



From mountain to sea

Udny Green

Conservation Area Management Plan

July 2023

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is a conservation area?

Conservation areas were first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 defines conservation areas as.

‘An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

Aberdeenshire currently has over 40 conservation areas varying in character from central Stonehaven to the small coastal settlement of Pennan.

1.2 What is the purpose of a Conservation Area Management Plan?

Udny Green was formally designated as a conservation area in 1980. During this process a Conservation Area Appraisal was produced identifying what was significant about the townscape qualities and appearance of the settlement. This document has now been updated.

The Conservation Area Management Plan builds on this document to give guidance on what the designation means; what permissions may be required before carrying out works; and essentially the policy and guidance on how to undertake works to a property.

Designation means that the local community and the local authority have agreed that the appearance of the settlement warrants a special protection. This protection is achieved by removing or reducing permitted development rights (development that can be carried out without applying for consent) so that changes can be positively managed through the planning process and so the community has the opportunity to comment on applications.

This document is intended to be of value in providing guidance to property owners on the ongoing care of their properties; to their agents on how traditional buildings may be sensitively altered; to contractors in providing technical guidance on works to traditional buildings; to developers when considering investing in projects; and to Development Management Officers in the assessment of developments that fall within the boundary.

1.3 Why did Udny Green become a conservation area?

Gordon District Council originally proposed that the centre of the village should be designated a Conservation Area in the Gordon District Local Plan in 1980. As its name suggests, the settlement has the appearance of a traditional cluster of buildings around the village green – not a particularly common form of development in the north-east of Scotland. For this reason, the village has a very individual character quite different from other settlements in this area, and although some of the

buildings are relatively recent additions, the overall layout remains largely unaltered from the original settlement form.

1.4 Buildings and spaces identified by the community as important

This section will be filled in during the consultation process to understand what the community feel is important about the settlement.



2 Planning policy context

To give some background to planning. Applications for any form of development or redevelopment are assessed based on planning policies. This section covers the national and local policies which shape how planning applications, which impact on the historic environment, are assessed through the planning process.

