

Kirktown of Fetteresso



Proposed Conservation Area

Appraisal

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition of a Conservation Area

Conservation Areas were first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 provides the current legislative framework for the designation of conservation areas.

A Conservation Area is defined as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

All planning authorities are required by the Act to determine which parts of their area merit conservation area status. Aberdeenshire currently has 36 Conservation Areas varying in character from central Stonehaven to the small coastal settlement of Pennan.

1.2 What does Conservation Area Status mean?

In a Conservation Area it is the buildings and the spaces between them that are of architectural or historical interest. Therefore it is important to maintain the integrity of the entire area and enhance its special character. Conservation area status affords greater control over development. However this does not mean that new development is unacceptable. Care must be taken to ensure that new development will not damage the appearance or character of the area.

1.3 Purpose of a Conservation Area Appraisal

The purpose of the Kirktown of Fetteresso Conservation Area Appraisal is to identify the area’s special features and interest, and to delineate its boundaries. It should also provide a vital tool to assist the active management of the area by providing the context for the assessment of development proposals, and identifying opportunities and priorities for enhancement.

It is recognised that the successful management of conservation areas can only be achieved with the support and input from all stakeholders, and in particular local residents and property owners. Comments and suggestions received at the draft appraisal stage will therefore be reviewed and incorporated into the final document following consultation with all interested parties.

The appraisal should be regarded as supplementary guidance to the policies set out in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

1.4 Proposed Designation

Kirktown of Fetteresso Conservation Area was proposed, and a boundary identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan, which was adopted in 2006.

2.0 LOCATION

2.1 Geographical Context



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Kirktown of Fetteresso is located in the Parish of Fetteresso, in Kincardine and Mearns, the most southerly of the six administrative areas of Aberdeenshire. Located just west of the town of Stonehaven, it consists of a historic kirk and kirkyard and 11 houses which form a picturesque 18th century grouping. The principal buildings are primarily located between two flows of water, the Carron Water to the south and the Cheyne Burn to the north.

Some half a mile to the west, with policies adjacent to the village, stands Fetteresso Castle. The East Lodge and entrance gates to the castle are located on the northern edge of the village.

3.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Early History

Located, at the heart of the village of Kirktown of Fetteresso is the surviving ruin of the 17th Century rebuild of the much earlier medieval church of St Ciaran's. St Ciaran was an Irish monk who lived from AD 515 to AD 548. He was a missionary to the Picts and was best known for being the founding Abbot of Clonmacnoise Monastery, the remains of which can still be found in County Offaly, Ireland, on the banks of the River Shannon, south of Athlone.

The church was dedicated in AD 1246 by Bishop David de Bernham, the Bishop of St Andrews. The church was considered to be the "mother church" of the chapels of Cowie and Dunnottar. Inconveniently sited on a knoll above the Carron water at the extreme south of the parish, it suggests the re-use of an earlier sacred site, although no Pictish symbol stones are known from here.

The medieval church plan was longer than the existing ruin and there was no north aisle. The roof would have been thatched and had an earthen floor.

3.2 18th Century

In 1720 the north aisle was added to the Kirk, closely followed by the birdcage bellcote in 1737. By then, in addition to the rebuilt church, a picturesque village grouping was beginning to establish, which included the Old Inn, Old School House, kirkyard, and bridges. The area to the east of the grouping at this time lay open down to the banks of the Cheyne Burn.



Roy Military Survey of Scotland 1747-1755
Reproduced by permission of the National Gallery of Scotland



Reconstruction of service in Old Kirk, late 18th C.



Reconstruction of the Old Kirk and Kirkton, late 18th C



John Thomson's Atlas of Scotland 1832
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3.3 19th Century

Examinations of Ordnance Survey maps illustrate very little change to the settlement layout during the 19th Century. However, in terms of garden ground there appears to be a less formalised structure and more freedom of public movement between dwellings and gardens. This layout would suit pedestrian movement and access to, and along, both the river banks.



*First Edition OS Map – Kirktown of Fetteresso, 1865
Reproduced by permission of the National Gallery of Scotland*

Stonehaven Railway Station was opened in November 1849. In addition to its significance to the expansion of Stonehaven and the surrounding area, the construction of the railway had a marked impact on the Indscape setting of the Kirktown.

3.4 20th Century

On the east side of the village there has been some modern infill, and many of the original residences demonstrate 20th Century additions; this is more noticeable on the small cottage style properties that back on to the River Carron. To the west of the village the original buildings depicted on old maps have been replaced by two modern bungalows.

4.0 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

4.1 Setting and Topography

The landscape of the area is mildly undulating, with the village grouping nestling down unobtrusively between the banks of the Carron Water and the Cheyne Burn. Only the kirkyard sits slightly elevated on a grassy knoll. As you exit the village in a southerly direction there is a sharp incline up Feathers Brae.

