

Agenda Item	<b>8.</b>
Report No	<b>CC/19/21</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Caithness Committee

**Date:** 12 August 2021

**Report Title:** Draft Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal and Conservation Area Management Plan

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

### 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report presents the post-consultation draft (**Appendices 1 & 2**) of the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) and Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) (including boundary amendments) for Wick Pulteneytown and asks that this Committee recommend that the Infrastructure, Environment and Economy Committee approve the reports.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
- i. Note the public comments and agree the Council response; and
  - ii. Recommend that the Infrastructure, Environment & Economy Committee formally approve and adopt the Wick: Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal (**Appendix 1**) and Management Plan (**Appendix 2**), including the amended conservation area boundary, at a forthcoming meeting.

### 3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - The proposed boundary amendments will bring a number of properties into the Conservation Area and therefore under stricter planning control. There is therefore potential for the amended boundary to generate a small number of additional planning applications, although this is not expected to be significant.
- 3.2 **Legal** - The Council has a statutory duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation, management and enhancement of its Conservation Areas. The adoption of these reports will discharge this duty in relation to the Wick: Pulteneytown conservation area. There are no other legal implications.

- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) implications** - The CAA and CAMP highlight Buildings at Risk, underused and vacant buildings, inappropriate or negative development and public realm works, poorly managed green space and areas that should be targeted for future regeneration. Improving the built environment can have wide-ranging benefits across the local community, including generating a sense of civic pride, investment and tourism and improving sense of place.
- 3.4 There are no Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications arising directly from this report.
- 3.5 **Risk** - Although conservation area designation places a range of statutory duties on the Local Authority, in this case the CAA and CAMP reviews, revises and refines an existing designation. There are no new risk implications associated with the recommendations of this report.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** - In line with Council policy, Gaelic headings are included throughout.

## 4 Background

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 provides the current legislative framework for Conservation Areas. Under the 1997 Act, the Council has a statutory duty to determine which parts of their area merit Conservation Area status and the Council is required by law to protect Conservation Areas from development that would be detrimental to their character.
- 4.2 The 1997 Act defines a Conservation Area as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The 1997 Act places a statutory duty on the Council to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation, management and enhancement of Conservation Areas. These are referred to as Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans.
- 4.3 Two small Conservation Areas were designated in Pulteneytown by Caithness County Council in 1970. These were Argyle Square and Harbour Place/Terrace. Following a review in 2000, those areas were incorporated into the larger Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area. The draft reports (attached as appendices) are the result of the first formal review undertaken of the Conservation Area since this designation, and the first time an appraisal and management plan have been developed for Pulteneytown.
- 4.4 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were drafted by a conservation-accredited conservation architect on behalf of the Council. Council officers from across the planning service (including the conservation officer and planning officers from both the development plans and development management teams) have been involved throughout the process, as has a diverse stakeholder group established to inform the direction of the reports. Both have been instrumental in developing the final draft as presented at this committee.
- 4.5 Members supported the proposal that the draft Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal for a 6-week public consultation at their Ward Business Meeting (WBM) dated 21 January 2021.

## **5 Consultation Process**

- 5.1 The public consultation was launched via The Council's consultation portal on 28 January 2021 and was due to close on 12 March 2021. This was widely publicised, with a public notice placed in the Northern Times and the John O'Groats Journal, promoted social media posts and notification, by letter, to all properties (totalling 612) within the existing *and* proposed Conservation Area boundary. Other agencies, including Historic Environment Scotland, as part of a stakeholder group, were also invited to comment.
- 5.2 The stakeholder group, consisting of representatives from the Council (including local Members), Community Council, Wick Heritage Society, Wick Harbour Trust, Caithness Chamber of Commerce, Caithness Voluntary Group, Argyle Square Community Association, Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm, Wick Nucleus Archive Centre, key business contacts and Members of the North Planning Applications Committee, were all notified of the consultation, invited to share the consultation within their own contacts, and asked to comment.
- 5.4 Due to Covid-19, the draft documents were not available as paper copies and public events were not permissible during the consultation period (NB *pre*-consultation face-to-face public events were held at Mackay's Hotel, Wick in late 2019). To counteract this, the consultation period was extended from six to ten weeks in response to stakeholder feedback. Following a request from the Community Council six printed copies were requested and posted to residents.

## **6 Consultation Response: Wick Harbour Authority**

- 6.1 At the request of Councillor Mackie, an online meeting was arranged with the Wick Harbour Authority (HA), who had expressed concern regarding the proposed inclusion of the harbour area within the amended conservation area boundary. The meeting was attended by HA representatives and their solicitor and HC officers from the Historic Environment and Planning Teams. It was acknowledged by all that the harbour is central to the past, present and future of the area and a key component of Pulteneytown. The principle concerns raised were the implications of the conservation area designation for future development opportunities, the potential curtailing of permitted development rights (via Article 4 Directions) and the ability to continue to operate the harbour and deliver on its commercial interests with the same level of autonomy as currently enjoyed.
- 6.2 Although reassurances were given by HC officers that the conservation area would have minimal impact on the day-to-day operations of the harbour, the Wick Harbour Authority, via their legal representative, made a formal representation to object to the proposed inclusion of the harbour within the conservation area for reasons set out above.
- 6.3 Further efforts to resolve the objection were made, including undertaking a retrospective assessment of planning applications submitted within the harbour from the past 20 years to establish what affect the conservation area would have had on previous decisions. The reassessment indicated that none of the applications would have resulted in a substantially different outcome. Additionally, written assurances that Article 4 Directions (to restrict existing permitted development rights) would not be imposed by the Planning Authority in respect of the harbour were insufficient to allay concerns that such directions could still be applied in the future. The HA therefore have chosen to maintain their objection in respect of including the land controlled by the HA within the amended conservation area boundary.

- 6.4 **Proposed Council Response:** All stakeholders, including the Wick Harbour Authority, recognise that the harbour is a key historic and architectural component of Pulteneytown and as such inclusion within the amended conservation area boundary would be justifiable in accordance with the criteria set out in the 1997 Act. It has also been demonstrated that the designation of the harbour would have no significant detrimental implications for its management, or the operations of the HA, and the wide-ranging permitted development rights currently enjoyed under the relevant Planning and Harbours Acts would continue to apply. However, this also means that opportunities to control future development within the harbour and opportunities to ensure that such development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the harbour area would also be minimal; conservation area designation of the harbour would result in very few additional controls, safeguards, benefits or opportunities. On balance, therefore, it is proposed to remove the harbour area from the proposed amended conservation area but to seek to work more closely with the HA in future and to provide advice and guidance in areas where positive outcomes for the adjacent conservation area can be achieved. The HA have been advised that it will be recommended to Members to remove the harbour from the proposed conservation area and if Members so agree this would nullify the concerns as raised and the objection can be withdrawn.
- 6.5 No other consultation responses were received which is, at least in part, a result of the extensive and successful efforts at pre-consultation stage to understand issues and address any concerns of the local community via stakeholder group meetings and through subsequent dialogue and correspondence with individual representatives. The outcomes of these meetings, both formal and informal, have been built into the final report negating the need for formal representations. Likewise, pre-Covid-19 restrictions, officers undertook public engagement sessions in Pulteneytown which allowed members of the local community to discuss the proposals and for officers to answer questions, note issues and respond to concerns. It is notable that no negative representations were received from the owners/occupiers of the 149 properties being proposed for inclusion within the conservation area and it is therefore assumed that they are either content or supportive of the proposals. The majority of property owners consulted are already located within the existing conservation area and as they will see no change in status as a result of this consultation, formal representations were unlikely to be received (although informal correspondence thanking officers for the information on the history and architecture of the area were received).

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The Planning Authority has a statutory duty to ensure its Conservation Areas accurately represent what is of architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and to formulate and publish proposals for their preservation, management and enhancement. These reports discharge that statutory duty.
- 7.2 The appraisal process has concluded that the existing conservation area boundary requires to be amended to include buildings and open space that are of architectural and historic interest, are contemporary with Thomas Telford's original design and vision for Pulteneytown and add significant value to the Conservation Area (referred to in the Conservation Area Appraisal as areas C, D and F). As a result of the public consultation it has been concluded that, on balance, the harbour area (as defined by land controlled by the Harbour Authority and referred to as area E in the Conservation Area Appraisal) should be removed from the proposed amended boundary.

## **8 Next Steps**

- 8.1 Subject to Member agreement, the draft Wick: Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be presented to the Infrastructure, Environment & Economy Committee on 1 September 2021 for final adoption.
- 8.2 Subject to Members agreeing to adopt the reports in September, Scottish Ministers will be notified of the boundary changes and an advert will be placed in the Edinburgh Gazette, as required by relevant legislation.
- 8.3 Although there is no statutory requirement to do so, should Members wish, all properties within the Conservation Area boundary (as amended) will be notified of any changes by letter.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 8 July 2021

Authors: Andrew Puls, Acting Environment Manager/Conservation Officer  
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# Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal

## Measadh Sgìre Glèidhteachais Pulteneytown Inbhir Ùige

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July 2021

Post-consultation Draft



**WICK PULTENEYTOWN  
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

MEASADH SGÌRE GLÈIDHTEACHAIS

PULTENEYTOWN INBHIR ÙIGE

**POST-CONSULTATION DRAFT: JULY 2021**

DRAFT

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE / RO-RÀDH AGUS ADHBHAR

### 1.1 CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that conservation areas “...are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas.

Two small conservation areas were designated in Pulteneytown by Caithness County Council in 1970. These were Argyle Square, Harbour Terrace and Harbour Place (fig 39). Following review those two areas were incorporated into the larger Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area designated in 2000 which was current at the time of this review (fig 1).

Conservation area status brings the following works under planning control:

- Demolition of unlisted buildings or structures
- Removal of, or work to trees
- Development including, for example, small house alterations and extensions, the installation of satellite dishes, roof alterations, stone cleaning or painting of the exterior.

It is recommended that the successful management of conservation areas can only be achieved with the support of and input from stakeholders, and in particular local residents and property owners.

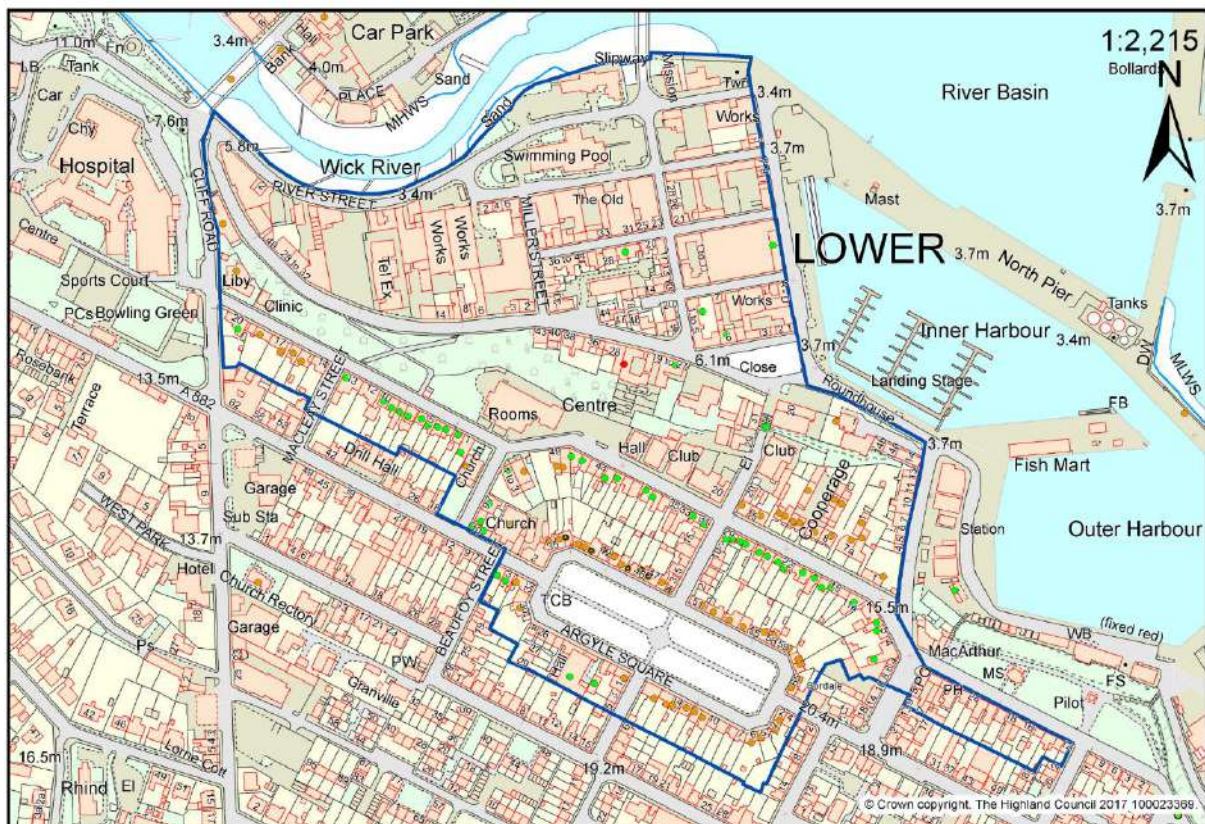


Figure 1: Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area, designated in 2000 (CA boundary outlined in blue; listed buildings dotted: red-Category A; orange-Category B; green-Category C). © Crown/THC