2.1 National and Local Strategies, Plans and Advice

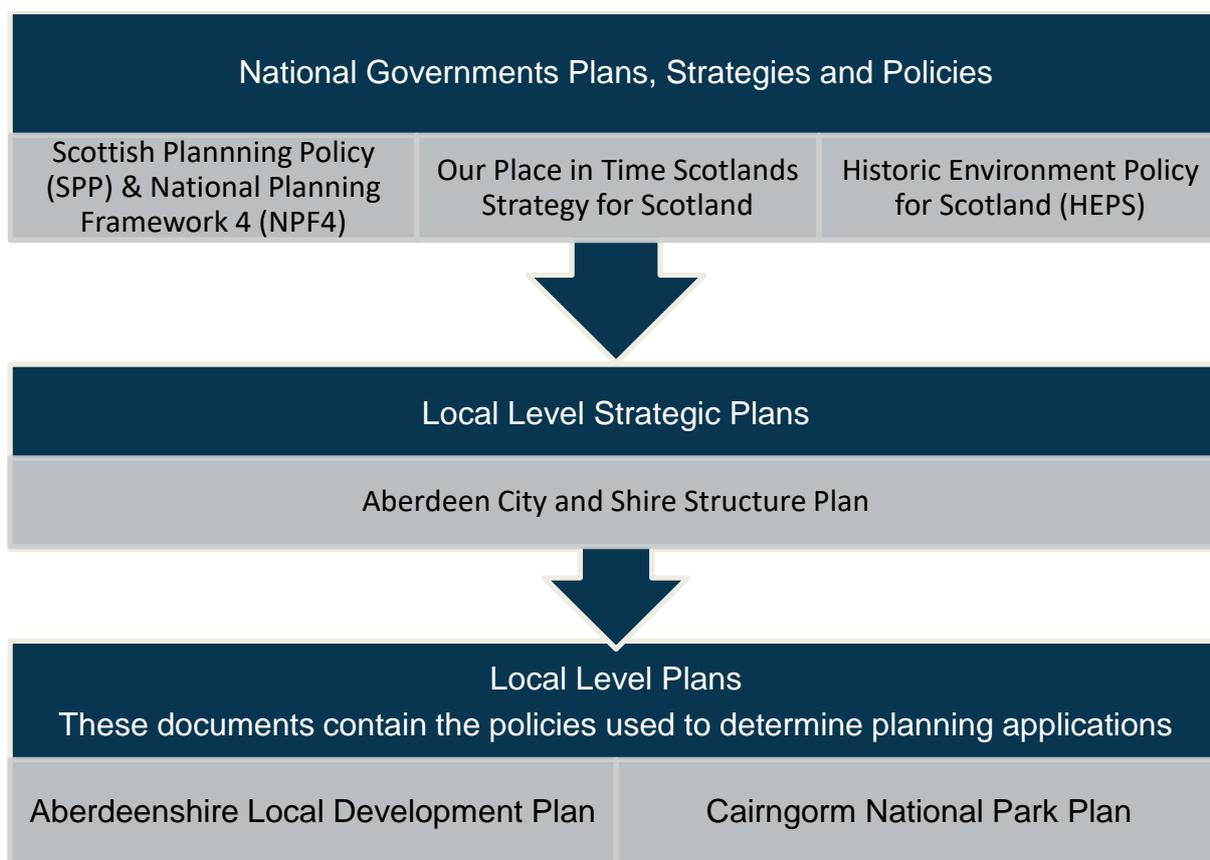


Table 1 – National and local strategies and plans



Table 2 – Planning advice which supports national and local strategies and plans

2.2 Aberdeenshire Council's historic environment policy

The historic environment policies applied to planning applications for change in a conservation area are held within the most up to date Aberdeenshire or Cairngorm National Park Local Development Plan.

2.3 Aberdeenshire Council's Built Heritage Strategy

Aberdeenshire Council recognises that protecting and improving the historic environment is important to the distinctiveness and sense of place within Aberdeenshire. Local history helps create a clear identity for the area and strengthens connections between people and places. The historic environment is important to the character of the area and to the quality of life of the people who live here, it is an economic asset to the area.

The Historic Environment Team within Aberdeenshire Council not only assist with the management of development through the planning process. They are also involved in a wide range of work promoting, protecting, and enhancing built heritage. The full range of the Historic Environment Team's work is detailed in the most up to date Built Heritage Strategy.

<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/built-heritage-strategy>

3 Additional controls within the Udny Green Conservation Area

3.1 Additional controls in a conservation area

It is not always large change but small incremental changes that can be damaging to our most attractive settlements. For example, the replacement of doors and windows, the erection of gates, fences, garages, sheds, porches, storage tanks, the installation of satellite antennae, solar panels, signage and small but unsympathetic extensions. In isolation these can appear minor but over time can start to erode the special character of a place.

Therefore, building and property owners in the conservation area will need to apply for planning permission for changes to the external appearance of their properties that would normally be classed as permitted development. Although to encourage owners to care for their property this does not apply to 'like for like' repairs and maintenance.

Trees often contribute significantly to the character of a conservation areas. It is an offence for any person to cut, lop, top, uproot, wilfully damage, or destroy any tree in a conservation area unless six weeks' notice has been given to the local authority.

Conservation Area Consent will also be needed for the demolition of any unlisted building of over 115 cubic metres located within the Udny Green Conservation Area.

This is an abbreviated list of permissions so please check with the planning authority before undertaking works.

3.2 Article 4 Directions

In addition to the controls above it is proposed to add extra controls within the Udny Green Conservation Area. This will put extra restrictions on groups like Statutory Undertakers and Local Authorities to bring their obligations more in line with those of the owners of domestic and non-domestic properties and provide consistency in planning decisions within the conservation area.

For a full list of the Article 4 Directions relevant to Udny Green please go to Appendix II – Article 4 Directions.

4 Conservation Area Management Plan

4.1 Design guidance and detailed planning advice

The following guidance is based on the findings of the comprehensive survey undertaken for the conservation area appraisal which looked at the special characteristics that make up the settlement of Udny Green. The guidance here is largely based on traditional construction. When applying for planning permission each building is viewed on its individual merits. The materials and design should therefore be appropriate to the age, type, and design of the property.

The guidance here is further supported by the Managing Change Guidance Notes produced by Historic Environment Scotland and their Short Guides all available on their website under publications <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/>

Climate Change

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 commits Scotland to some of the most ambitious carbon reduction targets in the world. The historic environment has a huge role to play in this due to the significant amount of embodied energy held within their original construction. A number of measures can be carried out to properties within conservation areas to ensure they are as energy efficient as possible and therefore extending their lifespan. This is described as the retrofit of traditional buildings. Further information can be found below.