4.2 Views

The topography and layout of the village does not allow for many long distance views within the proposed Conservation Area. The Kirk, because of its location on the grassy knoll, can be seen throughout the village with the bellcote being quite notable on the skyline, giving the Kirk and kirkyard a significant presence when travelling through the village. The railway is a dominant feature in the landscape and views of the railway viaducts can also be caught when looking to the south. Glimpses of the village can be viewed from Feathers Brae and from the driveway leading up to Fetteresso Castle.



View looking north east from the Feathers Brae



View looking south east to Kirktown of Fetteresso from Fetteresso Castle access road

When approaching from the south under the railway line, crossing the Carron Water, the 20th Century additions to the row of cottage buildings located on the north bank of the river impact upon views of the Kirk. Also approaching from this direction glimpses of Fetteresso Castle can be captured when the vegetation is not in full growth.



View looking west to Fetteresso Castle when approaching the village from the south

The views within the proposed Conservation Area vary upon actual locality but overall the scale and meandering pattern of the layout gives a sense of enclosure, each step travelled provides a fresh glimpse of what's ahead. The village demonstrates both intimacy and variety in its appearance.

4.3 Gateways

The village can only be accessed from Toucks Road, which runs through it's centre. The public road crosses two stone bridges, between which the core of the village lies. The bridge over the Cheyne Burn dates from the 18th century and takes the form of a small single segmental arch constructed in rubble. Fetteresso Bridge, over the Carron Water, also dates from the 18th century with evidence of later widening having taken place. Fetteresso Bridge is constructed of two segmental arches with a cutwater detail on the up stream side, designed to split the water between the two arches and break up any ice in the winter months. Both the bridges are Category B Listed on The Scottish Ministers' Lists of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest.



Bridge over the Cheyne Burn



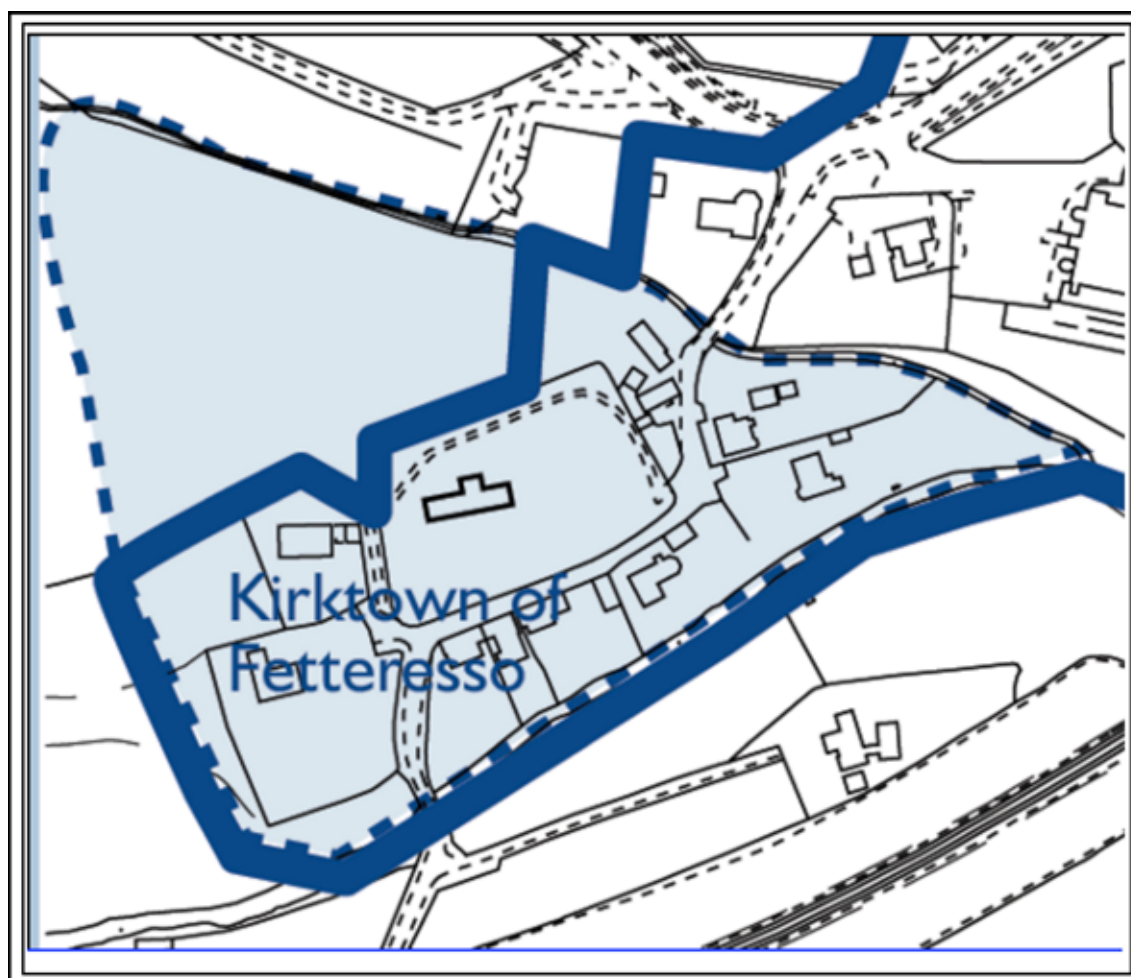
Bridge over the Carron Water

4.4 Boundaries and Edges

An important element of the Conservation Area appraisal is an assessment of its boundaries. The Conservation Area boundary should be properly defined.