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE APPRAISAL

The purpose of this appraisal is to identify and assess the special architectural and historic interest of Wick Pulteneytown (referred to as Pulteneytown) along with those key elements that contribute to its character and appearance. This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the conservation area
- Identify any issues which threaten the special qualities of the conservation area
- Assess the current designation along with adjacent areas and identify potential boundary alterations

The appraisal follows Scottish Government guidance as set out in *Planning Advice Note 71: Conservation Area Management* (2004).

Planning authorities must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the designated area in making planning decisions that affect the conservation area. A more considered and careful approach is therefore needed in considering development proposals in conservation areas. The appraisal provides a firm basis on which applications for development within and in the vicinity of the conservation area can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with the current planning policy frameworks of THC.

Planning authorities have a duty to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, although there is no imposed timeframe for doing so. The appraisal provides a basis upon which programmes can be developed by, and in association with, The Highland Council (THC) to protect and enhance the conservation area. Further analysis and detail is provided in the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Management Plan*.

### 1.3 METHOD

The commission has been undertaken on behalf of The Highland Council (THC). It is supported by a project Stakeholder Group (Appendix 1).

The final draft appraisal for public consultation was prepared by Sonya Linskaill RIBA RIAS, Chartered Conservation Architect and Consultant in association with The Highland Council. The draft appraisal was reviewed with the Stakeholder Group and by THC prior to publication for public consultation. The final approved report will be under the copyright of The Highland Council.

Historical and background information has been supplied by The Highland Council. This was researched and collated from both primary and secondary sources including maps and photographs. Site surveys were carried out including a character assessment comprising: setting, views, activity and movement; street pattern and urban grain; historic townscape; spatial relationships; trees and landscaping and negative factors. Please note all historic images and maps are for illustration purposes only and must not be shared or copied.

The Highland Council arranged a stakeholder meeting which took place in June 2019 followed by a community engagement event in July 2019. This event looked to gather local thoughts on the conservation area, its buildings and public realm. Subsequently, the stakeholder group was invited to make comment of a draft of this report before formal public consultation.

### 1.4 BACKGROUND

A number of initiatives have been established and undertaken in Pulteneytown over the past three decades. This commenced with The Wick Project (from 1991), a multi-agency initiative aiming to bring life back into neglected parts of Wick, including Pulteneytown. The Highland Council prepared a regeneration strategy for Lower Pulteneytown, an area which at that time was suffering from neglected property, vacancy, dereliction, and low property values. Initial investment came from local authority housing grants for residential property improvement and housing association interest. The deficit in property value versus the cost of repair and conversion led the council to seek external funding. External funding was secured from both the Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage Initiative (2003 – 2008), followed by Historic Environment Scotland's Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS; 2007 - 2013). As well as physical regeneration, focus was also placed on interpretation of the area's rich Thomas Telford heritage as a means to raise local awareness, encourage visitors, and support economic growth in Wick.

## 2.0 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE / SUIDHEACHADH AGUS CRUTH-TÌRE

### 2.1 LOCATION

The Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area forms part of the town of Wick in The Highland Council local authority area, in the corporate management area of Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross. Pulteneytown, originally an independent town, has since 1902 formed part of the town of Wick, the historic Royal Burgh on the north bank of the River Wick.

Wick lies on the far north-east coast of Scotland; 20 miles south-east of Thurso by road and just over 100 miles north-east of the nearest city at Inverness. The town lies on the major road (A99) north from Inverness to John O’Groats, and is connected by the A882 to Thurso. The town also has rail connections to Thurso and south via Inverness, and an airport on the northern edge of the town. Wick harbour is located within the town on the south-eastern bank of the River Wick comprising of the Inner and Outer Harbours which are divided from the River Harbour by a water break. The Inner Harbour has a marina for leisure craft.

### 2.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH CAITHNESS, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Caithness occupies the north-east tip of the Scottish mainland enclosed by the Pentland Firth to the north coast, and the North Sea to the east. Wick lies on the eastern sea coast of Caithness at the mouth of the River Wick where it flows into Wick Bay and beyond the North Sea. The interior landscape is generally flat, in stark contrast to other areas of Highland Scotland, comprising open farm and moorland, extending to dramatic sea cliffs.

The geology of the area has afforded natural building materials including flagstone. The New Statistical Account (NSA, 1845, 125) details this including that at Castle of Girnigoes a dark bluish calcareous flagstone is present which continues along the coast to the cliffs southwards of the burgh of Wick. This stone differs from general formation of the district in having thicker beds and was much used for building.

## 3.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT / LEASACHADH EACHDRAIDHEIL

### 3.1 ANCIENT WICK

Wick is of ancient foundation, a natural harbour and market centre for Caithness, an area inhabited by the Celts, then the Picts. From the early 10<sup>th</sup> century Caithness, along with the Orkney Islands, Sutherland and Ross, came under the control of the Norwegian Earls. There is a considerable legacy of this period reflected in the both surnames and place names, the latter in particular in the Parish of Wick (NSA, 1845, 131-132). The name *Wick* itself is thought to derive from the Norse *Vik* meaning bay. The Castle of Old Wick, on a narrow promontory a little south of Wick town, was commonly known as the ‘Aul’ man o’ Wick’, and is thought to have been built in about 1160 by Harald Maddadson, Earl of Caithness and Orkney. There are historic references to the town during this period, and at some time between 1390 and 1406, King Robert III granted the town of Wick in heritage to Neill Sutherland with a Burgh of Barony (Origines, 1855, 773). From 1589 Wick became an established Royal Burgh by charter from James VI.



Figure 2: Pont’s map of Scotland ca. 1583-1614 illustrating Wick and surrounding settlements © NLS

### 3.2 WICK IN THE LATE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Wick had grown as a market and administrative burgh on the north bank of the River Wick where it flows into Wick Bay. The principal street, High Street, ran parallel following the river with narrow lanes leading off. The river was originally crossed by boat before a wooden bridge was constructed which was still in place in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, prior to its replacement with the first masonry bridge, designed by Thomas Telford, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (now demolished).

Despite Wick’s natural access to the North Sea, before the 19<sup>th</sup> century Wick was little used as a port, as Staxigoe to the north was preferred for its shelter, and Thurso was commercially more important (Beaton, 1996). Wick had no physical harbour, just a rough quay and the sandy shores of the river. The

geography of the east coast of Caithness comprising high cliffs (e.g. from Clyth to Ulbster) and small inlets known as ‘*geos*’, had led traditionally to fishing in small boats which took harbour in these *geos*.

The lack of safe harbour at Wick became increasingly problematic with the growth of herring fishing in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. From 1756 legislation removed previous restrictions, and allowed the free use of any harbour or shore for landing and curing herring. In Caithness, the first herring fishing was instigated in the late 1760s by local fishermen from Staxigoe and grew steadily year on year in the 1780s. In 1786 *The British Society for Extending the Fisheries and Improving the Sea-Coasts of the Kingdom* was established and had an immediate effect, seen in the comparison of 363 barrels of exported white herring from Wick in 1782, compared with 10,510 barrels of white, and 2,000 of red herring exported on 1790 (NSA, 1845, 152). Despite the lack of a physical harbour, by 1790 there were 32 vessels at Wick during the herring season which caught 1610 tons on herring (OSA, 1794, 10). It was clear that further expansion of the herring industry would be hampered by the lack of a safe harbour. It was also noted that salt, casks (barrels) and hemp (for cord and nets) were required in greater number to meet the increasing volume of the catch.

*“The new harbour is not only an object of the highest importance to the town itself and its immediate neighbourhood, but the kingdom at large. It would be the means of saving many vessels, which, when overtaken by storms or contrary winds, have no place of shelter, between Cromarty and Stromness [...] A harbour commodious for a number of vessels, and safe in all weather, might be made at Wick. This would be particularly beneficial during the herring fishery, which had been much retarded from the want of such a shelter.”*

(OSA, 1794, 5)

The First Statistical Account of Scotland (OSA) was written shortly before the establishment of Pulteneytown, however by the time the Account was published, the British Fisheries Society had already surveyed the area. Conditions being favourable, correspondence had commenced with Benjamin Dunbar of Hempriggs, the local proprietor, to feu the appropriate land to build a harbour and fishing village on the south side of the River Wick opposite, and outwith, the existing Royal Burgh.

### 3.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF PULTENEYTOWN: WICK HARBOUR AND THE HERRING FISHERY

The creation of ‘Pulteney Town’ (as it was originally written) was solely as a result of the promotion of the fishing industries by the British government.

In 1786 *The British Society for Extending the Fisheries and Improving the Sea Coasts of the Kingdom* (later the *British Fisheries Society*) was incorporated by an Act of Parliament. The Society was charged with the overall control of expansion of the fishing industry including building roads, harbours, and villages, and providing low interest rate finance to those involved in the fishing industry. The Society had engaged the civil engineer and architect Thomas Telford to advise on potential sites. After surveying works at Ullapool in 1790, Telford travelled to Wick and in his report to the Society favoured Wick and improvement of the natural harbour there. In 1792 John Rennie surveyed the site, which would become Pulteney Town, on behalf of the Society, although it was 1802 before Thomas Telford sought Treasury approval for his plan which included a village for 1000 people; and it was not until 1803 that a contract was signed by the Society and Sir Benjamin Dunbar to purchase 390 acres on the south side of the mouth of the River Wick. The site included the headland, the hill of Old Wick as far as the Old Castle of Wick, and the lands of Harrow. Finally in 1806 an Act of Parliament allowed £7,500 from the surplus of the Forfeited and Annexed Estates to be used for the construction of the harbour. The harbour construction is thought to have started in 1803 and was completed in 1811 for 100 decked vessels. This harbour

quickly became overcrowded and a new basin was started in 1826, under local engineer James Bremner, and completed in 1831.

This signalled the start of the most successful era for the herring industry with the trade growing unchecked for the next 40 years (Sutherland, 29; approx. 1826 to 1866). The herring season commenced in mid-July for 8-10 weeks and in 1840 employed almost 8,000 persons, half of which were the boat crews, and the remainder in support of the industry including over 2,000 women employed as gutters (NSA, 1845, 153). In that year, 63,495 barrels were cured and a further 10,333 packed from Wick harbour alone. By 1851 the fleet in Wick was 1000 vessels and at its height 1,120 vessels in 1862 (Sutherland, 32).

Over the next fifty years (approx. 1862 to 1912) the catch remained constant although the number of boats reduced (Sutherland, 51). The need again to increase the harbour's capacity was addressed by the commencement of a breakwater in 1863 by Thomas Stevenson, but subsequent frequent damage led to the failure of the construction and abandonment of the scheme in 1877. In 1879 the Wick Harbour Trust was created by Act of Parliament to take control from the British Fisheries Society.