It may be beneficial to consider the further impacts of climate change to Udny Green when works are proposed for the area. Any appropriate measures which could be taken to protect the individual properties should be considered as well as the settlement as a whole.

Retrofit

Retrofit is the method of adding measures to your property to increase its thermal performance. This can be done in several ways, such as the introduction of insulation, draughtproofing or the upgrading of heating systems. When used in conjunction with each other they can successfully reduce the energy demand of a property. Many of the retrofit options can be carried out in a discreet manner which cause no negative impact on the appearance of the settlement. Unless the property is listed, many retrofit measures, such as the introduction of internal wall or roof insulation can be carried out without permission from the Planning Service. Measures which would alter the appearance of the exterior of the property, such as external wall insulation or the introduction of solar panels, would require permission from the Planning Service, whether the building is listed or not. The introduction of solar panels needs to be carefully considered through careful siting and design.

There are many options available to successfully retrofit a traditionally constructed property, however advice should be sought prior to any works being carried out to ensure that the proposed method is suitable for the property and will not cause any

adverse effects such as condensation or material decay, as many products available are not suited to traditionally constructed buildings.

Before any retrofit work is carried out to a building, it is essential that it is in a good condition and any areas of damp are dealt with. A building in a poor condition cannot be thermally efficient.

Historic Environment Scotland are the government agency who take a lead role in the research and guidance on improving energy efficiency in traditional buildings, a sample of which are given below. These and a wider selection of guidance, case studies and research are available online from the link below. Further guidance can also be sought from the Planning Service.

Short Guide 1 – Fabric Improvement for Energy Efficiency

Short Guide 8 – Micro-renewables in the Historic Environment

Short Guide 11 – Climate Change Adaption for Traditional Buildings.

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/>

Stonework

The main building material in the historic core of Udny Green is local granite, both coursed rubble and smooth block, which plays a significant role in shaping the appearance and character of the conservation area. There is a presumption against painting or applying any form of coating onto the face of exposed stonework. Lime pointing should be retained or replicated on a like for like basis matching the specification (mix) and finish of the original mortar. The Planning Authority will also advise and encourage the replacement of existing cement pointing with traditional lime mortars, if doing so can be achieved without damaging the stonework. The cleaning of stonework can often result in its long-term deterioration especially when using abrasive systems, high pressure water or chemical treatments.



There will be a presumption against the cleaning of properties unless it is proven necessary. Cleaning will be restricted to scrubbing by hand with non-ferrous brushes and a low-pressure water source.

Render

Although the main construction material is granite there are several buildings in Udny Green which have a rendered or roughcast surface treatment. Most of these finishes contain cement associated with post war construction but which probably replaced earlier lime harling or render. The former School House would originally have been lime harled, with the decorative granite margins around openings left exposed. This has since been removed, exposing the stonework with only the gable being harled today. The reason for the buildings being rendered is unclear but may be due to the stone being of poor quality or non-regular in size and shape. Whatever the reason, the local authority will promote the reinstatement of a traditional lime harl or render when the existing cement-based renders need to be replaced.



Roofs

Most of the buildings located within Udny Green have natural slate roof coverings which significantly shape the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is predominantly Welsh slate with lead flashings to chimneys and dormer window detailing. The Old Library and Primrose Cottage have overhanging eaves, while the Old Library also has visible truss ends under the fascia. Shoemakers Cottage and the adjoining Exchange Cottage have the traditional practice of diminishing courses, where the largest slates were laid at the base of the roof with the smaller slates laid nearer the ridge. This practice was due to the variations in the size of slates from Scottish quarries and ensured the most efficient use of the slates. Eat on the Green has an interesting detail of fish scale slates along its ridgeline. These materials and

detailing are notable as they significantly shape the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The local authority will therefore seek the retention of these traditional treatments to make sure that repair works, and any replacement roofs replicate this original type of roof covering.



Dormers

A wide variety of traditional roof dormers can be found within the Udny Green Conservation Area, which not only shape the character of the individual buildings but the wider appearance of the streetscape. The local authority will seek the retention of these traditional elements and insist that any new dormers (on traditional buildings) are appropriately designed to complement the character of the building and the conservation area. This will include the replication of the proportions, opening method and materials of the more traditional style dormer.