Where the designated area starts and stops is a vital aspect in understanding its value in terms of form and character.

The proposed boundary indicated in the 2006 Aberdeenshire Local Plan forms a triangular shape, with the northern and southern edges following the line of the two water courses. The third side of the triangle is less clearly defined as it crosses the field between the two rivers some 50m to the west of the kirkyard.



- ■ ■ ■ Proposed Conservation Area
- Settlement Boundary

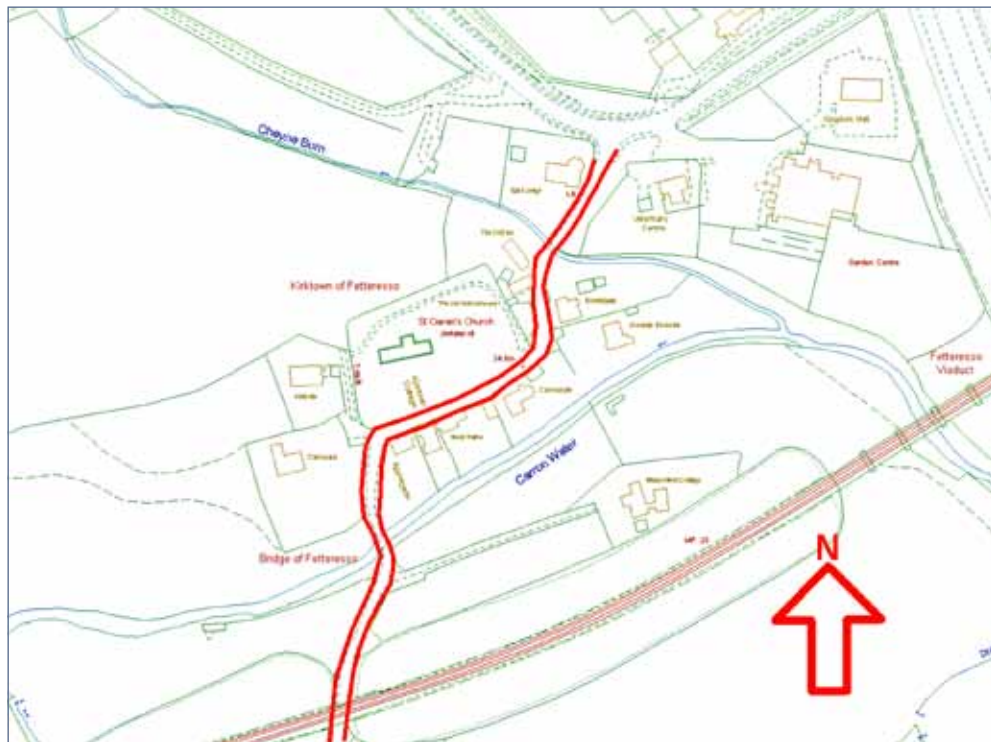
Proposed Conservation Area – Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2006

4.5 Street Pattern

The original pattern, of a narrow single road winding through the village, has remained unaltered primarily due to the restrictive nature of the rivers and crossing points.



View looking east along the public road which runs through the centre of the village



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4.6 Plot Pattern

There is a considerable variance in the size and orientation of land holdings within Kirkton of Fetteresso. The variety of building forms within the village is evidence of the physical evolution of the village and restrictions imposed by both natural features of rivers and slope and by historic structures such as the kirkyard and the road. Later 19th Century expansion and modern infill tend to be set back from the road and have larger plots. The changing plot pattern is an important physical record of the settlement's evolution.

4.7 Buildings and Townscape

The fundamental character of the village is largely derived from the 4 Category B Listed buildings, not including the two Category B Listed bridges noted above. All the buildings and architectural detailing, with the exception of the Kirk, are essentially of a domestic scale which induces a distinctly "village like" atmosphere. As a result St Ciaran's Kirk becomes the most striking building within the grouping.

The Category B Listed Kirk, which is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is sited on a steep knoll above the Carron Water to the south and the Cheyne Burn to the north. The form that now remains would have created a T-shaped preaching Kirk. The Kirk's 18th Century bellcote can be viewed from throughout the village. In 2004, under Aberdeenshire's Historic Kirkyards Project, St Ciaran's underwent a programme of repair, consolidation and conservation.



