



rural

location

design

sustainability



Planning Advice Note

housing

in the countryside



housing in the countryside the intention is to create more widespread good quality rural housing which respects the Scottish landscape



rural solutions are required for rural locations

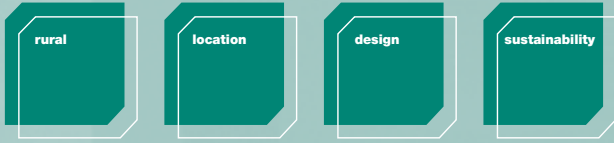
Planning series:

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

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

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

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



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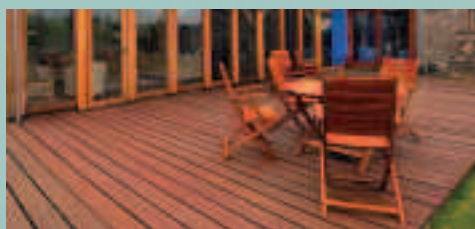
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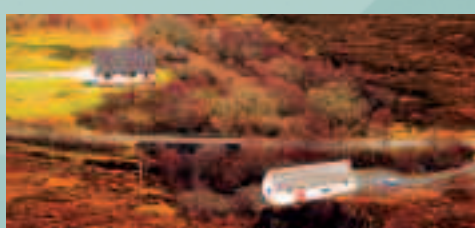
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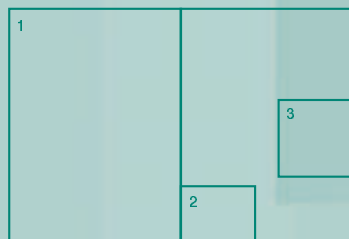
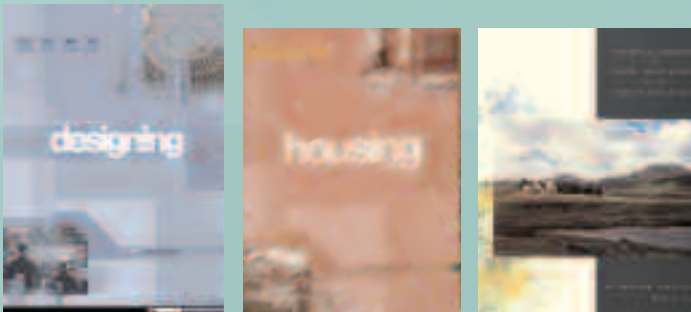
Aim

***Designing Places*, published in November 2001, sets out the Scottish Executive's expectations of the planning system to deliver high standards of design in development for rural and urban areas. The design based Planning Advice Note (PAN) series is an additional means by which we can maintain the profile of design and identify best practice in planning for high quality development.**

This PAN supersedes and reinforces many of the key themes set out in *PAN 36 Siting and Design of New Housing in the Countryside* (published in 1991) and brings the advice up to date with the new emphasis on design and quality.

The advice in this PAN sets out key design principles which need to be taken into account: by applicants when planning a new development and by planning authorities, when preparing development plans and supporting guidance, and determining applications.

The purpose is to create more opportunities for good quality rural housing which respects Scottish landscapes and building traditions. The advice should not, however, be seen as a constraint on architects and designers wishing to pursue innovative and carefully considered contemporary designs.



- 1: Skirling, Scottish Borders
- 2: Housing sitting down low in the landscape
- 3: Gable end of the Wooden House, Skye, Highlands



Rural development

Problems to solve

For over 10 years, PAN 36 has had some positive impact on new housing development but, nethertheless, concerns remain:

- ▶ an inability to understand designs particular to local areas;
- ▶ development plans and supporting guidance not always sufficiently clear about the standards required;
- ▶ a lack of confidence in articulating and holding out for quality design, and following through to appeal, if necessary;
- ▶ an over reliance on houses not designed specifically for the site; and
- ▶ roads and drainage engineers using urban solutions rather than having greater flexibility to reflect local circumstances.

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It is therefore appropriate to restate the importance of quality development in the countryside by expanding on the messages in PAN 36.

Changing circumstances

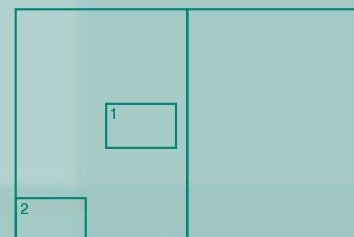
One of the most significant changes in rural areas has been a rise in the number of people wishing to live in the accessible parts of the countryside while continuing to work in towns and cities within commuting distance. Others wish to live and work in the countryside. These trends derive from lifestyle choices and technological changes which allow working from home. More people are now also buying second or holiday homes. In addition, leisure and tourism businesses have been increasingly active, for example through timeshare and chalet developments. It is for planning authorities to assess these demands and decide how, and where, to accommodate them.



a rise in the number of people wishing to

live

in the countryside



1: Self catering units, near Auchterarder, Perth & Kinross
2: Contemporary artist's studio and home, Perth & Kinross

Opportunities

Some landscapes will probably have to accommodate considerable change in the coming years. This change needs to be planned and managed so that the effects are positive. Buildings in rural areas can often be seen over long distances and they are there for a long time. Careful design is essential. Traditional buildings can be an inspiration but new or imaginative re-interpretation of traditional features should not be excluded. Where possible, the aim should be to develop high quality modern designs which maintain a sense of place and support local identity.

Examples of the main opportunities include:

conversion or rehabilitation

The revival of rural buildings to provide comfortable modern homes has become increasingly popular. It not only brings a building back to life but it may provide opportunities to sensitively conserve our built heritage, including buildings of merit which are not listed. The sympathetic restoration of buildings which are structurally sound, largely intact, safely accessible and linked to water and other services maintains the character and distinctiveness of places.



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small-scale infill

Small-scale infill in existing small communities can bring economic and social benefits by supporting existing services such as schools and shops. Planning authorities should generally seek to reinforce the building pattern of the existing settlement and ensure that new buildings respect and contribute to the area's architectural and cultural heritage.



new groups of houses

Housing related to existing groupings will usually be preferable to new isolated developments. The groupings should not be suburban. They should be small in size, and sympathetic in terms of orientation, topography, scale, proportion and materials to other buildings in the locality. They should take account of sustainable development criteria in location and infrastructure needs.



single houses

There will continue to be a demand for single houses, often individually designed. But these have to be planned, with location carefully selected and design appropriate to locality.



Policy framework

Guidance and advice

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 3 *Planning for Housing* and SPP 15 (revised) *Planning for Rural Development* recognise that changes in the rural economy require new development. Diversification of the rural economy is also of importance and PAN 73 on Rural Diversification concentrates on this issue.

Policy in SPP 3 *Planning for Housing* anticipates that most new housing will be located in towns and villages, but given the major changes in farming and the rural economy, it is expected that new housing out with existing settlements may have a greater part to play in economic regeneration in rural areas.

SPP 15 *Planning for Rural Development* advances policy in respect of small-scale rural housing developments, including clusters and groups in close proximity to settlements, replacement housing, plots on which to build individually designed homes and holiday homes.

The requirement for additional housing in an area should reflect not only local needs including affordable housing, but also provide for second and holiday homes where there is demonstrable demand.

