

Port Erroll
Conservation Area
Appraisal



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INTRODUCTION

Location

The Port Erroll Conservation Area sits directly upon the north-east coast, within a dip in the landscape. Port Erroll, as the area became known in the late 19th century, is partially screened by sand dunes that stretch from the settlement along to the harbour. It is accessed from the A90 by any of three roads, two of which are minor routes, and is approximately 23 miles north of Aberdeen and 8 miles south of Peterhead.

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, as defined by The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) (Scotland) 1997, is “*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 41 conservation areas designated, with a further 7 proposed, varying in character from the central Peterhead to the rural settlement of Old Deer.

Implications of Conservation Area Designation

In a conservation area it is both the buildings and spaces between them that are of architectural or historical interest. Planning control is therefore directed at maintaining the integrity of the entire area and enhancing its special character. Conservation area status does not mean that new development is unacceptable, but it enforces the need for careful consideration to be taken to ensure that any new development will not damage the appearance or character of the area. This mechanism has been put in place not only to safeguard the long term management of the designated conservation areas but also to enable development to be in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011 removed all permitted development rights with the exception of the construction of a deck or platform not exceeding 4 square metres. The removal or works to trees located in the conservation area also requires consent.

Furthermore, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2014 removed the rights associated with Class 25 for the provision of a hard surface within the curtilage of an industrial building or warehouse, and is therefore no longer permitted within a conservation area. The general permitted development rights were also removed involving: Shops or Catering, Financial or Professional Services Establishments, Schools, Colleges, Universities and Hospital Buildings, Office Buildings, Recharging Electrical Outlets and Access Ramps.

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 Local Planning Authority when making a decision on the application. In order to protect the conservation areas, designation requires the local authority to formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement.

Aberdeenshire Planning Authority will only approve new development, wholly or partly, within a conservation area (subject to other policies) if:

- All details are provided under cover of an application for full planning permission;
AND
- The design is of the highest quality, and respects and enhances the architectural, historic and visual qualities that give rise to the designation;
AND
- Any trees that contribute to the conservation areas setting and character are retained.

Purpose of a Conservation Area Appraisal

Conservation area designation should be regarded as the first positive step towards an area's protection and enhancement. The Scottish Government and the local authority are required by Law to protect conservation areas from development, which would be detrimental to their character. It is necessary therefore for planning authorities, residents and property owners to be aware of the key features, which together create the area's special character and appearance.

The purpose of this conservation area appraisal is to define what is important about Port Erroll through the identification of characteristics and appearance, whilst it is also a vital tool to enable the active management of the conservation area. It identifies the area's special features and changing needs through a process which includes researching its historical development, carrying out a detailed townscape analysis and preparing a character assessment.

This information provided demonstrates the consideration of conservation area boundaries as well as providing a context for the assessment of development proposals within the area. It identifies opportunities and priorities for enhancement and sets out the policy framework for the determination of development proposals. This appraisal should be regarded as supplementary guidance to the policies set out in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

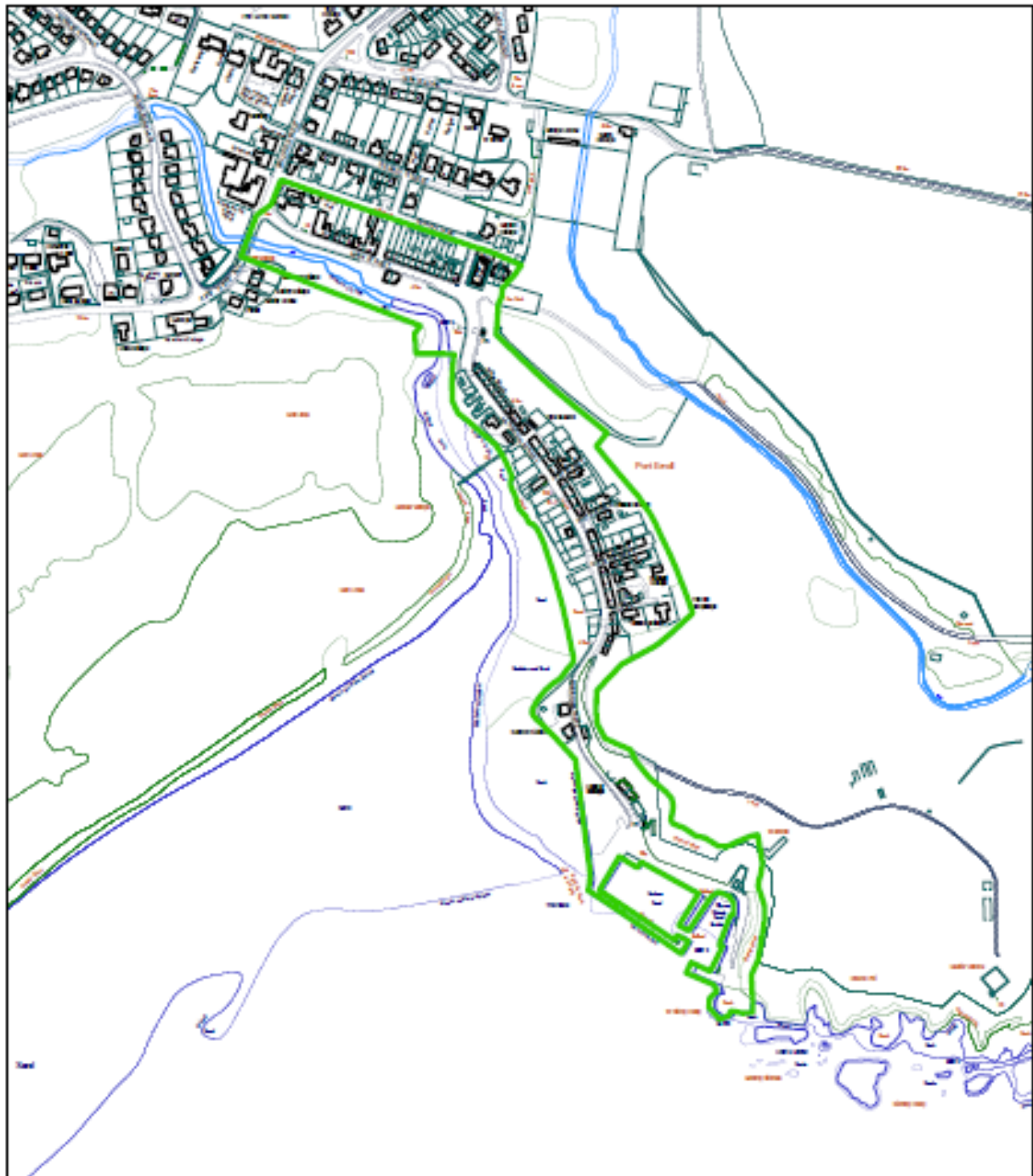
It is recognised that the successful management of conservation areas can only be achieved with the support and input from all stakeholders, particularly local residents and property owners. It would therefore be beneficial to obtain observations or suggestions on this draft appraisal which can be incorporated into the finalised document.

Designation

The Port Erroll Conservation Area was designated in 1975 by the Banff and Buchan District Council and encompasses the harbour and shoreline.



View looking back towards Port Erroll Conservation Area.



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02 November 2011

Aberdeenshire Council

Scale - 1:5000

**Port Erroll Cruden Bay Conservation Area
Designated**



Map showing the boundary of Port Erroll Conservation Area

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The name Cruden Bay was derived from the Gaelic “Croch Dain” (Slaughter of Danes), as it was a site of the battle between the Scots and the Danes in the 11th century. Other names used to identify the area include; Ward of Cruden and Port Erroll. The battle site, the Bay of Ardendraught, lay between Slains Castle to the east and a Castle then occupied by the Danes. It is alleged that the location of the Cruden Bay Golf Links Course is on the final battlefield.

