

Banff



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1 Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Conservation Areas

A Conservation Area is defined as an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance. They form an important physical record of the architectural development and historical growth of an area, and are irreplaceable cultural and economic resources that contribute to the distinctive character and unique quality of Scotland.

In a Conservation Area it is the whole area, made up of the buildings and the spaces in between them, that is of importance. Trees, historic street patterns, open spaces, designed gardens and landscapes are all important components that combine to create an area of special architectural or historic interest. Each local authority is required to determine which parts of its area merit conservation area status. Aberdeenshire Council has a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas.

1.2 The Purpose of this Document

The Conservation Area Appraisal is a management tool which is essential in validating the continued relevance of designated areas and their boundaries, assessing the success of existing management strategies and identifying new development and enhancement strategies and opportunities reflecting the specific changing needs of the area.

1.3 Banff Outstanding Conservation Area

Banff Conservation Area was designated in 1973. It was subsequently extended and declared Outstanding in 1976. The Banff Outstanding Conservation Area is worthy of protection because of the historical, cultural and architectural significance of the town to the region. Banff is unique in character, not only in terms of Aberdeenshire but in the wider context of Scotland and Europe. It has a combination of outstanding features that mark the development of the town and establish its uniqueness on a greater scale.

The conservation area comprises the medieval core of Banff, centred on Banff Castle; the Quayside and Harbour area; the principally residential area to the North of the town centre, known locally as Seatown; and Duff House, its policies and designed landscape (see Map 1).

2 Historical Development

2.1 Situation

Banff is situated in Aberdeenshire on the North East coast of Scotland, approximately 45 miles North West of Aberdeen, at the mouth of the River Deveron. Although Banff has a fragmentary early history from the Neolithic period, the earliest parts of the town still visible date to the medieval period. A settlement has existed in Banff since at least the 12th Century AD, and it holds a historically important position on the principal medieval route from Aberdeen to Inverness. The history and character of Banff is best described, and perhaps most easily understood, in its built environment. A wide variety of buildings survive, dating from the 16th to the 20th centuries, reflecting both traditional vernacular styles and more polite, formalised styles.

2.2 Medieval Burgh

Banff was confirmed as a Royal Burgh in 1372, by King Robert II, and is one of Scotland's 'first generation' of medieval towns which has until recent times seen little major development. Unfortunately, there is little surviving documentary evidence dating from this time thus much of its history is shrouded in mystery, including the location of the Carmelite Friary said to have existed in Banff between the 14th and 16th centuries.

At the heart of Banff is the Castle, probably first established in the 12th Century, but rebuilt in later years. Certainly there is a charter of 1163 that shows Malcolm IV was living in Banff at the time, most likely in the Castle itself. It is a major feature of the town, dominating its history and topography, which together with its port formed part of the Northern Hanse, a group of Scots harbour towns that traded with the Baltic in the 12th Century. King Robert recognised the importance of the town by establishing a Carmelite priory nearby in 1321, destroyed in an arson attack in 1559. All that now remains of the medieval Castle are the northern and eastern curtain walls, ditch and rampart, and the postern.

A number of streets within the town survive as testament to the medieval street pattern of Banff, including High Shore, Water Path, Strait Path and Old Castle Gate. It is likely that archaeological remains of the medieval town survive below ground level in these areas, however very little investigative work has been carried out in Banff.

2.3 The Georgian Revival

The town appears to have had something of a resurgence in the 18th century, at which time industry and trade increased. The Statistical Account of 1791 - 1799 describes an extensive brewing industry; large scale thread and linen manufacture; a considerable stocking industry, employing nearly 600 people; and small scale soap & candle works, rope & sail works, and brick & tile works (OSA 1799). There was also an increase in the number of tradesmen operating within the town at this time, including shoemakers, silversmiths, tailors and wrights, but over the same period overseas trade also increased. This increase in trade and industry corresponds with the development of the harbour in c.1775, and the completion in 1799 of a seven arched bridge across the River Deveron. These industries have now all been lost to Banff, while the once bustling harbour is now used principally for pleasure craft.

It was also in the 18th Century that the medieval Banff Castle was replaced by a John Adam

designed mansion house. Originally built as a town house for the Ogilivies of Findlater & Deskford, the building and grounds were gifted to the community in the 1950s and stand as a living war memorial.

On the outskirts of the town, Duff House was built in 1725-1740 by William Adam for Lord Braco, later the Earl of Fife, and stands as a particularly fine example of Georgian architecture.

2.4 20th Century to the Present Day

During the earlier part of the 20th century the town centre was teeming with thriving businesses, but today there are many vacant shops, cafes etc, and since the 1970s there has been a general decline in town centre business opportunities. Bridge Street in particular has suffered considerably, which is reflected by the number of properties from this street that feature on the Buildings at Risk Register. It was once a busy shopping street, leading up from the market place. The main route through Banff was then upgraded, diverting traffic away from Bridge Street and through what were once the grounds of Duff House. Shops and business premises relocated to the High Street, and the cinema closed. With retail activity now focussed on the High Street, the once busy thoroughfare of Bridge Street has become largely forgotten with shops left empty and properties falling into decline.

None of the booming industries which flourished throughout the 17th and 18th centuries have survived into the 21st century. The remaining fishing boats now operate out of Macduff and the associated business of the ships chandlers, fish market and boat builders are now also there.

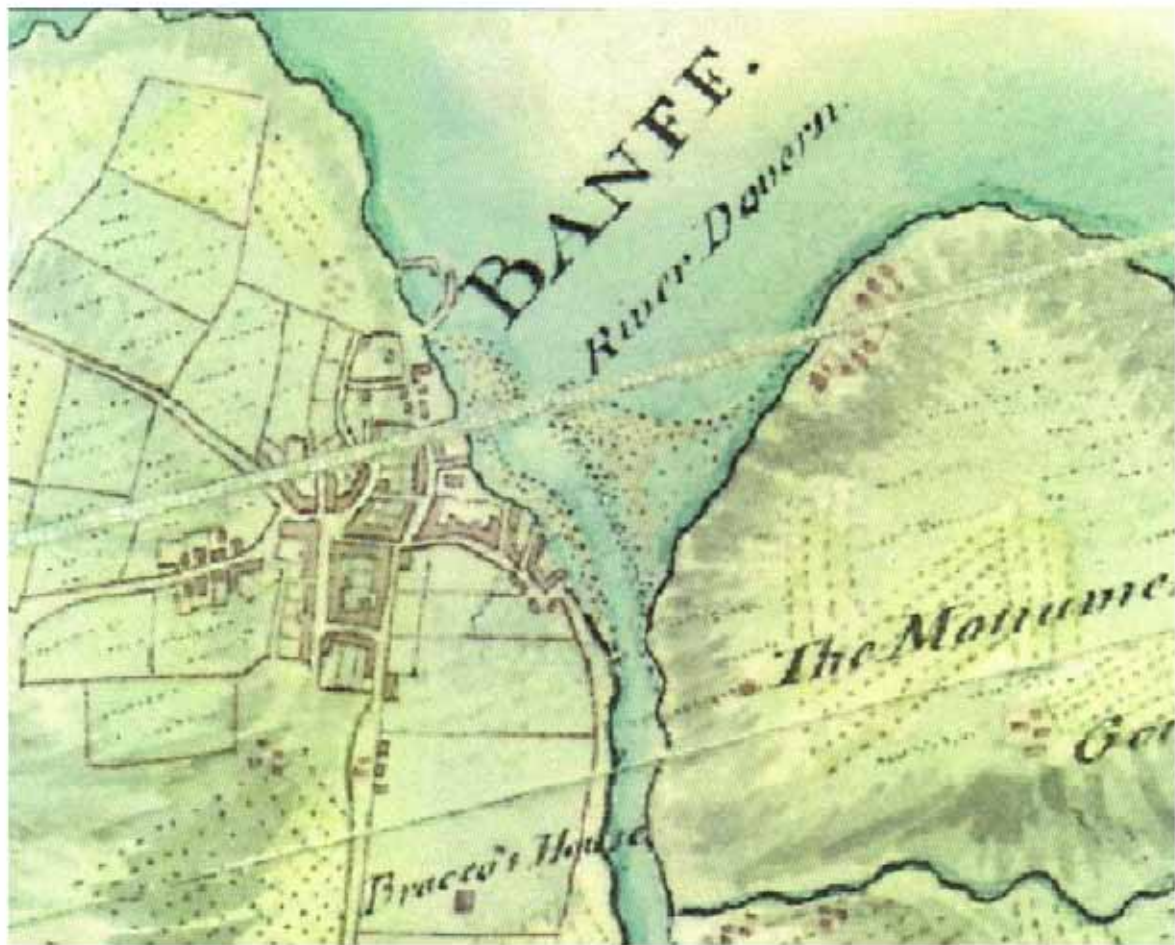
In the mid 20th century, the slate, pantile or perhaps thatch roofs on a number of buildings within the town centre were replaced with asbestos sheeting. At the time, this was a cheap and easy short-term solution but these roofs are now beginning to fail and are perished in parts. This can be clearly seen at properties on Bridge Street.

In recent times, there has been a wide scale “modernisation” of properties within the conservation area, which has seen traditional multi-pane timber sash & case windows replaced with aluminium and uPVC double glazed windows; the loss of traditional shop fronts and signage; the replacement of cast-iron rainwater goods with plastic; and the extensive use of cement mortar and render in place of traditional lime-based products. These modifications have all combined to alter the appearance of the townscape at a detailed level. However, there has been very little development through the 20th century in terms of new buildings.

