

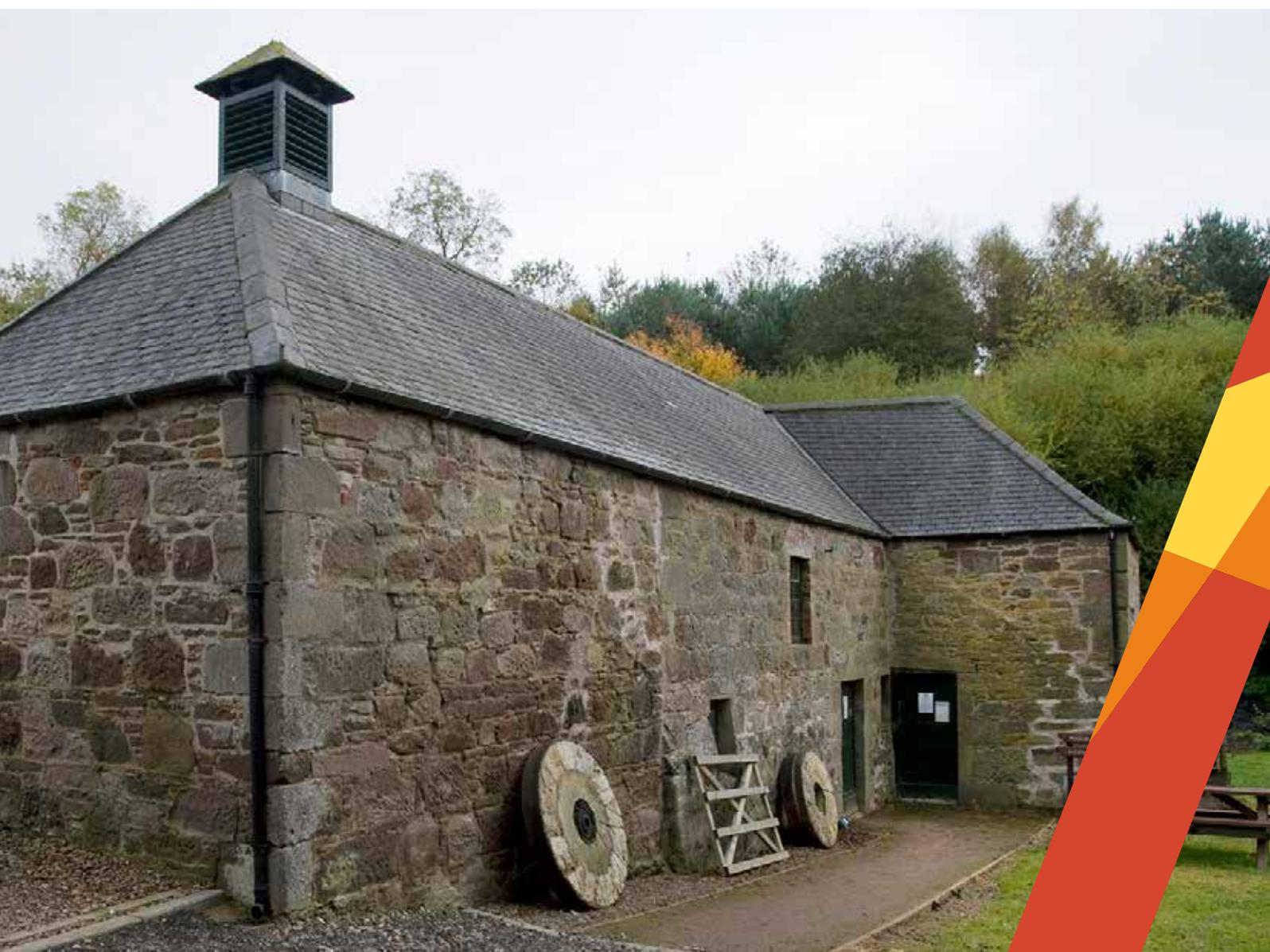


From mountain to sea

Benholm

Conservation Area Management Plan

November 2016





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1.0 Introduction

1.1 What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation areas were first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 provides the current legislative framework for the designation of conservation areas. A conservation area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

All planning authorities are required by the Act to determine which parts of their area merit conservation area status. Aberdeenshire currently has over 40 conservation areas varying in character from central Stonehaven to the small coastal settlement of Pennan.