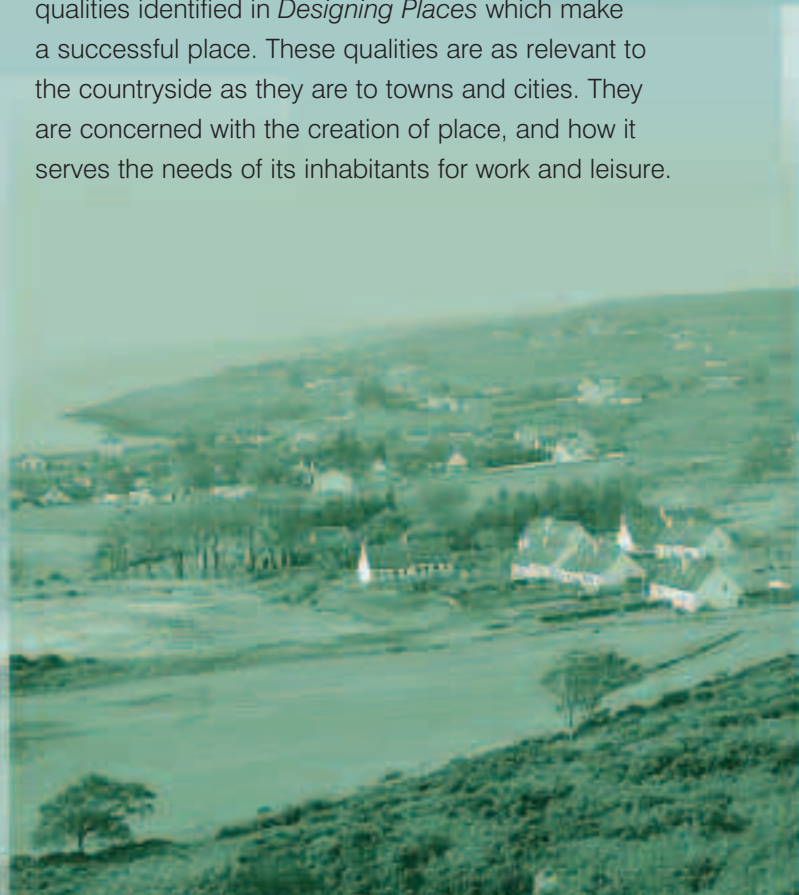
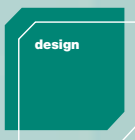
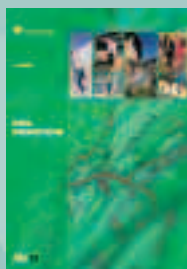
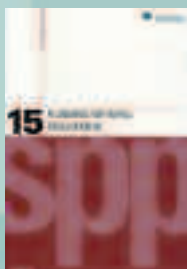
Together, the guidance and advice indicates that the amount and location of housing that can be developed in rural areas is determined by a number of factors. These include:

- › **Context** – Fit in the landscape.
- › **Identity** – Design details which reflect the local character, as well as an increased awareness of energy efficiency linked to design standards.
- › **Connection** – Proximity to services, e.g. schools, shops (ideally within walking or cycling distance), ease of access (from an existing road and foot path and to a rail station or bus route); drainage and sewerage capacity (from combined septic tanks or links to public systems).

Overall, new developments in the countryside, if properly planned, sited and designed, contribute to the quality of a landscape.

Designing Places

Designing Places (2001) sets out clear national planning policy support for higher design standards, and it is important that these are carried forward throughout Scotland. The aim is to improve the quality of the environment for everyone. There are six key qualities identified in *Designing Places* which make a successful place. These qualities are as relevant to the countryside as they are to towns and cities. They are concerned with the creation of place, and how it serves the needs of its inhabitants for work and leisure.



Distinctive

Vaila Shore Base, Shetland

The success of a place often depends on maintaining its distinctiveness. Development which does not undermine the identity of rural areas should be supported.



Safe & pleasant

Barn O'Braco, Aberdeenshire

These qualities are seen by many as essential to countryside living. People often move to the countryside for a healthier and less frenetic lifestyle.



Easy to get around

Manor Valley, Scottish Borders

Countryside dwellers rely on good accessibility to conduct their day-to-day lives. The reality of life in many rural areas requires the use of a private car.



Welcoming

Kincardine O'Neil, Aberdeenshire

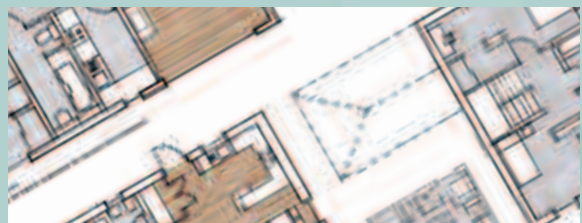
Making development welcoming is important, especially in the layout of new houses on the edge of settlements and at the gateways or entrances to villages.



Adaptable

Layout plans for adaptable space

This is about recognising changing patterns of use where appropriate, as well as allowing people to easily adapt their homes as their needs change with time.



Resource efficient

North Uist, Western Isles

Careful siting will not only enhance the landscape but can also bring benefits by utilising current infrastructure and services, maximising passive solar gain and reducing energy consumption through avoiding extremes of weather. Also, using locally sourced materials may be more sustainable and better suited to the local natural and built environments.



Location

The provision of new development should be sustainable. One way of achieving this is whether it helps to maintain the population in an area – making services viable, retaining people in affordable homes and creating new businesses in rural areas. It is also helpful if development makes use of spare capacity in existing infrastructure and services. But it is important to ensure that any new development does not overload the capacity of current services and infrastructure.

3 factors which influence location

- 1. Landscape**
- 2. Layout**
- 3. Access**

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location

sustainability

1. Landscape

Scotland's geological and climatic conditions have influenced vegetation, land use, settlement patterns, building methods and styles. This has led to a rich diversity of landscapes. These landscapes have different capacities to accommodate development. It is therefore crucial that the proposed location and siting of new housing considers the impact on the landscape, in terms of both immediate and wider surroundings. If a proper fit in the landscape is not achieved, then even a well designed building can fail. Overall, a well designed house must reflect the landscape in which it is set. It must be informed by and respond to it, rather than being a house which is designed without regard to the context and placed within a site.

Scotland's most valued landscapes are recognised by a range of national and local designations. These include National Parks, National Scenic Areas, local landscape designations (such as Areas of Great Landscape Value), Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Conservation Areas and the setting of listed buildings and Ancient Monuments. These identify areas that are mainly important for their scenic or cultural heritage but which may also be important for nature and recreation. In such places, planning authorities should take steps to encourage developments that respect the special combination of features for which an area has been designated.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), in partnership with local authorities across Scotland, has completed a suite of Landscape Character Assessments. These provide a more objective description of landscape, enabling a better assessment of how change will affect it. Related techniques, such as landscape capacity studies, can also help in exploring the ability or limits of different landscapes to successfully accommodate development in keeping with local landscape character.



Some landscape considerations

Location within the landscape – Location concerns site selection within the wider landscape. Some areas are so prominent that it is accepted that any development at these locations would be detrimental to the surrounding landscape. Most new developments should try to fit into or nestle within the landscape. Skyline development should normally be avoided, as should heavily engineered platforms. This is to ensure that the building does not interrupt and conflict with the flow of the landform or appear out of scale. Even where sites are less visible they will still require a significant level of skill to assimilate buildings into the landscape. Sites which are least visible can often be suitable for more adventurous or individual designs. Occasionally, where a landmark development is considered to be appropriate, its design needs to be of the highest quality and considered very carefully. Likewise, where there are groupings of new buildings, their location within the landscape and relationship to each other is important.



Woodlands – Setting a building against a backdrop of trees is one of the most successful means by which new development can blend with the landscape. Where trees exist they should be retained. Care should be taken to ensure an appropriate distance between tree root systems and building foundations, so that neither is compromised. In some parts of Scotland, where there is little existing planting and limited scope for landscaping, particular care should be taken in the selection of sites and design of houses.



New planting – The purpose of new planting is not to screen or hide new development, but to help integration with the surrounding landscape. New trees and shrubs which are locally native will usually be easier to establish than non-native plants, and will be more in keeping with the character of the area. Planting with locally native species has the additional benefits of creating habitats for wildlife and potentially contributing to Local Biodiversity Action Plans.



Boundary treatments – The open space associated with a house or houses should be considered as an integral part of the development, not as an afterthought, and again be treated in relation to the surrounding environment. Suburban ranch-type fences, concrete block walls and the regimented use of non-native fast-growing conifers should be avoided. Although the use of dry-stone walling in some areas can help the integration of new development with the landscape, the costs involved may mean that this can only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances are most likely to arise in designated areas, e.g. National Parks, National Scenic Areas, Conservation Areas and local landscape designations.



2. Layout

The importance of layout within a site cannot be over stated. A good layout can enhance an individual house design; conversely, a bad layout can detract from a good design. When determining a site's layout, consideration must be given to a range of natural and technical factors.