The designation of a local church to the Danes, dedicated to St Olave, was to perpetuate the memory of those lost during the battle¹. This ancient Kirk of Cruden was mentioned in a Papal Bull by Pope Adrian IV in 1157 and is referenced again in 1256 as it appears as a prebend of the Cathedral of St Marchar in Aberdeen². This first church is believed to have been located on the sandy plain near the sea, now part of the links golf course. It is considered to have been relocated during the 13th century, and an article by Adam Mackay in 1912 describes its new location as “well known” and specifically to a “rising knoll, 50 yards south of the Burn of Cruden and near to the bridge which leads over it to the village of Port Erroll”³. A portion of the east wall and the foundations of the first church were left on the original site until removed, approximately 1837, for road building. Excavations of the original site were carried out in 1857, led by Major-General Moore, which confirmed that the site had been overwhelmed by sands and exposed a burial ground⁴. No trace of this church nor the graves are visible now but its appearance in O.S. maps dated 1867 and 1888 can be seen. A relic of a font which is deemed to be from this church can be seen within the present day Parish Church⁵.

Another church was erected within the area and later dismantled. However, unlike the others, this structure was situated where the current Parish Church stands. It is supposed that this would have been pre reformation (circa 1560) and the only evidence available regarding this building in the presbytery records which began in 1597⁶.

In 1776 the minister declared that no more services would be undertaken within the building until it was repaired and thus the third building was dismantled and rebuilt over a summer. This new building was a much more simplistic structure of granite blocks and reopened in November 1776 for services. In 1834 the north facing wall was removed to allow for the addition of a new wing and pillars were inserted to carry the load of the roof⁷. Round towers were also added, built in a similar style to those seen at Slains Castle, allowing access to the galleries. This would not be the end of the works upon this site and renovations carried on through the twentieth century. In 1915 a major project to renovate the chancel area was undertaken, allowing for the insertion of an organ and in 1972 the rear pews were removed to enlarge the vestibule. The most recent works took place in 2002 which saw the addition of a ramp and disabled toilet, enabling the building to meet the requirements of the 1995 Disability Act.

1. <http://crudenbay.net/crojudane.htm>

2. <http://www.crudenchurch.org.uk/history.htm>

3. <http://canmore.org.uk/site/20865/crudon-bay-old-parish-church-of-st-olaf-and-churchyard>

4. <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/shire/detail.aspx?refno=NK03NE0049>

5. <http://www.crudenbay.org.uk/page5.html>

6. <http://www.crudenchurch.org.uk/history.htm>

7. <http://www.crudenchurch.org.uk/history.htm>

The Congregational Church located within the Port Erroll Conservation Area was erected on land gifted by the Earl of Erroll and was formed on 1st December 1882 with 53 members¹. The doors opened on the 14th December 1884 and the church quickly gained recognition as “The Fishermens Kirk”. The church contains a memorial plaque acknowledging the sacrifice of those who fell in the First World War.



Congregational Church



New Slains Castle

The ‘Old Slains Castle’ was destroyed in 1594 by James VI. The ‘New Slains Castle’, situated 6 miles south-west of the original structure and approximately 1 mile north of Port Erroll, was erected on the site of the former Bowness Castle in 1597. The new castle underwent numerous developments with a gallery being added in 1664 and a new front entrance inserted in 1707². Some time before 1899 Thomas H. Mawson, an accomplished landscape architect and town planner, created a garden for the castle³. The castle was inhabited by generations of Hays until 1916 when a 300 year association with the area was severed by Charles, 20th Earl. The sale was due to a combination of inflations of tax associated with death duties, and the castle was never lived in again⁴. The new owner, Sir John Reeves Ellerman a philanthropist and shipping company owner, purchased the castle, lands and harbour. A mass meeting between the fishermen of Port Erroll and Sir John in 1923 led to the gifting of the harbour to the fishermen and a donation of £250 to aid the significant repairs required. Trustees were appointed and a disposition deed drawn up, recorded on 16th July 1924. The castle further suffered in 1925 when it was unroofed in a bid to avoid taxation and only ruins of the castle remain overlooking Port Erroll⁵.

In 1822 a Brick and Tile Works factory was established to the north of what is now the links golf course, and this continued operating until 1904. No evidence for this remains as the site was cleared⁶.

The evolution of “Port Erroll”, as it became known, was significantly contributed to by the investments made by William George Hay 18th Earl of Erroll. These investments included the addition of the harbour. Unfortunately, the tidal nature of this harbour restricted the size of craft that could be used and the village could not prosper from the herring fishing. Instead the fishermen prospered from both white and shell fish⁷.

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1. <http://crudenbay.net/worship.htm>
 2. <http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/details/903870>
 3. http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=201147
 4. <http://crudenbay.net/new%20slains.htm>
 5. <http://crudenbay.net/new%20slains.htm>
 6. <http://canmore.org.uk/site/112299/cruden-bay-brick-and-tile-works>
 7. <http://www.porterroll.net/>



Photographs of the Harbour

A string of catastrophic accidents haunted the coastline of Port Erroll and various documents detail the vessels damaged by the rocky outcrops off the coastline. To name a few of the vessels who became victim in Cruden Bay:

25th February 1874, wooden schooner “ITYA” carrying timber became stranded within the Ward of Cruden.

On 29th July 1883, schooner “SURPRISE” and schooner “WATERS” collided 6 miles off the coast of Buchanness. “WATERS” was sunk and “SURPRISE” made it to Port Erroll severely damaged.

14th September 1901 a wooden paddle steamer, “LAMBTON”, became stranded upon The Skares whilst at Port Erroll for salvage operations. Other vessels that succumbed to these rocks were “SOLVANG”, a wooden schooner, Steam Trawlers “STAR OF THE ISLES” and “NILE” and steam ships “EASDALE” and “FREDERICK SNOWDON” as recent as 1912. Records of these incidents can be found on the Canmore website.

The Kilmarnock Hotel, which borders the boundary of the conservation area, is believed to have been the first hotel in the area with a local newspaper noting its upcoming events in 1888. A guestbook within the hotel itself dates back to 1893, pre dating the increase in tourism following the arrival of the railway¹.



Kilmarnock Hotel, 2015

In 1897, the Great North of Scotland Railway attempted to create a tourist attraction within the village. This saw the inclusion of an electric tram system to take visitors back to the Boddam Branch Line of the Formantine and Buchan Railway². The platforms and base of the water tower from the Cruden Bay Station still exist and a council depot was built on the former Goods Yard.

1. <http://www.kilmarnockarms.com/history-kilmarnock-arms-hotel.html>
 2. http://www.railbrit.co.uk/Boddam_Branch/index.php

The golf course, as stands today, was fully opened in 1899 as part of the recreational activities offered by this same scheme. It is now the only remaining operational element of this project and contains a Category C Listed Starting Box. The Cruden Bay Hotel was also erected as part of this scheme to provide luxury accommodation for visitors. During the 1930's the railway was disconnected and subsequently the tramline removed. In 1950 a string of local businessmen purchased the remaining elements of the development and erected a new club house at the golf course. The new structure replaced the old laundry building that stood on the site previously and granite blocks were reclaimed for use within the modern structure.

In 1902 the "Cruden Bay Brick and Tile Works" was established on a new site to the north of Cruden Bay village atop the hill. This business manufactured field drains and extruded bricks, the works site comprised of a range of buildings. The buildings were much altered through the modernisation of manufacturing processes but elements of them can still be identified¹.

