



# Muirhouses Conservation Area Management Plan

Guidance on the Responsibilities of Property  
Owners, Occupiers and Agents

February 2011



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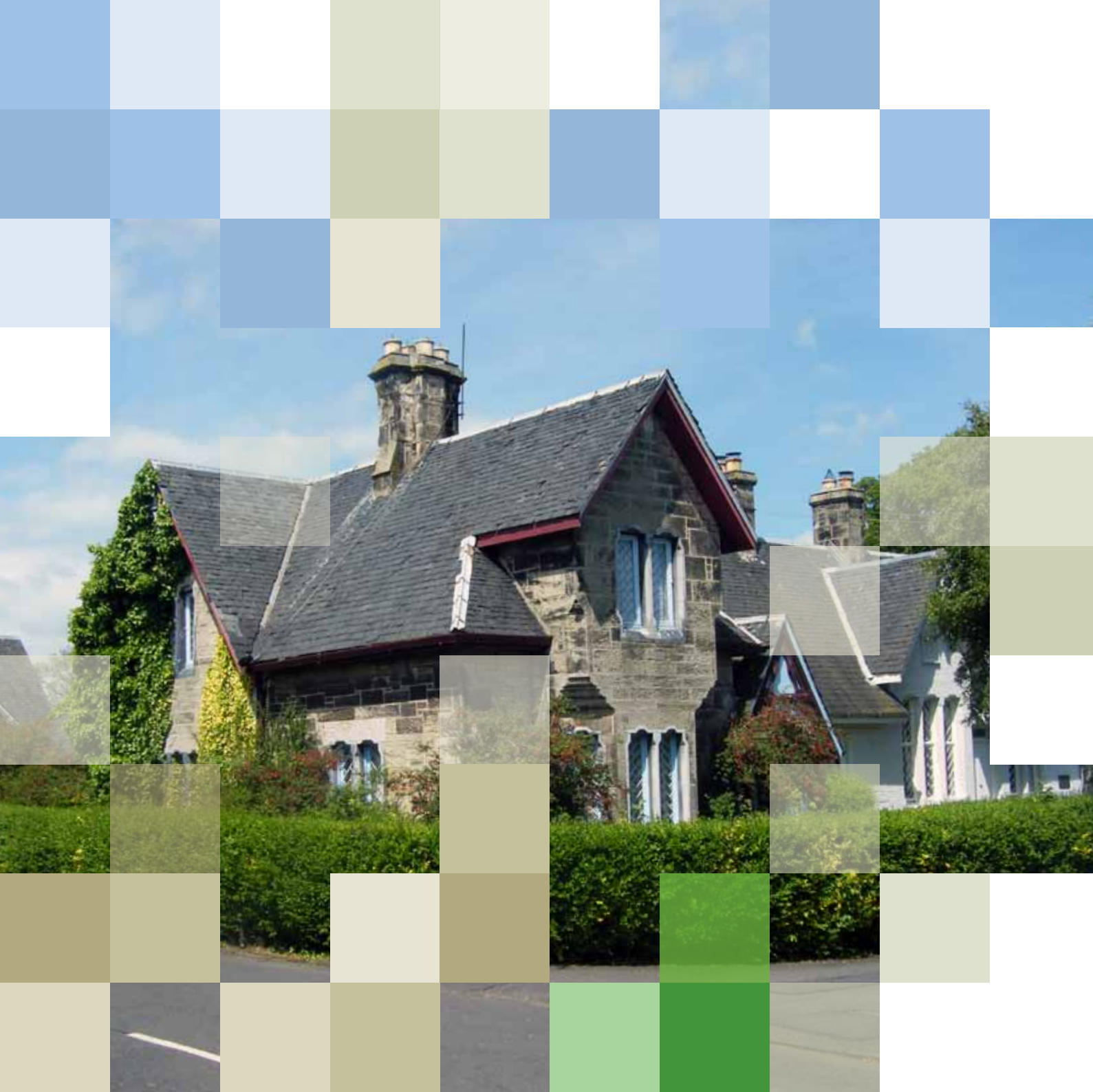
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What is a conservation area?

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. They are designated by local authorities under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

## 1.2 What is the purpose of this management plan?

The purpose of this management plan is to provide detailed guidance to property owners, occupiers and their agents on a) the policies and procedures to be followed, and b) the design standards expected, when developing or making alterations to land and premises in the conservation area. The guidance also applies to Council services and statutory undertakers when carrying out works.

## 1.3 Failure to obtain planning permission

The Council has powers under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to take enforcement action. The Council will use these powers where development is undertaken without planning permission and is considered to be unacceptable. Particular note should be taken of the need to obtain planning permission to undertake 'sundry minor' operations e.g. fencing and other means of enclosure, external painting or stone cleaning.