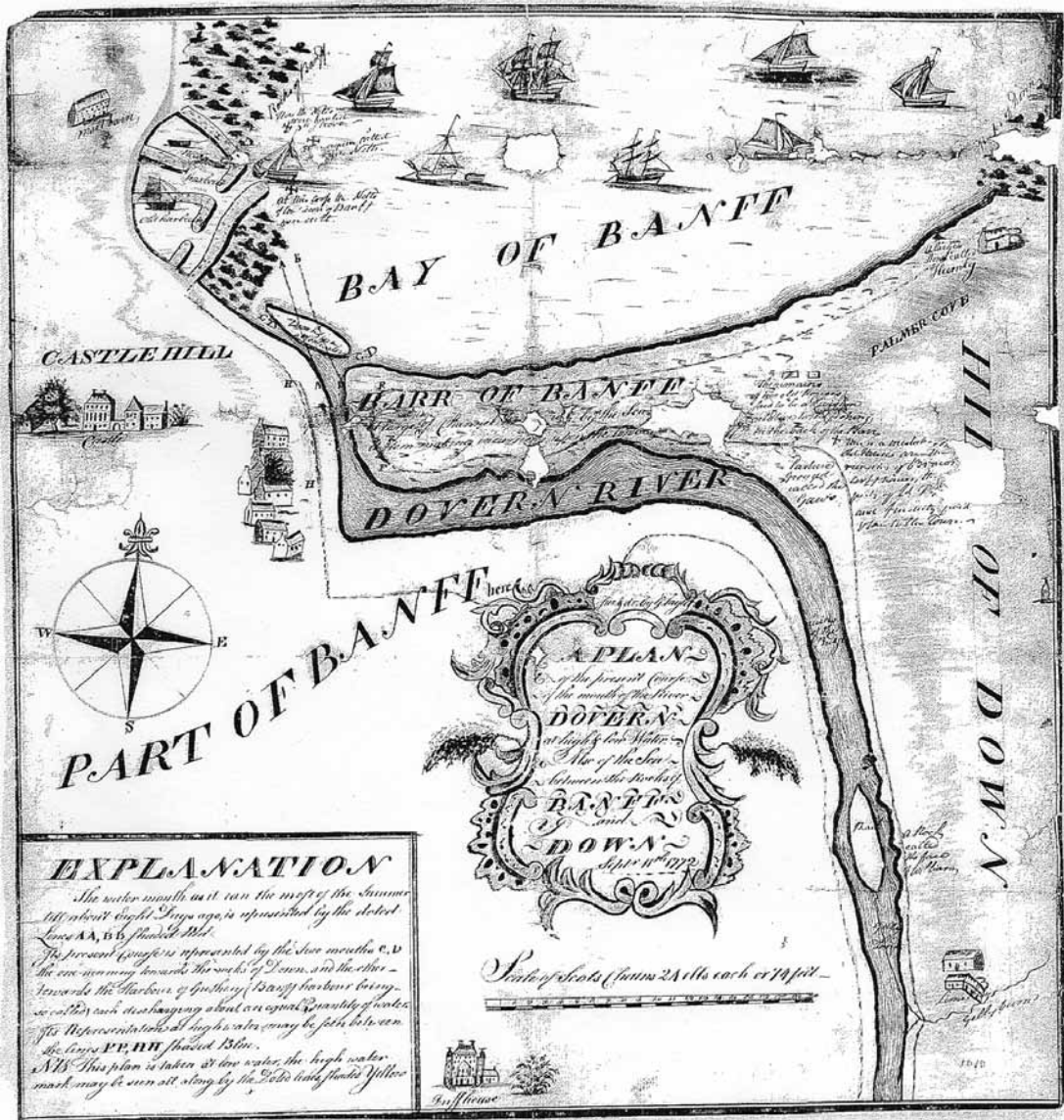
There has also been necessary demolition of a small number of listed buildings within the conservation area which have become dangerous structures as a result of years of neglect, in some cases exacerbated by unstable ground conditions. This had led to a number of unsightly “gap” sites appearing in the town centre, which add to the general feeling of decline and neglect.



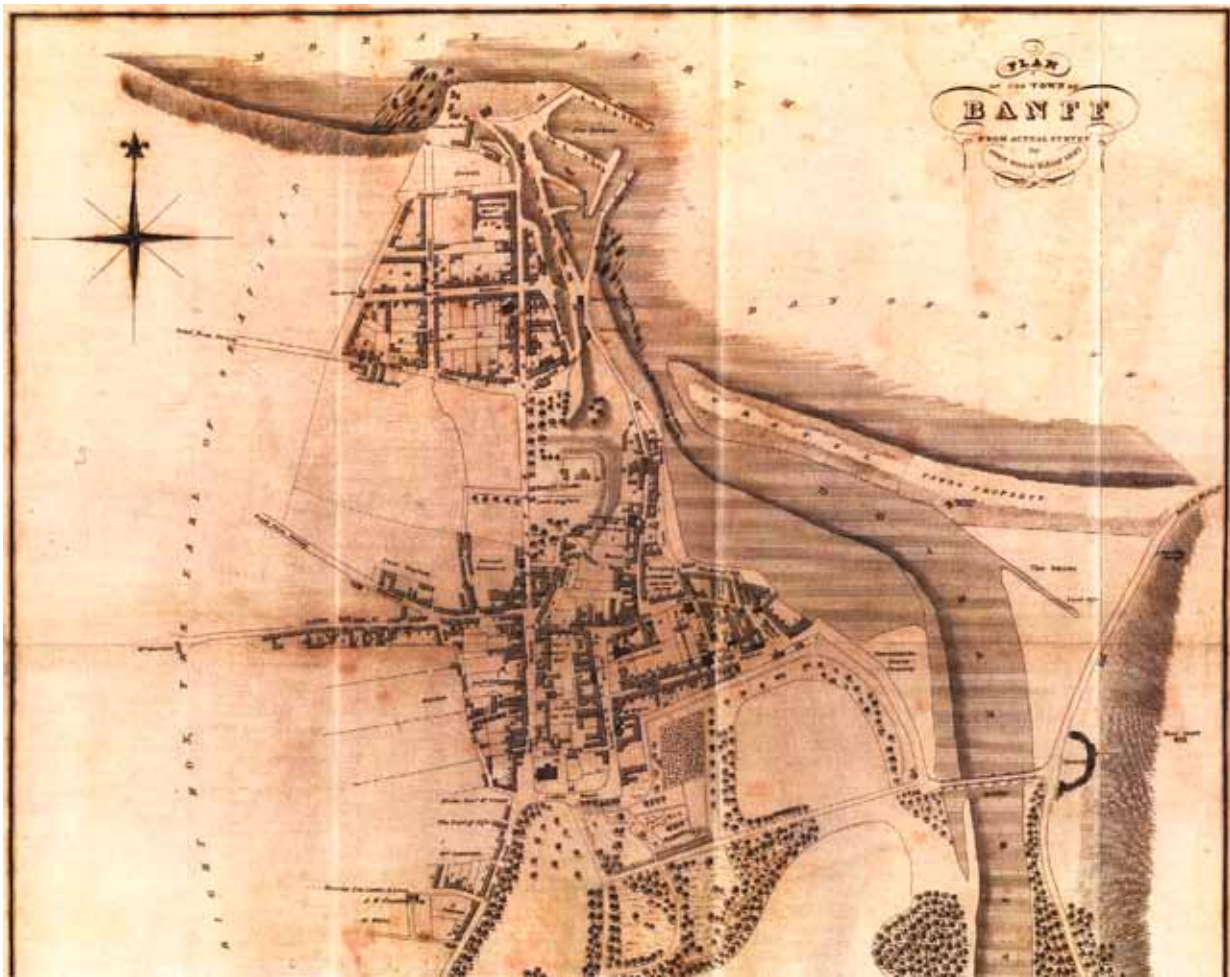
Extract of General Roy's Military Survey of 1747-55. This map appears to be the earliest detailed map of the town of Banff, showing street layout and buildings.



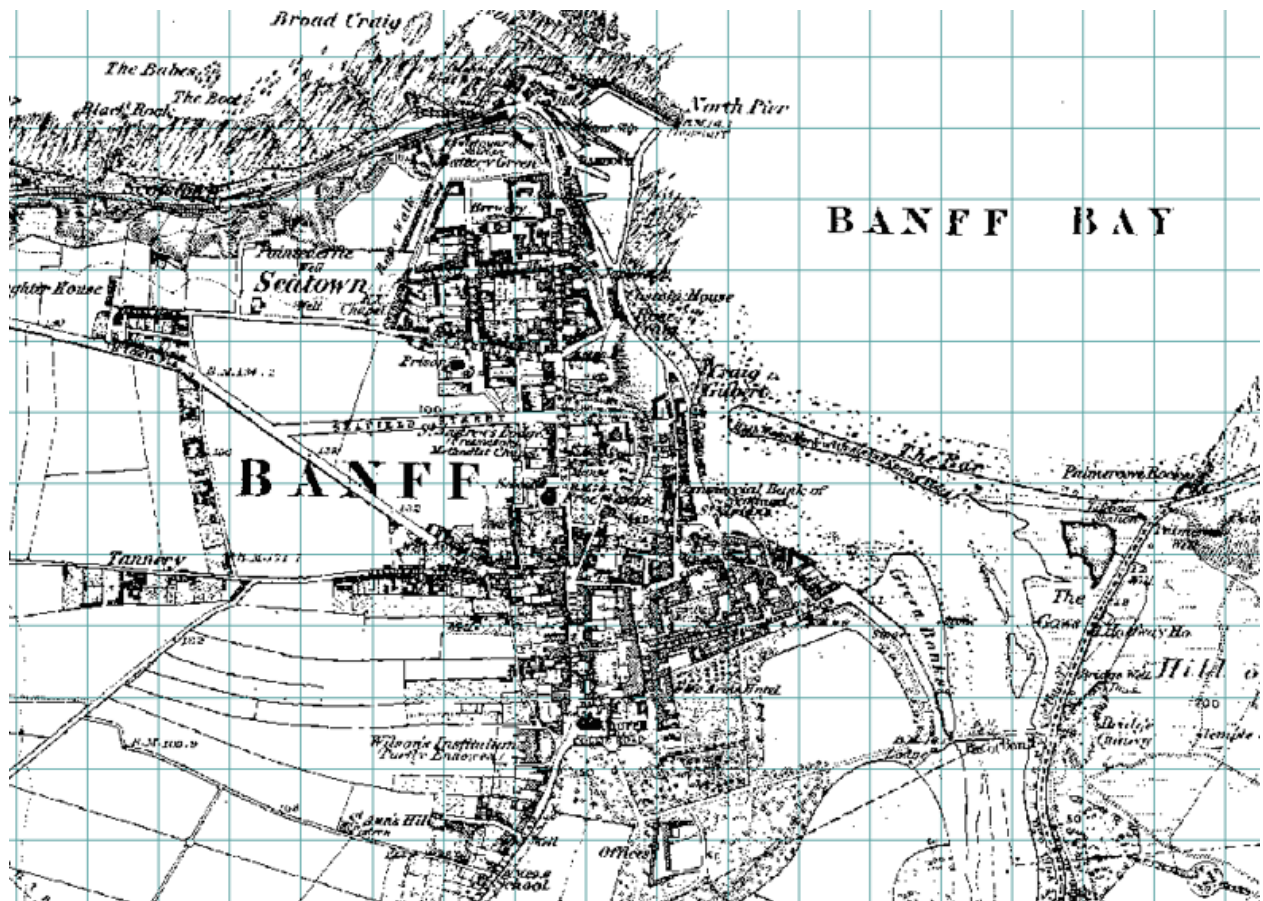
Map 2: Extract of General Roy's Military Survey 1747-55



Taylor's Plan of the present course of the River Dovern, dating to 1772. Today, the "Barr of Banff" sand bar is not visible, and the course of the river has been considerably altered and diverted to the North East. The map also shows Banff Castle to the West of the sand, with a row of buildings occupying the land between the castle and the river with roughly corresponds to the Low Shore/Deveronside area of modern day Banff.