Layout considerations

Topography – Sloping sites need careful consideration to allow a practical house design which does not look out of place. They can, however, give an opportunity to use the difference in levels to create an interesting and fitting building. This approach is much more appropriate than the use of platforms. In low-lying areas, flood risk needs to be addressed.



Orientation – Attention should be paid to established building lines and orientation of any buildings in the area. Overlooking should be avoided. The location and proximity to natural and built features, such as landmarks, can also influence layout.



Shelter – Layouts should try to avoid any unnecessary exposure to the elements, i.e. houses should shelter one another and generally be positioned to take account of the prevailing wind direction and to create a good microclimate.



Solar gain – Energy efficient layouts can help to maximise natural light and solar gain.



Views – Views to and from the site should be maximised, but not at the expense of good design.



Movement – Easily accessible links should be made for pedestrian and vehicular movement.



3. Access

Rural areas need design solutions and road standards which are appropriate to their character and setting. The application of urban standards and materials, such as tar macadam and concrete kerbs have resulted in development in the countryside looking too formal and over engineered. In addition, the adoption of suburban street lighting standards is not only inappropriate and increases light pollution, but often the lamp design can look out of place in the rural context. Every effort must be made to adopt an approach which complies with safety standards and yet responds sensitively to the rural scene and local circumstances.

There is scope for innovative road design solutions, particularly in designated areas, which achieve safety without compromising a sense of place. For example, where possible, access should be from existing entrance points on existing roads, modified as appropriate to improve sightlines. It may be appropriate to develop small groups of roadside buildings, particularly where this follows a historical precedent. Provision should also be made for safe parking.

Careful consideration needs to be given to proposals for new housing where access from the trunk road is required. The Executive is committed to improving safety on trunk roads.



scope for rural road design solutions

Cluster



Courtyard



Linear





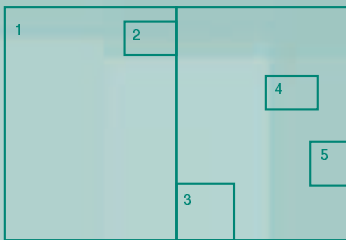
Design

High quality design must be integral to new development and local area differences must be respected.

Traditionally, local climate and available materials have had a profound influence on the design of houses and have helped to create local area characteristics. Likewise, features and finishes can help connect, or disconnect, a house to its surroundings. Increasingly, however, design has been standardised across the countryside. The challenge therefore lies in encouraging designs which are distinctive and responsive to their setting.

In some areas, such as National Parks, National Scenic Areas and Conservation Areas, there may be a case for more prescription and a preference for traditional design, but it is also important to encourage the best of contemporary designs. There is considerable scope for creative and innovative solutions whilst relating a new home to the established character of the area.

The overall aim should be to ensure that new housing is carefully located, worthy of its setting, and is the result of an imaginative, responsive and sensitive design process.



- 1 & 2:** Manor Valley, Scottish Borders
- 3:** The Wooden House with four interior levels and design flexibility so that the walls can be added or taken out, Skye, Highlands
- 4:** Elgol, Skye, Highlands
- 5:** Sustainable steading conversion, Barehilllock, Aberdeenshire

3	factors which influence design	1. Scale
		2. Materials
		3. Details



1. Scale

There is a sturdy quality to much of the scale and shape of Scotland's domestic rural architecture. This is derived largely from the simplicity of the form and proportion, and in the arrangement of doors and windows. Traditional Scottish style has sometimes been diluted by modern designs which do not always reflect the historic scale and proportions. There is a need for sensitive designers to tackle this, especially when buildings are sited next to traditional buildings.

The main objective should be to adapt the best from the local elements and to interpret traditional shapes and sizes into a modern context. Overall, the envelope (the width, height and depth of the walls) together with the roof pitch (angle) determine a building's proportions.



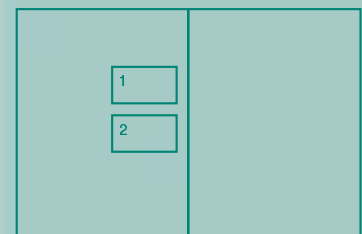
simplicity

of form and proportion

Traditional rural buildings look "right". They have a wide frontage and narrow plan which controls their scale and proportions.



Even if the roof pitch remains the same, if the proportions alter, the building starts to look less appropriate!



- 1: Easter Davoch steading conversion, Aberdeenshire
- 2: New extension, Skye, Highlands

2. Materials

The use of inappropriate or too many materials can have a negative impact. The greater the use of local materials, the more the house may reflect aspects of the local character. This will also help to contribute to sustainability.

In some parts of Scotland, stone is the traditional building material, with the diversity in colour and texture adding to local identity. It is expensive, however, and may only be required in some circumstances. One suitable alternative is a tinted harl which reflects local colour, such as red brown in East Lothian.

Slate or pantiles are often the most common traditional roofing materials. Slate is a versatile and highly effective roofing material but, like stone, it is becoming increasingly expensive. In some circumstances, manufactured alternatives may be suitable.

The economic and practical advantages of timber frame construction and timber cladding means that this is likely to remain the prevalent form of construction and design in rural areas. Forestry Commission Scotland and the Wood for Good Campaign has been promoting the idea of living and building with wood. Also innovative house designs have been produced looking at the use of timber in construction.

More use of timber cladding needs to be encouraged. Ways in which it can be made more visually appropriate is through opaque painting, which is also highly desirable in terms of durability. The use of limey white colours can help to assuage concerns about timber not fitting with the tradition of lime-washed harl masonry. Other colours may sometimes be acceptable including ochre, duck egg blue and dark green.

Kit houses in the countryside need to be well designed to reflect local circumstances.



3. Details

The detailed aspects of rural house design show some general characteristics, although local guidance should stress any variations. Many of the typical attributes of the Scottish rural house, such as window size and setbacks, eaves and verges, dormer design, chimney stacks and porches are shaped by an often wet and windy climate. Overall, design details often need to be assessed on individual merits but excessive detailing and ornamentation should generally be avoided.

Some design detail considerations

Windows and doors – Windows and doors are often historically small and set back from the face of the wall for added protection from driving rain. Their emphasis is almost always vertical, with windows consisting of small panes. More recently, some new modern housing has favoured large windows with a horizontal orientation. This has advantages of light, solar gain and outward views from the house. Whatever the size, the use of traditional wooden frame designs, as opposed to plastic, should be encouraged.



Eaves and verges – Overhanging eaves and verges are very much part of the Scottish tradition, but their use does vary from place to place, as they are often a direct response to the micro climate. For example, they have particular benefits in areas of high rainfall.



Gables and chimneys – Chimneys are an important characteristic of traditional Scottish rural housing, normally located on gable ends and breaching the ridgeline of the roof to avoid long slender stacks exposed to the weather. However, in the context of energy efficiency, it is good practice to locate a chimney centrally, rather than on a gable.



Dormers – Dormer windows, used where the roof space is required for accommodation, should normally take the form of traditional dormers or roof lights with vertical proportions.



Porches – Porches are a common feature on most houses and a variety of styles has evolved, performing a number of useful functions such as reducing draughts. Where they are part of the overall design of a house they can make a contribution to the quality of the internal and external environment. Whether traditional or modern, they have to be in proportion to the elevation.



Energy – Considerations should be given to energy efficiency including heating systems, insulation and type of glazing.



Conservatories – These should be sensitive in design and often benefit from more heat and light if placed on a south facing elevation.

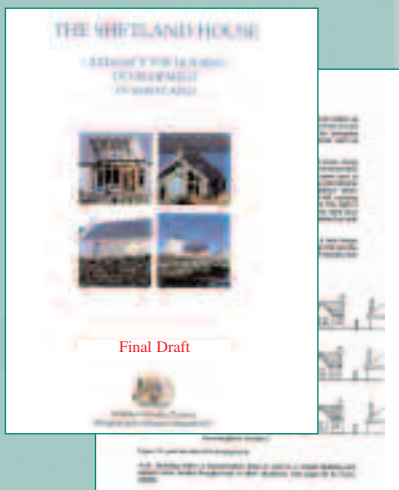


The way forward

Role of applicants

Applicants must play their role in delivering good quality designs. They should seek the assistance of skilled architects and designers. Applicants, and their agents, should familiarise themselves with the relevant policies before preparing a proposal, and likewise planning authorities have a duty to communicate to applicants, and explain to them what is required. Pre-application meetings with the planning authority should be encouraged.