### 3.4 ESTABLISHMENT OF PULTENEYTOWN: BUILDING IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Thomas Telford was responsible for the planning and design of all the key elements of the new settlement:

1. A new bridge over the River Wick to connect the proposed harbour area with the Royal Burgh;
2. A new harbour (section 3.3);
3. An industrial area including warehousing and curing yards for the herring by the harbour;
4. A residential area ('village') above the harbour to house the new town's population.

#### 3.4.1 The Telford Bridge

Thomas Telford had designed a new bridge to cross the River Wick to replace the old timber construction upstream. Telford's bridge was built in 1805 and served as the town's only road crossing until it was replaced in 1870s by current Bridge of Wick.

#### 3.4.2 Lower Pulteneytown

Lower Pulteneytown was to be the industrial sector of the new town. It was set out adjacent to the new Wick harbour on the low lying ground that formed part of the banks or 'links' of the River Wick. The first design for this area in 1807 (fig 3B; SRO/RHP/42242/1) consisted of 21 lots of land (each 60 by 120 feet) for the building of herring curing houses, although Telford's final plan varied slightly (fig 8). Dwelling houses could be incorporated in these industrial lots as long as the minimum building height of 18 feet was maintained (GD9/337/1). The buildings were to be solely used by those involved in the herring industry.

An advert appeared in the Aberdeen Journal, and other papers, on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 1808, including that the commercial lots would be disposed at auction in July 1808, when eleven lots were taken, five by locals from Wick, one from Clyth, two from Dundee, and three from Leith (Dunlop, 1982, 154). These lots were numbers 1 to 8, 10, 11 and 12 on the 1807 plan (fig 3B; SRO/GD9/376/1). Telford reported that three of these lots were built by August 1809, as well as the Round House and nearby salt cellars (GD9/300/3A). Whilst identifying the precise herring houses built by 1809 may require further research,



they would appear to have been on three of the following lots: 1, 2, 5, 6 or 11 (1807 plan; fig 3B); all of which were recorded as having ‘Red Herring Houses’ in 1818 (SRO/GD9/376/1).

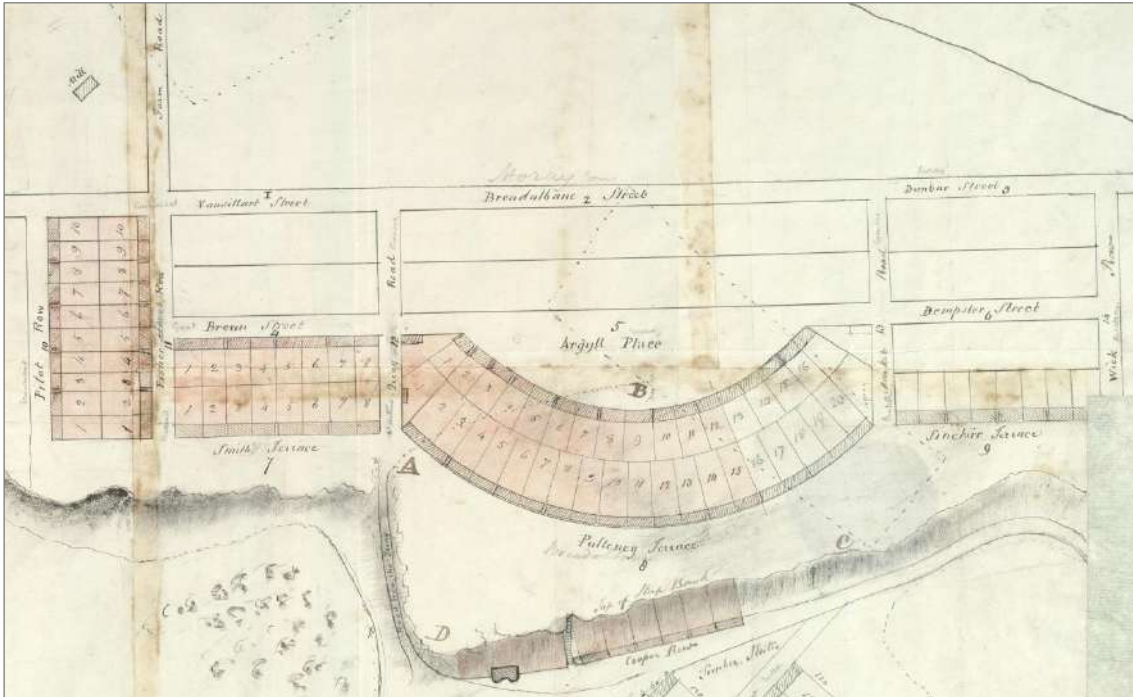


Figure 3A: Extract from Telford's 1807 design for Pulteneytown showing the upper town with 72 numbered lots. Whilst several street names were altered or relocated in the subsequent plans, the principle of a grand terraced frontage is shown extending from Smith Terrace through the curving Pulteney Terrace (redesigned as Broadalbane Terrace) and Sinclair Terrace (shorter at this stage; with no lot numbers). The concept of a central square is not yet developed, but partly there in the form of Argyle Place forming a curved terrace behind the seaward frontage. RHP/42242/1 © SRO

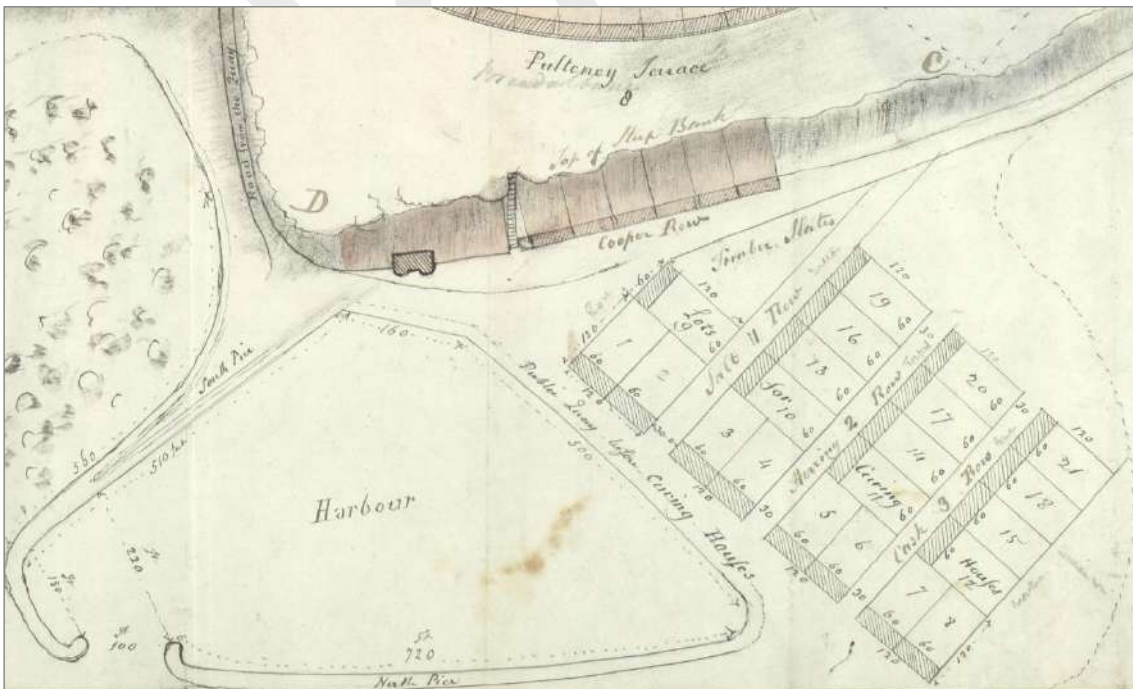


Figure 3B: Extract from Telford's 1807 design for Pulteneytown showing the harbour and industrial sector with 21 lots before a central street (Williamson Street) was introduced in later plans. Also note the straight short street called Copper Row, redesigned and extended on a curve by 1813 as Bank Row. RHP/42242/1 © SRO

Telford's plan for Lower Pulteneytown subsequently altered and there were 26 lots illustrated in feu plans drawn in 1813 (fig 8) with a central street, parallel to the harbour quay, introduced (Williamson Street); as well as ten lots on Bank Row, realigned to follow the curve of the river embankment (SRO/GD9/337/1).

### 3.4.3 Upper Pulteneytown

Upper Pulteneytown was to be the principal residential sector of the new town, referred to in Telford's reports as 'the village'. It was set out on the high ground above the harbour. In August 1807, Telford records that he has settled on a plan on 72 lots in what is now the equivalent of: Breadalbane Terrace, the north side of Argyle (originally spelt Argyll) Square, Grant Street, Smith Terrace, Hubbart Street and Vansittart Street (fig 3A; SRO/RHP/42242/1). It was Telford's opinion that settlers should for the present be limited to that area (Dunlop, 1982, 151; SRO/GD9/300). The first lot to be both feued and built upon was in 1809 by Mr John Sinclair, a millwright, and thought to have been Lot 15 Grant Street, now demolished, approx. where Nos. 7-9 Grant Street are today (Johnston Collection image JN20003B001; Agent's Report August 1809, GD9/300/3A & Telford's Survey 1813, GD9/337/2; GD9/337/1).

As with the lower town, the design of the village had changed by the 1813 feu plans both in its street layout (including several renamed) and its extent. The 1813 feu charter lists 190 lots extending from Vansittart Street in the east to Francis and Thurso Streets in the west, and Brown Place in the south (Map 6.1).

### 3.4.4 Development

By 1811, 60 lots across the upper and lower towns had been let, including half of the numbered 72 lots identified by Telford in his 1807 plan (fig 3A; SRO/GD9/376/1). In 1812 there is correspondence between Telford and the Society on how best to determine the town plan lots at its western edge around the 'ravine' close to Sinclair Terrace (presumably the embankment), Macleay Street, Francis Street, and road alignments (SRO/GD9/311/4). It is evident the Society was looking to extend the new town as far as the existing County Road (Francis Street) and the existing Thurso Road.

Three documents help to define the final new town plan in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These documents set out the lots, record which are feued and where buildings are constructed:

1. "Map of the Several Districts of Pulteney Town in the County of Caithness with References to Feus from the British Fishery Society" referred to in this document as the 'draft feu charter' (GD9/337/1); 1813.
2. Telford's Survey in October 1813 (GD9/337/2);
3. The Society's Agent's detailed report in March 1818 (GD9/376/1).

In 1818, the Agent's report describes that the town, with a population of 852, included:

- 102 building lots feued
- 7 red herring houses built
- 12 cooperages
- 108 dwelling houses

Based on these records, by 1818 much of the early industrial area was complete with all ten original lots on Bank Row built upon, and much of the four urban blocks east of Williamson St. In the upper town 65 lots, about one third, were taken, with around 50 of those built upon, largely in Grant Street and Smith Terrace as well as Huddart and Kinnaird Streets. The Society Minutes of 1827 report that it is

possible every lot on the plan will be let in the ensuing year (Lockhart, 2002, 169) and the population is now over 1,500.

The Second Statistical Account of Scotland (NSA, 1845) records progress of the new town by the early 1840s. It records that Wick and Pulteneytown have four rope works (first opened in 1820), one distillery (1827), one meal and barley mill, four saw mills, one ship and 12 boat building yards, and a recently opened iron foundry. A gas company was formed in 1840 and the Gas Works were under construction in 1845 with gas lighting available shortly after this date. There were also 23 inns and public houses in Pulteneytown alone. The church had been completed on Argyle Square in 1842 (architect William Davidson of Thurso; extension 2001) and the new town had a police force by 1844. The Pulteneytown Academy was built by the British Fisheries Society in 1838.

The number of inhabitants of Wick in 1792 was about 1000 (OSA, 1794, 16) and in 1811 similarly 994 persons in the burgh, with an additional 755 in Louisburgh (northern extension), Pulteneytown and Bankhead (NSA, 1845, 143). In 1840 the population on Wick was 1,254; of Pulteneytown 2,959 persons (almost 700 families); and of Louisburgh 379 persons (NSA, 1845, 157). The growth in the population of Pulteneytown provides one illustration of the success of the new town.