The Kirk is surrounded by a kirkyard, the final resting place for over 200 burials. There are many fine examples of dedication poems to be found in St Ciaran's Kirkyard.

The Category B Listed boundary wall probably dates from the 18th Century. It is constructed from rubble and averages 1.8 metres in height. The wall is a very strong feature in the streetscape, defining one side of the main street.

Adjacent to the kirkyard is located the Old Kirkton Inn, described in Historic Scotland's Lists as an 18th Century coaching inn. The building is two-storey, with single storey wing, rubble walling and characterised by its steeply pitched pantile roof. It is Category B Listed.

Next to the Old Inn lies another Category B Listed building. The Old School House is also a two-storey building with steeply pitched pantile roof dating back to the 18th Century. This building has had a later addition of a porch added to the front of the building which faces south.

The strong traditional form and finishes of these two buildings make a significant contribution to the special character of the village.



The peripheral edge of the village to the south west is dominated by 20th Century architecture, a considerable change to the traditional style and layout of the historical village.



4.8 Building Materials

The traditional materials found in the proposed Conservation Area help to define the special character of the Kirktown. Clay pantiles, sandstone walls and lime mortar are of particular importance but other materials including slate, harl render, cast iron and timber also contribute to the character.

Modern materials are also found in the proposed Conservation Area. The use of UPVC, dry dash render, aluminium, concrete and synthetic stone can be out of character and may be potentially harmful to the character of the historic village.

4.9 Open Space

With the exception of the Old Kirkyard, which is open to the public, there is no public open space within Kirktown of Fetteresso. There are areas of privately owned open space to the west and south of the village. These areas appear to be primarily used as horse paddocks with makeshift shelter constructions in each.



4.10 Trees

There are two main treed areas within Kirktown of Fetteresso both of which are located in the riparian zones of the Cheyne Burn and the Carron Water. These areas are both similar in that they are primarily a broadleaved mix including alder, elm, sycamore, ash and willow. There is also a significant grouping of conifers within the grounds of East Lodge, which form a treed back drop to the Old Kirk.

Other mature trees within the settlement are of significance and contribute to the setting and character of Kirktown of Fetteresso.

4.11 Traffic and Movement

Although a through route, Toucks Road is predominantly used to access farms and properties in the surrounding countryside, and therefore traffic is not heavy through the village. However, as there are no formalised pedestrian footpaths, pedestrian activity and movement is also restricted. Sharp bends limit vision and high roadside walls give a closed in feel.

4.12 Activities/Uses

The village of Kirktown of Fetteresso today has a role of a dormitory settlement. There are currently no services provided within the village. The historic kirkyard is no longer used for burials. However, as a result of Aberdeenshire's Historic Kirkyards Project, an information panel has now been erected at the site and tourists and visitors are welcome and encouraged.

4.13 Condition

The overall condition of the village is good. Property and land is well maintained, generally enhancing the area.

4.14 Townscape Detail

The presence of the following features contribute to the cohesiveness of the area and its special interest.

- Traditional roof pitches and materials
- Traditional materials such as clay pantiles, sandstone walls and lime mortar
- Traditional features such as chimney stacks, stone boundary walls, cast iron railings and metal sky lights

4.15 Public Realm

Roads are surfaced with tarmacadam, street lighting is standard and of modern appearance, and overhead electricity lines cross the street. There is no amenity planting or street furniture.

5.0 CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

5.1 Introduction

Having examined the streetscape of the proposed Conservation Area it is possible to identify those features which contribute to its character and appearance as an area of special architectural and historic interest.

5.2 Key Features

The historical and architectural interest of Kirktown of Fetteresso devolves from its special character as a very small traditional Kirktown defined by the kirk and kirkyard, an informal group of traditional houses, and its low lying position in a rolling agricultural and treed landscape contained by the Carron Water and the railway line.

5.3 Key Challenges

The character of this very small traditional Kirktown has been maintained despite its proximity to Stonehaven. Although there has been a significant amount of 20th Century building in the village, and use of modern materials which have diminished its character to some extent, the scale and design of the modern developments could be regarded as neutral in terms of their impact on the special character of the area. However there is a danger that, over time, the character of the settlement will be changed by gradual additions and alterations more appropriate to a modern settlement, and potentially harmful to the long term conservation of the village.

The main challenges in terms of managing change in the proposed Conservation Area relate to:-

- The retention, repair and maintenance of traditional buildings and of the original historic fabric, architectural detailing and materials such as chimney pots, stone and wet harled finishes, original doors and windows.
- The protection and enhancement of the historic Kirk and kirkyard and of the village's historic setting.
- The control of minor modifications such as inappropriate replacement doors and windows, and the erection of poorly designed or sited elements such as garages or satellite dishes.