Wood's Plan of Banff from Actual Survey, 1823, is a very detailed town plan of Banff which serves to illustrate how the town development during the 18th and early 19th Centuries.



Ordnance Survey 1st edition map, c.1866, shows the expansion of the town around the Seafield Street area, linking the north and south settlements of the town.

3 Townscape Analysis

3.1 Setting

The Banff Outstanding Conservation Area incorporates the town centre with the surrounding settlement area having developed out from this. The general position of the town is on a downhill slope leading East towards Banff Bay, with the land levelling out towards the river Deveron to the South. It is flanked on its North and East sides by the Moray Firth, and surrounded on its South and West sides by agricultural land and the designed landscapes of the Duff and Montcoffer Estates.

3.2 Topography & Street Pattern

Banff was described in 1746 as "...a neat little town, consisting of two long streets and several short ones; there is also some neat buildings in it, and two small harbours" (Gourlay & Turner 1977: 1).

The "two long streets" referred to are Low Street and High Street, two parallel streets on a North-South alignment which by the mid 18th Century constituted the two principal thoroughfares of Banff. High Street occupies a ridge of high raised beach or cliff, while Low Street lies at the foot of the slope, close to the shore. Between Low Street and High Street are two linking cross-streets, Strait Path to the North and Back Path to the South, which are both very steep. However, while Low Street and High Street may be physically connected, characteristically they are quite separate.

High Street, a long straight avenue, the younger of the two streets, is home to many of the later public buildings such as the 18th Century Parish Church, the Episcopal Church and rectory and the public library and museum.

Low Street is, in contrast, an irregular curving street which widens out at its North end forming what was the old market area. It terminates abruptly at its North end with Carmelite Street, and at its South end where it turns West to join the A98 trunk road.

From consideration of the surviving buildings and street layout, it appears that the lower part of the town, in the shadow of the castle and along the shoreline, developed first, with expansion over the higher ground surrounding the castle following soon after.

Banff's pre-1800 streets include Low Street, High Street, Back Path, Strait Path, Old Market Place, Carmelite Street, Bridge Street, High Shore, Low Shore (now Deveronside), Boyndie Street, Water Path and Water Lane, connecting the lower part of the town with the upper part. Castle Street dates from the 19th century, as does Seafeld Street which was opened in 1852 and replaced Boyndie Street as the main road into Banff from the west.

3.3 Building Styles

Within Banff a wide variety of buildings from the 16th to the 20th centuries can be seen, reflecting the historic character and social development of the town. These range from Early Post-Medieval hostelrys to Georgian Townhouses, but the most prosperous period dates to the 16th - 18th centuries during which the town attracted the local gentry landowners who built their large houses.

Within the Outstanding Conservation Area there are number of notable landmark buildings, prominent features in the townscape and fine architectural examples. These have been highlighted on Map 2, and are described in this chapter.



Chalmers Hospital, in the 19th Century (above) and today (below)

Chalmers Hospital is an unusual building, built with money bequeathed by merchant and ship-owner, Alexander Chalmers. Built in 1861, in the Jacobean style to the design of William Lambie Moffat, it dominates the Seatown with its finialled triangular gables and tall piended platform roofs. Sadly, much of the decorative cast iron work to these roofs has been lost in recent years.



At the North entrance to the town sits the former Town Hall, built in 1852-3 to a design by Thomas Mackenzie. It is built of local dark whinstone in the style of an Italianate palazzo, its entrance flanked by ornate Doric columns. The first floor windows, facing onto Castle Street are pedimented and pilastered with unusual queen-head capitals.



Town Hall, Castle Street



Nearby, the John Adam's designed Banff Castle mansion house, built in 1750, sits within a stone walled grassed area, overlooking Banff Bay. The main house is flanked by a pair of 2-storey pavilions with two lodges situated on the North and South sides of the West entrance gate. The porch was added in the 19th Century.



Banff Castle

The Old Academy, on Institution Terrace (also known as Wilson's Academy), was designed by William Robertson and built in 1837. It is in the style of a classical pavilion, fronted by a wide pedimented portico with six Ionic columns.



The Old Academy, "Wilson's".

St Mary's Church dominates the skyline of the upper town with its octagonal clock-tower and spire. It was originally built in 1778 to the design of Andrew Wilson, strongly influenced by St Andrew's Church in Dundee, with the tower and spire the work of Thomas Mackenzie in 1842. Along with the Old Academy it sits as guardian on high ground at the "new" East entrance into the town, the A98/A97 along High Street.



St Mary's Church, High Street



Fife House (L) the Banff Court House (R), vand the Town House (below).

Fife House, Low Street (formerly the Fife Arms Hotel) was built in 1843-5 to accommodate visitors to Duff House. Its grandeur and scale is reflected in the Court House & County Hall, dated 1870-1, which sits opposite. These two buildings dominate the South end of Low Street, and are balanced at the North end of Low Street by the equally impressive Town House and steeple, dated 1764 and 1796 respectively. The steeple is a prominent feature of the skyline, particularly visible when approaching Banff from the South and East.



Connecting Banff with Macduff, the 7-span Bridge of Banff was built in 1779 by engineer John Smeaton. It is constructed of tooled rubble with ashlar dressings, dressed stone arched rings and rubble spandrels with oculi. The bridge replaced an earlier bridge, swept away in 1768, and carries the main road between Inverness and Aberdeen over the River Deveron.



Banff Bridge

Duff House was built in 1735-49 to a design by William Adam, and is an outstanding baroque palace. Situated on the West bank of the River Deveron, it is the most notable building within the Banff Outstanding Conservation Area.



Duff House

A distinctive feature to Banff is the variety of high quality carved stones, in the form of date-stones, marriage stones, and decorative ornate stonework, which can be seen throughout the town in situ on upstanding buildings, re-inserted as features on later buildings, as well as on display in the town's museum.



Decorative carved stones, common throughout Banff.

3.4 Listed Buildings

Within the Banff Conservation Area there are 234 Listed Buildings and structures. This includes 19 Category A-Listed Buildings, more than in any other conservation area in Aberdeenshire. The distribution of Listed Buildings within Banff is illustrated on Map 3.

Listed building consent is required under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 for the demolition or alteration of any Listed Building, or to extend a Listed Building internally or externally.

Conservation area consent is required for the demolition of any unlisted building in a conservation area.

3.5 Building Materials

The Clashach/Hopeman-type (Moray) yellow sandstone is the prevailing building material of Banff. Clashach sandstone is known to be a very durable stone with good resistance to acid rain and air pollution. It generally has a high resistance to salt damage, good frost resistance, and is suitable for use in most aspects of construction including flooring, paving, load bearing masonry and cladding. The stone is suitable for areas where a long service life is needed.

Local dark grey whinstone is also commonly used throughout Banff, either squared or in rubble form. Some of the later examples of its use, for example on Castle Street, appear to be emulating the fine granite architecture of the same period seen in Aberdeen. The local whinstone is noted for its hardness, and is an adequate substitution for the more expensive Aberdeen granite.

However, in a number of properties the whinstone has been used in conjunction with softer, lighter coloured stones creating a pleasing visual contrast but overall these combinations have been largely unsuccessful as deterioration of the soft stones has been accelerated where moisture is unable to penetrate the harder stone.



Moray Yellow Sandstone (L) local Whinstone (centre) and Whinstone combined with Turriff Red Sandstone (R).

In addition to the Moray sandstone, a locally sourced "Turriff" Old Red Sandstone was also used in Banff. This sandstone is a very vibrant shade of reddish-pink, and contrasts strikingly with the yellow sandstone or the dark grey whinstone with which it is frequently paired. However, it is a very soft, fine grained stone which is easily weathered. Failure of this type of stone has also been exacerbated by inappropriate repairs to original lime mortar pointing with cement mortar.

A prime example of the use of red sandstone is the property at 6 Deveronside, which faces onto Banff Bay, where the stone has been severely eroded over the years through natural causes. This damage has been accelerated through the use of cement mortar in repairs to pointing which, being a considerably more rigid and less porous substance, forces more moisture to escape through the stonework.

Aberdeen Grey Granite has been used to a lesser extent in Banff, but there are some interesting examples of buildings which utilise this material. These include the Archibald Simpson-style A-listed former merchant's house at 1 St. Catherine Street, in ashlar grey granite, and the former castellated ironmonger's shop at 28 Low Street, in bull-faced grey granite.



Ashlar granite (L) and bull-faced granite (R)

On a large number of buildings within the Conservation Area the stonework has been covered with harling, either the whole property or simply the gables. Some buildings retain the traditional lime harling, but a significant number of properties have been re-harled using a cement-based product. Over time, the use of cement harling on traditional stone-built buildings can lead to deterioration. Cement mortars and renders are rigid and prevent moisture escaping, forcing it to escape through stones or bricks. This frequently leads to cracks in harling and acceleration in the decay of existing stonework.



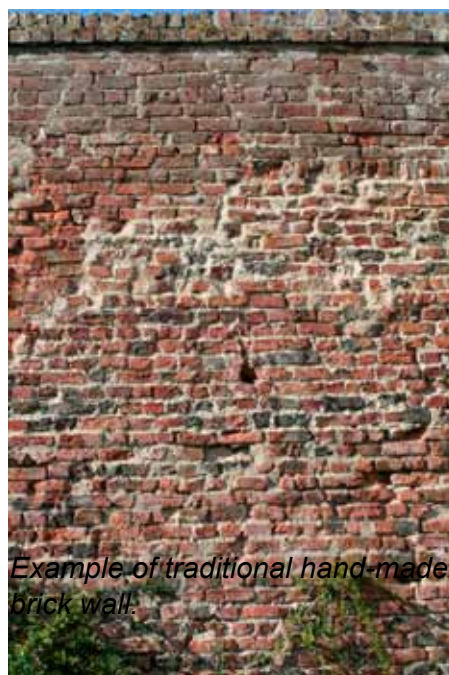
Traditional Lime harling (L) Modern dry-dash cement harl (R)

The majority of traditional roofs are covered with Scots or Welsh slate, with a small number of pantile roofs. A number of properties in Banff have lost their original roof coverings to be replaced with corrugated asbestos sheeting. In some instances the asbestos roofs are thought to date to the 1940s, and many are now beginning to fail. There are no thatched roofs within Banff, but it seems likely that some of the earlier buildings may originally have had thatched roofs.



