conservation area enhancement. Grants are awarded for the comprehensive repair of key buildings. Town schemes also operate in a number of outstanding conservation areas and provide grants for small scale repairs to property.

Significant parts of Scotland's urban areas are covered by City Heritage Trusts, which benefit from a combined annual grant from Historic Scotland of around £2.6 million. Additional funding is provided from local authorities and a range of other sources. Active Heritage Trusts also exist in Perth and Kinross, New Lanark and Dumfries and Galloway. These can operate local grant schemes and co-ordinate a range of other activity to promote, safeguard and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. Their staff are an important source of advice on funding for conservation.

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The Heritage Lottery Fund also contributes significant amounts of money to area conservation projects, particularly through its Townscape Heritage Initiative which focuses on the regeneration of conservation areas that face economic or social problems. The Heritage Lottery Fund generally meets up to 50% of a comprehensive and concentrated programme of building repairs, reinstatement of architectural detail, re-use of vacant floorspace, appropriate filling of key gap sites and conservation and enhancement of the public realm, all based on a conservation area appraisal and action plan. Match funding is generally provided by a combination of grants from Historic Scotland, the local authority, local enterprise company, European Regional Development Fund and Communities Scotland.

Building Preservation Trusts also play a significant role in overcoming the challenges presented by buildings at risk and adding value to wider management strategies. Building Preservation Trusts can access loans and grants to tackle development projects on a 'revolving fund' basis where a market solution is not possible. Through developing a relationship with a Building Preservation Trust, a local authority can manage the financial risks associated with urgent works notices, repair notices and compulsory purchase orders. The work of Building Preservation Trusts can also be a catalyst for wider regeneration.

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1: Beith

The recently published "Sources of Financial Help for Scotland's Historic Buildings", published by the Scottish Civic Trust on behalf of Historic Scotland, provides advice on a range of other funding possibilities. The Architectural Heritage Fund sponsored website www.fundsforhistoricbuildings.org.uk is another useful source of information.

Although in recent years resources have become fairly limited, local authorities have powers to make grants and loans for the improvement of conservation areas. Good examples of initiatives which have won external validation include Lesmahagow (1985) and Biggar (with Scottish Civic Trust) (1975) for European Architectural Year and more recently with the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning for West Wemyss, Fife and Crichton Campus, Dumfries.

Where no dedicated funds exist for conservation area enhancement, it is still possible to achieve outcomes and deliver conservation policies through influencing and aligning the spend of other agencies and organisations with a clearly communicated vision for the area.

Increasing numbers of Development Trusts are being established and can play a useful role in conservation area management. Development Trusts are community-led enterprises which seek to bring about social, economic and environmental change for the better. They can, for example, be set up to acquire and manage a historic building or historic community asset. Further information about Development Trusts can be found at www.dta.org.uk

Given that there are over 600 conservation areas, competition will be high in securing financial assistance. Applications for funding which are accompanied by supporting documents such as townscape audits and conservation area appraisals will strengthen the basis of any grant application.

The following table lists some of the sources of funding available:

| Funding Sources | Grant Programme | Further Information |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Local Authority Grants | Local Authority Discretionary Grants including Improvement/Repairs Grant schemes. | Relevant local planning authority. |
| Historic Scotland | Various | www.historic-scotland.gov.uk |
| Heritage Lottery Fund | Townscape Heritage Initiative Public Parks Initiative Heritage Grants Programme Places of Worship Grant (jointly with Historic Scotland) | www.hlf.org.uk |
| Architectural Heritage Fund | Heritage Grants and Loans Feasibility Study Grants Refundable Project Development Grants Organiser Grants Annual report of the Architectural Heritage Fund | www.ahfund.org.uk |
| European Union | Structural Funds Community Initiative Funding–Interrig iiiB, Leader+, Equal, Urban 11 Programme Culture 2000 | www.scotland.gov.uk/esf www.dti.gov.uk/europe/structural.html www.culture2000.info |
| Others | The Scottish Arts Council The Pilgrim Trust National Trust of Scotland The Scottish Museums Council The Scottish Enterprise Network Communities Scotland Development Trusts Association | www.sac.org.uk www.thepilgrimtrust.org.uk www.nts.org.uk www.scottishmuseums.org.uk www.scottish-enterprise.com www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk www.dta.org.uk |

Knowledge and Skills

Conservation officers, or their equivalents, are critical to the success and quality of conservation area management and often have responsibility for a range of statutory and project work. Where specialist expertise is lacking, pooling resources with neighbouring authorities or employing consultants is encouraged. The benefits of having specialist input to decision making, local planning and project work is invaluable. Once an appraisal has been compiled, monitoring and review should be less demanding on staff resources, but will still require the input of a specialist.