The Admiralty Chart for the Port of Wick (1839/57; fig 4B) provides a relatively detailed plan of the new town at this point. It is a more accurate representation of the development of the lots than that shown on the Reform Act Plan (1832; fig. 4A), and prior to the Ordnance Survey of 1872 (fig 5). The original lots of the lower town appear almost fully complete, and in the upper town the focus, as Telford had intended, has been on the eastern side of Argyle Square and as far as the block at Huddart Street. It is also recorded that work is in progress on creating River Street which would allow expansion of the lower town westward.

### 3.5 PULTENEYTOWN: SECOND HALF OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The peak number of vessels at Wick Harbour was recorded in 1862 at 1,120 (Sutherland, 32). Development of the infrastructure of the town continued apace, with the foundation stone laid in 1863 for an eastern breakwater to create a larger harbour (later abandoned due to technical difficulties), and in 1877 Telford's bridge was replaced by the current Bridge of Wick. A 'temporary' bridge, known as the Service Bridge, was constructed downstream to allow passage of traffic while Telford's Bridge was replaced (which remained in place into the 20<sup>th</sup> century). The Sutherland and Caithness Railway (later Highland Railway) was opened in 1874 connecting Wick and Thurso to southern markets via Inverness.

With the original feus of the new town plan let, it appears additional lots were created including: the western end of Sinclair Terrace; on the originally open ground on the north side of Breadalbane Terrace; Harbour Terrace; and on reclaimed land in the western section of Lower Pulteneytown forming Union Street and River Street (compare figs 4 & 5; map 6.1).



Figure 4A: *Reform Act Plan, 1832*: the earliest map representation of Pulteneytown. Whilst broadly reflecting the new town’s development, the extent and accuracy of specific buildings cannot be relied upon. ©NLS



Figure 4B: *Admiralty Charts of Scotland: The Port and Vicinity of Wick* (surveyed 1839; additions 1857) provides the most detailed plan before the Ordnance Survey in 1872. Whilst additions are said to have been made to the map in 1857, the omission of a number of key buildings constructed in the 1840/50s suggests no update was made to the town plan, probably only the marine map in 1857. The plan captures Telford’s design before it extended in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the west in Lower Pulteneytown and on the land between the lower and upper towns. Paths are indicated across this open area, which presents a level of formal grandeur to in particular Breadalbane Terrace. Development of the upper town to the east (Huddart and Vansittart Streets) and to the south (Moray Street, Brown Place and Kinnaird Street) is clear with the ‘Ropery’ south of Brown Street clearly marked. In the lower town the map states that works are progressing on River Street. ©NLS

### 3.6 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Discussion around the amalgamation of Pulteneytown with the Royal Burgh was raised toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1883 a partial extension of the burgh had incorporated Louisborough, Boatham, Bankhead, Janetstown and East and West Banks. Pulteneytown would follow in the 1902 extension of the Royal Burgh of Wick. The role of the Pulteneytown Commissioners, appointed by Act of Parliament in 1809 as a locally elected council which took responsibility for continued expansion and day to day matters of the town, ceased.

The decline in the herring industry started from the 1890s although it was imperceptible at the time (Sutherland, 62). Part of decline was the development of steam and motor power for boats and changes in fishing practice. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century several global events impacted the industry and its foreign markets including: emigration, the First World War; the Russian Revolution; and the international depression on the 1920s. After the Second World War there was a changing demand for herring and rejection of traditional work conditions, with the last herring landed in 1953. After the demise of herring fishing, the Wick fleet turned to white fish and a flourishing fishing trade was established during the 1960s, however this was impacted after the UK entered the EEC in 1970, with quotas and fish imports changing the home market.

Wick became the County town of Caithness which in some part mitigated the loss of the herring industry income. It became the seat of local government with central government departments having regional offices such as the Inland Revenue, customs and excise, dept. of social security etc.

Wick suffered some damage during the Second World War with the first daylight bombing raid on mainland Britain on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1940 and subsequent loss of life and buildings on Bank Row and the Crown Hotel on the corner of Bank Row and the Black Steps.

In the 1950s, the nuclear power establishment was built on the site of a Second World War airfield at Dounreay. The site is used by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (Dounreay Nuclear Power Development Establishment) and the Ministry of Defence (Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment). Dounreay, about 9 miles west of Thurso, grew rapidly as a result, and Dounreay remained a major element in the economy of Thurso and Caithness until 1994 when the government ordered that the reactors be closed, although a large workforce is employed in the decommissioning of the sites.

After the Second World War, the expansion of Wick, and small scale redevelopment of the edges of Upper Pulteneytown, occurred with the construction of local authority housing. In Lower Pulteneytown in the late 1980s / early 1990s early attempts at regeneration included road widening at the southern end of the Harbour Bridge, and demolition of adjacent sites (including the 1848 lifeboat house, the oldest in Scotland, and former Gas Works). This facilitated the construction of a public swimming pool and medical centre.

### 3.7 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

A number of initiatives have been established and undertaken in Pulteneytown over the past two decades. This included the Heritage Lottery Funded Townscape Heritage Initiative (2003-2008) and later Historic Environment Scotland funded Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (2007 – 2013). Most recently investment by SSE has seen regeneration of two street blocks in Lower Pulteneytown, one becoming the new operational facilities for the Beatrice Offshore Windfarm Limited from 2019. Investment by the Wick Harbour Authority has provided a new marina; and a new Caithness Archives facility (The Nucleus) has been opened close to Wick airport. Wick is also a stop on the tourist NC500 route created in recent years.

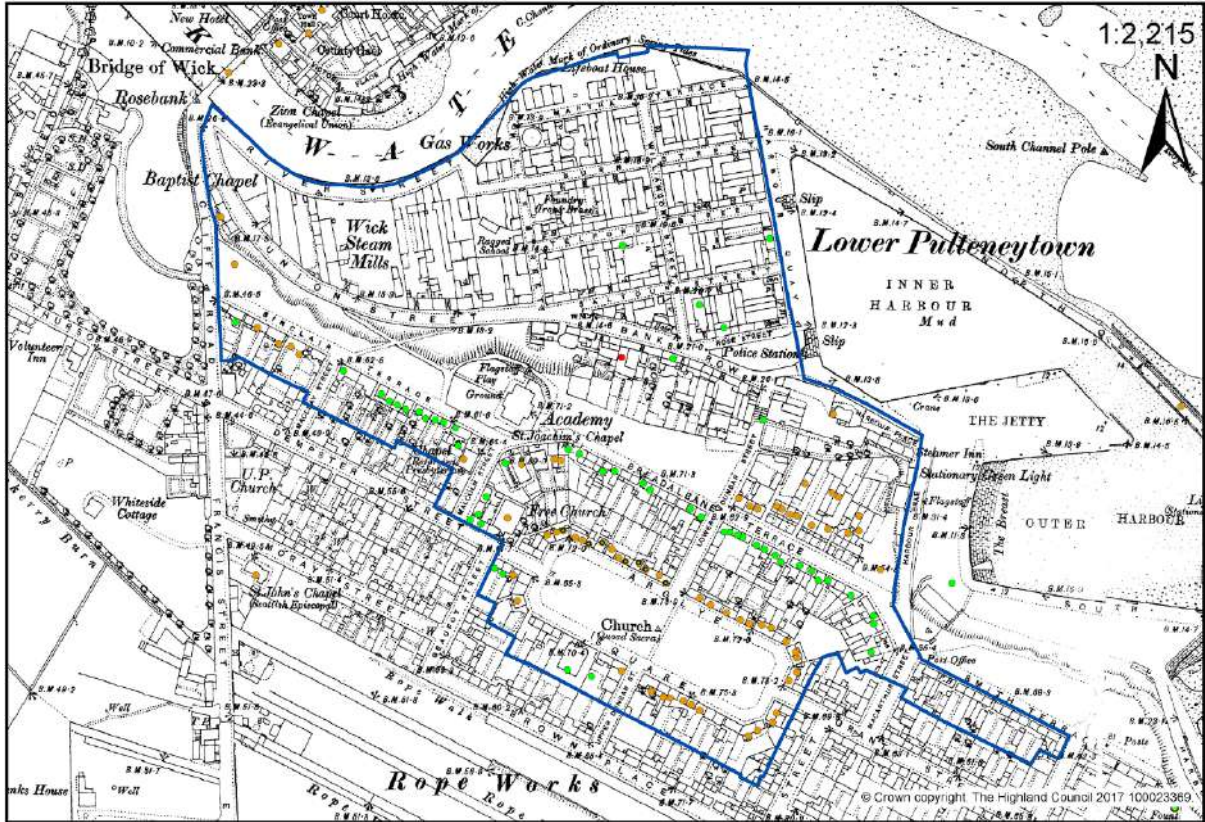


Figure 5: 1st Ed. OS 1873; surveyed 1872 (CA boundary outlined in blue; listed buildings dotted: red-Category A; orange-Category B; green-Category C). © Crown/THC

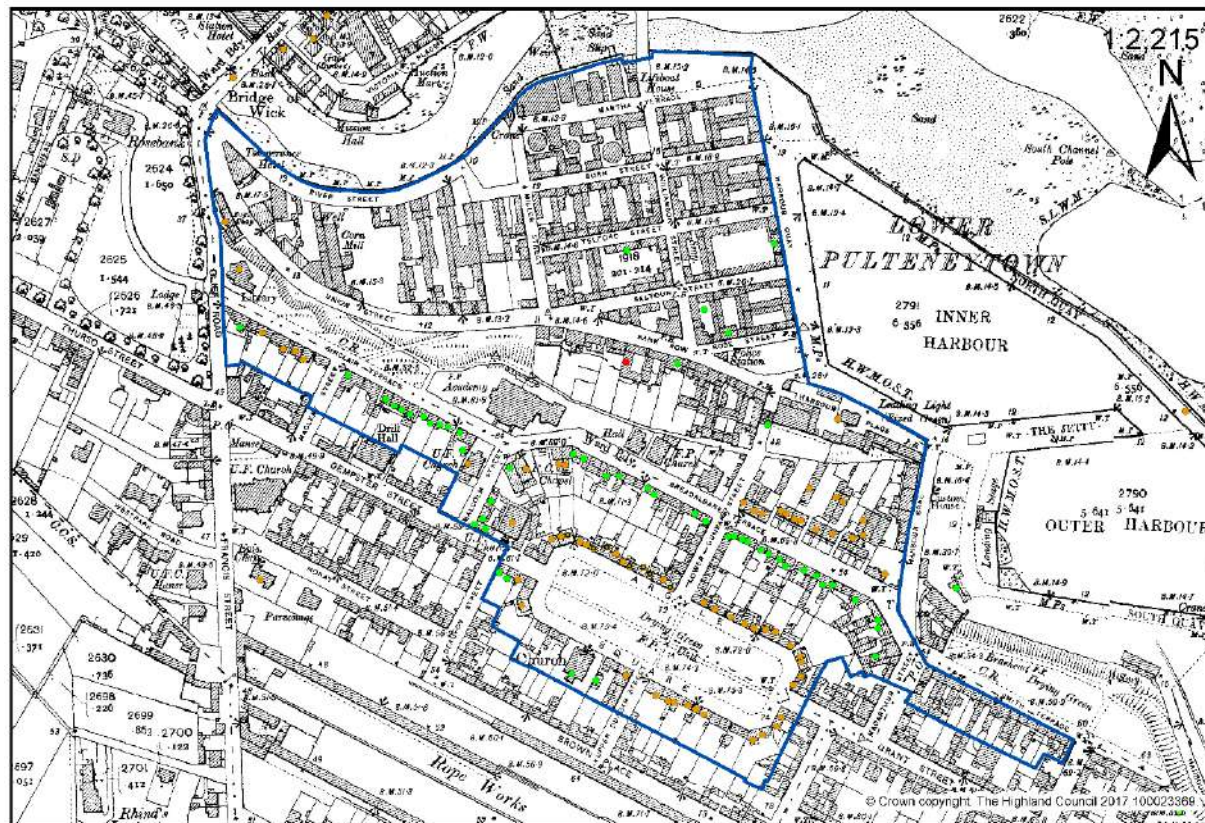


Figure 6: 2nd Ed. OS 1906; surveyed 1905 (CA boundary outlined in blue; listed buildings dotted: red-Category A; orange-Category B; green-Category C). © Crown/THC

## 4.0 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE / CARACTAR AGUS COLTAS

### 4.1 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

#### 4.1.1 Setting

The geography of the site had a significant influence of Telford’s design, principally separating the new town into upper and lower sections which remain a key characteristic today. Upper Pulteneytown was set out on raised ground above the River Wick overlooking the estuary. Lower Pulteneytown was set out on the links of the River Wick, a flat site, separated from Upper Pulteneytown by steeply sloping ground, formerly the river banking. A strong sinuous route (Bank Row and Union Street) was formed at the base of this banking, connecting the harbour to the principal junction at the Bridge of Wick. This curving route is in sharp contrast to the regularised street pattern which the new town plan imposed across the site.