Rooflights

There is a presumption in the favour of keeping original cast iron rooflights especially in 'non-living' spaces such as attics and subservient structures, spaces where heat loss can be mitigated or is less of a consideration. There is a mix of traditional cast iron rooflights and standard models found throughout Udny Green.

Where new rooflights are to be introduced on traditional buildings, they must be the minimum necessary, be true top hung (hinged) conservation units with vertical proportions and subdivided into two panes by a central glazing bar. On symmetrical elevations the rooflights position should be balanced with the overall composition of the elevation.

Rainwater Goods

Cast iron gutters and downpipes are good quality and if well maintained play a significant role in shaping the character of individual buildings. Any repairs or replacement gutters and downpipes should be undertaken on a like for like basis. Modern uPVC rainwater goods not only have a negative impact on the appearance of properties but are more fragile and prone to damage. There is a presumption against the replacement of original cast iron rainwater goods with uPVC fittings, and encouragement given to the reinstatement of cast iron gutters where they have already been replaced. Where appropriate, black aluminium, cast-iron look downpipes may be acceptable on non-listed traditional properties within the conservation area.

Ridges, Skews and Chimneys

Chimneys are an important visual feature within the conservation area. The local authority will therefore seek that chimneys are retained. The existing granite skews, clay ridge tiles and ceramic chimney pots also have a positive impact on the appearance of the settlement. The Old Library has decorative lattice ridge tiles which is unique in the settlement. Any of these materials should be retained or replaced on a like for like basis if considered beyond repair.



Doors

Door furniture including decorative glasswork and ironmongery (handles, letterboxes, and knockers) make a significant contribution to the character of the Udny Green Conservation Area. A common design detail within the settlement is narrow fan lights above the front doors. Eat on the Green, the former Udny Arms Hotel, has an unusual small door in comparison to the buildings, which may have been heightened. The local authority will promote the retention of all traditional doors and seek that any replacements match the original door not only in terms of design and construction but also in external treatment and ironmongery detail.

It should be noted that a historic doorway is not solely the door. But also surrounding elements such as letter boxes, door knockers, boot scrapers, painted numbers, and other exterior ironmongery. The local authority will seek and promote the retention of any original fittings and features.



Windows

Windows are an important element which shape the appearance and character of not only the individual property but the wider conservation area. Udny Green benefits from a variety of traditional window styles. There will be a presumption of repairing original units over replacement. When timber windows are shown to be beyond economic repair, single glazed or of limited interest, replacements must replicate the original windows in terms of appearance, construction and decorative (paint) finish. For windows which are single glazed, it may be possible to upgrade these to incorporate double glazing or replace with a double-glazed unit following the previous design and construction. Where trickle ventilation is needed to meet building standards, they should be designed so they are not visible.

Modern timber windows can achieve the same performance standards of their uPVC counterparts with the advantage of being a more sustainable building material. Historic Environment Scotland provide detailed guidance and research on this topic, which can be accessed via their website under Publications. <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/>

Metal windows are a characteristic of buildings of the inter war years. They make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. There will be a presumption of repairing original units over replacement. When windows are shown to be beyond economic repair or of limited interest replacement should be on a like for like basis.

Where existing windows are replacements and are out of character with the building such as uPVC, the Planning Service will promote the reinstatement of original window patterns to restore the architectural integrity of an elevation, with a material which is more appropriate for use in a conservation area.





Boundary Treatments

The various boundary treatments (gates, walls, fences, hedges, railings) found within Udny Green make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. Many of the original boundary walls still exist, notably around the graveyard. Wrought-iron railings have been introduced in some places, such as to the School House and the Old Library. These larger boundary walls appear on the more “formal” buildings in the settlement. There is little division between the pavement and the houses on the south of the green with very low boundary walls, and Academy Court.



Upon all entrances to the settlement, there is the deliberate and distinctive introduction of the Udny estate stone walling, defining the village boundaries and identifying the planned nature of the village.

The age and construction of these elements all contribute positively to the visual appearance of the settlement. The local authority will therefore seek the retention of traditional boundary treatments and support any proposal to reinstate missing architectural elements.