PAN 68 on Design Statements provides advice on how to write design statements. They should often be prepared for developments in sensitive locations. Their purpose is to allow applicants an opportunity to demonstrate their analysis and understanding of the settlement character, their thought process behind their development and the quality to which is being aspired.



Ways for local authorities to help communicate effectively with applicants

- ▶ Hold lists of good local architects and designers with examples to illustrate their work.
- ▶ Publish design guides and advertise them to landowners, developers, local architects, planning consultants and builders in the area.
- ▶ Provide detailed design guidance at the pre-application stage to ensure potential applicants are aware of the policies and less likely to submit proposals likely to be refused.
- ▶ Mount a public display in the planning department to illustrate local examples of successful siting and design. This could be rotated around relevant venues such as libraries, shopping centres and community groups for maximum benefit.
- ▶ Organise seminars to publicise the planning authority's policies on the location, siting and design of new housing in the countryside. Illustrate poor examples, and explain why they are unacceptable.
- ▶ Hold local awards (such as Aberdeenshire Council) and advise applicants to submit to other award schemes.
- ▶ Set up websites which provide easy access to examples of good design in the area.



Role of planning authorities

Local authority planning services should be committed to securing high quality design in new homes and must equip their teams with the necessary design skills. They must also engage effectively with applicants.

Development planning

Development policies must provide a clear vision for high quality developments. They provide an opportunity to set out the type of high standards expected from development proposals. They should be up to date, clear and forward-looking.

It is proposed that rural Scotland will be covered by single-tier plans, and also more concise plans in the future. This will mean that there will be a greater role for supplementary planning guidance.



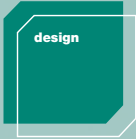
Supplementary planning guidance

Development plan policies should be complemented by more detailed design policy in supplementary planning guidance (SPG). This is an effective way of handling detailed information. When drawing up the guidance, public consultation is essential followed by formal adoption. This strengthens its status as a material consideration in the planning process.

Some examples of SPG include:

- ▶ **Design guides** – Guides or handbooks can help to illustrate the relationships of new houses to the landscape and the range of local traditions, with some principles of character and vernacular. Examples of good and bad practice from the area enable people to form a clearer picture of appropriate development. Illustrations with explanations of what would and would not be likely to be given planning permission can also be helpful. Overall, they appeal to a wide audience and bring to life many of the issues.
- ▶ **Design codes** – Design codes may be appropriate in very special circumstances where a very high degree of prescription is required, for example, in a Conservation Area.
- ▶ **Leaflets** – Simple information leaflets summarising local policy and guidance should describe the key policy elements, refer to additional sources and emphasise the benefits of submitting a well considered and presented application.





Development control

Authorities must ensure that applicants are clear about the expected quality and design requirements. The principles which will be taken into account when determining applications should be expressed clearly and concisely. It is also essential that authorities apply their policies consistently. Where policies are not clear and open to interpretation, this hinders the development control process, through an increased risk of inconsistent decisions. Design is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Role of councillors

Development in the countryside can be sensitive politically. It is very important that there is a solid core of planning policy and guidance which is accepted, understood and applied consistently. If there is to be more development in the countryside it has to be well planned and then implemented properly. The process has to be seen to be fair and impartial and councillors must demonstrate a commitment to policy. Seminars, study tours and attendance at local awards schemes can be useful.

consistency

of decision making



Concluding remarks

There will continue to be a need for new houses in the countryside and this demand will have to be accommodated. Although we are sensitive about our landscapes, they are evolutionary, not static. Most are able to accommodate some degree of change.

This change can be positive, if it is well planned. The location and appearance of each new house must be determined with care and thought, as short-term thinking can have a long-term impact on the landscape.

Every settlement should have its own distinctive identity. This is determined in part by the local characteristics of the area's architectural style of individual buildings and the relationship of these buildings to each other.

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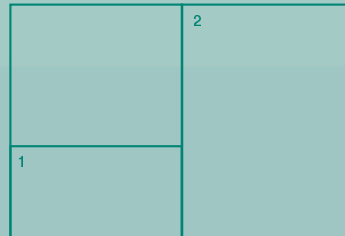
analysis

concept

The key messages are to:

- ▶ set the scale of change that is acceptable;
- ▶ establish a clear policy framework which promotes opportunities to create sustainable and affordable new homes, and apply it consistently;
- ▶ ensure that developments enhance local character; and make a positive contribution.

Creating new homes represents an important challenge for all concerned. Together, we must ensure that today's new developments have the quality and integrity to form the Conservation Areas and listed buildings of the future.



1: New housing, Duisdale, Skye, Highlands

2: Steel and timber conservatory, Perth & Kinross

change can be

positive



Acknowledgements

Images

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Renzo Mazzolini
Rural Design
Shetland Islands Council

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Further copies of this PAN and a list of SPPs, NPPGs and PANs can be obtained by telephoning 0131 244 7543. A copy of this PAN is also available on the Scottish Executive website: www.scotland.gov.uk/planning



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

MANAGING CHANGE IN THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Setting





Above: Kilmartin Glen, Argyll and Bute. An important prehistoric linear cemetery composed of a number of burial cairns and standing stones. Intervisibility between elements of the complex, and views along the line of monuments, through and along the valley, are key to understanding each monument and the complex as a whole. © Kilmartin House Trust'

Cover image: Bronze-Age stone circle at Tomnaverie, Aberdeenshire. Many recumbent stone circles are located on elevated positions and are positioned to have wide-ranging views over the landscape. Views towards these monuments are also an important part of their setting as many appear skylined against the horizon.

MANAGING CHANGE IS A
SERIES OF NON-STATUTORY
GUIDANCE NOTES ABOUT
MANAGING CHANGE IN THE
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT.
THEY EXPLAIN HOW TO APPLY
GOVERNMENT POLICIES.

The aim of the series is to identify the main issues which can arise in different situations, to advise how best to deal with these, and to offer further sources of information. They are also intended to inform planning policies and the determination of applications relating to the historic environment.

INTRODUCTION

This note sets out the principles that apply to developments affecting the setting of historic assets or places, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings, Inventory historic gardens and designed landscapes, World Heritage Sites, conservation areas, historic battlefields, Historic Marine Protected Areas and undesignated sites.

Planning authorities usually make the initial assessment of whether a development will affect the setting of a historic asset or place. However, this may also be identified through other mechanisms such as an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). If a planning authority identifies a potential impact on a designated historic asset, it may consult Historic Environment Scotland, who act as statutory consultees in the planning process.

World Heritage Site status brings a commitment to protect the site's cultural significance and the Outstanding Universal Value for which the site is inscribed. This may include reference to aspects of setting.



Clava Cairns, Highland. An important Bronze-Age cemetery complex of burial cairns and standing stones. Intervisibility of elements of the complex is key to understanding the scheduled monument. © Crown copyright: Historic Environment Scotland. Licensor canmore.org.uk

Below: Fort Augustus lock flight, Caledonian Canal, Highland. Running from Inverness to Banavie, near Fort William, the scheduled Caledonian Canal represents the culmination of 18th-century canal construction in Scotland. The modern village of Fort Augustus developed along the locks, and views along the lock flight clearly reveal the relationships between the urban topography and the canal. © J. Malcolm



KEY ISSUES

1. Setting can be important to the way in which historic structures or places are understood, appreciated and experienced. It can often be integral to a historic asset's cultural significance. Planning authorities must take into account the setting of historic assets or places when drawing up development plans and guidance, when considering environmental and design assessments/statements, and when making decisions on planning applications.
2. Where development is proposed it is important to:
 - identify the historic assets that might be affected
 - define the setting of each historic asset
 - assess the impact of any new development on this
3. Setting often extends beyond the property boundary or 'curtilage' of an individual historic asset into a broader landscape context. Both tangible and less tangible elements can be important in understanding the setting. Less tangible elements may include function, sensory perceptions or the historical, artistic, literary and scenic associations of places or landscapes.
4. If proposed development is likely to affect the setting of a key historic asset, an objective written assessment should be prepared by the applicant to inform the decision-making process. The conclusions should take into account the significance of the asset and its setting and attempt to quantify the extent of any impact. The methodology and level of information should be tailored to the circumstances of each case.
5. In the light of the assessment described above, finalised development proposals should seek to avoid or mitigate detrimental impacts on the settings of historic assets.
6. Advice on whether a planning application should include an assessment of the development's impact on setting should be sought from the planning authority.