It is a criminal offence to carry out unauthorised works to a listed building which in some cases may lead to an unlimited fine or imprisonment. In the event of serious neglect of the fabric of a listed building a repairs notice may be served by the Council, with the possibility of a compulsory purchase order failing satisfactory action by the owner. Urgent works may also be carried out by the Council at short notice with costs being recharged to the owner. Scottish Ministers have powers to direct that the same powers should apply to unlisted buildings in the conservation area.

# 2. Background

## 2.1 Why did Muirhouses become a conservation area?

This small settlement near Bo'ness is characterised by the striking former library, schoolhouse and workers' housing relating to the adjacent Carriden estate. This group of buildings, all listed, was built by the owner of Carriden House, Admiral John Hope, between 1864 and 1874.

Purpose built "model" villages of this era are considered rare in Scotland, and especially in the local context. This combined with its distinctive architectural style is why Muirhouses Conservation Area was first designated in 1975. The boundary was extended in March 2010 (Appendix 1).

## 2.2 What is special about Muirhouses in conservation terms?

An appraisal of Muirhouses Conservation Area, confirming its special architectural and historic importance, was approved by the Council in March 2010. Of the older buildings within the conservation area 16 properties are listed buildings (Appendix 2). The more recent properties are modest in character but architecturally complement the more historic core. The appraisal identified the following important characteristic features:

- A unifying "cottage orné" architectural style;
- Carefully profiled sandstone external wall surfaces;
- Casement windows, some retaining the original pattern leaded lattice;
- Painted plain timber boarded external doors;
- Graded grey Scottish roof slates with overhanging purlinned eaves;
- Chimney stacks and cans providing visual punctuation;
- Cast-iron gutters and downpipes;
- Low sandstone rubble walls to prominent front garden edges;
- Secondary hedging.



# 3. Policy Context

## 3.1 Falkirk Council Development Plan

The Council's Development Plan i.e. its Structure and Local Plan, sets out a specific planning policy on conservation areas as well as general policies to guide development. A series of Supplementary Planning Guidance notes provides more detailed policy guidance on particular design topics. The key policy of the Falkirk Council Local Plan (policy EQ12) states:

The Council will protect the historic character and visual amenity of each conservation area, accordingly:

(1) The Council will prepare Character Appraisals of individual Conservation Areas and, on the basis of these, will review existing boundaries and Article 4 Directions, prepare detailed design guidance as appropriate, and draw up enhancement schemes as resources permit;

(2) New development in Conservation Areas, or affecting their setting, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings, will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character of the area, with particular reference to the historic pattern and density of development; its setting; the architectural style, massing and materials of buildings; landscape treatments; and boundary features;

(3) Demolition of buildings within Conservation Areas will not be permitted unless they make no material contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Where demolition is proposed, the considerations set out in the relevant Historic Scotland guidance note should be adhered to; and

(4) Replacement windows, doors, roofs, rainwater goods, boundary treatments and other features on unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area in terms of appearance, detailing and materials.

General planning and design policies in the Local Plan, which are also relevant, are:

- Townscape design (EQ3)
- Landscape design (EQ4)
- Design and community safety (EQ5)
- Design and energy use (EQ6)
- Area enhancement priorities (EQ7)
- Adverts (EQ10)
- Listed Buildings (EQ14)
- Re-use of buildings (EQ15)
- Sites of archaeological interest (EQ16)

The Supplementary Planning Guidance notes referred to cover the following more specific design topics in detail:

- Design statements.
- House extension and alterations.
- Trees and development.

The Council will seek to achieve this management plan through the application of the above Development Plan policy guidance to proposals for development put before it. Access to all Local Plan policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance notes can be gained from the Council's website at [www.falkirk.gov.uk](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk).



## 4. Conservation Area Management in Practice

### 4.1 What will be considered in determining an application for development?

In order to preserve or enhance the historic character and appearance of the conservation area and its historic buildings, features and setting, the Council will seek to apply Local Plan Policies by having regard to:

(1) Preserving and reinforcing the historic character. Seeking to ensure that repairs and alterations are carried out sensitively and that works to buildings, features and surroundings, especially where listed, are considered in relation to the historic context and use appropriate scale, materials and detailing;

(2) Minimising the impact of any new development or alteration. Ensuring that it is designed to be sympathetic to the character, appearance and historic context of the conservation area in terms of scale, massing, materials and detailing. It is important that new development does not erode the setting of the existing historical features or key features highlighted in the appraisal. Care should be taken to avoid "non-period" replacement features e.g. doors, windows, fencing, walling, decking;

Any planning application will need to be supported by a conservation Design Statement (as set out in the Council's approved Supplementary Planning Guidance "Design Statements").