Community organisations and amenity bodies often take a strong interest in conservation area issues. Their involvement in the planning process is strongly encouraged as a way of capturing local knowledge and expertise and helping local authorities in their efforts to enhance environmental quality. In particular, they have an important role to play in the appraisal process. Historic Scotland, in the form of the Area Inspector of Historic Buildings, is another source of stakeholder advice on the creation and monitoring of conservation area appraisals and conservation area management generally.

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1: East Dunbartonshire Council
2: Dollar



Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and review is essential in validating the continuing relevance of designations, their boundaries and the success of management strategies. Useful indicators of the impact of a management strategy might include the:

- › extent of repair needs of buildings and the public realm, the progress made towards addressing them, and the quality of repairs undertaken;
- › design quality of new buildings, alterations and extensions;
- › cumulative effect of erosive small-scale changes and the use of planning tools, such as Article 4 Directions, to combat them;
- › vitality and viability of any commercial areas; and
- › the level of investment and progress in the implementation of particular schemes of enhancement, such as shopfronts or streetscape enhancement.

Monitoring indicators should be set out in the conservation management strategy. As most of the indicators are qualitative and hard to measure, it may be necessary to develop assessment methods using external audits or community juries. There are, of course, other indicators of management performance that go beyond conservation, such as litter, graffiti, vandalism, community safety and maintenance standards.

It is necessary to establish a review cycle in order to give continuing support to conservation area management. The local community should be actively involved in the monitoring and review process.



Conclusion

Designation alone does not fulfil a local authority's responsibilities for conservation areas. An active culture of management can deliver quality if it is based on the character and needs of individual areas.

When local authorities have evaluated and understood the issues, it is vital that action is taken to manage change effectively. This may require new policies in local plans, the publication of supplementary guidance, improvements to the public realm or design and conservation training. Management objectives need to be realistic, taking into account: available staff resources and funding; the feasibility of enhancement opportunities; the development plan review timetable and methods to involve the community and other stakeholders.

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A robust and active management strategy combined with an effective monitoring and review mechanism will ensure that valuable aspects of our heritage resource are protected and that opportunities to enhance them are delivered.