1. WHAT IS 'SETTING'?

'Setting' is the way the surroundings of a historic asset or place contribute to how it is understood, appreciated and experienced.

Monuments, buildings, gardens and settlements were almost always placed and orientated deliberately, normally with reference to the surrounding topography, resources, landscape and other structures. Over time, these relationships change, although aspects of earlier settings can be retained.

Setting can therefore not simply be defined by a line on a map, and is likely to be unrelated to modern landownership or to curtilage, often extending beyond immediate property boundaries into the wider area.

Baltersan Castle, South Ayrshire. A category A listed 17th-century tower house, viewed from the 15th-century gatehouse of the adjacent Crossraguel Abbey. The medieval burgh of Maybole lies beyond, marked by the bell tower of the tolbooth. These elements of the late medieval / early modern Maybole area have clear visual and spatial relationships. © J. Malcolm

2. WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO SETTING?

The setting of a historic asset can incorporate a range of factors, not all of which will apply to every case. These include:

- current landscape or townscape context
- views to, from and across or beyond the historic asset or place
- key vistas (for instance, a 'frame' of trees, buildings or natural features that give the historic asset or place a context, whether intentional or not)
- the prominence of the historic asset or place in views throughout the surrounding area, bearing in mind that sites need not be visually prominent to have a setting
- aesthetic qualities



- character of the surrounding landscape
- general and specific views including foregrounds and backdrops
- views from within an asset outwards over key elements in the surrounding landscape, such as the view from the principal room of a house, or from a roof terrace
- relationships with other features, both built and natural
- non-visual factors such as historical, artistic, literary, place name, or scenic associations, intellectual relationships (e.g. to a theory, plan or design), or sensory factors
- a ‘sense of place’: the overall experience of an asset which may combine some of the above factors

Defining the setting of a historic asset or place is case-specific and will ultimately rely on informed judgement, based on a range of considerations, including those set out above.

Cullen Seatown, Moray. In this conservation area the layout of the buildings is closely linked to the landscape context: on the north side of the village, gables face the sea to maximise shelter; here, on the south side, the houses are aligned to maximise light. © N. Haynes



3. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CHANGE

There are three stages in assessing the impact of a development on the setting of a historic asset or place:

- **Stage 1: identify the historic assets** that might be affected by the proposed development
- **Stage 2: define and analyse the setting** by establishing how the surroundings contribute to the ways in which the historic asset or place is understood, appreciated and experienced
- **Stage 3: evaluate the potential impact of the proposed changes** on the setting, and the extent to which any negative impacts can be mitigated (see Section 4)

Stage 1: identify the historic assets

A desk assessment of historic environment records and other relevant material will provide the baseline information, identifying which assets will be affected and what is significant about them.

The initial approach should include all the potentially affected historic assets and places (including those relatively distant from the proposal) and their settings. It may be necessary to engage a suitably qualified historic environment consultant to undertake this identification and assessment.

Neist Point Lighthouse, Skye, Highland. The remote location and open views are important elements in the function and setting of the category B listed lighthouse. Seaward views are important, and views towards the lighthouse from shipping channels also form part of the setting.



Stage 2: define and analyse the setting

The setting of a historic asset comprises our present understanding and appreciation of its current surroundings, and what (if anything) survives of its historic surroundings combined with subsequent historic changes. Answering the following questions often helps define a setting:

- How do the present surroundings contribute to our ability to appreciate and understand the historic asset or place?
- How does the historic asset or place contribute to its surroundings? For instance, is it a prominent or dominant feature in the landscape?
- When the historic asset or place was developed or in use (both originally and subsequently):
 - how was it intended to be viewed? From a distance? From other sites, buildings or specific points in the landscape?
 - what views was it intended to have? Wide views over the landscape or seascape? Confined views? Narrow alignment(s)?

Key viewpoints to, from and across the setting of a historic asset should be identified. Often certain views are critical to how a historic asset is or has been approached and seen, or understood when looking out. These views were sometimes deliberately manipulated, manufactured and/or maintained, and may still be readily understood and appreciated today. Depending on the historic asset or place these could include specific points

on current and historical approaches, routeways, associated farmland, other related buildings, monuments, natural features, etc.

Sometimes these relationships can be discerned across wide areas and even out to distant horizons. In other cases they have a more restricted view, defined and enclosed by topographical or built features. For some historic assets and places, both immediate and distant points of visual relationship are crucial to our understanding of them.

Changes in the surroundings since the historic asset or place was built should be considered, as should the contribution of the historic asset or place to the current landscape. In some cases the current surroundings will contribute to a sense of place, or how a historic asset or place is experienced.

The value attributed to a historic asset by the community or wider public may influence the sensitivity of its setting. Public consciousness may place a strong emphasis on an asset and its setting for aesthetic reasons, or because of an artistic or historic association. Such associative values can contribute to the significance of a site, and to the sensitivity of its setting.

Whether or not a site is visited does not change its inherent value, or its sensitivity to alterations in its setting. This should be distinguished from the tourism, leisure or economic role of a site. Tourism and leisure factors may be relevant in the overall analysis of the impact of a proposed development, but they do not form part of an assessment of setting impacts.

In certain circumstances the value attributed to a historic asset by the community or wider public may influence the sensitivity of its setting. Public consciousness may place a strong emphasis on an asset and its setting for aesthetic reasons, or because of an artistic or historic association. Such associative values can contribute to the significance of a site, and to the sensitivity of its setting. However, it is important to emphasise that an asset has a setting whether it is visited or not.

Stage 3: evaluate the potential impact of the proposed changes

The impact of a proposed development on the setting of a historic asset or place can be a material consideration in determining whether a planning or other application is given consent, so thought must be given to whether new development can be incorporated

Aerial view of Kinross House (1684) and gardens and Lochleven Castle, Perth and Kinross. The category A listed house and gardens which feature on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, designed by Sir William Bruce as his main residence, used the castle and the island as a picturesque focal point in the landscape.
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sensitively. Depending on the nature of the historic asset or place, relatively small changes in the wider landscape may affect its setting.

Certain types of development require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which might include assessing the impact on the setting of a historic asset or place. Further information and advice about EIA can be found on our [website](#).

Factors to be considered in assessing the impact of a change on the setting of a historic asset or place include:

- whether key views to or from the historic asset or place are interrupted
- whether the proposed change would dominate or detract in a way that affects our ability to understand and appreciate the historic asset
- the visual impact of the proposed change relative to the scale of the historic asset or place and its setting

- the visual impact of the proposed change relative to the current place of the historic asset in the landscape
- the presence, extent, character and scale of the existing built environment within the surroundings of the historic asset or place and how the proposed development compares to this
- the magnitude of the proposed change relative to the sensitivity of the setting of an asset – sometimes relatively small changes, or a series of small changes, can have a major impact on our ability to appreciate and understand a historic asset or place. Points to consider include:
 - the ability of the setting to absorb new development without eroding its key characteristics
 - the effect of the proposed change on qualities of the existing setting such as sense of remoteness, current noise levels, evocation of the historical past, sense of place, cultural identity, associated spiritual responses
 - cumulative impacts: individual developments may not cause significant impacts on their own, but may do so when they are combined



Rosyth Castle, Fife. Once located on an island in the River Forth, the site was incorporated into the naval dockyards in the 20th century resulting in significant change to the scheduled monument's original setting. Any changes, including enhancement, need to be considered against the current setting.

Many Geographical Information Systems (GIS) packages support useful interpretative models, such as wireframes, viewshed analyses and digital terrain models. Graphic presentations such as photomontages, and landscape data-sets such as Historic Land-use Assessment (HLA), may also assist in reaching an understanding of a historic asset or place in the landscape and how development may affect it.