6.0 BOUNDARY

6.1 Amendments to proposed boundary

Consideration had been given to restricting the designated area to the historic core of the village, with the kirkyard wall, and the two rivers delineating much of the boundary. However it is felt that this would not properly reflect the setting of the Conservation Area nor adequately protect the important views to and from the settlement and the special features and character of the historic core. Therefore following public consultation and discussions with Historic Scotland amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area are proposed.

In order to ensure that the boundaries to the proposed Conservation Area are well defined and provide a robust defensible edge to the designated area existing features such as roads and riverbanks have been used to delineate the boundary wherever possible. Where this has not been possible or appropriate other visual breaks such as a significant change in slope have been used. In the absence of any such features the boundary has been drawn as a straight line between two fixed points.

To the west and north it is proposed to take a straight more clearly defined line along the periphery of the residential feus, and then across the field to where the access road to Fetteresso Castle crosses the Cheyne Burn. The boundary would then follow the line of the access road south to its junction with the public road, and the main access into the village.

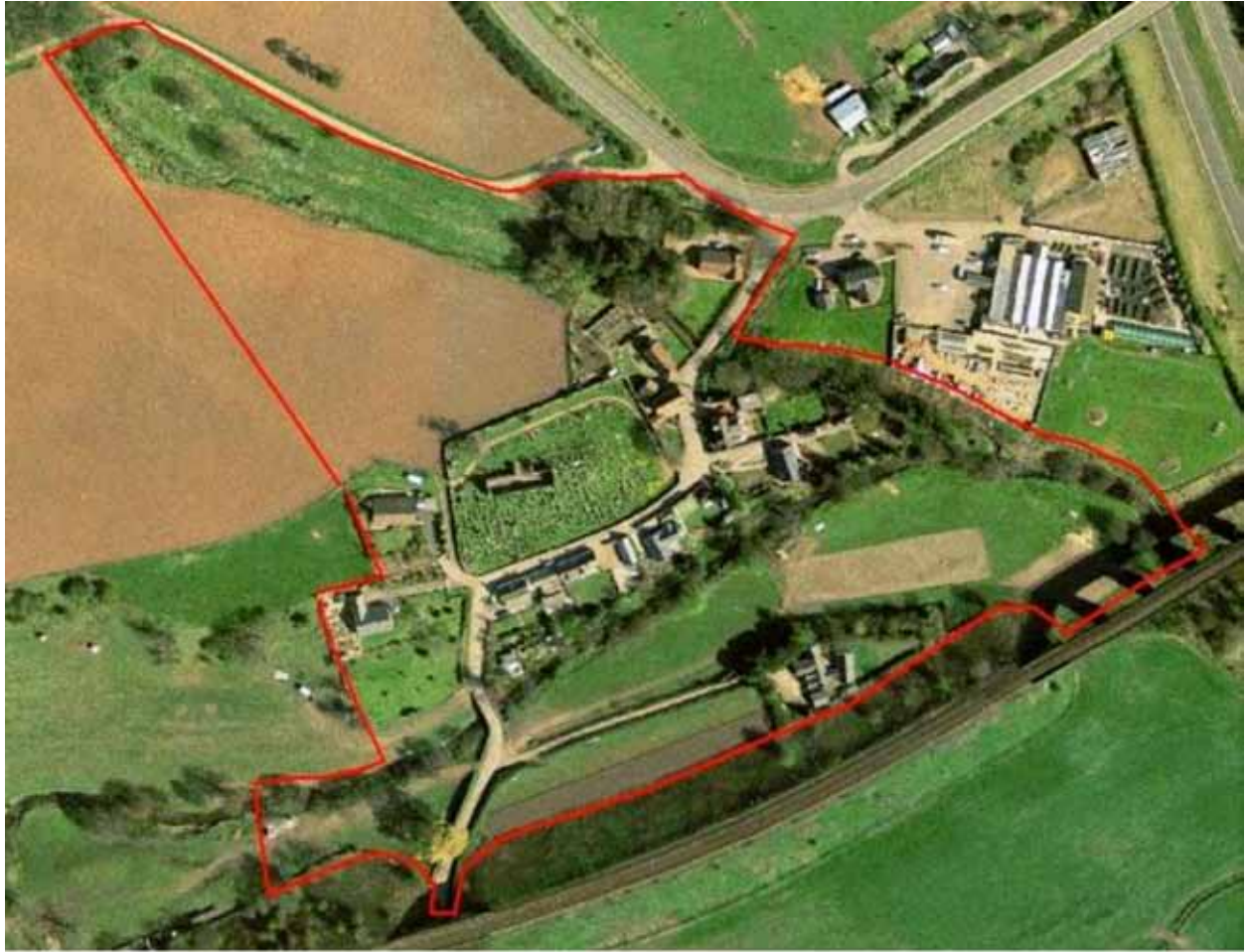
It is proposed to encompass the building and lands associated with East Lodge. The Lodge although redeveloped, is not unsympathetic and the building and gated entrance provides a very clear physical and visual entrance to the historic village. Inclusion of the property and associated land will also protect the significant trees there, which form an important visual backdrop to the village.