The Primary School was built in 1903 at the heart of the village and served its purpose until the oil boom of the 1950/60's. A new facility was built to house the growing population but soon the number of pupils became so large the old school was re-established to house the younger class's only². A fire burnt down the original structure in 2000 and this has since been replaced with a modern, state of art building to house the school children.

The vulnerability of the coastline was made apparent during World War II and this is evident due to number of archaeological structures that remain, including pill boxes and anti-tank blocks. On the headland north east of Port Erroll was a ground station of LORAN (Long Range Aid to Navigation) radio navigation system. This was used by the RAF to provide means of navigation³.

The Cruden Bay Hotel was used as a military hospital during WWII but was later abandoned and fell in to disrepair until its demolition in 1948⁴. The most prominent element of defence seen within the conservation area are the anti-tank blocks situated downstream of Ladies Bridge.

The area experienced a number of attacks during World War II:-

22nd August 1940 – Slains Lodge – 4 high explosive bombs dropped (Landsdale Rd, York St, Academy School & L.N.E.R. Station). Blocked railway line and caused damage to the signal station, engine shed and gas and water mains. Dwelling houses damaged, 3 of which were demolished. 3 Casualties and 4 injured.

1st March 1941 – Off Whinnyfold a ship was set on fire – 4 high explosive bombs dropped.

2nd April 1941 – 1 High explosive bomb dropped on the Engine House and Brick & Tile works at Cruden Bay, the latter being put out of action.

25th July 1941 – 2 offshore explosions reported.

The development of modern day Port Erroll and Cruden Bay can be attributed mainly to the installation of the harbour along with the growth of the oil industry. The golf course provides a tremendous tourist attraction and there is a growing number of walkers and wildlife watchers visiting the bay.

1. <http://canmore.org.uk/site/112299/cruden-bay-brick-and-tile-works>

2. http://www.porterroll.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/area_001.htm

3. <http://canmore.org.uk/event/745113>

4. <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/crudenbay/crudenbay/>

The New Statistical Account of Scotland as composed by Reverend Alexander Philip in 1845 suggests that the number of residents within Cruden Bay Parish fluctuated during the 1820's. This can also be seen in the table below.

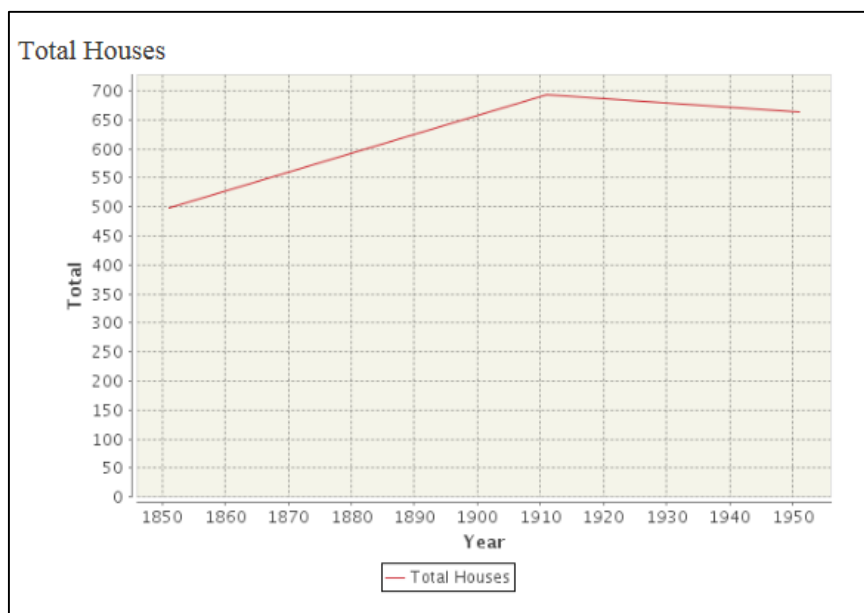
Year	No. Residents
1801	1,934
1811	1,967
1821	2,258
1831	2,120
1841	2,349
1851	2,479

Table showing number of residents in Cruden Parish. Source: The New Statistical Account of Scotland.

Archive information available shows a continued increase in population from 1852 to 1911 reaching a high of 3,166 residents. This number declined dramatically again by 1951 with numbers reducing down to 2,295¹.

The continued decline in people residing in Cruden Bay Parish, can be justified further by the 2011 census from which 1,615 people were reported living within Cruden Bay². Furthermore the 2014 census shows that 1,620 residents lived in the Cruden Bay village.

Cruden Bay Parish house numbers grew relative to the population, as demonstrated in the graph below.



Source: <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10200775/cube/HOUSES>

1. http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10200775/cube/TOT_POP
2. http://www.populationlist.com/Port_Erroll/Scotland/United_Kingdom/2999493/city-population

It should be considered that, there can be no single trade or element identified as significantly contributing to the development of Port Erroll, or more widely Cruden Bay. The Parish has thrived on numerous industries overtime, spanning from fishing to the tile works, with little evidence remaining of these elements within the present day Cruden Bay.

The Salmon Station, Ice House and Harbour are the only remaining elements of early industry present within Port Erroll conservation area but only the Harbour remains functioning.

Maps

The area appears on numerous maps throughout time but is often labelled with different names. The earliest name seen is “Ward of Cruden” but it can also be identified as; “Cruden Bay” and “Port Erroll”.

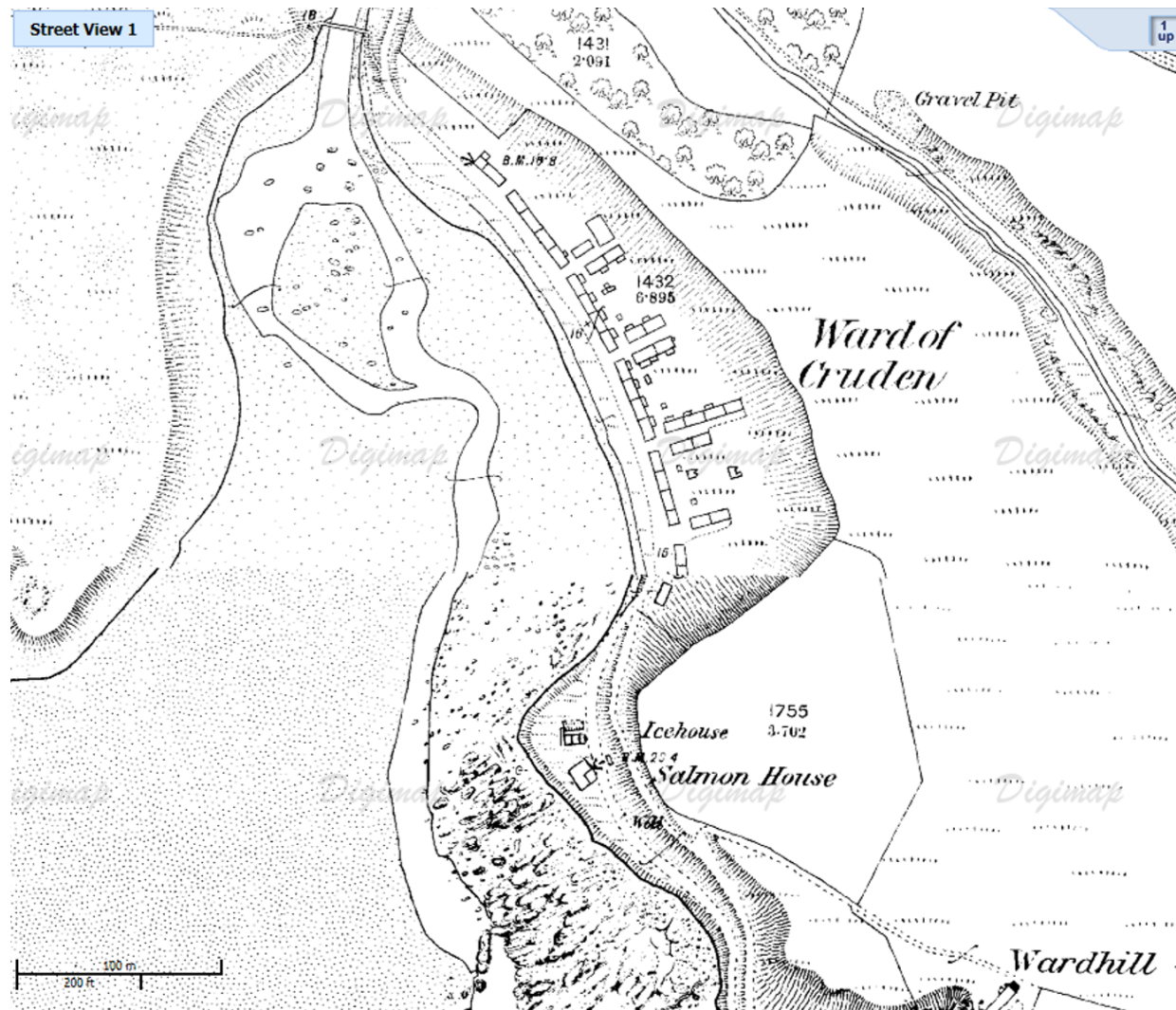
The earliest appearance of the area in map form can be seen on maritime maps dating from the 16th century. The infamous Scars can be appreciated in the example below.