4. MITIGATION OF IMPACTS AND ENHANCEMENT OF SETTING

Where the assessment indicates that there will be an adverse impact on the setting of a historic asset or place, even if this is perceived to be temporary or reversible, alterations to the siting or design of the new development should be considered to remove or reduce this impact.

The most effective way to prevent impacts on setting is during site selection and early design. Any mitigation and enhancement proposals should be discussed as part of the pre-application process.

Burghead Harbour, Moray. Early 19th century listed granaries line the quayside. Their even spacing, scale and relationship to the wet dock and to the grid-plan town are relevant to an understanding of the setting. © N. Haynes

Other mitigation measures include screening the development, for example with trees or bunding (enclosing structures). However, the screening itself needs careful consideration so that it does not cause an impact in its own right.

It is also important to bear in mind that vegetation such as trees are subject to environmental and other factors (e.g. wind blow, felling and seasonal changes which affect leaf cover) and cannot necessarily be relied upon to mitigate adverse impacts of a development. In some cases, there may be potential for improving the setting of a historic asset or place, for example by opening up views through removing vegetation.





The Inventory garden and designed landscape at Crathes Castle, Aberdeenshire. The formality of the late 18th and 19th century gardens contrasts with the farmland beyond. © N. Haynes

5. FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Historic Environment Scotland is charged with ensuring that our historic environment provides a strong foundation in building a successful future for Scotland. One of its roles is to provide advice about managing change in the historic environment.

Information for designated heritage assets can be downloaded from Historic Environment Scotland's [spatial data warehouse](#) or viewed at [Pastmap](#).

The Hermitage. An 18th-century picturesque Inventory designed landscape, Perth and Kinross. Both William and Dorothy Wordsworth featured The Hermitage in their writing. Ossian's Hall (pictured) was placed to take advantage of views over the falls, and the sound created by them. These elements also contribute to an appreciation of the nearby woodland walks, and combine to form part of the setting.



Details of listed buildings and advice on the requirement for listed building consent, conservation area consent, building warrants and other permissions/consents should be sought from local authorities.

Most works at monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 require scheduled monument consent. Where a structure is both scheduled and listed, the scheduling controls have precedence. Separate advice is available from Historic Environment Scotland's [website](#).

Planning authorities also have their own historic environment records and policies in local development plans and supplementary guidance.

Other sources of information

Mitigation measures in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) terms are explained in [Planning Advice Note \(PAN\) 1/2013](#):

Aerial photography and other records of the settings of historic structures or places can be obtained from Historic Environment Scotland, John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 9NX

Tel: 0131 662 1456,
Fax: 0131 662 1477
Email: info@rcahms.gov.uk
Web: www.historicenvironment.scot

The setting of heritage structures, sites and areas is the subject of the [ICOMOS Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas \(2005\)](#)

Historic Land-use Assessment (HLA)

The HLA, developed by Historic Environment Scotland, is a GIS-based map that depicts the historic origin of land-use patterns, describing them by period, form and function. Its purpose is to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the historic dimension of the landscape and to inform management decisions relating to it. It highlights relict archaeological landscapes, aids understanding of the landscape context of individual sites and helps identify areas where further survey could be useful. It is available [here](#).

Gardens and designed landscapes

The Gardens Trust has [Planning Conservation Advice Notes](#) on Development in the Setting of Historic Designed Landscape (Number 11 2008) and Briefs for Historic Landscape Assessments (Number 13 2008)

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has also produced [landscape guidance](#):

Wind energy development

The Scottish Government has produced [guidance for wind planning applications](#).

SNH has produced a [suite of documents](#) to assist in the process of assessing the potential impacts of wind farm proposals on Scotland's landscapes.

Historic Marine Protected Areas

Guidance is located [here](#).



Balfarg henge and standing stones, Fife. An example of a scheduled monument now surrounded by a 1970s housing development: the two photos show the site before and after redevelopment. Upper image © Crown Copyright: HES. Licensor canmore.org.uk. Lower image © K. Brophy



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HISTORIC
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MANAGING CHANGE IN THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

September 2016





Above: Ardtornish, Highland (GDL00024). A new biomass boiler was recently constructed within the Inventory site. The planning application was accompanied by a design and access statement which addressed the impact of the proposed change, set against the significance of the site. The resulting building has been carefully located and designed to minimise its impact on the designed landscape and the setting of the listed house. © Jennie Robertson

Cover image: Colonsay House, Argyll & Bute (GDL00106). An informal designed landscape containing an extensive woodland garden of outstanding horticultural value set within the rugged Hebridean landscape. © Historic Environment Scotland

MANAGING CHANGE IS A SERIES OF NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE NOTES ABOUT MANAGING CHANGE IN THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT. THEY EXPLAIN HOW TO APPLY GOVERNMENT POLICIES.

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INTRODUCTION

This note sets out the principles that apply to developments affecting Inventory gardens and designed landscapes, and the roles and responsibilities that organisations have to care for and protect them. It should inform planning policies and help with decisions relating to planning applications affecting Inventory sites. It also provides guidance on how to manage the impact of change – respecting the inherent value of these sites in the context of a dynamic and changing environment.

The focus of this guidance note is on those sites that meet the criteria for national importance and are included on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. The same general principles apply to development proposals that affect gardens and designed landscapes of regional and local importance.

KEY ISSUES

1. Gardens and designed landscapes are an important element of Scotland's historic environment.
2. The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes is a list of nationally important gardens and designed landscapes. Sites on the Inventory are given special consideration in the planning and other land-use systems (such as long-term forestry planning).
3. The Inventory identifies gardens and designed landscapes of national importance, and provides information on them. It informs the management of change in these areas.
4. To ensure that the most important gardens and designed landscapes survive, change should be managed to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the significant elements.
5. Planning authorities should take gardens and designed landscapes into account when preparing local development plans and making decisions on planning applications.
6. Planning authorities are also encouraged to develop policies to identify and manage regionally and locally important (non-Inventory) gardens and designed landscapes.

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

7. All public bodies should take Inventory sites into account when preparing plans, policies and strategies.
8. Landscape management plans help to develop a longer-term vision for engaging owners and land managers in managing change sensitively.

The Necropolis, Glasgow (GDL00366). Set on a prominent hill above Glasgow Cathedral, this is one of Scotland's first planned garden cemeteries and contains outstanding architectural features by eminent designers such as Thomas Hamilton and Alexander 'Greek' Thomson. © Historic Environment Scotland



Gardens and designed landscapes are a significant element of Scotland's historic environment. Legislation defines them as grounds that are consciously laid out for artistic effect. They usually include a combination of planting, land-forming (for example creating artificial slopes), built structures, open grounds, water management and natural landscape features. All of these may contribute to the value of the site.

Gardens and designed landscapes contribute greatly to our culture. They enrich the texture and pattern of the Scottish landscape, and form a unique resource with complex historical, cultural and landscape components. Gardens and designed landscapes reflect centuries of social, cultural and economic change.

Many of the sites on the Inventory are living examples of unique artistic talent. They may be the setting of listed buildings and scheduled monuments, and offer rich and varied habitats for nature conservation. Some also contain important collections of rare or specimen trees, shrubs and plant material.

Gardens and designed landscapes offer significant opportunities for education, employment, tourism and recreation. They also provide a valuable green network, and make a major contribution to the wider landscape of Scotland.

2. THE INVENTORY OF GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

Historic Environment Scotland has a statutory duty to compile and maintain the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. There are currently over 300 gardens and designed landscapes included on the Inventory, which is available online [here](#).

The Inventory is a list of gardens and designed landscapes of national importance. They are assessed against the following criteria:

- value as individual works of art in their own right
- historical value
- horticultural, arboricultural or silvicultural value
- architectural value
- scenic value
- nature conservation value
- archaeological value.

The importance of a site depends on the extent to which each of these values is demonstrated. For each criterion, a site may be ranked as having ‘outstanding’, ‘high’, ‘some’, ‘little’ or ‘no’ value. The more values ranked as outstanding or high, the more likely the site is to be included in the Inventory. Exceptionally a site may be of such significance in just one value that it is of national importance.