The boundary of the designated area would continue along the river below the Veterinary Centre and the Garden Centre. The northern bank of the river, which bounds these business premises, would be included within the Conservation Area, in order to protect the trees on the river bank there.



To the south the boundary would extend to the railway embankment which helps to define the Kirktown and contributes to the sense of place. It would include the field adjacent to the Carron Water and Mansefield Cottage. The southern boundary would also extend slightly west of the railway bridge to encompass the area of land and existing structures adjacent to the road.



Kirktown of Fetteresso Proposed Conservation Area : Aerial View

7.0 Preservation and Enhancement

7.1 Introduction

The close proximity of Kirktown of Fetteresso to Stonehaven and to the A90 will no doubt add pressure for development. If a Conservation Area is designated a Conservation Management Strategy is required. The strategy should address the potential pressure for further development based on safeguarding its special architectural and historic interest as a small secluded traditional Kirktown.

The strategy should provide a proactive approach to managing change within the Conservation Areas. Where appropriate, community planning, and other infrastructure and amenity projects and plans should be incorporated.

The application of planning policies through Development Management, the provision of information and advice to encourage sympathetic repair and maintenance, and a sympathetic approach to public works and community projects are all important management tools in the preservation of the area's unique character.

7.2 Policies

Policies for the protection of the character and amenity of Conservation Areas exist at both National and Local Government level. At national level in Scottish Planning Policy and Scottish Historic Environment Policy and at local level through Development Plans.

The policies against which development proposals will be assessed are contained within the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan and the associated Supplementary Guidance which was adopted on 1 June 2012. Development

Plan Policies, Supplementary Guidance and Planning Advice will be used to determine applications, guide enforcement action, and advise members of the public on how best to alter their properties.

There are no sites within the proposed Conservation Area identified for development in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. However, existing buildings, gap sites and areas of land within the area could be the subject of development proposals.

There is a presumption against any development, including change of use or demolition, which would have a detrimental effect on the special character or setting of a Conservation Area.

7.3 Development Management

The day to day work of Development Management provides a primary means to implement policies for preservation and enhancement within Conservation Areas. Only proposals that preserve and/or enhance the character and appearance of a Conservation Area should be approved.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011 came into effect in February 2011. The Order extended restrictions on development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse within a Conservation Area.

Conservation Area designation automatically brings the following works under planning control:-

- Alterations or extensions to a dwelling house or flat, including any alterations or extension to the roof
- Stone cleaning or painting of the exterior
- Provision of hard surfaces and restrictions on the size of decked areas or raised platforms
- Additional control over satellite dishes and installation of domestic micro-generation equipment
- Close circuit television cameras
- Additional control over demolition
- Tighter restrictions on the size of extensions to dwelling houses, which may be erected without consent
- Development of sheds, garages and solar panels within curtilage
- Gates, fences, walls and other means of enclosure

Other minor developments are not automatically restricted. If it is considered that such minor alterations will cumulatively have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area the Local Authority could seek to introduce additional controls. These are known as Article 4 Directions and would be promoted by the Council and confirmed by the Scottish Government. Any works included in the Article 4 Direction would need planning permission. Where a development would, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, affect the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, the application for planning permission will be advertised in the local press providing an opportunity for public comment. Views expressed are taken into account by the Planning Authority when making a decision on the application.

A list of classes of permitted development which the Council could make the subject of an Article 4 Direction is appended to this appraisal.

7.4 Protecting Buildings and Features of Merit.

The Kirktowns special architectural and historic character should be promoted to help raise awareness of its historical and cultural interest.

It is also important to raise awareness of the value of architectural and historic detail such as building materials, windows, doors and traditional roof finishes which all add considerably to the area's distinct local identity. The value of small items such as stone steps and chimney pots is often overlooked. Owners and those responsible for their upkeep will be provided with advice and assistance.

The removal, alteration, demolition and redevelopment of buildings, features or areas which do not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the proposed Conservation Area will be encouraged.

Focal points, views and vistas which have been created by the historic street pattern and the topography should be protected and enhanced. The character of the open spaces and habitats on the approaches to and around the boundaries of the proposed Conservation Area should also be given careful consideration.

7.5 Works in the Public Realm

There may also be potential to enhance the Conservation Area by careful management of works carried out in the public realm. This could include:-

- Assessing the requirements for pedestrian and vehicular traffic and for residents and visitor access.
- Reviewing the design of road surfaces and public space to provide co-ordinated, safe and attractive features appropriate to the surroundings.
- Under grounding of electricity and telephone cables to improve visual amenity and remove discordant features from the historic streetscape.
- A more sympathetic approach to street lighting to reflect its special character and enhance the amenity of the area.