New clay pantiles (L); traditional Scots graded slate roof (centre); aging asbestos roof (R) which can be seen on a number of buildings in Banff

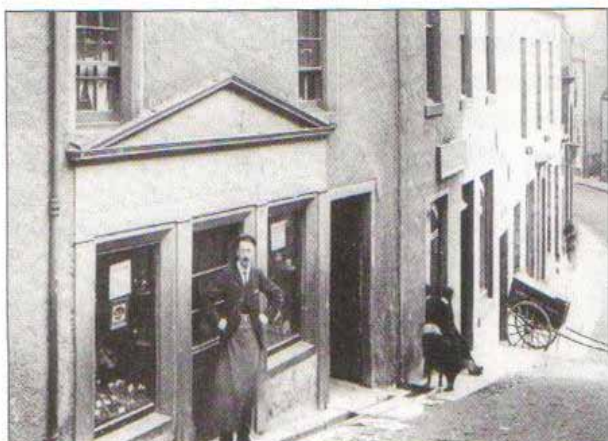
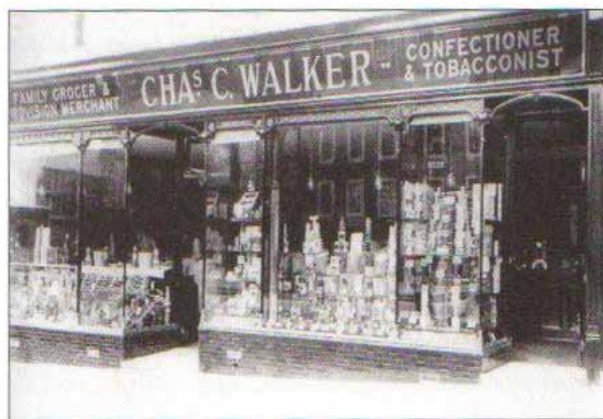
Many garden walls, and other inconspicuous features, within the Conservation Area have been constructed of irregular, handmade brick. Examples can be seen along Water Path, in particular the entrance through the boundary wall between Water Path and the Castle grounds where brick maker's fingerprints are visible on some of the bricks. It is not clear if the brick was locally made, or if it was imported (either as cargo or ballast) from the Low Countries as has been recorded elsewhere in the UK.



Example of traditional hand-made brick wall.

3.6 Shopfronts

A few examples of traditional, mainly Victorian, shop frontages survive within the Banff Conservation Area, particularly on Low Street and Bridge Street. These original shop fronts were mainly constructed in timber, with timber signs, elegantly proportioned windows and doors flanked by ornate pilasters and corbels, and timber stall risers.



Examples of Banff's Victorian shopfronts. Walker's (top right) on Low Street, is now Pyramids takeaway – here the frontage survives, but has been recently renovated. © Bodie's of Banff



Surviving examples of traditional shopfronts (above); renewed traditional shopfront (L) (Pyramids).

While many of the original, often recessed, doors survive with their colourful encaustic tiled thresholds, often the windows have been replaced with large plain, modern openings. Surviving examples of traditional shop windows are rare, but can be seen at 53 Low Street (restored), and 28, 32, 38/40, 44, 49/53 Bridge Street. The original timber stall risers do survive in places, but few traditional shop signs can now be seen.



Examples of original tile thresholds.

The increased erosion of what was formerly an attractive shopping area within the historic core of Banff is concerning. Unsympathetic alterations and additions to individual and parades of shop fronts which obliterate the original details, along with poorly proportioned windows, detract considerably from the townscape. It is noted that the decrease in the local retail economy has had a detrimental effect on the condition and maintenance of traditional shopfronts. Attractively designed shop fronts can enhance the townscape, adding to the vitality of the commercial environment.



One example of a modern shopfront, which has replaced the more traditional style. It has large wide window openings, and oversized plastic sign boards.

3.7 Trees, Landscaping and Open Space

The designed landscape associated with Duff House accounts for the majority of the “green space” with the Banff Conservation Area, much of which is publicly accessible. The parkland immediately surrounding the house has, since 1910, formed the setting for the Duff House Golf Club, while the policy woodlands, to the west of Duff House, are important to its setting and are visible from a wide surrounding area.



View towards Duff House designed landscape, and Banff, from the Hill of Doune.

Duff House also had large areas of walled and kitchen gardens, as shown on the 1st edition OS map, which have now somewhat diminished in size. Formerly, the ornamental gardens extended north behind the Fife Arms Hotel but only part of this now survives, at the South end of Low Street on the site of the former Airlie House extending towards to the town centre, now maintained by Aberdeenshire Council. This area is laid out with lawns and formal planted beds, while the wall enclosing the area underwent extensive restoration in the 1980s.



Duff House walled garden, Low Street.

Also presumed to be a remnant of Airlie House and its gardens is the single large apple tree situated between the Courthouse on Low Street and Collie Lodge.

Another large area of “green space” which is also publicly accessible is the walled garden and surviving earthworks, now grassed over, of Banff Castle. This includes an Araucaria tree (monkey puzzle) planted in honour of General Jose san Martin, liberator of Argentina, who spent much of his voluntary exile in Banff.



Banff Castle earthworks (L) and public gardens (R).

The open grassed area at Battery Green was originally appropriated ‘for the exercise and health of the inhabitants’. It occupies an exposed position on high ground above a rocky outcrop with open views out to sea.



Battery Green

The last significant area of “green space” within the Conservation Area is St. Mary’s graveyard, at the junction of Carmelite Street and High Shore. Within the graveyard are a number of mature trees.



St Mary's graveyard

Trees within conservation areas are afforded statutory protection by The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, recognising the valuable contribution that trees make to the character of conservation areas.

3.8 Activity & Movement

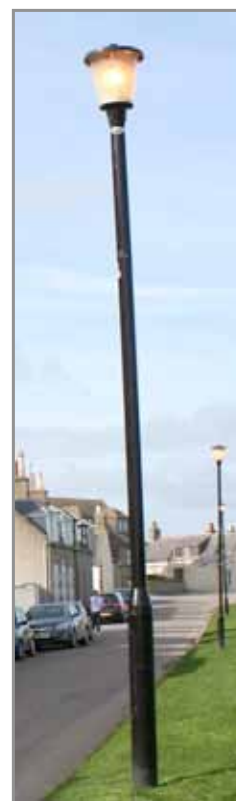
High Street is the principal route through the town. It is part of the A97/A98 trunk roads, and as such experiences heavy volumes of traffic from all modes of transport. It is also, along with Low Street, the principal retail area of the town and is therefore subject to considerable pedestrian movement. There are strong North-South movements through the town centre with weaker linkages East-West.

There are various zones of activity within the Conservation Area, ranging from the retail area focussed on High Street/Low Street to the semi-industrial area between Church Street and the foreshore. The area to the South of the town centre, surrounding Duff House, is dedicated to sporting activity and includes the Deveronvale FC ground, the Duff House Royal Golf Club, and the Banff rugby ground. The designed landscape of Duff House is popular with walkers and runners and children who make use of the well equipped play area. Duff House itself, along with Banff Castle, also hosts a variety of themed events and exhibitions throughout the year.

3.9 Public Realm

Street furniture

Banff town centre, in common with town centres throughout Britain, suffers from a profusion of street furniture which includes bollards, litter bins, bus shelters, railings, flower tubs and lampposts. While these all have a specific and important individual function, and some are attractive additions to the streetscape, taken as a whole they dominate and confuse the street at the pedestrian's level. A wide variety of styles and materials can be seen in Banff town centre, a mix of modern functional furniture and mock-Victorian which do not sit comfortably side-by-side. Street furniture should complement and enhance the Conservation Area, rather than detract from it. It would be beneficial if the setting was taken into consideration before new street furniture was imposed on the already cluttered streetscape.



Examples of the varying styles of street furniture which can be found in Banff



Examples of street signage in Banff.



Street name signage

There is a mixture of street name signage throughout Banff, ranging from more traditional style black and white lettering, to the more contemporary reflective white on blue. Positioning of street name signs also varies throughout the town. The overall appearance of the town would be improved by consistency in street name signage, with modern signage more complementary to the character of the town being used when necessary.

Surfaces

Concrete and tarmac paving materials have superseded older street coverings. There is very limited evidence of early paving or road surface materials in Banff. A number of private spaces, notably the stable yard beside Fife House on Low Street, make use of carefully set rounded beach cobbles. This is a traditional paving method, and not surprising to find in a seaside burgh, but it is extremely difficult to repair or replicate properly, and rarely survives in good condition.

Fife House also has original granite sett paving, which again is difficult to replicate correctly, while on Coldhome Street a short section of Caithness Slate paving survives outside no.5.

The many alleys and pends of Banff may also retain more traditional paving styles but these areas are not all readily accessible.

Mixed modern paving surfaces in Banff (L) traditional granite sets combined with beach cobble “paving” as seen at Fife House (centre), and slate paving on Coldhome Street (R).

3.10 Archaeology

Banff has had a long and complex history, having been settled as early as the 12th Century AD as one of Scotland's earliest medieval towns. There is also evidence of prehistoric human activity within the wider surrounding area. As such there is a high chance of buried archaeology surviving below ground level. The historic core of Banff in particular, which is contained within the Outstanding Conservation Area, should be considered an archaeologically sensitive area. Consideration should always be given to this fact prior to any developments, or ground-disturbing works (including utility works), going ahead. Any such works are likely to be subject to archaeological planning conditions as recommended by the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service.

However, equal importance should be given to the upstanding archaeological remains, in the form of buildings, walls and other structures. Later buildings frequently incorporate elements of earlier structures, such as early timber frames within later masonry buildings or the survival of early building fabrics. The majority of buildings and structures within the Conservation Area have never been photographed or surveyed, particularly the interiors. Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service should be consulted before any major development of upstanding remains within the Conservation Area to allow them assess whether the structure should be recorded for posterity.

There are also three designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) within the Conservation Area: Duff House, Banff Castle and environs, and St. Mary's church and burial ground on High Shore. Any developments or ground-breaking works occurring inside SAM area, or within 20m of the SAM boundary, will require Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent from Historic Scotland and may well require a programme of archaeological works to be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeological contractor.

3.11 Negative Features

A number of issues have been identified as having a negative impact on the Outstanding Conservation Area.