Satellite Dishes and Aerials

There are several satellite dishes and aerials attached to the main frontages and chimneys of properties within the conservation area. These items can often have a negative impact on the appearance of a building, and greatly diminish the wider character and appearance of the conservation area. They should therefore only be installed where it is possible without affecting the wider appearance of Udny Green. The fact that a property is set well back from the road is not a relevant consideration in assessing if the installation of equipment is acceptable. Applicants should always be advised to locate such fixtures in a position not visible from roads or public pathways.

Micro renewables

Renewable technology should be considered as part of a holistic approach to achieving an improvement in energy efficiency. The introduction of micro-renewables is not the first or the only way to make a building 'carbon conscious', especially one of traditional construction, which is already a past investment in resources during construction. It makes no sense to invest in systems to produce renewable energy without first taking steps to reduce energy demand, through reduced heat loss and more efficient methods of heating.

The use of renewable energy technology may be deemed appropriate when it has been demonstrated that the character of the historic building or place can be protected through careful siting and design of the system.

Extensions

Proposals to extend a property located within the conservation area should not be considered in isolation but in context to the wider townscape. This is to ensure it respects the character, scale and proportions of neighbouring buildings. Any new extension should follow the established building line of the street using detailing and materials which are distinctive or complimentary to the settlement.



Street Furniture

The sensitive nature of Udny Green merits street furniture design that reflects the settlement's distinctive individuality. Most of the existing street furniture within the settlement complements the small village well, with the use of cast iron street signs, heritage style street lighting and the retention of the iconic red phone box. The bus stop has been constructed of granite walls with a slate roof, which does not detract away from the historic setting of the village. Several of the lighting lanterns have been replaced with modern alternatives, with one being replaced with an entirely different light fitting. These detract away from the positive contribution from the other elements of street furniture and therefore should be discouraged. Consequently, the bland standardised street furniture and normal proliferation of traffic signage will need to be considered and located carefully so as not to have a negative impact on the appearance of the conservation area.



Shop Frontages

Traditional shop fronts make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of conservation areas and provide an insight into the wellbeing of settlements in terms of current retail pressures and the impact on independent business.

There is very little evidence in the settlement of previous retail premises. The small building to the side of Eat on the Green gives the appearance of what would have once been a shop, but this would appear to have been merged internally with Eat on the Green with the façade being retained to the street. There is signage positioned evenly above the entry of Eat on the Green, which has hand-painted lettering onto a timber fascia. This design is complementary to the historic character of the conservation area. There is evidence of former ironmongery on the gable of Shoemakers Cottage, which may have been for signage.

There will be a presumption to retain all traditional shopfronts and their fittings, and encouragement will be given to restore lost features and recover the authentic appearance of shopfronts based on historic evidence, with architectural detailing being preserved where they are survived.



New Build

The position of any new building on its site will be determined by its relationship with neighbouring buildings and/or open space. The mass of the building should ensure that it sits in harmony with the neighbouring buildings and the wider area. The design of any new building will be such that the scale, proportions, and form relate to each other and the neighbouring buildings. The highest possible standard of professional design will be required wherever new buildings and alterations to existing buildings are permitted. In certain exceptional cases normal planning standards may be relaxed to achieve the best visual result.



5 Enhancement opportunities

5.1 SWOT analysis

SWOT Analysis can be a useful tool to help visualise the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for a conservation area. They can be viewed alongside one another and help bring together/summarise the content of the conservation area appraisal.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good example of a conservation area, well-kept and use of traditional materials and traditional style street furniture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy Court • Addition of new street furniture |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrofit of traditional properties • Reinstatement of any lost features • Church under new ownership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development within the Conservation Area and/or on boundary • Climate change |

5.2 Training and outreach opportunities for residents

Resources are available from other organisations, who provide guidance and training on a range of topics that relate to traditional buildings, such as Historic Environment Scotland, SPAB and the Scottish Lime Centre Trust.

5.3 Recommendations for future enhancements

Boundary change

The current boundary of Udny Green was established in 1984 by the then Gordon District Council, following the outline of the historic core of the settlement. Since this time, further development has been carried out within the village, such as the

construction of Hawthorn Gardens and the more recent redevelopment of the Smiddy site. These developments were constructed within the existing boundary line of the conservation area which now results in the boundary line no longer being clearly defined and crossing through properties within these developments.