Coast of Scotland Marine Charts, 1580-1850.



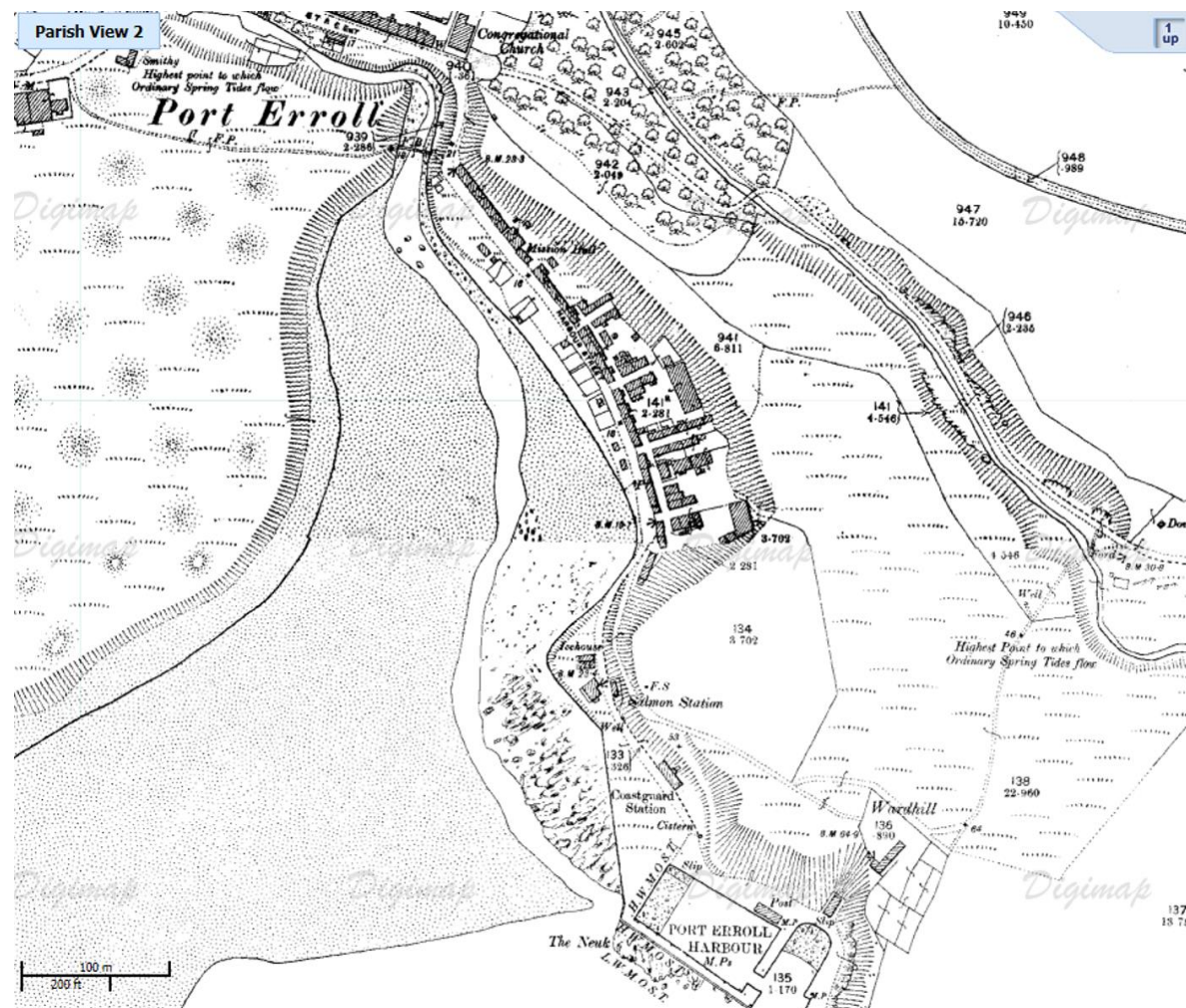
Source: <http://maps.nls.uk/view/74401122>