# 5. Advice On Procedures

## 5.1 What will need planning permission?

Within the conservation area planning permission from the Council will be required for the following:

- Works materially affecting the character of a building e.g. chimneys;
- Sundry minor operations e.g. boundary walls, railings, fencing and other means of enclosure, repainting, stone cleaning and cladding;
- Property extensions, enlargements, improvements or other alterations (including window, door or roof replacements);
- Works within the curtilage of a dwelling house;
- Hard surfacing within the curtilage of a dwelling house;
- Repairs to private streets and private ways or repairs to services;
- Demolitions (including boundary walls);
- Works to trees;
- Advertisements and signage;
- Changes of use or temporary buildings or uses.

In addition, listed building consent will be required to extend, alter or demolish buildings of special architectural or historic interest, as identified by Historic Scotland. These are recorded and shown on the attached Map of the conservation area (appendix A) and recorded in tabular form (appendix B).

However, it should be noted that where exact 'like for like' replacement of an original feature is agreed with planning officers e.g. of doors, windows, other features (including re-painting schemes), there may be no need for planning permission.

External re-painting to match the original colour scheme as follows, will be exempt from the requirement for planning permission:

**Windows:**  
white.

**Front doors:**  
matching terrace/group repetitive pattern.

**Rainwater goods and railings:**  
black.

When considering the need for planning and/or listed building applications **it is strongly advised to consult the Council's Development Services in advance of any works** (contact details at Sec. 7.1).

## 5.2 What do I need to provide?

The Council will expect planning applications to be mindful of the planning policies set out in its Development Plan and accompanied by Conservation Design Statements (for advice on preparing see contact details at Sec. 7.2). These statements should demonstrate:

- How the proposal reflects the purpose of this management plan;
- How the proposal takes account of the special architectural and visual qualities of the conservation area;
- How the proposal contributes to enhancing the conservation area through considerations of design, scale, massing, siting and use of materials;
- How the proposal secures the repair or retention of features of conservation value;
- How the proposal design minimises harm or erosion to the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- How the proposal mitigates any loss of mature trees by enhancing areas of poorer townscape character;

As above, applicants are strongly advised to contact the Council's Development Services in advance of preparing any development proposal in the conservation area. Application forms are now also available with guidance on completion and electronic submission from the Council's website.



## 6. Enhancement Opportunities

### 6.1 General

Improvement works to enhance the conservation area or address the erosion of character may be possible to complement the legislative controls. The following opportunities relating to the original model village properties would address issues raised in the character appraisal:

- re-introduction or replacement of original casement windows, standard doors, chimney and roof features;
- replacement of modern roof dormers by original or sympathetic designs;
- removal of ivy from building facades.

Wherever possible the Council will endeavour to develop public realm enhancements in partnership with the local community. The following are possible public realm opportunities:

- boundary wall/hedging restoration;
- appropriate new street lighting and cable undergrounding on Acre Road;
- public realm improvements to bus stop area e.g. new bus shelter, signboard and seating;
- "Muirhouses Conservation Area" gateway signage at entry points;
- interpretative panels on the history of the conservation area.

### 6.2 Maintenance

In addition to site specific opportunities, the Council will seek to increase monitoring, especially of telecommunications providers, and statutory undertakers where public realm works require careful restoration. Regular inspections to facilitate better maintenance will be undertaken. This should also assist with early identification of unauthorised developments and reduce the need for enforcement actions. Private owners are also reminded of the importance of good routine maintenance in retaining the conservation value of their property.

## 7. Contacts and Sources of Further Guidance

### 7.1 For advice on preparing your planning and/or listed building application:

Falkirk Council  
Development Services  
Abbotsford House  
David's Loan  
Falkirk FK2 7YZ

Planning application advice:  
Tel 01324 504950

[dc@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:dc@falkirk.gov.uk)

### 7.2 For advice on preparing your Conservation Design Statement:

Falkirk Council  
Development Services

Conservation design advice:  
Tel 01324 504715

[planenv@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:planenv@falkirk.gov.uk)

### 7.3 For general background information on conservation:

Scottish Government

[www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/planning](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/planning)

General information on planning and building standards. Plus Scottish Planning Policy and Planning Advice Notes 71 Conservation Area Management, and 52 Planning and Small Towns.