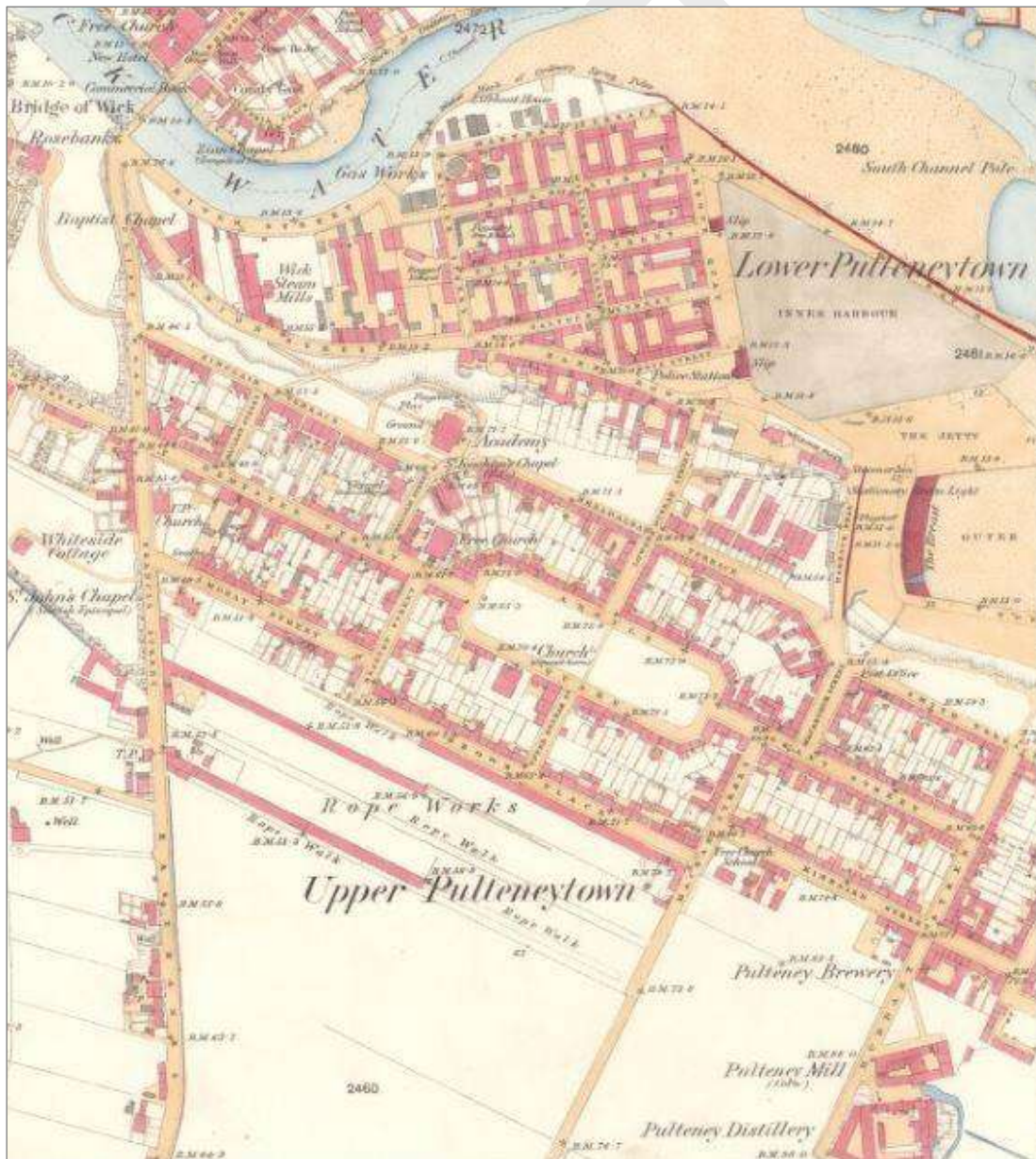


Figure 7: 1st Ed. OS 25" Plan 1873 (surveyed 1872) © NLS

#### 4.1.2 Spatial components

The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey (1872; fig 7), whilst prepared a number of years after the completion of the original new town, provides a good reference point to understand the components of Telford's new town design. These were:

##### *Lower Pulteneytown:*

- a. The principal grid iron blocks for the herring industry (fig 8) enclosed by (west) Millar Street – (north) Martha Terrace – (east) Harbour Quay – (south) Bank Row (c.1808 – c.1820)
- b. Wick Inner Harbour (1803-1811); and slightly later Outer Harbour (1826-1831).
- c. The secondary (and later) supporting area enclosed by (west) Cliff Road – (north) River Street – (east) Millar Street – (south) Union Street. (c.1840s – c.1880s)

##### *Upper Pulteneytown:*

- d. A planned street pattern focused on Argyle Square with a strong east-west linear form enclosed by (west) Francis Street – (north) Sinclair Terrace / Breadalbane Terrace / Smith Terrace - (east) Huddart and Vansittart Street block – (south) Moray Street / Brown Place/ Kinnard Street (1809 – c.1840).

##### *Intermediate area:*

The land separating Upper and Lower Pulteneytown comprised of the green spaces of Academy Braes and the open space and gardens between Breadalbane Terrace and Bank Row. Other than construction on the Pulteneytown Academy (1838) this intermediate land was not originally feued, excepting the lots on Bank Row and Harbour Place (fig 4). This physical separation is still largely evident on the 1872 map (fig 7), with the only new buildings being constructed on the lots at Nos. 4-18 Breadalbane Crescent which date to the 1860s. This physical break between the industrial and residential part of the town, would become less well defined once larger public buildings were constructed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century including: the St Fergus Lodge Masonic Hall (feu c.1894, opened 1896); the Free Presbyterian Church (1905; no longer Place of Worship after 2016); and the former Breadalbane Hall (opened 1911; later a cinema, which was internally rebuilt 1935-6 after a fire; converted into the Dounreay Social Club c. 1960s; closed in 2007; Canmore ID 319079). The Academy was also extended at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (fig 6).

#### 4.1.3 Layout and form of Lower Pulteneytown

Telford's earlier plan for Lower Pulteneytown consisted of 21 lots (1807; SRO/RHP/42242/1; fig 3B), however the grid iron plan which he had settled upon by the 1813 Draft Feu Charter comprised of 26 lots (fig 8). There were six and a half street blocks with Williamson Street as the central spine, and Harbour Quay forming the seaward frontage to the east. Miller Street to the west was as yet un-named, and truncated by the course of the river. The cross streets from north to south were Martha Terrace, Burn Street, Telford Street, Salton (later Saltoun) Street and Rose Street. The curving line of Bank Row enclosed the grid iron plan in the south and formed a triangular site which would subsequently consisted of smaller lots and the Lorne Hotel (fig 12). Telford consciously changed his original design for Bank Row "from a straight line into the flat segment of a circle" to create a more suitable direction for this street within his intended plan (GD9/300/3A). On Martha Terrace, the westward block was not fully developed until later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century once works were completed to further reclaim land to create River Street and push the water line back.



By comparing historic maps (figs 3B, 4 & 7), the two blocks north of Martha Terrace were not part of the original lots, and in the 1870s this area, just above the high water mark, was the site of a number of more temporary buildings and the original lifeboat house (1848). Shortly after the 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Ordnance Survey (1872), a new bridge was constructed (whilst Telford’s original Bridge of Wick was replaced) and a route formed from Williamson Street to the north bank of the river at the end of the High Street. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Ordnance Survey (fig 6) shows development on the western plot (currently the medical centre, built 1995) but no development on the eastern part (currently the fire station site).

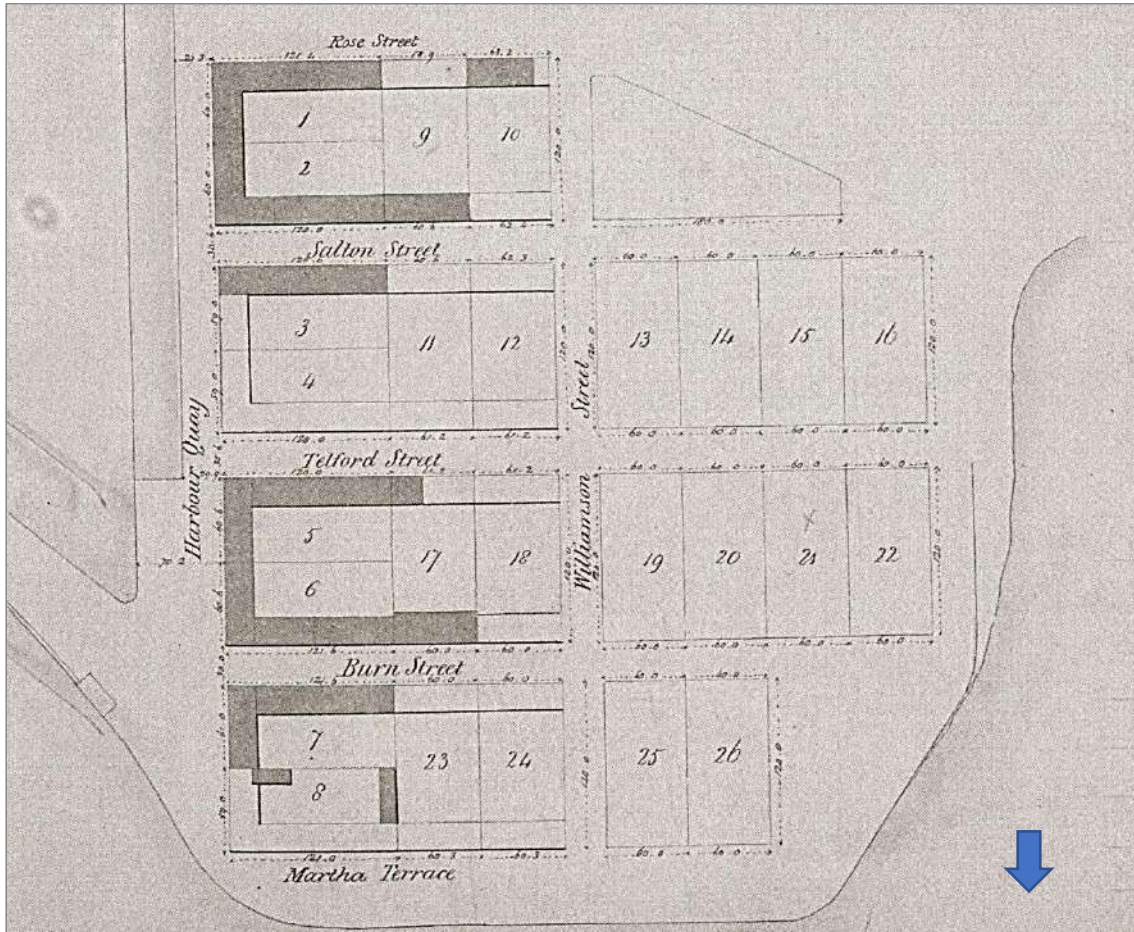


Figure 8: an extract from Draft Feu Charter illustrating 26 lots at this time; the shading indicates where buildings have been constructed (SRO/GD9/337/2). The arrow indicates north. Note the water line, at this point very close to the lots. ©SRO/GD9/337/1

Of the original industrial blocks, six remain largely intact. The smaller triangular block and part of the south side of the adjacent block (on Saltoun Street) have been redeveloped and the new development partially breaks down the strong street lines of the grid design.