Inappropriate repairs

Over the years, inappropriate repairs to properties within the Banff Conservation Area have become commonplace. These include the replacement of slate roofs with asbestos sheeting, many of which have been in place for over 50 years; the replacement of cast iron rainwater goods with uPVC; the use of cement mortar in place of lime to point stone work; the use of cement instead of lime harling; and, most noticeably, the replacement of traditional timber-framed sliding sash & case, single glazed, sometimes multi-paned, windows with aluminium & uPVC framed double glazed windows of inappropriate proportions. These repairs have all drastically altered the character and appearance of traditional properties within the Conservation Area. Through the Banff Townscape Heritage Initiative, it has been possible to reverse a small number of these modern alterations with the Small Grant Scheme, but the potential, and need, still exists for further similar work to be carried out in future. These inappropriate repairs, using man-made synthetic materials, are still

widespread, and continue to accelerate the deterioration of traditional buildings throughout Banff.

Buildings at Risk

Within the Banff Outstanding Conservation Area there are currently seventeen buildings on the Scottish Civic Trust's Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland. These are the former Trinity & Alvah Church on Castle Street; Gordon's Granaries, on Deveronside; the former Tolbooth Hotel on Low Street; the Duff House Fishing Temple; 2,4,6 Bridge Street; 21,25 Bridge Street; 38, 40 Bridge Street; 42, 44 Bridge Street; 41,47 Bridge Street; 49, 51, 53 Bridge Street; 16, 18 Carmelite Street; 6 Deveronside; Duff House Vinery; 2 Fife Street; 18-24 Low Street; and Old Market Place Smithy

Trinity & Alvah church

The Trinity & Alvah church is a B-Listed building designed by James Raeburn, dating to 1844, which ceased to operate as a church in the early 1990s. It was purchased by the Local Authority, at that time Banff and Buchan District Council, in 1992 and has lain vacant ever since. It was subjected to an arson attack in 2002, and while the church suffered minimal damage it remains at risk of further vandalism. Ownership has now been transferred to a religious organisation. The church occupies a prominent site on the main road through Banff, and it is important that it is brought back into use. Planning and Listed Building Consent is currently being sought to alter and redevelop the church for community and leisure use, including the demolition of the 1930s rear extension to be replaced with a modern 2-storey structure.

Gordon's Granaries

The former industrial building on Deveronside, known locally as Gordon's Granaries, has been vacant since the early 1990s. It is category B-Listed, and part of the building dates to the early 18th Century with the remainder dating to the early 19th Century. It is currently in the process of being renovated and converted into a flats development.

Tolbooth Hotel

Dated 1801, the Tolbooth Hotel sits in a prominent location on Low Street. Its upper floors are vacant, but a fast food outlet occupies the ground floor. The building appears to be structurally sound, but repair works to the harling, rain water goods and roof are required to maintain the building. Currently no action to restore this property is taking place.

Duff House Fishing Temple

The A-Listed Fishing Temple of Duff House was designed by William Adam around 1741. It is a 2-stage round temple, originally with domed roof surmounted by a gilded figure of Fame, sits on an island in the River Deveron to the East of Duff House. It has been roofless for over 10 years, and its condition has deteriorated considerably over this period. The Banff Preservation & Heritage Society

are taking steps to restore this building.

2, 4 Bridge Street

This property is a Category B-Listed, 2-storey house dating from the early 19th Century. It is currently only partially occupied, but the roof and rainwater goods are in a poor condition which is having damaging effect on the building particularly noticeable at the rear.

21, 25 Bridge Street

Although one property appears quite early this is an unlisted former shop, which is currently empty and boarded up. It consists of two 2-storey traditional houses with slated roof, crow-steps to East gable, and one single storey modern extension to the east, together with associated garage stores to the rear. There was a planning application approved for change of use to a nursery which included partial demolition. The planning permission has now lapsed.

38, 40 Bridge Street

38, 40 Bridge Street is a Category C(s) listed, late 18th Century, 2-storey, 2-bay slated, dwelling with later shop inserted. Dry dashed frontage with painted margins around the openings. It has outer pilasters to shop front supporting later bracketed and corniced fascia with slender cast-iron columns to shop window. The shop unit has been closed for over eight years.

42, 44 Bridge Street

Category C(s) listed 2-storey dwelling dating to late 18th century, with later shop inserted. A corrugated asbestos roof has replaced the original slate roof with 3 small 1st floor windows later raised to break the wallhead as flat-roofed dormers. The shop unit has been closed for over five years but still retains the original internal wooden fittings.

41, 47 Bridge Street

This property is formed from two separate builds. The original dates from the late 18th century, Category C (s) listed, with the ground floor entirely infilled with glazed shop fronts. The later building forms an integral and important part of the historic streetscape in Banff due to its former use as a cinema with an auditorium surviving to the rear. The former 'Picture House' opened in 1937, but finally closed in 1974. The building is now in use as a store for a local shop. Partially roofed with asbestos sheeting with modern metal shutters to the windows the building appears in need of general maintenance.

49, 51, 53 Bridge Street

A Category B listed, late 18th century, 2-storey group of buildings. No. 49 is a compact 3-bay shop front dating from c.1835, the central entrance to which is flanked by panelled windows, the

doorway and windows divided by pilasters. Original 12-pane timber, sash and case windows to the 1st floor with an unusual shop front incorporating pilasters with composite capitals. These are similar in design to those decorating former Banff Academy, a stylistic feature much used by William Robertson, architect. The front wallhead chimney stack is characteristic of some early houses in Banff and Portsoy. The building once again is roofed with asbestos sheeting. This building had lain vacant but has recently been sold and there appears to be some building work taking place.

16, 18 Carmelite Street

A Category B listed, mid 19th century, 2-storey, 6-bay former police station, with a c.1900 glazed entrance porch enriched with Art Nouveau coloured glass. It was last in use on the ground floor as a shoe shop which closed down two years ago. The dwelling to the ground and first floor has been unoccupied for over seven years and has changed hands a number of times over recent years. Repairs to the roof and windows were undertaken in 2011 and it is believed will be for let as a holiday home.

6 Deveronside, Category

A Category C(s) listed, late 19th century, 2-storey, 5-bay building comprising dwellings and a shop with a late 19th century range at the rear. The use of dark whinstone with red sandstone dressings to the front elevation facing onto the bay have helped lead to the deterioration of the building along with the poor condition of the windows and doors. The building has been derelict for over fifteen years and the recent grant aided proposal for conversion into three flats has proved financially unviable at this time.

Duff House Vinery

Duff House Vinery, 19th century and B listed. The building straddles the walled garden that was formally within the polices of Duff House from which it is now separated by the main road through Banff. The lean too greenhouse (Vinery) which has late 19th century cast-iron ironwork to the south gable, backs onto a rubble bothy housing the former boiler house. The building forms part of the property and land of the Common Good for Banff which is run by Aberdeenshire Council. The roof and rainwater goods of the bothy are in poor condition and the floor unsafe to walk on. The glass to the green house has been replaced with polycarbonate. It was in use recently but has now been closed to the public.

2 Fife Street

An unlisted single storey stone built cottage, probably 19th Century, with asbestos cement roof attached to a stone built garage/ workshop structure on the corner of Fife Street and St Catherine Street. The building is lying derelict and is in poor condition with a double pitch roof of metal and felt tiles.

18-24 Low Street

A C(s) listed 2-storey house with two modern shopfronts to the ground floor. The original 12-pane

glazing in timber sash and case windows are still intact. One of the shop units and the flat above has not been in use for over five years. The roof was in a poor condition which resulted in the slates being removed and a temporary roof covering being fixed in place. With the help of grant funding the roof has been repaired and the building is now wind and watertight. Work is still required internally to fully bring the building back into use.

Old Market Place Smithy,

Two parallel, single storey and loft, former meal-houses or stores, facing North and abutting the pavement; further early 20th century parallel gabled range to the East that is B listed. The earlier buildings are harled with tooled ashlar margins. Former meal stores each with ground floor doorway and round-headed loft entrance immediately above. West range topped with a re-used apex bellcote and corrugated-asbestos and corrugated-iron roofs. As part of a larger development it has been agreed that building will be restored and that The Banff Preservation and Heritage Society will take on the ownership of the building.

In addition to those buildings currently included on the Buildings at Risk register, there are a number of other buildings within the Banff Conservation Area which were identified during this review for potential inclusion on the register. These are:

55 Bridge Street, Category B listed

1, 1A Carmelite street, Category C(s) listed

5 Carmelite Street, Category C(s) listed

9, 11, 13 Low Street, Category B listed

12 – 16 Low Street, Fife House Stables, Category A Listed

19 Low Street, unlisted but within conservation area

1 Strait Path, Category C(s) listed

3, 5, 7 Strait Path, unlisted but within conservation area

Vacant/derelict buildings and gap sites

There are a number of vacant, or partially vacant, and derelict properties within the Conservation Area, as well as “Gap Sites” created in the streetscape through the necessary demolition of dangerous buildings. It is also worth noting that a large number of properties in the Conservation Area are only occupied intermittently as holiday or second homes.

Vacant retail and commercial properties can be seen on High Street, Low Street, Strait Path and Bridge Street, often with unoccupied residential space on upper floors.

The largest of the vacant properties are the 18th Century former brewery/barracks (Category B-Listed) at 83 North Castle Street (partially vacant), the former hotel at 6 Deveronside (Category C(S) Listed), and the former Tolbooth Hotel on Low Street (Category B Listed).

There is a lesser number of what could be termed derelict buildings within the Conservation Area.

These include three listed buildings: the 18th Century Duff House Fishing Temple; the former Vinery in the old Duff House walled garden at the South end of Low Street; and the 19th Century former hotel at 6 Deveronside. Attempts have been made recently to bring the latter two properties back into use, but due to financial restraints this is proving very problematic. The 20th century un-listed building on High Street, adjacent to the Co-op supermarket, perhaps creates a greater negative impact due to its prominent position and obvious poor condition, although a local group is currently trying to bring this building back into use.

There is also a risk that more properties within the Conservation Area will become vacant through the rationalisation and consolidation of office space used by Aberdeenshire Council if new uses cannot be found for them. These could include properties on such as those on Low Street and Carmelite Street, including the Category B-Listed former Post Office, an elegant structure built in 1906 in the Edwardian Renaissance style.

Inappropriate shopfronts & signage

Traditional shopfronts throughout the Conservation Area have been remodelled and modernised over the years, with very few original shopfronts surviving.

Timber framed single-glazed shop windows and doors have been removed and replaced with modern alternatives; glazing proportions have been altered, with multi-pane glazing having been replaced with large single panes. Original hand-painted timber signage has largely been lost to be replaced with large plastic fascias with transfer applied oversized lettering. The design of the fascia should be in keeping with the character and period of the building in which the shopfront is located since it is the visual connection between the upper and lower floors of the building.

Victorian shopfronts, whether an integral part of a Victorian building or inserted into an older one, should be retained or restored to help preserve the character of the Conservation Area. Applied fascias, oversize lettering, and internally illuminated letters should be avoided on traditional buildings.