O.S. Map of Ward of Cruden 1850



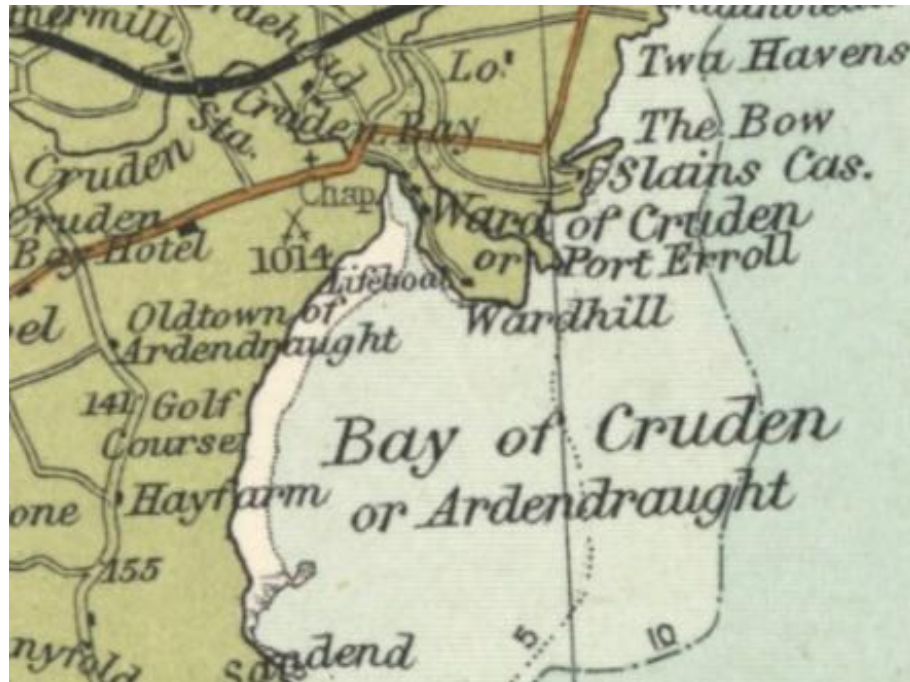
Source: Digimap 2015

O.S. Map of Port Erroll 1900



Source: Digimap 2015

Bartholomew Survey Atlas of Scotland, 1912



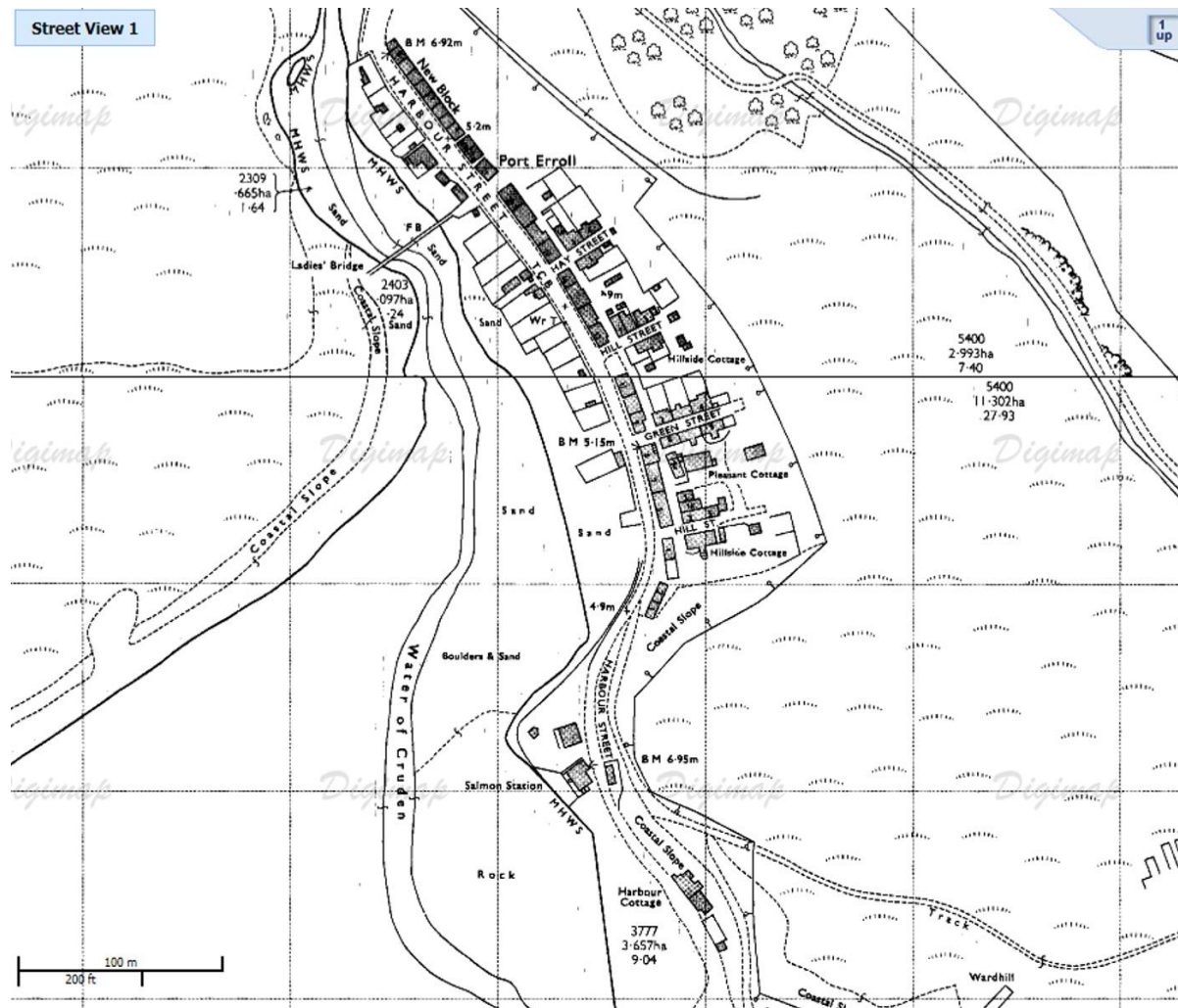
Source: <http://maps.nls.uk/view/78055285>

Land Utilisation Survey, Scotland, 1931-1935



Source: <http://maps.nls.uk/view/74425093>

O.S. Map of Port Erroll 1970



Source: Digimap 2015

The maps depict significant growth between 1850 and 1900 within the heart of the now designated conservation area. The growth does not however alter either the pattern or layout of the existing settlement but merely increases the density of buildings. A few smaller developments within the conservation area can be noticed when examining the O.S. Map of 1900 against the O.S. Map of 1970 although no significant changes can be identified.

The O.S. Map of 1900 provides the earliest evidence of the new boundaries situated upon the shoreline as residents claimed the communal grounds. The O.S. Map of 1970 shows the development of these areas with a larger number present and the appearance of some small buildings within these plots also.

TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL

Topography

Port Erroll sits, sheltered by sand dunes, in a dip within the landscape directly on to the North Sea. The remainder of Cruden Bay village sits upon the hillside above to the north-east and west of the conservation area.

Gateways

Entry to the Port Erroll Conservation Area is somewhat restricted by not only the lay of the land but also the original settlement pattern. Cruden Bay can be accessed from the A90 and there are three roads, two of which are minor, leading in to the village. The Port Erroll conservation area can only be accessed from Aulton Road (A975) via Main Street. The boundary of the conservation area at present encompasses all properties from the junction between Main Street and Aulton Road eastwards along down Harbour Street. The boundary of the conservation area is the coastline/shore edge on the south and School Lane to the north. The Golf Links Course sits opposite the conservation area on the south west bank of the burn.

The majority of houses are situated on the inland side of Harbour Road with a few converted boat houses and shed buildings erected on the shore side. There are approximately 100 residential properties within the conservation area with fewer than 10 commercial properties.

Conservation Area Boundaries and Edges

It is considered that the edge of a conservation area should both physically and symbolically denote a clear sense of inside and outside its boundary. Indeed, where the designated area starts and stops is a vital aspect in understanding its value in terms of form and character which should be properly defined and instead of simply merging into the remainder of the settlement. The original boundary was set out to include the harbour and original fishermen's cottages. This specific area was targeted as it was, and still is, considered to be the heart of the village, from which expansion took place.

At present the boundary to the conservation area cannot be clearly identified as a defined area apart from the remainder of the settlement.

Plot and Street Pattern

The cottages are mainly located on the north-east side of both Main Street and Harbour Street with very few exceptions.

There are no developments, barring the golf course, situated to the west of the river mouth making the views out from the conservation area tranquil and largely unchanged.

The majority of the original properties situated on Harbour Street are terraced, one and a half storey, harled cottages. These have been decorated using various colour

finishes over more recent years which has somewhat diluted the basic design intention of these modest cottages. The erection of properties on the west, shoreline side of the road disfigures the original development pattern somewhat. The original houses within the Port Erroll Conservation Area are those set back from Harbour Street, orientated with their gables facing the seafront. These are located upon; Hay Street, Ward Street, Green Street and Hill Street.

The houses along Main Street differ in design as they are terraced, two storey pink granite with cherry cocked mortar joints on the façade. The remainder of the walls are rough cut granite and the infiltration of cement mortars can be noticed.

Within the conservation area also stands the Congregational Church, the Church Hall and the Masonic Hall.

The distribution of Listed Buildings within Cruden Bay itself and the surrounding curtilage can be seen as sparse, see map below.