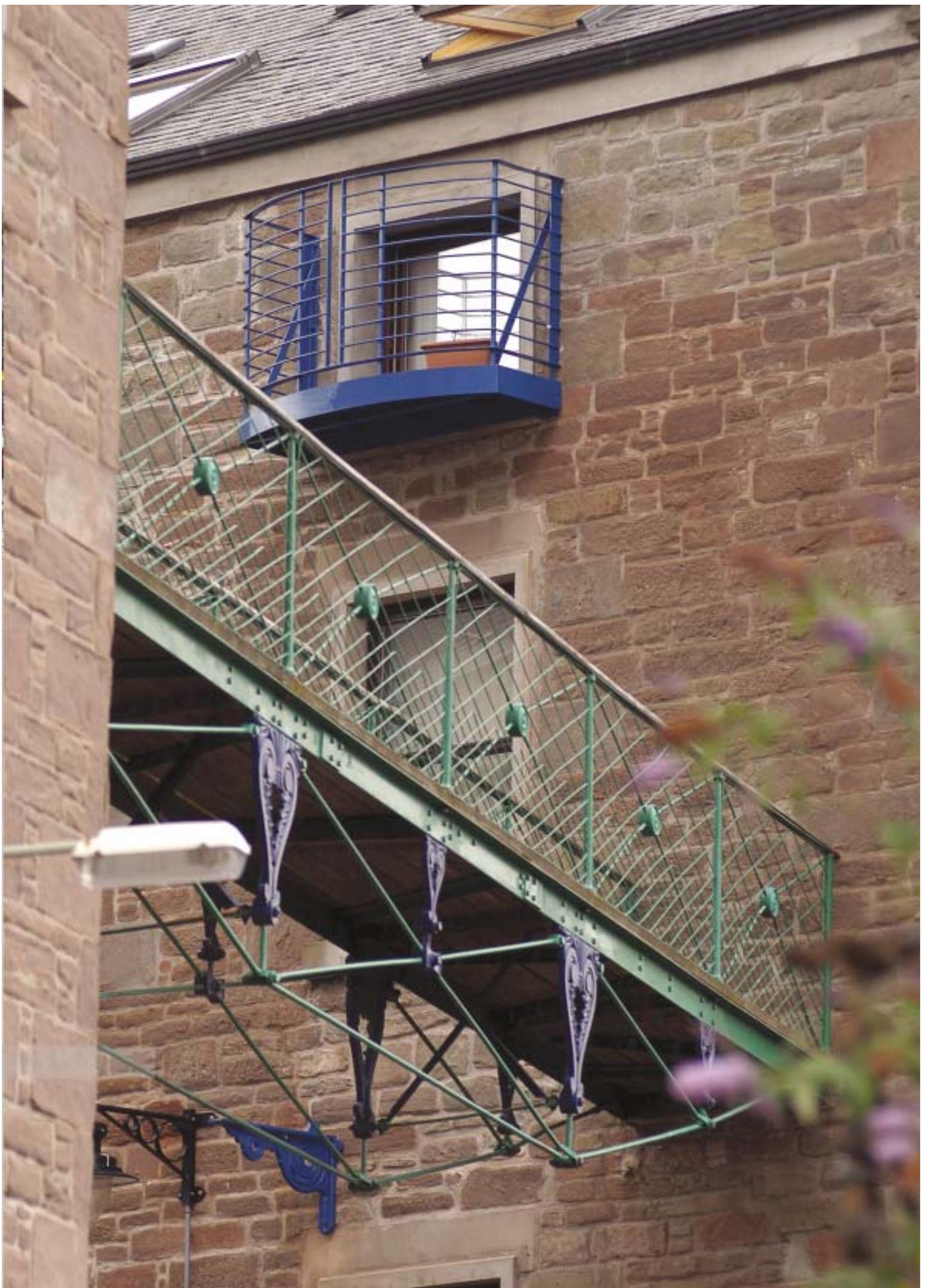
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- 1: Glasgow
- 2: Dunkeld
- 3: Dundee





Annex: Conservation Area Appraisal

What is a conservation area appraisal and why is it useful?

A conservation area appraisal is a management tool which helps to identify the special interest and changing needs of an area. An appraisal provides the basis for the development of a programme of action that is compatible with the sensitivities of the historic area and enables local authorities to fulfil their statutory duties to protect and enhance conservation areas. Appraisals also inform policy and assist development control. They provide an opportunity to educate residents about the special needs and characteristics of the area and help developers identify and formulate development proposals.

A conservation area appraisal should not be included in a local plan. It is more appropriate as supplementary planning guidance.

Who should prepare a conservation area appraisal?

Local authorities are encouraged to prepare appraisals for all their conservation areas on a priority basis and in consultation with the local community.

In cases where an appraisal is required to assist the consideration and determination of a major development proposal, the developer may wish to carry out the appraisal or may be willing to pay for its independent production in order to improve the decision making process.

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How do you prepare a conservation area appraisal?

Conservation areas are unique. It is therefore not practical to prescribe a method of appraisal that will be applicable to all. The following checklist, however, provides a starting point for local authorities. The list is not exhaustive but can be adapted to meet the specifics of individual conservation areas and can be updated over time. The left hand column outlines elements which will be likely to form an essential part of the appraisal. Consideration of the significance and importance of each element to the conservation area is vital. The right hand column provides further suggested issues for assessment.

Before commencing the appraisal, authorities should consider the format in which it is going to be presented. Findings should be set out clearly and concisely and seek to analyse and draw conclusions rather than simply describe an area. Publication of appraisals on the internet will give further accessibility and allow for simple updating.

Many of the themes and issues addressed in an appraisal are best communicated through pictures, maps and diagrams.