Existing mid-late 20th and 21st Century commercial developments within the Outstanding Conservation Area are not in-keeping with, or sympathetic to, their surroundings and detract considerably from the appearance of the town centre. The designs of any future developments, commercial or residential, should be more carefully considered to ensure they are more complementary to their historic surroundings and serve to enhance the character of the Conservation Area rather than detract from it.

4 Character Areas

4.1 Low Street, High Street, Back Path & Strait Path

The High Street and Low Street area contains a rich variety of commercial and wealthy domestic buildings representing the periods of economic development within Banff from the 18th Century to the 20th Century. This area has remained the heart of Banff since the 18th Century, but was not subjected to the same scale of Victorian development that many other Scottish towns have faced. Buildings on the East side of Low Street tend to be earlier than those on the West side, while High Street has a more consistent building style than Low Street. The two main streets are linked by the smaller Paths, which have a mixture of residential and commercial properties.

4.2 High Shore & Deveronside

The old industrial area around Deveronside (formerly Low Shore) and the area around High Shore contain a great variety of well preserved buildings from the 18th and 19th Centuries, as well as the medieval St Mary's Kirk and graveyard. A number of small scale industrial units remain on Deveronside, while the majority of properties in the area are now in residential use.

4.3 Seatown

The Seatown or Fishertown of Banff developed in the area to the North of the Castle and encompasses North Castle Street, Fife Street, Clunie Street, Battery Green, Braeheads, Coldhome Street, Bartlet Place and Campbell Street. It consists of a mixture of single-storey terraced fishing cottages and houses built mainly in the 19th Century set out on a grid layout, typical of fishing villages of this period. The imposing Chalmer's Hospital building is also situated in this area, as is the former brewery, barracks and district laundry building of 1704 which towers over the old harbour on top of the ridge that forms the main North-South axis of Banff. The latter building is one of the biggest, and possibly the earliest, surviving buildings in Banff, and as such should be preserved.

4.4 Castle Street

Laid out by Lord Deskford in 1750, Castle Street, along with High Street and North Castle Street, forms a powerful axis, occupying the same prominent ridge. Properties are predominantly residential, with fewer commercial properties than on the adjoining High Street. The East side of Castle Street is dominated by Banff Castle and its grounds, with open views out across Banff Bay. On the West side, a number of grand buildings designed in the mid-19th Century by Thomas Mackenzie can be seen, including The Gables and Seafeld House. The earliest properties are to be found on the East side, numbers 4-10, which date from the mid-late 18th Century.

4.5 Quayside & Harbour

The harbour area is shown on early 18th Century maps and appears to have changed very little over the years. Built between 1770 and 1775 to a design by James Smeaton, the harbour was later modified and improved by Thomas Telford between 1818 and 1828, and is Category A Listed. Banff

harbour was at its busiest in the 19th Century during the North Sea herring boom, but its fortunes were dictated by the tendency of the river Deveron to silt up. The harbour is no longer used for commercial fishing but instead has found a new lease of life as a pleasure-craft marina, although the problems of alluvium silt building up within the harbour continues. Generally, the harbour remains in relatively good condition, with original features clearly visible. As examples of the work of two of the most renowned civil engineers of their generations, the harbour is of wide interest. A number of warehouses remain along the Quayside, with some converted to housing and commercial uses.

4.6 Bridge Street & Old Market Place

At the time of its construction, Bridge Street was the principal route into the town centre from the East. It is home to a number of 18th Century buildings and 19th Century shops which have been much neglected in recent times, and whose condition is deteriorating rapidly. At its East end, Bridge Street merges into Old Market Place which in turn connects at its North-west end with Carmelite Street and Church Street forming an enclosed area of commercial, light industrial and residential use. This area has a more informal street pattern than the central area of Banff.

4.7 Banff Castle

The remains of the medieval castle walls and moat, along with the 18th Century mansion house, sit on landscaped high ground with magnificent views over Banff Bay. The Castle grounds form the ancient heart of Banff along with the old St. Mary's graveyard on Church Street / Carmelite Street, and have been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Old Castle Gate was formerly the entrance way to the South side of the Castle from the early main road (Boyndie Street), and may pre-date the High Street itself.

4.8 Duff House

Duff House was designed by William Adam in 1725-1740 for Lord Braco and is situated on the west bank of the River Deveron, on the south side of the town. The house is set facing south across the alluvial plain of the Deveron, formerly parkland but now in use as a golf course.

Duff House has been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and the house and its policies are included on Historic Scotland's "Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland". The main house is category A-listed, and is now part of the National Galleries of Scotland; other buildings and structures within the policies are also listed.

Duff House is a magnificent baroque mansion, built on a square plan of 3-storeys over a raised basement with advanced corner towers, breaking eaves, and with domed roofs and cupolas. It is constructed predominantly of fine ashlar sandstone, with some rustication to the basement. The front elevation is dominated by a ram's horn staircase leading up to the principal floor, with a triumphal, pedimented centrepiece topped with exuberant armorial carving in the tympanum of pediment, the whole presided over by classical lead statuettes at the apex (Diana) and outer angles of pediment (Mars and Orpheus).

The house and its policies dominate the Banff Outstanding Conservation Area, accounting for approximately two-thirds of the total designated area.

4.9 Macduff

The Banff Outstanding Conservation Area boundary extends East across the River Deveron and leads towards Macduff over the Hill of Doune. Incorporated into the Conservation Area are 9 commercial and residential buildings, and the 18th Century Temple of Venus. Part of the Duff House policies, and designed by William Adam, the Temple dominates the hill top. Built at the request of the Earl of Fife, the temple is Category B-Listed and is described by Charles McKean as a “diminutive, crude, circular domed pimple” (McKean 1990: 110). It was erected to improve the skyline and is located to frame views looking back down the Deveron, across to Banff than looking north out to sea. Unfortunately it has suffered from inappropriate repairs, and the views are now interrupted by the electricity cables running across the foreground and the wind turbines in the distance. To the south west of the temple are the remains of what was possibly a garden or picnic area, circular in plan and edged by shrubs.

Of the 9 other buildings, only one, Fairs Cottage, is Listed. It is a Category B-Listed single storey harled cottage, dating from c.1820, which is fronted by an unusual canted portico supported by four tapering faceted wooden shafts.

Starting at the Southern edge of the Conservation Area and moving clockwise, the remaining buildings on the East side of the river consist of the L-plan Macduff manse, which is depicted on the 19th Century 1st & 2nd edition OS maps; two cottages, adjacent to the Gelly Burn; the former lifeboat station and Banff Bridge Railway Station, both of which are now in residential use, and are first shown on the 2nd edition OS map; and a railway engine shed, the furthest east building in the Conservation Area, which is shown on the 2nd edition OS map and is now used for commercial/ industrial purposes. This last building was part of the second Macduff railway station to be built; the site of the original Macduff railway station lies on the South side of the Hill of Doune, and is shown on the 1st edition OS map but had been demolished by the time the 2nd edition OS map had been published.

5 Conservation Strategy

5.1 Appropriateness of Designation

Within Banff, the combination of buildings, street pattern, open spaces and other elements of townscape create an attractive area of special architectural and historical interest. It remains desirable to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the centre of Banff by means of the protective Conservation Area designation.

5.2 Development & Enhancement Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities within the Outstanding Conservation Area for development and enhancement, which would improve both the physical and economic outlook of Banff.

Bridge Street was formerly a busy shopping area, but has seen a rapid decline in recent times. As such, it is an area which would benefit hugely from regeneration. In terms of improving the area, there are number of potential opportunities which have been identified as part of the Conservation Area Review. Firstly, there is the potential for enhancement through public realm works. The road and pavement surfaces, along with the street furniture, could all be improved. This could be tied in with the proposed large-scale retail development on land at Princes Royal Park, since Bridge Street will act as a link between Low Street and development.

There are also a number of vacant retail spaces, complete with their original traditional Victorian frontages. Encouraging the reuse of these existing vacant retail spaces, and ensuring that the traditional facades are retained, would not only protect the character of conservation area (as stipulated in Policy Env\17) but also increase footfall to the area and thus improve the area's economic viability.

The character of this part of Banff could also be enhanced by the removal of later buildings which detract from the traditionally designed buildings in this area. The possible demolition of 20th Century retail developments inappropriate to the Conservation Area could be looked on more favourably if the proposed replacement was a development which was more complementary to the status of the area.

Another area of Banff which could be greatly enhanced is the Deveronside area. Deveronside is situated on the fringe of the medieval core of Banff, and is home to some of the earliest surviving buildings in the town. As such, special consideration should be given to its historical and archaeological significance when considering new developments. Again, this area could be greatly improved by the introduction of road and paving surfaces and street furniture more in keeping with the status of the Conservation Area.

The car parking area contained within the former walled garden of Shore House is also considered something of an eyesore, and would benefit from repairs to the walls and parking surface and the possible reinstatement of the cast iron railings.

If it remains undeveloped, consideration should be given to full or partial demolition of the derelict residential building at 6 Deveronside. In its present state, it is not financially viable to restore the building. However, if there is an upturn in the housing market, banks may be more willing to finance

such a project.

Demolition should only be approved on the understanding that any replacement building meets the policy guidelines. These state that any new development “must be of the highest quality and respect and enhance the architectural and visual qualities that give rise to their actual or proposed designation”.

The development of the former Gordon’s Granary building will see the renovation of this derelict industrial building on Deveronside to form 9 residential units. This project should be seen as a catalyst to improve this long neglected area of Banff.

With the exception of the newly extended Chalmers hospital, the property at 83 North Castle Street is probably the largest building in Banff. It is thought to have been constructed c.1704, probably as a warehouse, and was subsequently used as the district laundry and as a brewery. It occupies a prominent position on the headland overlooking Banff harbour, and is a three storey, harled rubble building forming two sides of a courtyard entered through a wide pend. It is often referred to as “the barracks”, a reference to when Cumberland’s troops were housed in it during the 1745 rebellion. Today, much of the ground floor is occupied by active business units but the top floor lies empty. The north facing roof has been clad with asbestos. At present there are no plans to bring the vacant floor space back into use, but in the past the owner has discussed converting the property into a flatted development. This could feasibly be undertaken with negligible loss of character, and sympathetic restoration of the property should be looked on favourably. Alternatively, given its prominent location and proximity to the marina, a mixed development combining holiday accommodation with a restaurant/café might be more beneficial this part of Banff, increasing the vibrancy of the area and taking advantage of the popularity of the marina.