Source: www.pastmap.org.uk

The listed buildings are categorised at either “B” or “C” status and the only listed structures situated within the current conservation area boundary are the Port Erroll Salmon Station & Ice House and Cruden Bay Bridge over Water of Cruden. The Salmon Station & Ice House building underwent extensive development in 2008 to create a new modern housing development. The ice house can be clearly identified and the erection of interpretation boards enable visitors to understand the sites history relatively easily.

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the locality of Port Erroll or Cruden Bay. Since the designation of the conservation area major developments within Port Erroll have plateaued. It is believed the main reason for this is a combination of the lack of development land within the conservation area along with the fact that there are less restrictions surrounding developments undertaken outside the conservation area.

Open Space

The size, location and use of small open spaces fashioned by the functionality of their previous uses have a considerable impact in shaping the character of the southern part of the conservation area. The maintenance of these open spaces is

therefore of significant importance in not only being a physical record of the settlements evolution but also in their role in shaping the wider appearance of this part of the settlement.

By maintaining the spaces within the conservation area key views both from within and back towards this important designated area will remain much unaltered.

The open space that previously existed within Port Erroll would have been community lands, upon which fishermen could dry their nets. Some drying posts remain close to the harbour but the remainder of these community spaces have been acquired by the property owners to create private garden spaces.

Activities/Uses

Port Erroll remains a relatively small scale residential area. The harbour is now mainly used for leisure with some smaller fishing vessels using the facilities.

The community has developed “Cruden Bay Community Association” to provide a watchful eye on the village and take the lead on fund raising activities to enable the continued preservation of the area.

A project for the replacement of Ladies Bridge, originally erected in 1922 and funded by a group of local ladies, was completed in 2015 to provide better facilities for both the townspeople and visitors.

Architectural Character

The buildings in the conservation area are predominately one and a half storey granite or harled with welsh slate roofs and symmetrical frontages. A large number of these residential dwellings now incorporate dormers or roof lights to increase usable floor space allowing occupants to meet the needs of modern living standards. These distinctive architectural elements, particularly the plended, oriel, hipped and cat slip dormers, add a visual disfigurement to not only the form of the individual buildings but also the wider roofscape, especially when combined with the varying chimney designs.

The majority of properties situated on Harbour Street have created garden spaces on the shore side of the road which show a varying style of landscaping, along with the erection of some small sheds and summerhouses.

The addition of various uncharacteristic extensions has somewhat damaged the architectural design intention of the original properties. These can be clearly identified as modern additions due to the inconsistency in design and material choice.

The transition between Harbour Street and Main Street can be clearly noted as an open space, either side of the road, with a moderate parking area situated on the shore side.

The infiltration of various temporary containers, relatively small in size but large in number, can be seen surrounding the harbour. These are used by fishermen and leisure sailors alike to store equipment.

There are two public WC buildings also present within the conservation area, one situated within the harbour and the other by the Congregational Church.

Building Materials

The traditional materials found in the conservation area are:-

- Pink rough ashlar granite
- Scottish slate
- Welsh slate
- Pantiles
- Cast iron rainwater goods
- Timber
- Traditional Wet Harl

Many modern materials can also be found in the conservation area, but their inclusion in the list below does not mean that their employment is considered acceptable:-

- uPVC
- Dry dash render
- Plastic sheeting
- Plastic guttering, outlets and downpipes
- Asbestos
- Artificial stone and tiles
- Concrete/Cement
- Steel/Tin sheeting
- Aluminium

Condition

The overall condition of the properties within conservation area is good with only minor pockets of disrepair.

The main problems that are present stem from a lack of regular maintenance and routine repairs which, if carried out, would help to eliminate many of these problems and greatly assist in the enhancement of the area.

The architectural form of the area is somewhat spoiled due to the varying design of the alterations that have been made over recent years. This distortion makes the identification of a standard feature design difficult to deduce. It has also altered the townscape somewhat, making it difficult to read the overall development of the area.

Townscape Detail

The presence of the following features adds significantly to the character of the conservation area:

- Chimney stacks
- Street frontages
- Dormer windows
- Open views over the burn and shore

Landscape and Trees

The physical buildings and their location beside the shoreline create two very distinctive views. The first out of the conservation area towards the south exhibits a natural landscape and the second from within and back towards Port Erroll, facing north, is a densely developed townscape with long terraces.

The landscaping within and surrounding the area is natural, with a dominance of sand dunes. There is very little artificial landscaping and very few trees exist. This is potentially due to the harsh and exposed weather conditions that are experienced in the area but also could be attributed due to inappropriate soil compositions.

The open spaces are designated for the use of visitors and residents alike with an abundance of attractive and welcoming seating areas within the area. These allow people to enjoy the views and tranquillity of Port Erroll.

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Introduction

Having examined the streetscape of the conservation area it is now possible to identify those features which contribute to its character and appearance as an area of special architectural and historic interest. This will include features which contribute positively and are worthy of retention as well as features which make no positive contribution or which detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Listed below are:-

Key features

The essential character and architectural quality of the conservation area is largely derived from the position, design and construction of the buildings in the streetscape. These, predominately domestic scale properties, are an important historic record of the settlement's development and any proposal to replace or demolish a building that is located in the designated area will require the applicant to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that every effort has been exerted to save the property.

The harbour, much like the domestic properties, plays a big part in the identification of the area and denotes much historical value. It not only demonstrates the main trade of the area but also the strong relationship between the townspeople and the late Earls of Erroll.

Key Challenges

Loss of original architectural detail – The original architectural detailing and materials make a defining contribution to the wider appearance of the village and its retention is therefore extremely important for the preservation and enhancement of the area. The proliferation of minor modifications such as the introduction of inappropriate replacement doors and windows has had a negative impact on the special character of the Port Erroll Conservation Area. Larger alterations, such as extensions and new developments on the shoreline have diminished not only the original street pattern but also the architectural quality of the buildings found within the area.

Use of inappropriate materials – The use of good quality traditional materials in a conservation area is another important element of its character and appearance. Where these have been replaced with modern materials there will normally be a loss of character through the removal of both original material and original design. A common example of this is the replacement of original timber windows with plastic substitutes which are not in keeping with the character of the historic buildings found within the conservation area. The inclusion of a variety of designs of such elements makes it difficult to read the true architectural form of the buildings.

The public realm – The quality and upkeep of the public realm is extremely important to the overall impression of the Port Erroll Conservation Area. The design and location of street furniture, including signage and lighting, and the maintenance of amenity space also needs to be revisited to ensure that it complements the wider character and appearance of the conservation area.

Signage and adverts – There are two shops located within the Port Erroll Conservation Area and their main signage has been largely unchanged for a substantial period of time. This being said it is apparent that the sign present on the façade of the Post Office is of an attractive and sympathetic design. Comparatively The Press and Journal shop signs are much larger and less sympathetic, namely the inclusion of the Lottery and ATM signs.



The inclusion of signage, particularly within the harbour, is of varying quality and design and the planning service would like to ensure that any new signs erected are of a more sympathetic design and incorporate the architectural and historic features of the area rather than acting as a standalone element.



BOUNDARY

An important element of the conservation area appraisal is the assessment of its boundary and the Planning Service have carried out a detailed assessment of the existing boundary, which has not changed since it was originally designated in 1975. This designation sought to preserve the evolution of the settlement by not only encompassing the older regular site pattern but also the late 19th century harbour development to demonstrate the economic growth of the area. This appraisal seeks to establish whether there has been any post designation development which undermines the architectural interest and historic quality of the conservation area. Indeed, to validate the existing boundary or instigate refinements to justify the continued designation of the Port Erroll Conservation Area.

It is considered that due to the tight boundary of the conservation area as it exists there is little room to reduce its size without diminishing the value of the designation. It should also be noted that the condition of the properties within the conservation area merit further protection and elements identified as “inappropriate alterations” could, in the future, be rectified through the employment of traditional designs and materials without too much difficulty.