On the north-west corner, the original form of the block between Martha Terrace and Burn Street has been completely changed with construction of the swimming pool (1993) at the centre of the block and the plot has also been extended westward closing off the route of Miller Street. Road widening in the late 1980s to create a mini-roundabout at the end of Williamson Street has also eroded the north-east block.



Figure 9: the typical hard urban grain of the original Lower Pulteneytown lots with buildings constructed on the street line.



Figure 10: recent redevelopment on Saltoun Street has reduced the hard frontage of the block and set housing back from the street line with small front yards and parking.

Bank Row is thought to be the first street to be fully built (GD9/337/1 & 2) due to its geography, the street is divided into linear lots extending into the steep bank to the rear of the street fronting buildings. Several of the buildings have access to now terraced gardens climbing up to the rear of properties on Breadalbane Crescent. For example from the rear of the Wick Museum it is possible to access the Assembly Rooms car park (although not a public route with locked gates). The Ordnance Survey Town Plan (1872) shows a number of stairs and paths connecting the buildings on Bank Row to the open area behind the lots which were each enclosed by boundary walls. Only one is named, Tanner Close, leading from a pend adjacent to the current day Memorial Garden. There were ten lots on the 1813 Draft Feu Charter for Bank Row, suggesting the last lot at its western end was a later 19<sup>th</sup> century addition. Second

World War bombing resulted in the loss of several buildings at the eastern end of Bank Row including the Crown Hotel on the corner of Bank Row and the Black Steps. This creates a void in the urban structure where the buildings have not been replaced, and there are views to the rear of the large properties on Breadalbane Crescent. The wedge of space between Bank Row and Rose Street was once the site of a boat yard and the town's police station and jail (fig 13). It is currently undeveloped but defined by low masonry walls.

West of Miller Street the grid iron plan was not continued and the plots are generally long narrow strips extending from River Street in the north to Union Street in the south. These lots appear to have originally housed both curing yards and supportive industries including corn and sawmills. Street fronting buildings were constructed on Union Street with buildings behind forming rear yards. This created an irregular frontage along the river which is still evident and presents an inconsistent form to the riverside and the historic burgh in the north (fig 14). At the far western end of the area, as River and Union Streets merge, the lots become increasingly truncated until they terminate in the narrow triangular site occupied by Mackays Hotel (1883).

Telford had defined the scale of buildings in Lower Pulteneytown by stipulating in particular that the height of buildings be a minimum of 18 feet to the eaves whether a street fronting (or rear facing) herring house, or a street fronting domestic building (GD9/337) with the aim to create a constant scale. The herring houses were also to have a minimum 18 feet internal width. However, in reality Lower Pulteneytown comprises of range of building heights from 3-storey warehousing to 2-storey office and residential buildings, and a small number of single or 1½ storey support buildings. The height of street elevations vary with some more consistent than others. The west side of Williamson Street has a strong and consistent eaves line, which accommodates a 3-storey warehouse and 2-storey housing (with dormers set back), as well as the elevated Telford House façade, only the latter's unusual gable end breaks the eaves line to the street (fig 15).

The parallel Harbour Quay, does not repeat this uniformity, but does have a level of consistency which is important for this prominent sea frontage. Here the tallest warehouses stand at a full 3-storeys, but there are also slightly smaller 3-storey and 2½-storey buildings, the latter with dormers that break the eaves line and elevate the buildings to closer to their 3-storey neighbours. The existing arrangement, whereby the tallest buildings are at the centre of the street, creates a balanced frontage. The elevated building height in the lower town, along with narrower street widths (lower town 30 feet wide, upper town usually 44 feet wide; GD9/337), gives the industrial quarter a more enclosed feel in comparison to Upper Pulteneytown.



Figure 11: later 20<sup>th</sup> century redevelopment of the triangular block on Bank Row. The houses have been set at an oblique angle to the street line; the considerable variation in building height is also not in keeping with the original 2-3 storey buildings.



Figure 12: the Lorne Hotel occupied the corner of Bank Row and Williamson Street, pictured here in 1900. In comparison to the redevelopment above, the form and scale of the hotel provided a strong corner and reaffirmation of the urban structure of the industrial area. Note the road surface made up in sea gravel and Caithness stone pavements. © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection



Figure 13: (top) looking east on Bank Row in the 1930s, with the triangular block on Saltoun Street on the left and the former police station buildings at the end of the boat yard site in the distance (now demolished) © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection; (below) similar view in 2019, the Saltoun Street block has been redeveloped with later 20<sup>th</sup> century housing.



Figure 14: view of the River Street frontage from the Bridge of Wick. Note the irregularity of the street frontage which developed on the ends of the lots extending through from Union Street. There are gaps where buildings or high walls have been lost and the form and height of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Telecoms building is inconsistent with the traditional industrial buildings.



Figure 15: the consistent eaves line on Williamson Street (west side). Note how the 3-storey warehouse on the right maintains the eaves line of the neighbouring 2-storey Telford House.



Figure 16: view of the Harbour Quay street frontage where the warehouses and support buildings are 2 to 3-storey in height with the tallest warehouses at the centre providing a balanced and attractive backdrop to the harbour.

#### 4.1.4 Layout and form of Upper Pulteneytown

Upper Pulteneytown, on the raised ground above the river, was similarly laid out on a formal regularised plan with the unusual exception of the blocks which form Argyle Square. Thomas Telford appears to have considered several designs for this square, one dating to 1807 which illustrates that a curving terrace would form the northern section of Argyle Square, more similar to the crescents in Bath and Edinburgh New Towns (SRO/GD9/7/264; fig 3A). The executed design which remains today is more rectangular in form but softened by chamfered corners on its north facing side and internally facing the square. At its centre is a long rectangular open space now tree-lined (possibly as late as the 1930s; fig 23) with strong axial routes north-south (Upper and Lower Dunbar Street) and east-west on Dempster and Grant Streets. Argyle Square is positioned at the high point in Upper Pulteneytown, with a slight decent to the east on Grant Street, and a steeper incline on Upper and Lower Dunbar Streets, the latter making the important connection to Lower Pulteneytown via the Black Stairs. These slight variations in the topography contrast with the flat industrial blocks on the lower town.

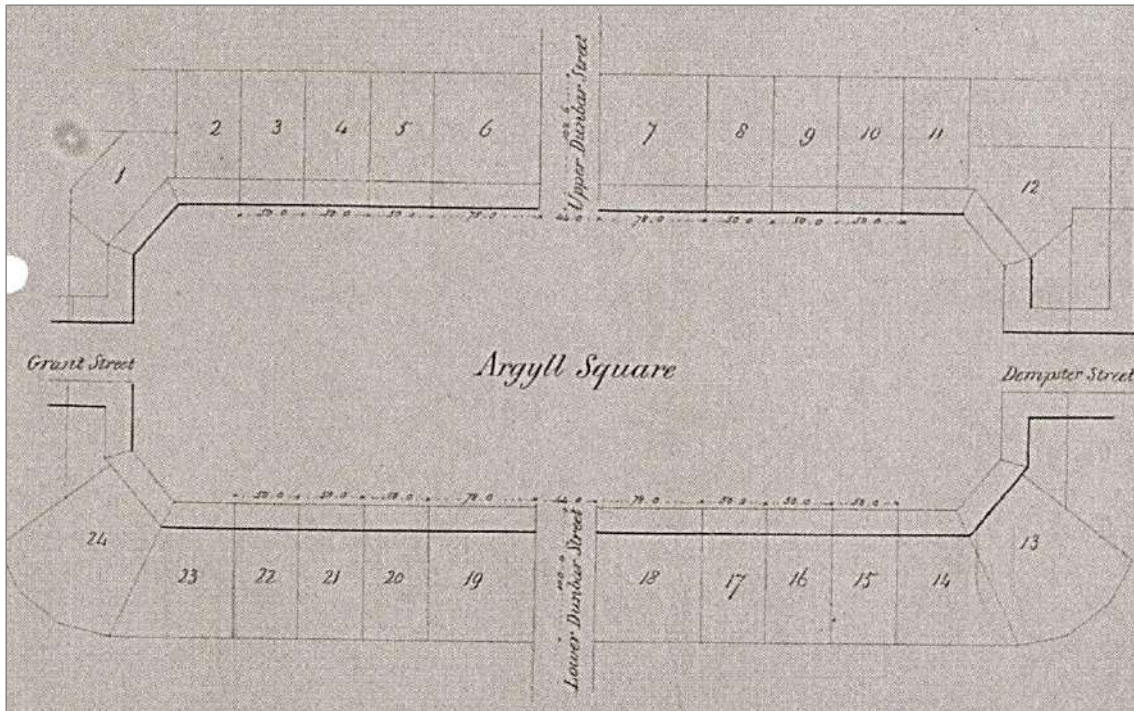


Figure 17: an extract from Draft Feu Charter illustrating the lots on Argyll (later Argyle) Square, this plan shows that not lots had been built upon by 1813, in fact only lots 22 & 24 had been feued (SRO/GD9/337/2). Most lots are 50 feet wide, but larger lots were provided at the internal corners and also at the corners with Lower and Upper Dunbar Streets. © SRO/GD9/337/1

Due to the existing presence of the road to Inverness (Francis Street) in the west, Telford’s grid plan could only expand to the south and east as was indicated in the Reform Act Plan of 1832 (fig 3) although there may be some artistic licence used, especially when compared to the Wick Port Plan first surveyed shortly after this in 1839 (fig 4). The Francis Street restriction meant that a symmetrical plan centred on Argyle Square could only be achieved in the street blocks immediately to the east and west (i.e. to Huddart and MacLeay Streets respectively). This appears to be emphasised by the fact that the Huddart Street block is turned at right angles to Grant Street and terminates the street view from Argyle Square. The blocks east of this point then continue this theme with their shorter ends addressing the coast line. The establishment of industries south of Brown Place (the ‘back’ of the southern Argyle Street blocks) meant that Telford’s design did not extend past this point as the Reform Plan had suggested. Whilst a further two blocks were developed (Barrogill, Rutherford, and Albert Streets) this was not until the late 1800s.

Map 6.1 illustrates the extent of the Draft Feu Charter in 1813, using the street names therein listed and also highlighting the lots which were developed by the time of Telford’s survey in October 1813 (SRO/GD9/337/2).

The upper part of the conservation area comprises almost entirely of 2-storey housing addressing wide streets. This creates a uniform spatial environment which is only interrupted by a small number of local landmark buildings such as churches. Telford had advised the Society that,

*“Uniformity of building, in point of elevation of the houses, and dimension of the doors and windows, is to be attended to as much as the nature of the ground will admit.”*

*Specifications by Thomas Telford in Draft Feu Charter 1813.*



Telford supplied standard house designs for both single and 2-storey models. He suggested that the Feu Charter determine where houses were to be 2-storey and in which streets single storey houses would be an option (GD9/289/51). The 2-storey house was to be a minimum of 17 feet to the eaves (a foot lower than in the industrial area) with a door 6 x 3 feet and windows 5 x 3 feet. Single storey houses were to be at least 8 feet at the eaves with the same door size but slightly smaller window openings at 4 x 3 feet. In construction, 2-storey houses predominated, with single storey buildings being extremely rare in the conservation area on the street elevations, although a few survive in the adjoining streets (e.g. Brown Place) and are evident in historic photographs (fig 19, Grant Street).