7.6 Monitoring & Review

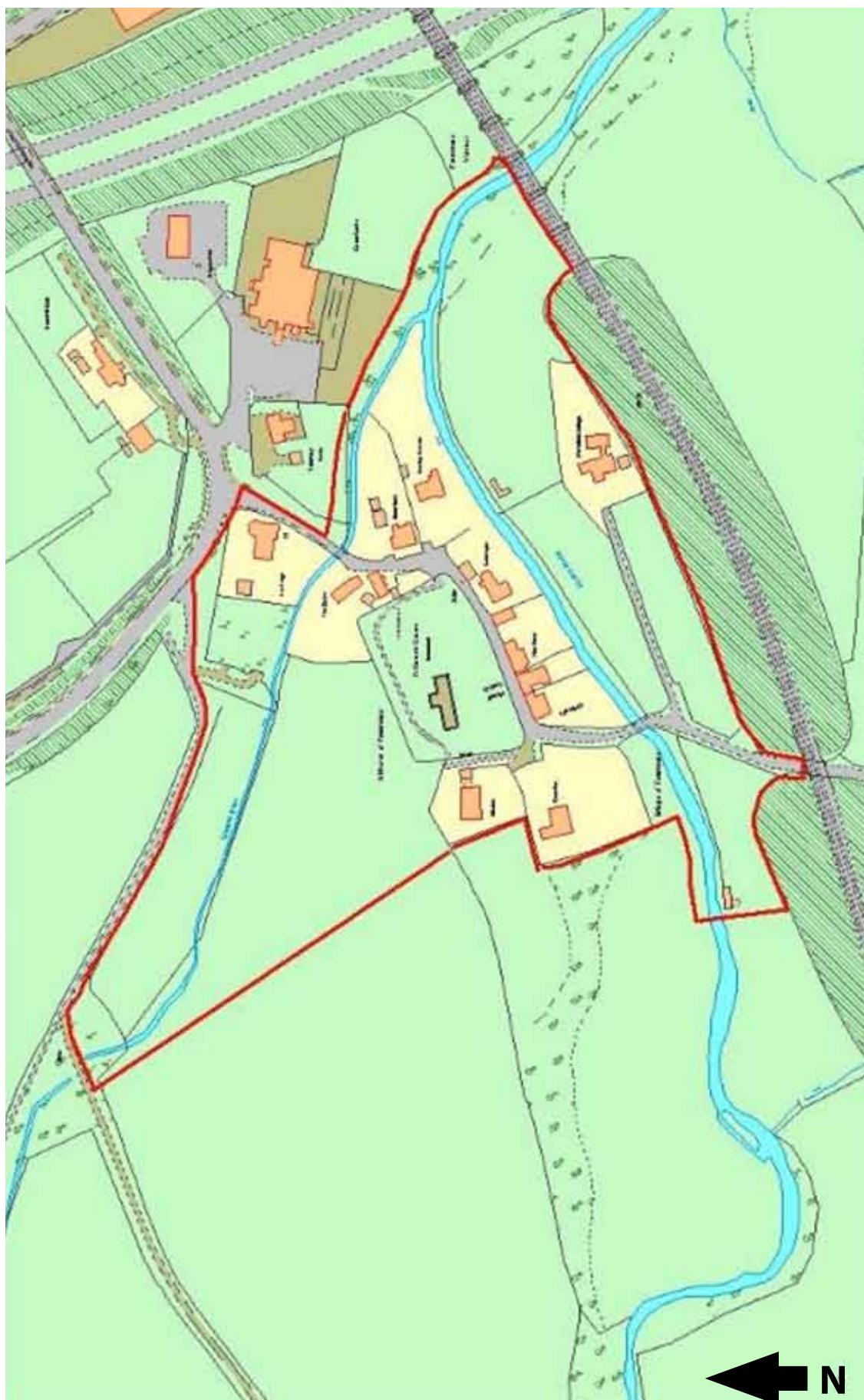
Legislation provides for the regular appraisal of Conservation Areas, which may result in new Article 4 Directions, supplementary guidance or planning advice.