At present, there are also two “gap sites” within the Banff Conservation Area. On Carmelite Street, a gap site was created by the loss of a listed building which had suffered from subsidence. The unstable ground condition continues to be a problem, and will create difficulties for any future redevelopment of the site. One development proposed for the site has already fallen by the wayside due to the increased costs resulting from the ground conditions, but future development on the site which complements the Conservation Area is not impossible.

The second gap site, on Bridge Street, is part of an ongoing development proposal currently on site. Originally it provided two commercial units on the ground floor, but it will now be solely residential reflecting the loss of commercial interest in Bridge Street.

There is also potential to enhance the Conservation Area by bringing vacant floor space in the town centre, both commercial and residential, back into use. This should comply with the existing planning policy which states that any development should not have a detrimental effect on the special character and/or setting of the Conservation Area. Traditional shopfronts should be retained as such, and change of use from retail to residential is not advised. By encouraging new, or existing, businesses to populate the vacant commercial space in the town centre the town’s economic, and visual, outlook would be greatly increased. It may also be beneficial to provide technical advice to owners of vacant properties, particularly residential properties. This will help to ensure that they are properly maintained, and may encourage their development according to conservation standards

allowing them to be brought back into use.

5.3 Boundary Refinement

The original Conservation Area boundary was designated in 1973. The boundary was extended in 1975, and again 1976 to include Duff House and policies. It does not appear to have undergone further refinements since this time.

The boundary has been reviewed during the course of this report, and the following refinements are proposed (see Map 4):

North end of Conservation Area: Campbell Street / St Catherine Street – Map 5

It is proposed that all of the listed buildings on Campbell Street are included in the Conservation Area. Currently, all but one of these Category C(S) Listed houses is included, but as the properties have a group listing status of Category B it is recommended that all are included to protect their listing status.

It is proposed that no.30 Campbell Street and nos. 45 and 43A St Catherine Street are withdrawn from the Conservation Area. No.30 Campbell Street, situated at the South end of the street, is much later in date than the listed group of buildings at the North end of the street, and is of a greatly differing building style not in-keeping with the character of the area. Nos. 45 and 43A St Catherine Street are also later in date than the surrounding buildings and do not merit inclusion in the Conservation Area. The adjacent property, no.41 St Catherine Street, is included because it is early in date, with connections to the former rope works which existed in this area in the 19th Century.

These proposals would see the following properties included in the Conservation Area:

Campbell Street: No. 17

The following properties would be excluded from the Conservation Area by these proposals:

St Catherine Street: Nos. 43a, 45

Campbell Street: No. 30

East side of Conservation Area: Hill of Doune / Macduff – Map 6

A number of unlisted buildings on the East side of the Hill of Doune, towards Macduff, were previously included in the Banff Conservation Area. These included a former railway shed at Macduff Station and Macduff Manse. The proposal would see more of the Hill of Doune included in the Conservation Area, with the exclusion of six properties formerly included which are of little architectural or historical merit, and which have no obvious connection with Banff.

The proposed revised boundary will further protect the Hill of Doune as a setting and vantage point of Banff, as well as the designed landscape associated with Duff House, and better reflects boundary proposals put forward by Historic Scotland in 1976. It also continues to afford protection to the 18th Century Temple of Venus which dominates this skyline.

The proposed amendments to the East boundary would see the following properties excluded from the Conservation Area:

Macduff Old Manse

South-West side of Conservation Area: Sandyhill Road / Bellevue Road & Terrace / Gardiner's Brae / St Ann's Terrace – Map 7

The proposal for the South-West side of the Conservation Area is to exclude the modern (20th Century) properties which have been built up since the creation of the Conservation Area on Sandyhill Road – Earlswood, Valhalla, 1 – 3 Sandyhill Gardens, St Helier, Northwinds and The Bungalow. Also proposed for exclusion is the Fife Lodge Hotel, which has undergone many alterations during the 20th Century, and is of little architectural merit.

However, it is also recommended that a number of properties on Sandyhill Road, Bellevue Road and Terrace, Gardiner's Brae and St Ann's Terrace not previously included in the Conservation Area should now be protected. The properties largely date to the 19th Century, and reflect the social and economic development of Banff through this period. The 19th Century was a period of increased wealth in Banff, and the properties in this part of the town appear to embody this. The properties also seem to illustrate the widening outlook of society by imitating the styles of buildings more usually seen in the likes of Aberdeen and Edinburgh. On the whole these properties are detached villas in substantial plots, built in a style not common elsewhere in Banff. Of these, only two are listed - Bellevue and St Ann's Hill, both Category B Listed, and situated on Bellevue Road. The vast majority of these properties retain much of their original character, including timber windows and doors, cast iron rainwater goods, slate roofs, and decorative stonework. It is important to protect these buildings before such details and character is lost, as has been seen elsewhere in Banff (eg. where ornate original timber doors, timber windows and cast-iron rainwater goods have been replaced wholesale with uPVC).

The proposed South-West extension would see the following properties included in the Conservation Area:

Sandyhill Road: Nos. 14 – 18, Our Lady of Mount Carmel R.C. Church and Presbytery, St Leonard's House, Earhill, The Elms, Esdaile, Banff House, Sandyhill House, Gowanpark, Gerriesfield, Ellerslie.

Bellevue Terrace: Parkmount, Ashbrook

Bellevue Road: Boyne Cottage, Morayhill, Wilton, St Helens, Broad Croft, Ruthrie, Sentosa, Craighill, Morehill, East Bank, St Ann's Hill, Bellevue

Gardiner's Brae: Nos. 1A, 1 – 5

St Ann's Terrace: Nos. 1 – 5

5.4 Planning Policy

The key policies, as approved in the 2006 Aberdeenshire Council Local Plan, which relate to the Banff Outstanding Conservation Area are Policies Env\17 and Env\18 (See Appendix II for details of these policies). The new Local Plan, produced in 2010, encompasses the same principles outlined in the earlier plan.

5.5 Additional Planning Guidance

To support the existing planning policies, it would be beneficial to produce a series of region specific additional guidance notes to help advise residents/property owners of properties in Conservation Areas in Aberdeenshire. This, combined with increased knowledge, and use, of Historic Scotland's series of Technical Advice Notes would help to ensure the character of the conservation area was progressively consolidated rather than eroded. Advice could be provided on traditional shopfronts; timber-framed windows & doors; lime pointing & harling; and traditional roof coverings, amongst other relevant topics. A large number of local authorities throughout UK currently provide guidance on these subjects, in particular shopfront design to help protect and enhance their Conservation Areas.

5.6 Article 4 Direction

Article 4 Directions, which remove certain permitted development rights, already apply in the Banff Conservation Area. These should continue to be enforced to help prevent further loss of character. Under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 the planning authority can seek the approval of the Scottish Ministers for Directions that restrict development rights. These can be used to help the planning authority minimise inappropriate alterations to properties which would have a negative effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The standard Article 4 Directions were increased in 2005 for the Banff Conservation Area to further protect its character. The Directions do not prevent development within the Conservation Area, however any such works will require planning permission. Strong consideration will be given to the potential impacts any developments will have on the special character of the Conservation Area.

The parts and classes of Schedule 1 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 are detailed in Appendix III.

5.7 Grants & Funding - Banff Townscape Heritage Initiative

In May 2003, Banff was forwarded as a candidate for inclusion in the Heritage Lottery Fund's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme. Banff was approved as a 5-year THI project, beginning in 2007, and has also received funding through Historic Scotland Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS).

The aim of the project was to stimulate the rehabilitation of the historic core of the Banff Outstanding Conservation Area by restoring key historic properties which are in poor structural condition; infilling two gap sites in prominent locations; providing a facelift scheme for shop fronts; developing a small grant scheme to assist private property owners with the repair of their properties; and to implement a programme of upgrade of pedestrian areas in a manner sympathetic to the town's historic fabric. The economic downturn, combined with a fall in house prices and a reduction in public funding, have caused problems for the four main THI projects, two of which have been shelved. In their stead four new projects have been brought in, continuing the aims and objectives of the THI.

Major THI Projects

The first of the major projects to be completed under the THI was the restoration of a derelict townhouse at 2 Old Castlegate, and its conversion into two dwellings. The property is a three-storey, mid-18th century category B Listed townhouse in the centre of Banff, which had been neglected and abandoned for over a decade. It had also suffered de-stabilisation and structural damage over the years due to irregularities in the ground conditions. This was visible on the Old Castlegate frontage, where sizeable cracks and a bulge in the walls appeared, and at the back of the house, where lintels were cracked and movement in the wall could be seen.

With the help of the THI funding programme, the property underwent extensive restoration work including significant structural underpinning and tying; full restoration of the windows; full restoration of all internal doors; repairs to the roof and rainwater goods; removing the cement harl and re-harling the entire exterior in lime harl; cleaning and stabilising chimneys; repairing the main stair; repairing cornicing and skirting; and repairing lath and plaster sections. The property was also modernised internally, creating two unique dwellings appropriate for the modern housing market. Both dwellings were sold soon after completion of the project.

The work to replace the existing asbestos roof and repair the timber windows at Trend DIY, 6,8,10 Castle Street, was completed at the end of 2011. Funding was allocated to this deserving building after other major projects fell by the wayside, and it is hoped that this work will help to secure the future of not only the building but also to help retain a local business in a prominent location.

Three further major projects began work on site in mid-late 2011. These are the conversion of a former granary building, known locally as Gordon's Granaries, on Church Street into a flatted courtyard development containing 8 two and three bedroom flats; the insertion of a new residential property on a "gap site" at 36 Bridge Street; and the restoration of a partly disused building within the grounds of Banff Castle and its conversion for use as a Folklore Centre and café. All are progressing well.

Small Grant Scheme

The small grant scheme has been highly successful with a total of 61 small grants having been issued to both residential and commercial properties. The types of work which were eligible for small grants were: repair work to roofs; repair or replacement of traditional windows and doors; repairs to or reinstatement of chimneys and cast iron rainwater goods; repairs to lime harling and repointing; repairs to traditional shopfronts; and repairs or reinstatement of architectural features. The scheme was oversubscribed, and requests for grants continue to be made on a regular basis. However, property owners have reported difficulties in finding suitably qualified contractors willing and able to undertake the work to "Conservation Standards". Property owners within the Conservation Area could benefit from improved advice, as well as from more specific educational and/or training events highlighting the importance of maintaining traditional buildings. However, if contractors are not familiar with traditional building techniques then it can be difficult for owners to get work done to an appropriate standard. Equally, maintaining building using traditional techniques and materials is generally the more expensive option for property owners. As such, there would be

merit in re-introducing a small grant scheme, in conjunction with educational and training events for both owners and contractors, in the future.