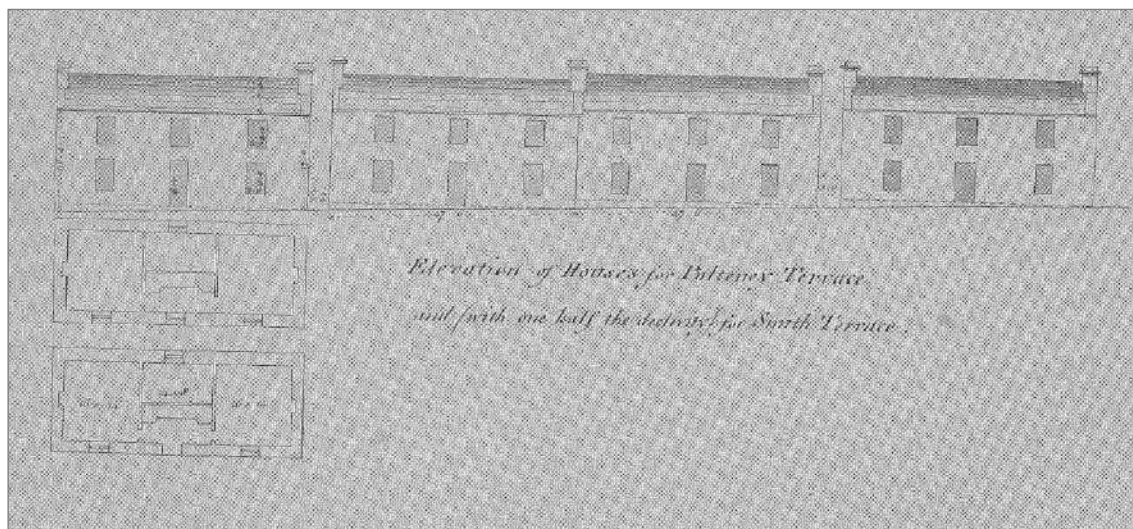


Figure 18: Telford's design for a two-storey model where he foresaw a stepping of the eaves levels to accommodate the inclination of individual streets © SRO/GD9/337/1

Telford appears to have considered the uniformity of building elevations carefully but acknowledged in 1815 that this could not be insisted upon taking into account the potential different views of individual feuars without the possibility of disputes between the Society and settlers (GD9/289/51).

Admittedly there is some variation in the height of these 2-storey buildings, nevertheless there is an overall consistency. However as can be seen on Argyle Square, independent builders produced design variations which may also have been influenced by the date of construction. For example the relationship of the upper window position to the eaves can vary, and whether there was an attic storey with dormers (fig 20).

The subtle change in site levels also effected building heights, a good example being Nos. 22 to 27 Breadalbane Terrace, where the eaves line is maintained, and results in Nos. 22 & 23 being a 3-storey building. The row is terminated at Upper Dunbar Street with a 2½-storey building, where the storey heights are markedly larger than those of the neighbouring building (an early construction; fig 21). This play on the site levels and enforcement of the street corner does create a strong architectural impact and in that regard may not have displeased Telford. The rows opposite on Breadalbane Crescent (Nos. 4-18) are of later construction (1860s) although conform more closely to typical Georgian standards of uniformity as seen in Edinburgh almost a century before.



Figure 19: Grant Street in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the right hand side of the street is now demolished but note the contrast of the single storey cottage and the neighbouring buildings. There was a noticeable variation in building heights here. © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection



Figure 20: Argyle Square: note the variation on the height of the windows to the eaves, and also the height of the eaves line, which is slightly different between lots.

Upper Pulteneytown streets are wider than in the lower town, with the Draft Feu Charter indicating 44 feet from the front of each house which would have accommodated Telford’s specifications for roads to be 30 feet wide with 6 feet wide pavements and kerbs each side; the only street which appears to be wider is Macarthur Street (SRO/GD9/337). Generally lots were to be 50 feet to the street frontage and 100 feet deep although this did vary for example at corner lots (figs 17 & 21). This produced a consistent

street and lot plan with no hierarchy, all the lots generally being the same. Variation came in the development of the lot, some plots were originally developed as two houses, and others as a single house; at a street corner the lot sides could vary and some were developed on more than one side. The angles of Argyle Square resulted in a number of alternate lot shapes to accommodate the design. The lots have been largely maintained except where large scale redevelopment has occurred (section 5).

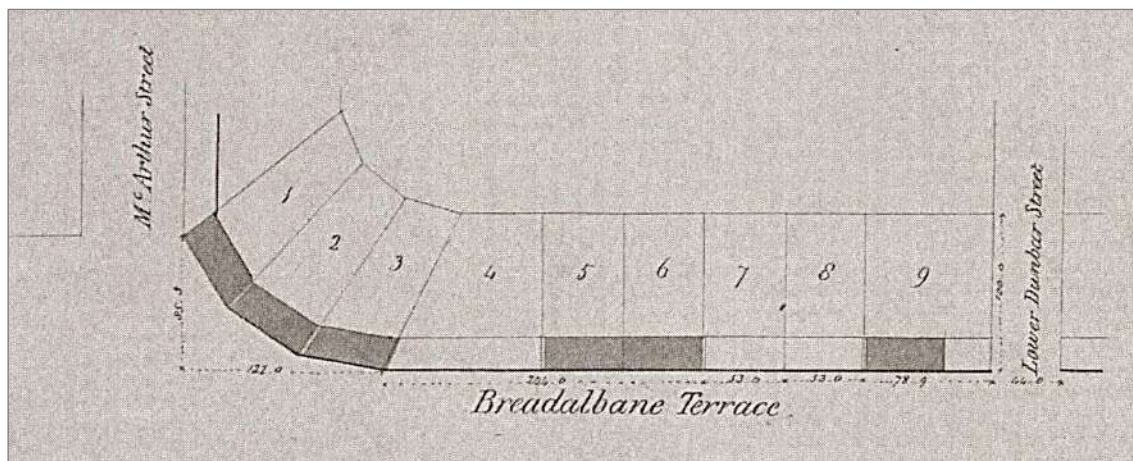


Figure 21: the Draft Feu Plan for the east side of Breadalbane Terrace and below the development on those lots. Note the larger scale of the corner building in comparison to its neighbour, shaded on the plan (lot 9) and one of the earliest buildings on the terrace constructed by 1813. The incline of the site has allowed progressively taller buildings to the east ending in the 3-storey at Nos 22-23. © SRO/GD9/337/1

As in the lower town, the Society's feu regulations stipulated that houses were to be built hard on the street line, creating a consistent street enclosure and preventing the dumping of rubbish in front gardens. Each house was to create an access passage to the rear gardens without need to pass through the houses and their extent and positions are recorded on the Ordnance Survey Town Plan (1872; fig 22). Some passageways were covered by the building above forming narrow pends, but more commonly formed as narrow breaks between houses, which set up a pattern of building blocks along

the street frontage, and as was indicated in Telford’s model elevations (fig 18). Within the conservation area this built form is intact, with front-facing buildings constructed to the street line with the chief exception being Nos. 4-13 Breadalbane Crescent set back from the street with gardens (section 4.2.4). There has been little redevelopment over time within the conservation area, although immediately out with, 20<sup>th</sup> century redevelopment has broken the frontage rule and set buildings back from the street line (section 5).

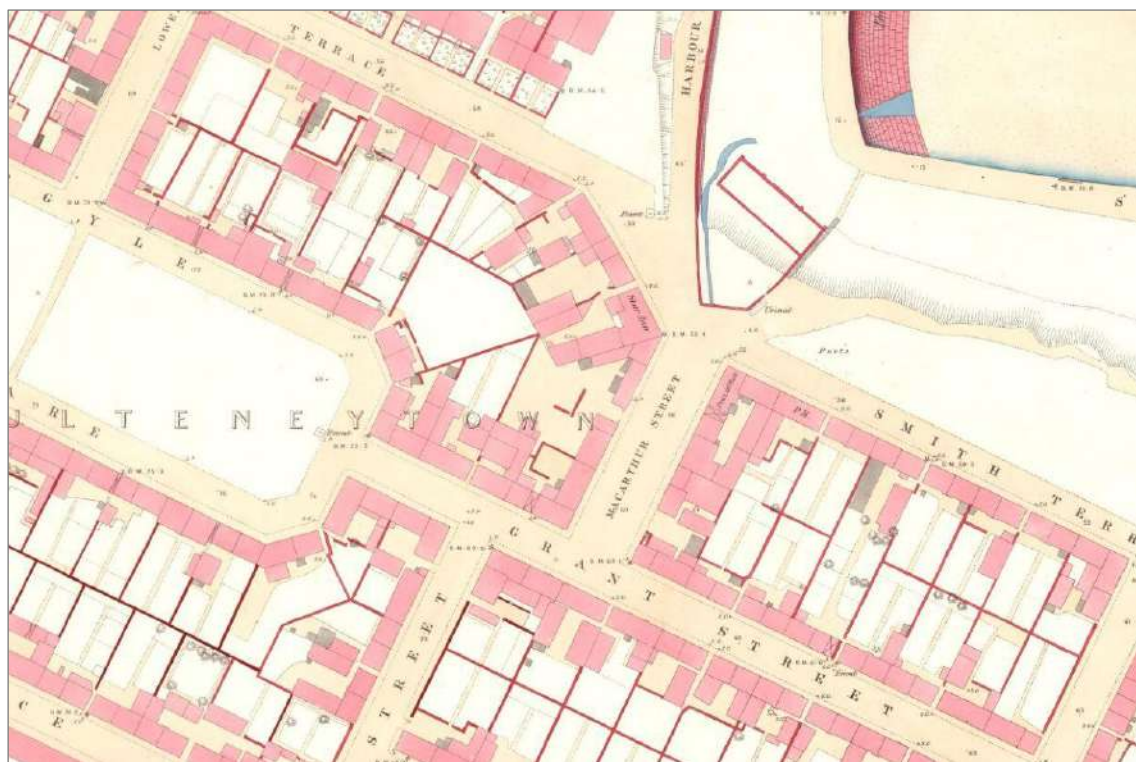


Figure 22: an extract from the Ordnance Survey Town Plan 1872 indicating clearly how the lots were defined by stone walls (dark red lines) and that most lots had two street fronting houses and often a building or extension to the rear. Note the passageways between lots which effectively gave access to the rear of four houses and set up a regular block pattern on the street. Where the passages are covered to form pends these are marked with a cross on the house plan. In general open passages were the norm, with pends more frequent on Argyle Square. © NLS

Whilst the residential plan maintained a regularity, it was more sophisticated than the simple grid-iron of the industrial area. The urban structure provided a refinement to the upper town that was not required for the more functional lower town. There is a perceivable change in scale and feeling of enclosure within Upper Pulteneytown. Compare the long and wide vista of Dempster Street approaching Argyle Square, with the open views which were afforded on the terraces, originally: Sinclair, Breadalbane and Smith Terraces. Today the terraced streets have a different atmosphere: Sinclair Terrace influenced by the greenery of the Academy Braes; and Breadalbane Terrace is more enclosed with the construction of large public buildings and tall terraced housing on its north side. Only Smith Terrace retains its original harbour aspect and open outlook.

Behind the buildings fronting the street, the rear of lots existed historically as the service areas (fig 22). Reference to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Editions of the Ordnance Survey (figs 6 & 7) illustrates development of structures in this area. A number of traditional single storey outbuildings remain, often constructed at right angles to the main building along the plot boundaries with, in some cases, modern development inserted.

#### 4.1.5 Open Spaces, Trees and Landscape

##### *Open spaces*

There are two large green spaces within the conservation area. The principal open space is Argyle Square, Telford's designed space at the heart of residential Upper Pulteneytown; with pedestrian routes crossing east-west and north-south. Its appearance has changed quite dramatically over time (fig 23) from an open treeless environment to the more enclosed and secluded tree-lined avenue we see today. The trees may have been introduced as late as the 1930s (HES, LB report 42267). The long central path east-west was not there originally (refer fig 22) but is recorded on the 2nd Ed. Ordnance Survey, referred to a 'Drying Green' (1905; fig 6).