REFERENCES

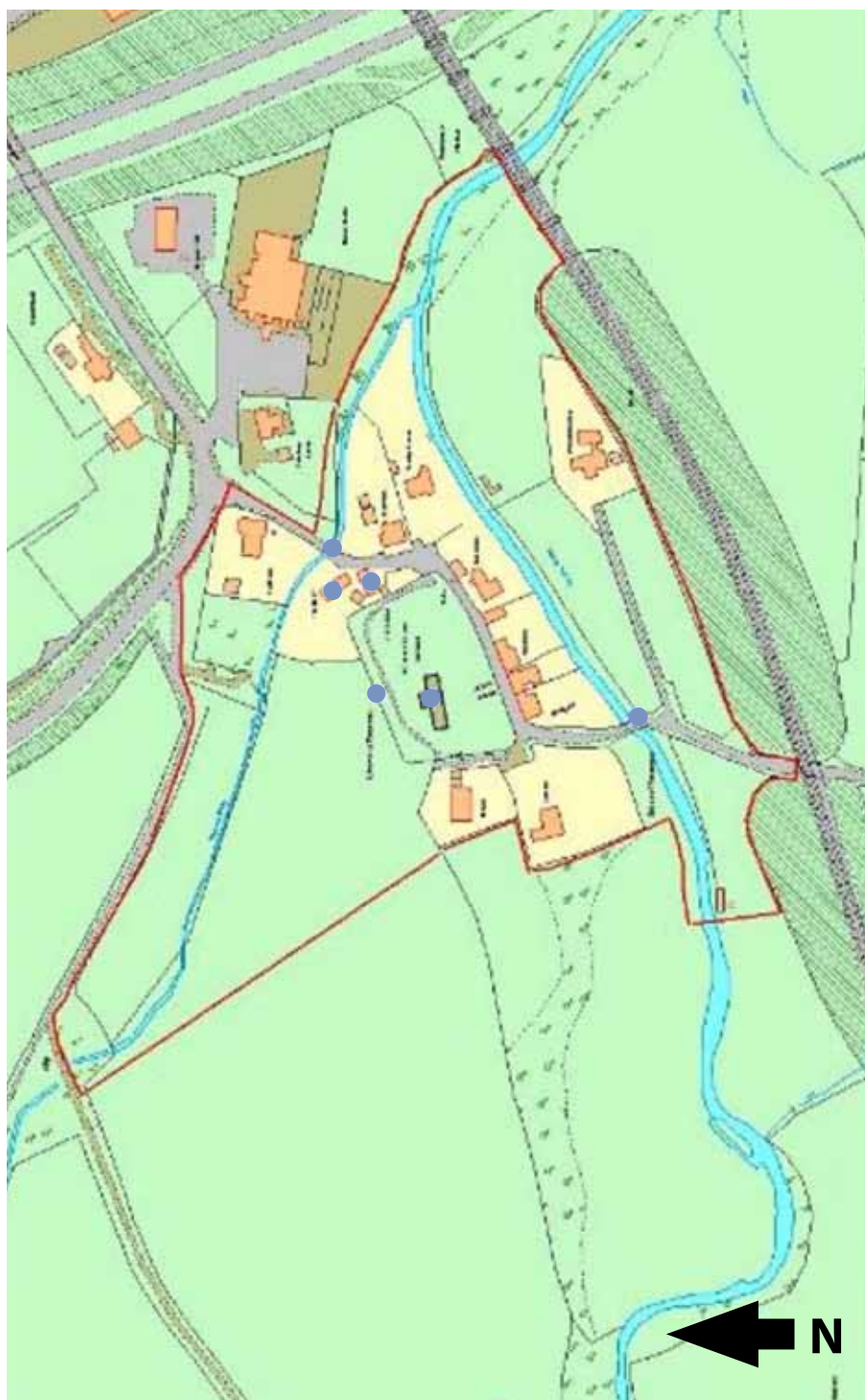
Aberdeenshire Council : Aberdeenshire's Historic Kirkyards

St Ciaran's Kirkyard, Fetteresso

Appendix 1 Boundaries



Appendix 2 : Listed Buildings



	Category	Reference	Date Listed
Fetteresso Old Parish Kirk**	B	9365	18.08.72
Kirkyard Walls, Old Parish Kirk	B	9366	18.08.72
Old Kirkton Inn	B	9367	18.08.72
House South of Old Kirkton Inn	B	9368	18.08.72
Kirkton Inn Bridge over Cheyne Burn	B	9369	18.08.72
Fetteresso Bridge over Carron Water	B	9370	18.08.72
** also a Scheduled Monument			

Appendix 3: Summary of extra controls which could be sought by means of Article 4 Directions

Class 3	Extend restrictions to include buildings of any scale within the curtilage of a dwelling house
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.
Class 9	The stone cleaning or painting of the exterior of any building or works
Class 20	Works required in connection with the improvement or maintenance of watercourses or land drainage works.
Class 27	Works required for the maintenance or improvement of a private road or way.
Class 28	Works for the purposes of inspecting, repairing or renewing any sewer, main, pipe, cable or other apparatus, including breaking open any land for that purpose.
Class 30	Development by a local authority required in the exercise of their functions including lamp standards, refuse bins, public shelters and similar structures.
Class 31	Works carried out by a roads authority required for or incidental to the maintenance or improvement of the road.
Class 38	Water undertakings, including the laying of underground mains, pipes or other apparatus;
Class 39	Development by a public gas supplier required for the purposes of its undertaking and including the laying of underground mains, pipes or other apparatus.
Class 40	Electricity Undertakings – Development by statutory undertakers for the generation, transmission or supply of electricity for the purposes of their undertaking and including the installation or replacement in, on, over or under land of an electric line.

**** For full details of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order visit :-**

www.legislation.gov.uk