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

Following the formal designation of Benholm as a conservation area on 2nd September 2014, Benholm Conservation Area Management Plan has now been produced. This document is designed to act as a supportive document to the Benholm Conservation Area Appraisal produced as part of the designation process.

The Benholm Conservation Area Management Plan identifies opportunities and priorities for enhancement and sets out the policy framework for the determination of development proposals. It further sets out the design standards expected when developing or making alterations to land and premises within the conservation area. The Benholm Conservation Area Management Plan should be regarded as supplementary guidance to the policies set out in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

1.3 Why did Benholm become a Conservation Area?

Benholm is a solid example of a kirkton which has developed as a result of the feudal system and agriculture. Benholm was originally centered around the barony which held feu superiority over tenant farmers, and this agricultural tradition lasted well in to the 20th century when Benholm still had over 30 working farms.

Benholm has a long history with evidence of an early medieval kirk being present in the heart of the settlement since 1242 and a history of milling dating back to the 12th century. The rebuilding of the parish kirk in 1832, with associated Manse, was typical of the religious revival and church building taking place during the late 18th and early 19th century.

For such a small settlement Benholm has 9 listed structures with Mill of Benholm and Benholm Parish Kirk both being designated as A listed.

The transition of the settlement through the wider social and economic changes in Scotland is perfectly evidenced in a number of the listed structures including; Benholm Parish Kirk, Manse, Schoolhouse, Mill of Benholm and the two C listed bridges known as Bridge over Benholm Burn and Bridge over Castle Burn, (Benholm in the 18th century sat on the main route from Montrose to Aberdeen, known as the 'post road' or 'auld road').

Its special character comes largely from its informal and unspoilt setting, where the buildings of historical significance and traditional construction still dominate and the streetscape remains largely uncluttered by modern signage, street lighting and pavements.

In addition to its historical associations and well preserved architectural qualities, Benholm is an important geological site and has a striking woodland setting with ancient semi-natural woodland, which are all worthy of protection.

Like many small settlements in Aberdeenshire, there is a growing demand for new development. Conservation area status enables the planning authority to effectively manage the opportunities for new development, so as to enhance the village for future generations.

A number of buildings in the village are already protected by their listed building status, which means that many alterations already require Listed Building Consent. Conservation area status gives greater protection over the development and redevelopment of sites within the village, so greater care can be given to the relationship between new and old.



2.0 Policy Context

2.1 Statutory Powers and Policies

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

2.2 General Policy

Within the conservation area it will be the policy of Aberdeenshire Council to protect and preserve, by development management measures, all those buildings, views and other aspects of the environment that make up the character of Benholm. 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 to 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.

2.2.1 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.

The aim 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.

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.

2.2.2 Listed Buildings

We will protect all “listed buildings” contained in the statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest 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.

The aim 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.

3.0 Conservation Area Management Plan

3.1 Benholm Conservation Area Supplementary Guidance

When effectively managed, conservation areas can; anchor thriving communities, sustain cultural heritage, generate wealth and prosperity and add to quality of life. The challenge is to ensure that all new development respect, enhance and have a positive impact on the area.

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

Planning Permission in Principle

Planning Permission in Principle 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.

An application for Conservation Area Consent will be required for the demolition of any unlisted building located within the Benholm Conservation Area and it must be supported by a written justification for the proposed works along with detailed plans of both existing and replacement buildings.

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 conservation area.

Street Furniture



The sensitive nature of Benholm merits designs that reflect the settlements distinctive individuality. Currently Benholm has no pavements, street lighting, litter bins or seating. Consequently, the bland standardised street furniture and the normal plethora of traffic signage will not be considered acceptable within the Benholm Conservation Area.

Roofs

The majority of properties located within the Benholm conservation area have natural slate roofs which significantly shape the character and appearance of the settlement. The Planning Authority 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



Benholm does not have a strong tradition of roof dormers. Although there are a small number of traditional 1 1/2 storey properties with stone gable end pediments, face flush with the front of the building and the sill dropped below the eaves.

These dormer details not only shape the character of the buildings upon which they are attached but the wider appearance of the streetscape. The Planning Authority will seek the retention of these traditional elements.

New dormers should be appropriately designed and located with care. This should include replication of the proportion, opening method and materials of the more traditional style dormer.

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.

Rooflights

The Planning Authority will seek the retention of original cast iron rooflights 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 are 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.

Where appropriate, black aluminium, cast-iron look downpipes may be acceptable on non-listed traditional properties within the conservation area.