The overall integrity of a site – its wholeness and coherence – is a key consideration in the selection process. This includes an assessment of condition and the survival of significant features or fabric. To merit inclusion, a garden and designed landscape must have enough overall integrity to meet the standards for national importance.

The principles of selection are set out in detail in Annex 5 of the [*Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement \(2016\)*](#).

Portmore, Scottish Borders (GDL00318). Policies of a historic country house comprising a mansion house, parkland, extensive woodlands and a large walled garden with glasshouses and grotto, restored to a high quality in the late 20th century. © Historic Environment Scotland. Licensor canmore.org.uk.



The main purpose of the Inventory is to identify sites of national importance and to provide information on them. This is a basis for sustainable management of change through the planning system.

This guidance note sets out the principles that apply to development affecting Inventory gardens and designed landscapes. For further information on the designation, please see our publication *Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes 2016*.

Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes represents a wide range of nationally important sites, ranging from the policies of historic country houses to botanical gardens to urban parks and cemeteries.



Above: Linn Botanic Gardens, Argyll & Bute (GDL00401). The living plant collection at Linn is of outstanding horticultural importance for its size and diversity. It contains species from around the world, many of which are endangered in the wild or seldom seen in cultivation. © Historic Environment Scotland

Below: Baxter Park, Dundee (GDL00051). This 19th-century public park is the only complete park wholly designed by Sir Joseph Paxton in Scotland. © Historic Environment Scotland



3. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

Historic Environment Scotland maintains the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. This is in line with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), and is a statutory duty of the organisation.

National planning policy states that change in the historic environment should be sensitively managed to minimise adverse impacts. Changes to gardens and designed landscapes should seek to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment. Development proposals should maintain the specific qualities, character and integrity of the site.

Planning authorities are encouraged to include appropriate policies in their development plans to identify the Inventory sites in their area and outline how these sites will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. They are also encouraged to develop policies within their development plans for the identification and future management of regionally and locally important (non-Inventory) gardens and designed landscapes in their areas.

When a site is included on the Inventory it becomes a material consideration in the planning process. This means that those making decisions on planning applications have to take it into account. No additional consent is needed for undertaking works within a garden and designed landscape that is included on the Inventory.

Planning authorities have to consult Historic Environment Scotland on proposed developments that might affect an Inventory site. They should then take Historic Environment Scotland's advice into account when deciding whether permission should be granted.

Some types of development that do not normally require a planning application may need it if the development site is in a garden and designed landscape. Planning authorities can advise on whether an application is needed.

When making decisions about development that could affect an Inventory site, planning authorities have to consider national and local policies for planning and the historic environment.

Castle Kennedy, Dumfries & Galloway (GDL00093).
© Historic Environment Scotland. Pre-application discussion to consider new development proposals.



4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All public bodies have a responsibility for the care and protection of gardens and designed landscapes. Some have specific roles to play in this process at national or local level.

The Scottish Government sets the national policy for planning and the historic environment. These policies are then a consideration for national and local bodies. Scottish Planning Policy informs the content of planning proposals, and encourages public bodies to keep up-to-date information on gardens and designed landscapes, and assets within them.

Historic Environment Scotland maintains the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. It also gives advice on managing change affecting Inventory sites.

Organisations that make decisions about development are legally required to consult Historic Environment Scotland if changes could affect an Inventory garden and designed landscape.

Historic Environment Scotland's primary role is to advise on development that requires planning permission when requested by a planning authority. It does not have a role in the day-to-day running and maintenance of Inventory gardens and designed landscapes. There is no requirement to involve Historic Environment Scotland in the removal of individual trees, rhododendron clearance

and new planting layouts, although it can offer advice or guidance.

Planning authorities have an important role in protecting gardens and designed landscapes as the decision maker in planning applications. This applies to Inventory and non-Inventory sites. They should also consider gardens and designed landscapes in their development planning processes. This should include defining appropriate local policies and considering impacts on gardens and designed landscapes when identifying future development strategy.

Public bodies who have a responsibility for land management have to consider Inventory sites when they put together plans, policies and guidance. This allows them to manage appropriately any changes affecting gardens and designed landscapes.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON MANAGING CHANGE

Gardens and designed landscapes are by their nature evolving. Including a site on the Inventory helps to ensure that change is managed in an appropriate way. It encourages owners, developers and decision makers to protect and enhance the positive qualities and significance of a site and its constituent elements. This means seeking to retain key landscape features and characteristics for the future, while allowing the landscape to adapt. Carefully managed change will ensure that the elements which justify the designation of a site are protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Effective pre-application discussion is one of the best ways to make sure that gardens and designed landscapes are given appropriate consideration in plans and proposals. This process allows Historic Environment Scotland to give clear advice on the information necessary to support proposals at an early stage.

To manage change effectively, it is important to understand the effects it is likely to have. We recommend that this process is undertaken in three stages:

- **Identify:** understand the significance of a garden and designed landscape and identify the current baseline.

- **Assess:** assess the potential impact of a proposed change on the site and its setting.
- **Mitigate:** identify options to avoid, reduce or compensate for adverse impacts, and to enhance positive benefits.

Stage 1: Identify the baseline

Each Inventory site description sets out clearly the criteria against which it was assessed for national importance. Although this provides a useful starting point in understanding the significance of a garden and designed landscape, more detailed information may be required in support of a development proposal. This could include design statements or landscape management plans.

Design statements

Applicants should provide a design statement to inform the decision-making process. The statement should address the impact of proposed change, set against the significance of the site. The methodology and level of information should meet the circumstances of each case but the finalised proposals should seek to avoid, minimise and mitigate detrimental impacts on the site, and enhance positive benefits.

Landscape management plans

Planning authorities are encouraged to obtain landscape management plans for gardens and designed landscapes. These are commissioned by owners and should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced professionals. They should incorporate historic landscape appraisals and statements of significance and identify long-term conservation needs. They can then be used to direct how change can be best accommodated – where sympathetic development might be appropriate and where development would be detrimental. In cases of divided ownership, a landscape management plan can promote management solutions that protect the integrity of the whole garden and designed landscape.

Historic Environment Scotland can offer grants towards the cost of management plans for Inventory sites.

More information is available on our website [here](#).

Stage 2: Assess the impact

Inventory entries identify the values for which sites are designated. It is important to consider these in detail when assessing the impact of development. Any impact that might compromise these values should be avoided.

Planning authorities should consult Historic Environment Scotland when development may affect an Inventory site. Historic Environment Scotland will consider the impact that development would have on the site. This includes impacts on the specific qualities, character and integrity of an Inventory site, and the capacity of the Inventory site to accommodate the change proposed.

These impacts are normally defined in three broad categories:

- **Direct:** physical changes within an Inventory site boundary
- **Setting:** changes to land outside the boundary that makes a contribution to the experience, appreciation and understanding of an Inventory site
- **Cumulative:** development or alterations which combine with existing impacts and make them more significant.

Any of these types of change may alter people's experience, appreciation or understanding of a garden and designed landscape.

Direct impacts

Direct impacts are physical changes within the boundary of an Inventory site. They might include changes to significant features, key views or the character of the landscape.

Significant features of a garden and designed landscape are likely to include both built structures and planting – including planting layouts or significant trees. These can be damaged or destroyed by development that has not been carefully designed. There can also be impacts on the long-term viability of trees and other plants.

Many gardens and designed landscapes have important views to, from or within the site. These may include viewpoints where long views are available, related views between significant features within the site, and sequential views.

Sites on the Inventory will also contain areas of deliberately contrived character, such as drives, gardens, parkland and woodland. Changes to land use and land cover in these areas can have an impact on the overall character of a garden and designed landscape.

Structures and features within designed landscapes may also have heritage value individually. The setting of listed and unlisted buildings, scheduled and unscheduled archaeology can be affected by development within Inventory sites.

Other types of development, not all of which require planning permission, can have a significant impact on gardens and designed landscapes. These include parking, fencing, signage, lighting, new planting, earth movement, service infrastructure, paths and pavements, and new roads and drives. All such developments should be carefully designed to minimise their impact on Inventory sites.