It is proposed that the boundary of the Udny Green Conservation Area is reviewed to provide a clearer boundary which will encompass the historic core of the settlement and remove No.3 & 5 Hawthorn Gardens from the conservation area.

Sites suitable for adaptive re-use or redevelopment

As identified in the conservation area appraisal there are no properties within Udny Green that are currently lying vacant or are in a semi derelict state, detracting from the unique character of the area. One site which will be adapted to a new use in the future is the former Udny Green Parish Church. At the time of writing, the building has recently been sold and there have been no proposals made to the Planning Service for its redevelopment. Another site which is currently vacant is on Manse Road, directly behind Eat on the Green, which has planning permission approved for the erection of two houses.

Climate change strategy

Scotland's pre-1919 traditionally constructed buildings equate to around 20% of its total building stock. Around 40% of Scotland's total carbon emissions come from domestic energy consumption. But to understand the contribution these buildings make you first need to understand the difference between embodied and operational carbon.

Buildings that already exist are a huge past investment in carbon spent during the building's construction including extraction of materials, manufacture, transport, installation, and waste generated during construction. These all form part of its embodied energy. By retaining an existing building, you are not wasting the embodied carbon in its original construction and you are not adding to its carbon cost through the process of demolition.

'There is nothing more sustainable than a building that already exist'



Operational carbon emissions are those generated when the building is in use i.e., heating, lighting. Should old buildings simply be retrofitted to modern standards?

There needs to be a considered approach; retrofitting a traditional building in a material that has a high carbon cost in production or not compatible with traditional construction could be counter intuitive. The carbon cost in its production and installation could outweigh the operational reduction in carbon emissions. HES promote a holistic approach to emissions reduction.

- 1) Reduce your heat loss – this covers aspects such as ensuring your external fabric is in well maintained to avoid damp. Ensuring windows and doors are in good condition or improved in a sustainable manner. Ensuring the property is well insulated.
- 2) Improve space and water heating – this can include looking at more efficient heat sources i.e., using your fireplaces, biomass, ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps or even just a more efficient boiler.
- 3) Electricity generation – this should always be carried out last, there is no point installing solar panels, wind power or hydro power until you have first undertaken steps 1 and 2.

For further guidance research and case studies on this topic please visit <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/>

Short Guide 1 – Fabric improvement for energy efficiency

Short Guide 11 – Climate change adaption for traditional buildings

Short Guide 8 – Micro renewables in the historic environment

6 Monitoring and review

The legislation requires the local authority to undertake regular reviews of the conservation area. This is an opportunity to engage with the local community, to set out plans for management and to monitor the condition of the conservation area since the last review. They seek to identify what makes a place special and assist the local authority when reviewing the boundaries, identifying possible enhancements, considering if the designation is still suitable and monitoring the success or otherwise of change management in the settlement. At the point of next review:

- The conservation area management plan will be used as a benchmarking tool in terms of what 'we' as a local authority said we would do and the overall success of the plan.
- A photographic record of the settlement will also be undertaken, to be used as a tool to monitor the condition of the conservation area since the last review point.

For further information concerning the contents of this document, contributions for its improvement or any matters concerning conservation areas or listed buildings, contact the Historic Environment Team.

Helpful links

Aberdeenshire Council contact planning team

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/contact/>

Find out if you live in a conservation area

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/built-heritage/conservation-area/>

Find out if your property is listed

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/search-for-a-listed-building/>

Find Historic Environment Scotland Guidance

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/>

Search Aberdeenshire's Historic Environment Record

<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/default.aspx>

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix I – Conservation area boundary map





Scale - 1:1250

28 June 2023



7.2 Appendix II – Article 4 Directions

PART 2 - SUNDRY MINOR OPERATIONS

Class 7 Non-domestic, fence wall (includes flats)

PART 10 - REPAIRS TO SERVICES

Class 28 The carrying out of any works for the purpose of inspecting, repairing or renewing any sewer, main, pipe, cable or other apparatus, including breaking open any land for that purpose.

PART 12- DEVELOPMENT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Class 30 Erection, construction, maintenance, improvement of buildings, equipment, street furniture

Class 31 Maintenance, improvement works carried out by Roads Authority

Class 33 Dwellings etc. erected by Local Authority within their own district

PART 13 - DEVELOPMENT BY STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS

Class 38 Water undertakings

Class 39 Gas Suppliers

Class 40 Electricity undertakings

Class 43

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