It was also considered whether a widening of the conservation area boundary to the south should be proposed to incorporate the shoreline, burn and golf course. This would enable the protection of a number of elements such as; key views, underlying archaeology, protection of the battlefield and protection of the Great North of Scotland Railway development site (as remains). However, this has been deemed unnecessary as the purpose of the conservation area is not to protect solely identified assets but to protect an area as a whole and the current use of the golf course combined with its situation within the land is considered to be sufficient.

PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Introduction

Detailed analysis of the Port Erroll Conservation Area has identified a number of opportunities for its preservation and enhancement.

The application of planning policies and provision of advice encouraging sympathetic maintenance and repair are important tools in the preservation of the area's unique character.

Enhancement Opportunities

Monitoring and Review

It is vital that a review cycle is established and upheld in order to give continuing support to the Port Erroll Conservation Area. It is clearly important that there is increased monitoring of the conservation area to prevent further erosion of its character through small incremental changes. However, the long term success of this objective will also require close liaison with the local community in order to identify issues which could undermine the distinctive quality of the conservation area.

Observation

A photographic survey of the Port Erroll Conservation Area has been carried out during this appraisal process to create a baseline survey of all properties. This database will act as a future resource tool to monitor the deterioration of buildings and spot any unsympathetic alterations which undermine the character of a particular property. The images will be used as a baseline for managing the conservation area with regular checks and a fresh photographic survey carried out every five years.

Liaison

It is important that there is increased communication and interaction between the Planning Service and the wider community. The organisation of educational or training days could be a useful way of initiating communication with local residents and promoting the importance of maintaining their properties. The involvement of local groups in the monitoring process would also be a positive step towards greater community engagement.

Review

The appraisal has identified that the lack of previous reviews has had a detrimental impact on the integrity of the conservation area and that there is a need to undertake regular evaluations. These reviews should not only monitor change but future proposals to ensure the appearance and character of the historic settlement is not

undermined by inappropriate development. The challenge is to ensure that all new development respect, enhance and have a positive impact on the area.

Pavements and Roads

The various shades of tarmac associated with the reinstatement of the carriageway following the laying of underground services and other minor repair works to the road surface has had a detrimental impact on the wider appearance of the conservation area. The resurfacing of the entire carriageway would undoubtedly address this problem and improve the character of the designated area.

The encroachment of inappropriate road markings, particularly in the form of double yellow lines and speed bumps, has had detrimental effect upon the appearance of the area. A more sensitive approach to traffic management would allow for the inclusion of carefully designed solutions that would create only a minor visual impact within the area.

Gateways

The boundary of the conservation area is not physically defined on any of the entry points and an opportunity therefore exists to reinforce the profile of the designation by introducing a different road surface or feature that not only distinguishes the boundary but also contributes to the character of this part of Port Erroll. It is considered that this will be relatively easy to execute due to the lack of gateways in to the conservation area, especially on the main entrance by the bridge at the top of Main Street.

Street Lighting

The current standardised lamp post design does little to differentiate the conservation area from the rest of Cruden Bay and it would clearly be advantageous to come forward with a long term strategy to introduce more distinctive lighting that compliments the wider appearance of the designated area.

It would also be complementary to incorporate a design specification for the positioning of elements such as Street Lights so that they do not encroach on the shore side of the settlement either.



Open Spaces

The character of the Port Erroll Conservation Area is greatly shaped by the open spaces available to be enjoyed.

There are two key open spaces within the conservation area, the first beside the harbour, and the second between Main Street and Harbour Street.

The seating available within Port Erroll is of a range of materials and designs which is somewhat detrimental and unpleasing in terms of aesthetics. This being said there is merit in noting that many of the seats have been privately funded in memory of loved ones. This feature expresses an overwhelming sense of pride and fondness for the area and creates a welcoming feature for visitors and townsfolk alike.

Amenities such as litter receptacles are also inconsistent in design. Care and attention has been taken to install some wooden bins along the access to Ladies Bridge but other bins supplied by the council are simply large, unattractive dustbins sitting on concrete pads with steel posts.



FURTHER ADVICE

The Environment Team should be contacted at the address below if they've any issues with the content of this document or require additional advice on conservation areas.

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Gordon House
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APPENDICES

Appendix I Aberdeenshire Local Development Policies

Appendix II Supplementary Guidance Notes

Appendix III Port Erroll Conservation Area Building Survey August 2015

Appendix I Aberdeenshire Local Development Policies

SG Historic Environment 1: Listed buildings

We will protect all “listed buildings” contained in the statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for Aberdeenshire, and we will encourage their protection, maintenance, enhancement, active use and conservation.

We will refuse planning permission and/or listed building consent for any works, including demolition, which would have a detrimental effect on their character, integrity or setting.

We will only approve alterations or extensions to listed buildings or new development within their curtilage, subject to other policies, if:

- they are of the highest quality, and respect the original structure in terms of setting, scale, design and materials; AND
- 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.

Reasoned Justification

The aim of this policy is to protect listed buildings against detrimental works, in accordance with current guidance and legislation. Aberdeenshire’s built heritage is irreplaceable and must be preserved and conserved for present and future generations.

Listed buildings make a significant contribution to the character and amenity of Aberdeenshire. The fact that a building is obsolete for a period of time is not in itself a justification for unsympathetic change.

Listed buildings are at their most vulnerable when vacant, so encouragement is given to appropriate redevelopment that secures their best viable use. Changing the building’s use is often a successful way to bring a building out of disuse or disrepair. Listed buildings are a valuable resource that significantly contributes to the townscape of our communities, provides multi-functional buildings, can stimulate enjoyment of the wider environment, and can act as an important medium for education, recreation and tourism. As such, they must be protected.

The prime responsibility to maintain listed buildings in good condition rests with the individual owner. However, there are some grants available (from a variety of bodies) to help with the repair and maintenance of listed buildings. The Council can also exercise its right to place a building repair notice on a derelict listed building, and in extreme cases can apply a compulsory purchase order to prevent a listed building falling into ruin.

More detailed guidance on the application of this supplementary guidance is provided in Scottish Historic Environment Policy and Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes, which are available to download from Historic Scotland’s website.

In the event of the planning authority being minded to grant listed building consent for works affecting category A or B listed buildings or for demolition of category C listed buildings, the planning authority must notify Historic Scotland. To help assess proposals affecting listed buildings, Historic Scotland will therefore be consulted at an earlier stage, where appropriate, on proposals affecting category A or B listed buildings or the demolition of category C listed buildings. We will also seek the views of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, the Scottish Civic Trust, and Architecture and Design Scotland, as appropriate. The Council will continue to support the work of the North East Scotland Preservation Trust.

SG Historic Environment 2: Conservation areas

We will refuse planning permission and/or conservation area consent for any development, including change of use or demolition, which would have a detrimental effect on the special character or setting of a conservation area.

We will only approve new development wholly or partly within a conservation area, subject to other policies, if:

- all details are provided under cover of an application for full planning permission; AND
- the design is of the highest quality, and respects and enhances the architectural, historic and visual qualities that give rise to the designation; AND
- any trees that contribute to the conservation areas setting and character are retained.

Reasoned Justification

The aim of this policy is to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas, in order to safeguard the long term management of these areas in accordance with current guidance and legislation. Their boundaries are shown on the settlement proposals maps.

Conservation areas form an important physical record of the architectural development and historical growth of an area. They are an irreplaceable cultural and economic resource that contributes to the distinctive character and unique quality of Aberdeenshire and therefore must be protected. For this reason greater weight will be given to the requirements of this supplementary guidance, when there is a conflict with the requirements of other supplementary guidance in this plan.