Sympathetic developments in walled gardens can present a particular challenge. Development should be carefully designed to take into account the special qualities and characteristics of a walled garden. For example, new development should not exceed the height of the walls, and the number and size of new openings in the wall should be limited. Finding a future sustainable use for walled gardens does not necessarily have to mean ‘development’; there is an increasing interest in re-using them as horticultural spaces.



Fasque House, Aberdeenshire (GDL00178).
The Apple House in the Walled Garden before and
after restoration. The building now serves as holiday
accommodation. © Historic Environment Scotland.
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Impacts on setting

Inventory sites often have a planned relationship with landscape features beyond their boundaries, and these surroundings may contribute to the way they are experienced, understood and appreciated. Land outwith the boundary may provide a backdrop to a mansion house or terminate a vista. This 'borrowed' land is used as a feature to be enjoyed from the Inventory site.

Development outside an Inventory site boundary may therefore impact on the site's setting – for example, if it would affect a deliberately planned outward view. Proposals should be carefully designed and located to minimise any such impacts.

For further information on setting, see Historic Environment Scotland's [*Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting*](#).

Cumulative impacts

New development affecting Inventory sites is assessed on its own merits. Sometimes development impacts that are acceptable in isolation combine to create a significant cumulative impact, eroding a site's integrity.

For example, a single dwelling in an Inventory site may not have a significant impact, but the construction of a series of houses over time may change the site's character – making it a residential area rather than a garden and designed landscape. Cumulative impacts could also include incremental changes that erode or distract from key views or relationships between features in the site.

Kinross House, Perth & Kinross (GDL00247). One of the earliest and best-known examples in Scotland of the use of the surrounding landscape in a garden design. Sir William Bruce laid out the house and designed landscape in the late 17th century with a planned axial alignment towards the castle in Loch Leven, a historic building and landscape feature beyond its boundary.
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Stage 3: Mitigate and enhance

Good practice for mitigating adverse impacts identifies a hierarchy of preferred options. The highest of these is to avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, developers should aim to reduce impacts through design.

Proposals should also identify enhancement opportunities where possible. Such measures are likely to be considered as compensatory. This is the least preferred option, and should only be considered as mitigation when opportunities for avoidance and reduction have already been explored.

Mitigating impact by careful design

Proposed development should seek to avoid significant adverse impact on Inventory sites. Where this is not practical, impacts should be mitigated by careful design. A number of factors can contribute to this process:

- **Site selection:** development should avoid the more sensitive parts of an Inventory site.
- **Development layout:** existing site features, topography and established policy woodland should be used to minimise adverse visual or other impacts.

- **Building design:** form, orientation, massing, height and materials of new structures should take account of the specific qualities and character of the site.
- **Landscape design:** well-planned and executed landscape design may reinforce or enhance existing landscape features and character, and help to accommodate development within the site.
- **Screening:** screening can be effective in certain situations. New areas of policy woodlands or specimen trees can help blend a new development into its surroundings, enhance the planted element of a garden and designed landscape and ensure its long-term survival. However, if implemented without an understanding of the essential character of the garden and designed landscape, screening can sometimes increase the visual impact of a new development. A well-designed building that has been carefully located to sit comfortably in the garden and designed landscape may not require any screening, as demonstrated below.

Abbotsford, Scottish Borders (GDL00001). The new Visitor Centre was designed to sit comfortably in its designed landscape setting and has not required substantial screening. © Photo by Paul Zanre: pzphotography.com.



Pre-application engagement should include discussion of how measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be applied. Sometimes, adverse impacts cannot be mitigated and will have to be taken into account when deciding whether to grant planning permission.

Identifying opportunities for enhancement

Opportunities to enhance gardens and designed landscapes should be identified as early as possible. Such measures are unlikely to avoid or reduce impacts, but may provide benefits for the historic environment.

Development has the potential to add value where it includes the repair and restoration of important elements of an Inventory site. This can be guided by a landscape management plan, which will identify and prioritise works to protect and enhance the special qualities of an Inventory site.

Targeted land management can also bring benefits such as removal or relocation of woodland infill to re-open important views or restore areas of parkland. Historic Environment Scotland can offer advice and guidance on proposals at the request of the planning authority.



Penicuik, Midlothian (GDL00311). View from Old Penicuik House towards the Ramsay Monument before and after the felling of 20th-century woodland and reinstatement of the Chinese Gates. A key view within the Inventory site has been re-opened.
© Historic Environment Scotland

6. CLIMATE CHANGE

Gardens and designed landscapes are a fragile resource and are vulnerable to the threat of climate change, and new pests and diseases. New plant diseases and pests can have a devastating impact on planted elements within gardens and designed landscapes, for example resulting in the loss of mature policy woodlands or specialist horticultural collections.

Similarly, changing weather patterns associated with climate change, such as increased frequency and intensity of rainfall and storms, can cause significant erosion, landslip and destruction of mature woodlands within Inventory sites.

Historic Environment Scotland is responding to the issue of climate change and its impact on the historic environment. For further information on our role and research strategy, see our [*website*](#).

Windblown tree within a designed landscape.
© Historic Environment Scotland.



7. CONSENTS

Some elements within Inventory gardens and designed landscapes may have individual designations, such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments or natural heritage assets. You can check this online on the [Scotland's Environment website](#).

Listed buildings

Listed building consent is required for any work to a listed building which will affect its character: see the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. The planning authority is the main point of contact for all applications for listed building consent. It decides whether consent is required, and can offer advice on applications.

The planning authority will consider applications using guidance such as Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment series and other national policy documents including Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (2016) and Scottish Planning Policy (2014).

Scheduled monuments

Scheduled monument consent is required for any works to a monument scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Scheduled monument consent is determined by Historic Environment Scotland. We offer a free pre-application discussion and checking service for scheduled monument consent

applications. You can find out more about this on our [website](#).

Natural heritage assets

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are those areas of land and water designated for the special interest of its flora, fauna, geology or geomorphological features. This is a statutory designation made by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Further information can be found on [SNH's website](#).

Cowden Japanese-style Garden, Clackmannanshire (GDL00402). The vision of Ella Christie, a female explorer in the early 20th century, the garden was designed and maintained by Japanese practitioners. Despite vandalism in the 1960s, much of its essential structure endured. It is an exceptional representative of the Japanese-style garden tradition in the UK. Restoration started in 2013, guided by a conservation management plan. © Sara Stewart



8. FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Historic Environment Scotland is charged with ensuring that our historic environment provides a strong foundation in building a successful future for Scotland. One of our roles is to provide advice about managing change in the historic environment.

Policy

Relevant policies for Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes can be found at: [Scottish Planning Policy \(2014\)](#)

[Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement \(2016\)](#)

[Our Place in Time - The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland](#)

Advice on how to handle archaeological matters as part of the planning process:

[Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology](#)

Guidance

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes:

Historic Environment Scotland's webpage providing information on the Inventory can be found [here](#).

Historic Environment Scotland, [Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland: A Guide for Owners, Occupiers and Managers 2016](#)

Landscape management plan grants:

[www.historicenvironment.scot/grants-and-funding/our-grants/landscape-management-plan-grants-scheme](#)

Planning authority contacts:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/Roles/Planning-Authorities/Information](#)

Local historic environment records are a primary source of historic environment data.

[PASTMAP](#) is a website developed to identify heritage sites.

[HLAMap](#) is a website presenting data from the Historic Land-use Assessment which analyses and records the visible traces of past land use within the Scottish landscape.

Forestry Commission Scotland: The [historic environment pages](#) contain useful information, advice and guidance on all aspects of the historic environment in Scotland's woodlands and forests. This includes a practice guide:

[Conserving and managing trees and woodlands in Scotland's designed landscapes.](#)

Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage is a national charity formed to promote and protect the historic gardens and designed landscapes of Scotland: www.sglh.org

J. Watkins and T. Wright, *The Management and Maintenance of Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes* (London, 2007)

Dawyck, Scottish Borders (GDL00134). A historic arboretum managed by the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. The visitor centre sits sympathetically in its wooded designed landscape setting.
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