Following the completion of the Banff THI project in 2012, it is likely that funding opportunities for the Banff Conservation Area will be limited. The area has already received Historic Scotland CARS funding as part of the THI project, therefore it would be more challenging to be successful in obtaining a further round of CARS money. There has also been a general decline in the funds available as a result of wider financial cuts. Additional funds for specific projects may be available in future from the Aberdeenshire Council Regeneration Fund, but as a grant has already been awarded from this fund to a project in Banff this cannot be guaranteed.

However, the ongoing economic difficulties facing Banff and other coastal communities have been recognised, and the area is included in the regeneration zone identified in the Aberdeen City & Shire joint Structure Plan, which runs from Fraserburgh to Portsoy. As such, Banff may be able to benefit from other funding sources from partnership agencies and organisations to assist redevelopment of the town centre.

5.8 Monitoring & Review

It is vital that a review cycle is established and upheld in order to give continuing support to the Conservation Area. It is also important that there is increased monitoring of the Conservation Area to prevent erosion of character through small-scale changes, and that the local community should be actively included in the monitoring and review process.

It is proposed that the Conservation Area should be monitored and maintained through observation, liaison and review.

Observation

A photographic survey of the Banff Conservation Area was undertaken in 1985/86, and has proved to be an invaluable resource to the THI officers in establishing where character has been lost. A new photographic survey will be carried out as part of the THI review process, a legacy which will be a vital future resource as a record of the both the details of the buildings and their condition. As a baseline for monitoring the Conservation Area, a photographic survey should be carried out every 5 – 10 years.

It is suggested that this archive is incorporated into the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service Digital Sites & Monuments Record, allowing the resource to be available to a wider audience.

In addition to photographic surveys, officers should visit the Conservation Area at regular intervals to check on the progress of any restoration and enhancement schemes and also observe any other works occurring which may be unauthorised.

Liaison

It is important that there is increased communication and interaction between the planning service and the local community. Educational and/or training days would be a useful way of introducing

property owners to the importance of maintaining their traditional properties. The involvement of local groups/organisations in the monitoring process would also be a positive step towards greater community engagement.

Review

The Conservation Area should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. It is suggested that a review of the Conservation Area should be undertaken every 5 years. In the past, reviews have not been carried out regularly, and it is clear that this has had a detrimental effect on the integrity of the Conservation Area.

A useful resource for the review process are planning statistics, which can be used to assess and monitor successes or failures in the planning system as well as highlighting development pressures. Development within the Conservation Area should not be prohibited, rather a key objective of the review process is to identify and enable future evolution and change as long as they are appropriately controlled.

5.9 Further Advice

For further advice on conservation areas, or for queries regarding this document, please contact the Environment Planners as detailed below.

Aberdeenshire Council
Planning & Building Services
Infrastructure Services
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
AB16 5GB

Tel: 0845 608 1207

Website: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

6 Appendices

Appendix I: List of Streets within Banff Outstanding Conservation Area

Appendix II: Planning Guidance and Policies

Appendix III: Article 4 Direction

Bibliography

Appendix I

List of streets within Banff Outstanding Conservation Area, as designated in 1973

A947	Fairs Cottage
A947	Linn Cottage
A947	The Linn
A947 / A98	Bridgend Garage
A947 / A98	Doune Cottage
A947 / A98	Douneside
Airlie Gardens	All Nos
Airlie Gardens	Deveronvale FC
Airlie Gardens	Duff House Gardens
Back Path	All Nos
Bartlet Place	All Nos
Battery Green	All Nos
Battery Green	Coastguard Station
Boyndie Street	6 to 12, 7 to 13
Braeheads	All Nos
Braeheads	St John's Masonic Hall
Bridge Road	All Nos
Bridge Street	All Nos
Bridge Street	Community Centre
Campbell Street	1 to 18, 30
Carmelite Street	All Nos
Carmelite Street	Car Park
Castle Lane	All Nos
Castle Street	All Nos
Castle Street	Banff Castle
Castle Street	Harvest Centre
Castle Street	Trinity Car Park
Castle Street	Trinity Church
Castle Street	War Memorial
Church Street	All Nos
Church Street	East Car Park
Church Street	West Car Park
Clunie Street	All Nos
Clunie Street	Chalmers Hospital
Coldhome Street	All Nos
Crown Court	All Nos
Deveronside	All Nos
Duff House	Barnyards
Duff House	Duff House

Duff House	Fife Gates Cottage
Duff House	Mausoleum
Duff House	Pavilion
Duff House	Royal Golf Club
Duff House	The Orchard
Duff House	Woodlands
Fife Street	All Nos
Gellymill Road	Macduff Manse
George Street	All Nos
Green Banks	All Units
Harbour Place	All Nos
High Shore	All Nos
High Shore	St Mary's Kirkyard
High Street	All Nos
High Street	Banff Parish Church
High Street	Banff Library & Museum
High Street	St Andrew's Church
Hill of Doune	Temple of Venus
Institution Terrace	1, 2
Institution Terrace	Old Banff School
Kingswell Lane	All Even Nos
Low Street	All Nos
Low Street	Collie Lodge
Low Street	Court House
Low Street	St Mary's Car Park
Low Street	Town House
North Castle Street	All Nos
Old Castlegate	All Nos
Old Market Place	All Nos
Palmers Cove	Engine Shed
Quayside	All Nos
Quayside	Banff Harbour
Quayside	Banff Harbour Car Park
Quayside	Harbour Office
Reid Street	All Nos
Sandyhills Gardens	3
Sandyhills Road	1 to 13
Sandyhills Road	Earlswood
Sandyhills Road	Fife Lodge Hotel
Sandyhills Road	Northwinds
Sandyhills Road	St Helier
Sandyhills Road	The Bungalow
Sandyhills Road	Valhalla

Sandyhills Road	Woodstock
Seafield Street	2 to 6
Seafield Street	Athole Cottage
Seafield Street	Boys Brigade Hall
Sheriffs Brae	All Nos
St Catherine Street	1 to 45, 2
Strait Path	All Nos
Stuart Lane	All Even Nos
Stuart Street	All Even Nos
Temple View	All Nos
Walker Avenue	All Odd Nos
Water Lane	All Nos
Water Path	All Nos

Appendix II

Planning Guidance & Policies

Planning guidance on Conservation Areas and Listed Building issues are defined nationally by the Scottish Executive, and at local level in the Aberdeenshire Council Local Plan (in process of being adopted, 2011), and the Aberdeen City & Shire Structure Plan (2009).

National Guidance

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 is the primary statutory instrument.

Additional Scottish Executive publications:

Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas 1998 – Provides guidance on legislation and policy, and detailed advice on architectural features.

National Planning Policy Guidance 18 Planning and the Historic Environment sets out the planning policies in relation to the historic environment with a view to its protection, conservation and enhancement. Central to the Government's approach is the need to secure preservation whilst accommodating and remaining responsive to present day needs.

Scottish Planning Policy 20 Role of Architecture and Design - Scotland Draws together and reinforces the Executive's published design policy commitments and sets out the role of Architecture and Design Scotland.

Designing Places - The first policy statement on designing places in Scotland Sets out the policy context for important areas of planning policy, design guidance, professional practice, and education and training.

Planning Advice Note 71 Conservation Area Management Complements existing advice on the management of conservation areas identifies good practice, sets out a checklist for appraising conservation areas and advice on funding and implementation.

Strategic Guidance

The Aberdeen City & Shire Structure Plan 2009 recognises that the quality of life of communities will be improved by, amongst other things, conservation led regeneration and the enhancement of the historic environment. The Plan also contains a presumption in favour of safeguarding the quality and extent of identified environmental resources, including Category A Listed buildings and scheduled historic and designed landscapes.

Local Plan Policies and Guidance

Decisions on applications for planning permission and listed building consent and other planning matters requires to be made in accordance with the policies in the approved local plan (currently), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant policies are summarised below.

Policy Env\17: Conservation Areas

All designated Conservation Areas shall be protected against any development, including change

of use, that would have a detrimental effect on their special character or setting, by the refusal of planning permission or conservation area consent. New development wholly or partly within Conservation Areas must be of the highest quality, and respect and enhance the architectural and visual qualities that give rise to their actual or proposed designation. All proposals must follow the Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Historic Scotland).

Policy Env\18: Listed Buildings

All Listed Buildings or structures contained in the statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for Aberdeenshire shall be protected against any works which would have a detrimental effect on their listed character, integrity or setting by the refusal of listed building consent and/or planning permission. Alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings or new developments within their curtilage must be of the highest quality, respect the original structure in terms of setting, scale, design and materials and conform to Appendix 4. The Council will encourage the protection, maintenance, enhancement, active use and conservation of Listed Buildings. In principle, the Council will be sympathetic to applications, which demonstrate satisfactorily that the proposed development is essential to securing the best viable use of the Listed Building without undermining its architectural or historic character or its setting. Where a listed building is seriously at risk of imminent collapse or of further decay, then the merits of some enabling development will be considered where:

- a) the owner has exhausted all possibilities of grant aid assistance;
- b) it is demonstrated satisfactorily that the proposed development is essential to secure the preservation of the Listed Building;
- c) such development is the minimum required to enable the building's restoration
- d) any such development will not undermine the building's architectural or historic character or its setting;
- e) the applicant can demonstrate he has no other opportunities for enabling development under other policies of the plan on that or any related site; AND
- f) the enabling development is tied to the renovation of the listed building through a Section 75 agreement, ensuring that funds raised are successfully channelled into the conservation of the building/ buildings to which the enabling development relates.

Appendix III

Article 4 Direction (abridged list of directions)

Part 1: Development within the curtilage of a dwelling house

Class 1: The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house

Class 3: The provision within the curtilage of a dwelling house of any building or enclosure, swimming pool or other pool required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house, or the maintenance, improvement or alteration of such a building and enclosure.

Class 6: The installation, alteration or replacement of satellite antennae on a dwelling house.

Part 2: Sundry minor operations

Class 7: The erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure.

Class 8: The formation, laying out and construction of a means of access to a road which is not a trunk road or a classified road, where access is required in connection with development permitted by any class in the schedule other than class 7.

Class 9: The stone cleaning or painting of the exterior of any building or works

Part 4: Temporary buildings and uses

Class 14: The provision on land of buildings, movable structures, works, plant or machinery required temporarily in connection with and for the duration of operations being or to be carried out on, in, under or over that land or on land adjoining that land.

Class 15: The use of land for any purpose, except as a caravan site or an open air market, on not more than 28 days in total in any calendar year.

Part 8: Industrial and warehouse development

Class 23: The extension of additional or replacement plant machinery

Class 24: Development carried out on industrial land for the purposes of an industrial process.

Class 25: The creation of a hard surface within the curtilage of an industrial or private way of works required for the maintenance or improvement of the road or way.

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