Ridges, Skews and Chimneys

Chimneys are an important feature within the conservation area and the local authority will therefore seek their retention and not support any proposal to remove them from a property. 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

The local authority will 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 and ironmongery detail.

Windows



Windows are an important element in the building's design and a fundamental component which shapes the character and appearance of the conservation area. Benholm benefits from a variety of traditional window styles including sash and case and fixed multi pane.

As a consequence, the Planning Service will insist that replacement units replicate the design, construction and material finish of the original windows. It will also seek the reinstatement of the original

design where an applicant proposes to replace later unsympathetic windows.

Boundary Treatments



There are currently very few formal boundary treatments within Benholm, which adds to the open and informal character of the conservation area. The Planning Service will therefore carefully consider the installation of any new boundary treatments. Furthermore they will 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

Proposals 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. Any new extension should also follow the established building line of the street and use detailing and materials which are distinctive or complimentary to the settlement.

New Build

The relationship between the Parish Kirk, Old School, Old Coaching Inn and the site of the Smiddy plays an important role in the historic interest and intimacy of the core of the settlement and this clear relationship should be maintained. New build should avoid increasing the density of the settlement as this would be detrimental to Benholm's unique character.

3.2 Enhancement Opportunities

Redevelopment sites

There are a number of properties within Benholm that are currently lying in an unused state. It would therefore be beneficial to see the adaptive reuse of these sites so they enhance the area rather than detract from it, these include;

- Steading complex to the rear of the original coaching inn, (now the farmhouse);
- Benholm Mill.



In addition the Birnie Bridge over Benholm Burn, which lies to the north west of the settlement, is C listed and is in need of significant repair and maintenance. This bridge, during the 18th century, formed part of the main route from Montrose to Aberdeen known as the 'post road' and so is a significant feature in demonstrating the history and development of the area. It also provides potential for the re-connectivity of a significant historical path networks.

A striking feature of Benholm is its woodland setting. Ancient semi-natural woodlands follow the valleys of the Benholm Burn and the Castle Burn down to their confluence below the kirkton, and continue beyond the Mill towards the coast. There is opportunity for bio-diversity enhancement and interest in some areas. For example, verges and the historic kirk yard as well as woodland and landscape areas.



Benholm Parish Kirk is a significant building within the settlement, evident through its category A listed status. Its continued use is an essential contribution to the conservation area and should be supported.

Repair and Maintenance

The best means of preserving the character and appearance of a conservation area is through routine maintenance; architectural elements such as dormers, gutters and external railings all need regular attention to not only to secure the future of the buildings but also their setting.

4.0 Additional Controls within the Benholm Conservation Area

4.1 Changes in Legislation

In February 2012 the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011 came into force. This removed householder Permitted Development Rights within conservation areas. Owners of Domestic properties within the boundary of a conservation area now need to apply for planning approval for changes to their external appearance including windows, roof materials and painting external walls. This does not apply to like for like repairs and maintenance. Please check with the planning department if you are unsure if consent is required.

In June 2014 the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2014 came into force this removed permitted development rights for many non-domestic properties including shops, schools, office buildings and the creation of access ramps outside non-domestic buildings. Please check with the planning department if you are unsure if consent is required.

4.2 Article 4 Directions

In addition to the controls above it is proposed to add additional controls within the Benholm Conservation Area. This will put additional restrictions on groups such as Statutory Undertakers, Local Authorities and Telecommunication operatives as a means to bring their obligations more in line with those of the owners of domestic and non-domestic properties and provide consistency in decision making within the conservation area.

These restrictions are applied in the form of Article 4 Direction and within Benholm will include the following;

PART 10 - REPAIRS TO SERVICES

Class 28

PART 12- DEVELOPMENT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Class 30

Class 31

Class 32

Class 33

PART 13 - DEVELOPMENT BY STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS

Class 36.

Class 38.

Class 39

Class 40

Class 43

PART 20 - DEVELOPMENT BY TELECOMMUNICATIONS CODE SYSTEM OPERATORS

Class 67

5.0 Monitoring and Review

Legislation provides for the regular appraisal of conservation areas, which may result in new Article 4 Directions, supplementary guidance or planning advice. As part of the mechanism for review and monitoring, a photographic record has been undertaken as a means to record change. This will act as an important tool in the management of the conservation area by providing an indicator of the impact of development and form the basis of future reviews.



For further information concerning the contents of this document,
contributions for its improvement or any matters concerning
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