Appraisal Checklist

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Introduction, Purpose and Justification</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Date of appraisal ‣ Purpose of appraisal ‣ Date and reason for designation ‣ Location map showing area in context with the surrounding area (including any adjacent conservation areas) ‣ Boundary map |
| <p>Location, History and Development</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Reasons for location - natural landforms, strategic defence, river crossing, religious foundations etc ‣ Regional context ‣ Geology ‣ Topography ‣ Historic pattern of land use ‣ Settlement development ‣ Planned landscapes |
| <p>Character and Appearance</p> <p>Setting</p> <p>Activity and Movement</p> <p>Street Pattern and Topography</p> <p>Buildings and Townscape</p> <p>Spaces</p> <p>Trees and Landscaping</p> <p>Character Areas</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Assessment of the landscape and surroundings ‣ The area in relation to its form and function ‣ Significance of views into, across and from the conservation area ‣ Direction, mode, volume, circulation and levels of activity ‣ Day & night variations ‣ Seasonal variations ‣ Changes to previous street patterns and surfaces ‣ Way in which streets and buildings relate to ancient man-made and landscape features ‣ Scheduled monuments ‣ Key listed and unlisted buildings ‣ Buildings considered to be of townscape merit (including modern examples) ‣ Parks, historic gardens and designed landscapes ‣ Distinctive architectural style and detailing ‣ Building types ‣ Materials ‣ Past and current uses ‣ Orientation and density – possibly reflecting past uses ‣ Types of public and private open space (advice available in PAN 65 Planning and Open Space) ‣ Characteristics of each area of open space – changes in level, surface materials, planting, degree of enclosure, feature or focal points ‣ Tree Preservation Orders ‣ Extent of tree and hedge cover ‣ Nature of any dominant species ‣ Landmark trees ‣ Parks, gardens and designed landscapes. ‣ Record and explain any different character areas – Individual policies and action plans may be required for different character areas. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Negative Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identify any negative factors |
| Building by Building Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Record (in written and photographic format) details, condition and alterations at a particular point in time – this can inform decision making and provide a valuable monitoring indicator and enforcement tool |
| Buildings at Risk Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Note vulnerable buildings that contribute to the character of the area › Advise the Scottish Civic Trust to add to the Buildings at Risk Register › Survival of traditional surfaces |
| Public Realm Audit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Appropriateness of street furniture and signage e.g. should reflect the character of the area, be practical, be well maintained, define the area etc. › Effect of traffic and utilities engineering – inappropriate replacement surfaces, signage clutter, visually intrusive cabling etc. |
| Surveys of Specific Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Record aspects of distinctiveness e.g. typical shopfronts, boundary treatments, building details, materials etc. |
| Sensitivity Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Highlight vulnerable areas, buildings or issues |
| Assessment of Significance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Compare significance of the conservation area in the local, national and international context – this can be a useful tool when sourcing funding and considering development applications |
| Opportunities for Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identify sites where development could enhance the special qualities of the area › Reflect opportunities in the development plan › Prepare briefs or design statements for particularly sensitive sites |
| Opportunities for Planning Action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Assess the need for boundary refinement › Assess the effects of permitted development › Identify the need for the implementation or review of Article 4 Directions › Identify need for urgent works, building repair or amenity notices |
| Opportunities for Enhancement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Bring forward proposals for enhancement identified earlier in the appraisal e.g. new or restored surfaces, street furniture, planting, underground wires, traffic management changes etc. |
| Conservation Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A strategy may include: guidance on many aspects of managing change, details of any changes required to development plan policies, funding sources and opportunities; staffing resources, briefing for specific developments or sites, links with other strategic aspirations, and details of a monitoring and review mechanism |
| Monitoring and Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Consider and put in place appropriate monitoring indicators and agree a mechanism for review. Photographic surveys are an excellent means of recording change – they can also be a useful development control and enforcement tool |

Information Sources

For historical information, the lists of buildings of special historic or architectural interest, the inventories published by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, books in the Buildings of Scotland series, the RIAS guides, Burgh Survey and other local histories are a useful starting point. Local Authority Sites and Monuments Records provide information, particularly on archaeology, and references to further material. The National Monuments Record, held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, includes drawings, historical photographs and aerial photographs as well as historical accounts. For some specific places there may be archives or transactions of historical societies, which are usually held in the local history section of public libraries. The National Library of Scotland Map Library has a vast collection of historical maps.

Acknowledgements

Clackmannanshire Council
Fife Historic Buildings Trust
Glasgow City Council
Historic Scotland
Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Royal Town Planning Institute
Scottish Borders Council
The Conservation Studio
The Scottish Civic Trust

Enquiries

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www.scotland.gov.uk/planning

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