Trees in conservation areas are protected through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Before carrying out any work on a tree in a conservation area, owners are required to notify the local authority giving details of intended works. Article 4 Direction Orders restrict permitted development rights, and in certain cases have been put in place to prevent incremental change such as replacement doors and windows, which would otherwise cumulatively undermine the character of the conservation area over time.

The conservation area legislation provides for their regular appraisal, which may result in new Article 4 Directions and/or supplementary guidance in the form of conservation area policies or other design guidelines. Existing and proposed conservation areas in Aberdeenshire, together with relevant Article 4 Directions and further guidance will be provided in planning advice.

Any slate, stone, or other traditional building materials accruing from demolition should be retained and reused for new building in the vicinity, or by donating it to the Aberdeenshire Conservation Materials store.

In the event of the planning authority being minded to grant conservation area consent for demolition of an unlisted building, the planning authority must notify Historic Scotland.

Historic Scotland will therefore be consulted at an earlier stage, where appropriate on such proposals.

The agency's "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" is recommended in this regard.

To help assess proposals we will also seek the views of the Architectural Heritage Society for Scotland, The Scottish Civic Trust, Architecture and Design Scotland and appropriate local bodies.

Appendix II Port Erroll Conservation Area Supplementary Guidance

These guidance notes seek to provide supplementary advice to ensure that any future development compliments or enhances the wider character of the Port Erroll Conservation Area.

Statutory Powers and Policies

Applications for any form of development or redevelopment will be considered on their own individual merits having regard to the Aberdeen City & Shire Structure Plan, the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan and any other supplementary documents produced by the local authority.

General Policy

Within the conservation area it will be the policy of Aberdeenshire Council to protect and preserve by development control measures, all those buildings, views and other aspects of the environment that make up the character of Port Erroll. Furthermore, to enhance the area by encouraging appropriate development and landscaping, together with the removal of those elements which are deemed to have a detrimental impact on its appearance.

The following criteria for design will be applied in the determination of any future planning applications located within the conservation area:-

- (i) The position of the building on its site will be determined by its relationship with adjoining buildings and/or open space.
- (ii) The materials to be used shall be appropriate to the area and sympathetic to the adjoining buildings.
- (iii) The mass of the building shall be scale and harmony with the adjoining buildings and the wider area as a whole.
- (iv) The design of the building shall be such that the proportions of the parts relate to each other and are appropriate to the adjoining 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 in order to achieve the best visual results.

Specific Policies

Outline Planning Permission

Outline Planning Applications will only be considered by the Planning Service when they are accompanied by a sketch scheme (layout and elevations) which clearly show the design, construction and material finish of the proposed development. The best applications will also include supporting statements for the alterations which take in to account the history, in terms of architectural design/materials/local features, and consideration for these alongside their proposed scheme.

Demolition

In alignment with legislation any application for demolition within the conservation area will require conservation area consent. This applies to any building or structure, including those unlisted, within the Port Erroll Conservation Area and it must be supported by a written justification for the proposed works. This justification should include a statement of significance for the subject property (detailing the historic importance of the building along with a justification for the demolition) along with

detailed plans of both existing and replacement buildings to enable the Planning Authority to fully assess the case.

Street Furniture

The sensitive nature of Port Erroll merits themed designs that reflect the settlements distinctive individuality with lamp standards, litter bins and seating to acknowledge the unique character of the settlement. Consequently, the bland standardised street furniture and the normal plethora of traffic signage will not be considered acceptable within the Port Erroll Conservation Area.

Shop Frontages

Any new shop frontages will require Conservation Area Consent and should be designed to complement the wider character of the settlement. Special consideration should be made regarding the replacement design and scale of fascia boards, hanging signs and display windows and only sympathetic designs will be deemed appropriate. Therefore the use of brightly coloured plastic lettering or illuminated fascia boards will not be acceptable within the Port Erroll Conservation Area.

Design Guidance and Detailed Policies

The following considers those elements of buildings and development proposals that can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the Port Erroll Conservation Area. All of these elements require Conservation Area Consent, and some may require Planning Permission also, to be granted before any works are to be carried out.

Roofs

The majority of properties located within the Port Erroll Conservation Area have natural slate roofs which significantly shape the character and appearance of the settlement. The Planning Service will therefore seek the retention of these traditional treatments and will insist that both repair works and any new roofs replicate this original construction.

Dormers

An array of traditional dormers can be found within the Port Erroll Conservation Area which not only significantly shape the character of the buildings upon which they are attached but the wider appearance of the streetscape. The Local Authority will seek the retention of these traditional elements and insist that any proposed new dormers follow a similar pattern in being set back from the wall head and below the ridge line and not allowed to dominate or upset the balance of the roof with a shallow and inconspicuous fascia. A limited number of properties have large box dormers that are out of character and scale with the conservation area and their replacement with smaller more traditionally detailed and proportioned dormers will be encouraged.

Roof lights

The Planning Service will seek the retention of original cast iron roof-lights but will concede their replacement for conservation based models provided they replicate the design and size of the original units. The local authority will also support the introduction of new roof lights provided they're true conservation units and not the large standard models which are somewhat more intrusive and detract from the character of the roofscape.

Rainwater Goods

Traditional gutters and downpipes play a significant role in shaping the character of individual buildings and any repairs or replacement fittings should be undertaken on a like for like basis. Modern PVC replacement rainwater goods are inappropriate and will not be approved for properties located within the conservation area.

Ridges, Skews and Chimneys

Chimneys are an important feature within the conservation area and the Local Authority will therefore seek their retention. The existing stone skews, clay ridge tiles and ceramic chimney pots also have a significant impact on the townscape and should be retained or replaced on a like for like basis if considered beyond repair.

Doors

Door furniture including decorative glasswork and ironmongery makes a significant contribution to the character of the Port Erroll Conservation Area. The Local Authority will therefore promote the retention of all traditional doors and seek that any replacements match the originals not only in terms of design and construction but also in external treatment. In recent years the appearance of new colour schemes have crept in to the conservation area which significantly damage the original design intention of the area.

Windows

Windows are a key element in a building's design and significantly attribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. As a consequence, the Planning Service will insist that all replacement units, no matter where their location on the building, replicate the design, construction and material finish of the original windows.

Walls

The Planning Service will insist that new walls or extensions within the conservation area are built to match their immediate surroundings in terms of its overall construction including coursing and pointing. The use of dry dash is considered an alien treatment within the settlement and will not be supported by Aberdeenshire Council. Indeed, the local authority will promote the use of salvaged stone but may consider the use of a traditional lime harl subject to it matching the colour of the stonework found within the conservation area.

Boundary Treatments

The numerous boundary treatments found within Port Erroll make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area, particularly those found on the shoreline. The age and construction of these various elements contribute to the interest of the streetscape and the Planning Service will therefore seek the retention of any traditional boundary treatments as well as support any proposal to reinstate missing architectural elements.

Micro Renewable Equipment and Satellite Dishes

These items can often seriously disfigure a building and greatly diminish the wider quality of the conservation area and should therefore only be installed where it is possible to do so without affecting in any way the wider appearance of the

streetscape. The fact that a property is set well back from the road is not a relevant consideration in appraising the installation of equipment and the applicant should always be advised to locate any such fixtures in a position not readily visible from the public carriageway.

Extensions

A proposal to extend a property located within the conservation area should not be considered in isolation but in context to the wider streetscape to ensure it respects the character, scale and proportions of neighbouring buildings as well as its subject property. Any new extension should follow the established building line of the street and embrace features and materials which are distinctive to the settlement. It should complement and not overshadow or detract from the existing property.