Historic Scotland

[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

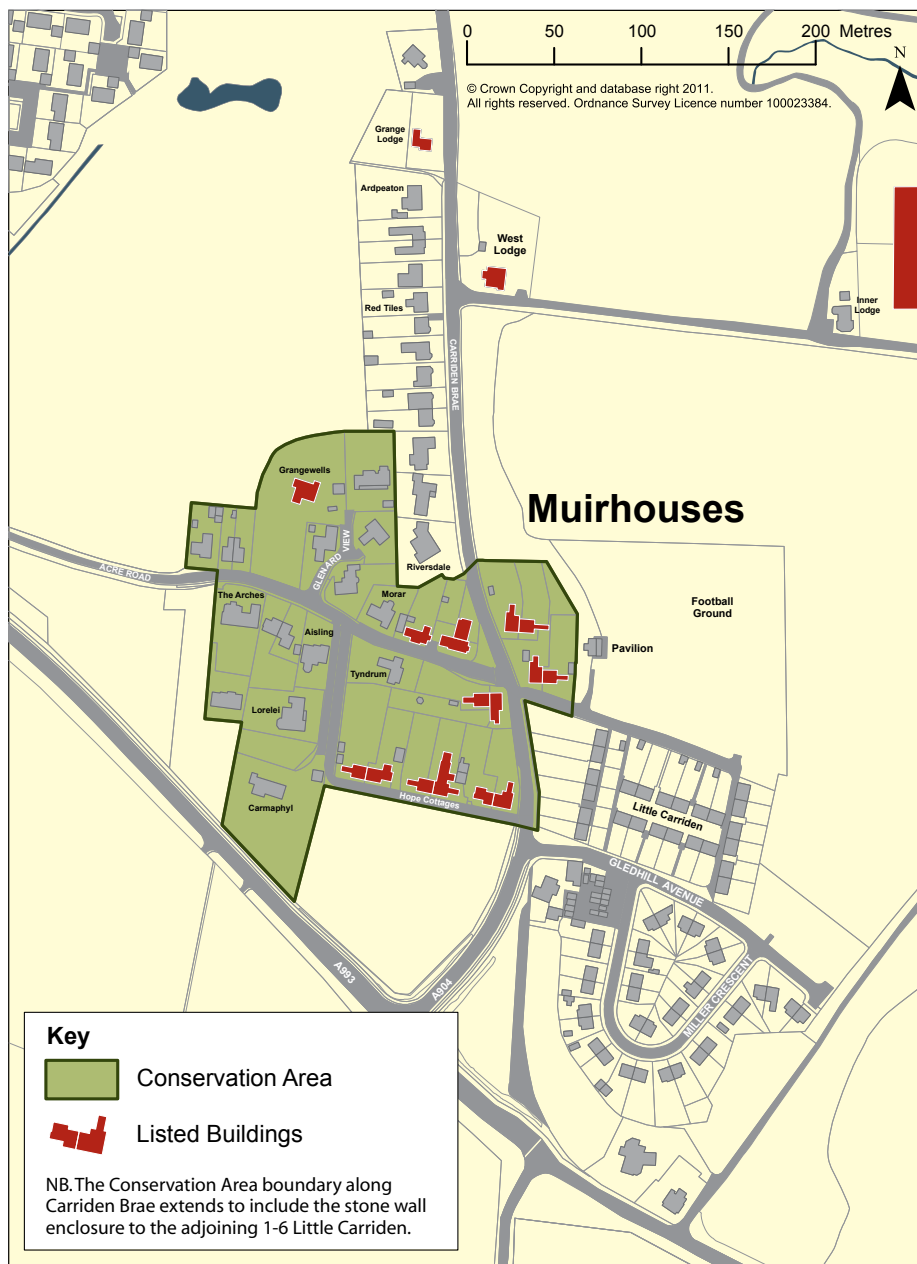
General information on built heritage, Scottish Historic Environment Policy on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Also useful INFORM guides.

Historic Scotland Conservation Bureau

[hs.conservation.bureau@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hs.conservation.bureau@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Assistance, publications and technical advice on a wide range of technical matters relating to built heritage.

## Appendix 1: Map of conservation area



## Appendix 2: Listed Buildings in Muirhouses Conservation Area

The original "model" village has been recognised for its unique qualities and all buildings have been Listed Category B for their Group value. Each Listed building within the Muirhouses Conservation Area is also individually Listed as follows:

### Category B

- The Library House
- The Old School House and Old Schoolhouse
- 18 and 19 Carriden Brae
- 7 and 8 Hope Cottages/Cleveland
- Grangewells

### Category C(S)

- 20 Carriden Brae and Carriden Cottage
- 1 and 2 Hope Cottages
- 3 and 4 Hope Cottages
- 5 and 6 Hope Cottages







Falkirk Council