The second open green space is the Academy Braes, a semi-natural green space on sloping land separating the lower and upper towns at Sinclair Terrace and Union Street. Two diagonal pedestrian routes crossing the space are visible on the 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Ordnance Survey map (fig 7), one originally leading to the Pulteneytown Academy. This green space has also changed as trees have matured and grown. Again older images reflect the changing appearance of this space and the resultant effect on the built environment around it, including views to and from the area, as well as the enclosure and natural light levels on Union Street (fig 24).

On Bank Row, the property lots extended back into the steep former river embankment. As discussed above (section 3.5), this slope was not initially intended for development, and the Port of Wick plan (1839/57; fig 4) captures its early form with paths across this area and converging on the Black Stairs. This plan presented a level of formal grandeur to in particular Breadalbane Terrace, the character of which is now very different. Subsequent development has covered a large part of this area, however there remain significant pockets of green space, with large trees particularly west of the Wick Heritage Museum garden. This important open space assists in defining and separating the upper and lower towns. Further open space lies behind the Round House and Harbour Place to the rear of the Breadalbane Crescent terraces. This land includes gardens and a number of mature trees which contribute to views of Upper Pulteneytown from the harbour (fig 27). Also on Bank Row, part of the area damaged by bombing in 1940 has been made into a community memorial garden in memory of the 18 civilians killed during two raids on Wick; 15 of which at the Bank Row site. The Memorial Garden is an important public open space, and the only 'public' garden within the conservation area.

Out with the conservation area, Braehead is an open green space opposite Smith Terrace. Part of Telford's design, it appears to have been less formal in its conception, chiefly undeveloped land to allow the grandeur of the terraced blocks to be expressed. Paths across the area only appear on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Ordnance Survey when it is recorded as a drying green (1905; fig 6). It provides a popular public space with views out over the harbour and is the location of the Pilot's House (section 5.1.4).

The importance of cleanliness to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century design, meant that the original properties had no street facing gardens only open space to the rear of the lots which is largely hidden from public view. Aerial views suggest a substantial portion of this ground is maintained as private green space and gardens. The exception to this was in the design of Nos. 4-13 Breadalbane Crescent, built in the 1860s. The terraced blocks have large front gardens enclosed with decorative iron railings and present a considerable contrast to the hard urban environment.

Although there is no formal open space in the lower town, the role of the natural landscape of the river estuary, bay and cliffs play a crucial part in the town's setting and that of the harbour itself.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in the conservation area or its immediate boundaries, however mature trees, as mentioned above, make an important contribution to soften an otherwise hard urban design.

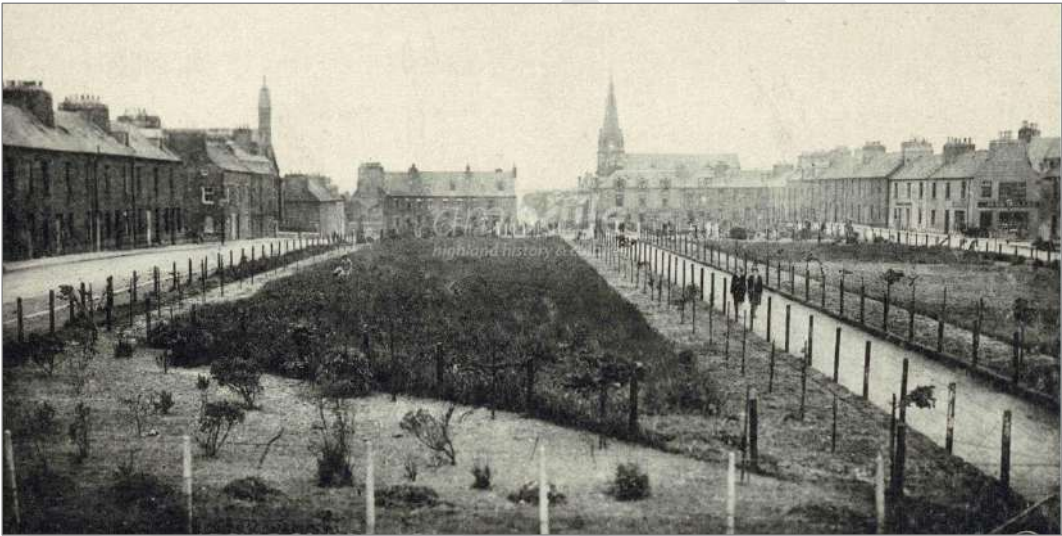


Figure 23: change to the nature of Argyle Square from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (top); tree planting possibly 1930s; and today a tree-lined avenue. © Am Baile



Figure 24: Academy Braes: (top) in the 1920s. Note the openness of the space at this time which afforded views to and from Sinclair Terrace © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection; (below) the braes in 2019.

#### 4.1.6 Approaches, Views and Landmarks

##### *Approaches and views*

Pulteneytown forms part of the south-east section of the town of Wick. It has no major routes passing through it and as such it could be said to be fairly hidden from the main landward approaches into Wick. Francis Street, the main approach (A9) from the south, forms an edge to the streets around the upper part of the conservation area. The most significant point is the crossroads of Francis Street (and its continuation as Cliff Road) with Thurso and Dempster Streets. This junction is a mixture of enclosure on its south-west and north-east corners and more open ground; the south-east corner is marred by a modern petrol station, formerly the site of the West Church. Dempster Street, of which only a very short section is within the conservation area, provides the important long vista toward Argyle Square including the approach from the west on Thurso Street (fig 25).



Figure 25: (top) the long vista looking east to Argyle Square from the crossroads at Francis Street in around 1910. Note the spire of the former Pulteneytown Free Church added in 1862 (now Wick Baptist Church), and no tree growth at that time © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection; (below) the same view in 2020.



The approach from the north and Wick town centre, is principally via the Bridge of Wick. Once across the bridge, the conservation area can be entered at three points: River Street, Union Street, or via the steep incline of Cliff Road (A9) to Sinclair Terrace. All three junctions can be defined by major or minor landmarks: Mackays Hotel at the junction of River and Union Streets (fig 26); The Northern Press building which traverses the incline between Union Street and Cliff Road; and the Carnegie Library at the corner of Sinclair Terrace. Union Street (fig 27), with River Street the only streets in Pulteneytown laid out on the natural contours of the land, provides an approach to the harbour which creates anticipation as it continues into Bank Row.



Figure 26: view of Lower Pulteneytown (River Street) from the Bridge of Wick. The majority of the street frontage has an inconsistent form and scale; however the street is anchored by the prominent Mackays Hotel cleverly fitted onto the narrow triangular site where River and Union Streets meet.

An alternative approach from Wick town centre is across the Wick Harbour Bridge which connects to Williamson Street. One of the principal views in Lower Pulteneytown is this long vista on Williamson Street looking from the Wick Harbour Bridge in the north, to Upper Pulteneytown in the south and creating a visual connection between the old and new towns (fig 27). The rear of the large public buildings on Breadalbane Crescent are prominent, in particular the large gabled elevation of the former Free Presbyterian Church.

The relatively flat site of Lower Pulteneytown means that views from within this part of the conservation area are restricted to enclosed street vistas. On the cross streets the views looking west capture glimpses of the harbour framed by the tall warehouse facades.

Set out on and above the river estuary and harbour, views on approach to the conservation area are very significant from Wick town centre, the harbours and the seaward approach. Therefore of the sea frontage on Harbour Quay, Harbour Terrace and Smith Terrace is very important in the presentation of Wick to in particular those using the harbour, and visiting the marina. The traditional warehouses and buildings on Harbour Quay provide scale and continuity to this frontage (fig 28), enhanced by recent restoration and adaptation on two full blocks. By contrast River Street presents a more confused urban frontage which is not continuous and has a mixture of building form and scale (fig 26).

From Harbour Quay and River Street there are expansive views both toward the town of Wick and of Wick Bay. Upper Pulteneytown forms a backdrop in many views. The formal terraced frontage of Telford's original design only appears as intended on Smith Terrace and Bexley Terrace (largely redeveloped), the other terraces now obscured by later buildings (Breadalbane Terrace) or mature trees (Sinclair Terrace). In reverse, the elevated ground of Upper Pulteneytown above the river and harbour, provides the potential of views north and west, across Lower Pulteneytown, towards the town north of the river and over the estuary. Smith Terrace is one of the few streets to retain a true open outlook facing north-east across the outer harbour and river mouth. In the remainder of the terraces (Sinclair and Breadalbane) open views have been reduced by buildings or the growth of trees, with only glimpses where there are breaks between buildings. The exception is Lower Dunbar Street which provides a broad vista towards the harbour indicating its physical connection, via the Black Stairs, to the lower town.

#### *Landmarks – Lower Pulteneytown*

The nature of the design of Lower Pulteneytown means there are very few landmark buildings which distinguish themselves from their surroundings. Two exceptions are The Round House (1807; section 4.2.2), an elegant Regency house on the elevated Harbour Place; and Mackays Hotel (1883; fig 26) with its striking narrow frontage and later Victorian detailing. Both contrast dramatically in their design and both are not typical of the buildings in the conservation area in terms of design. Within the former industrial area, Telford House on its corner plot forms a minor landmark with more elaborate Georgian detailing and current painted frontage (fig 27). The river front and harbour both form significant natural landmarks.

#### *Landmarks – Upper Pulteneytown*

Similarly to Lower Pulteneytown, the residential parts of the town are homogenous and there are few residential buildings which stand out as landmarks. However, the open plan form of Argyle Square itself is an important landmark. There are a number of large public buildings which break the continuity of the housing rows and could be considered minor landmarks. These include the Carnegie Library; the former Academy (now Assembly Rooms); St Joachim's RC Church (1833-34) and opposite the former Wick Martyr's Free Church (1839); and the Pulteneytown Parish Church on Argyle Square. On Dempster Street the former Pulteneytown Free Church (1853; now Wick Baptist Church) with its tall spire added in 1862 is one of the few structures to break the continuity of the residential sky line and is prominent in long views as well as closing the vista on Beaufoy Street (figs 23 & 25).

#### *Landmarks – Out with the conservation area*

A number of structures stand out including the disused and partially ruinous former Cooperative buildings on the corner of Harbour Terrace and Smith Terrace (fig 49), and the Pilot's House on Braehead (fig 47).



Figure 27: the long vista on Williamson Street in Lower Pulteneytown (top), looking south to Upper Pulteneytown elevated in the distance, with green space and trees at the rear of Breadalbane Crescent visible; (centre) the same position looking north to 'old' Wick. (Below) the curve of Union Street creates anticipation.



Figure 28: harbour approaches present views of Harbour Quay (top); Smith Terrace (centre); and Harbour Terrace (below); making the condition and integrity of design and materials on these properties particularly important to the overall impression of Wick Harbour.

#### 4.1.7 Activities

Whilst spatially Telford's new town plan is largely unchanged, its original purpose and function in support for the herring industry has gone and new uses and activities have replaced its original purpose. This is particularly relevant of Lower Pulteneytown, the previous industrial area of the town. Lower Pulteneytown today has a mixture of uses, primarily small industrial, office space, and residential. There is generally no retail and very few supporting services excepting a large café on Harbour Quay. An important visitor attraction in Lower Pulteneytown, other than the harbour itself, is the Wick Heritage Centre on Bank Row. Wick harbour lies immediately adjacent to the conservation area but is not within the current boundary. Operated by the Wick Harbour Authority, it is a busy working harbour both for new industries, such as servicing the Beatrice Offshore Windfarm, and as a leisure destination with a new marina.

Upper Pulteneytown retains much of its original purpose as a residential area, although there has similarly been loss of the smaller traditional trades associated with the fishing industries, and loss of smaller commercial and retail businesses which serviced the population.

Pulteneytown originated as a town completely separate from the old burgh and could function fairly self-sufficiently, with some exceptions such as banking located in the burgh. Today, Pulteneytown relies on the wider town out with its boundaries for services, shopping, dining, etc. Lower Pulteneytown is a chiefly a busy day time location for work with fewer evening activities; Upper Pulteneytown forms an attractive residential 'suburb' for Wick.

## 4.2 BUILDINGS AND TOWNSCAPE

### 4.2.1 Townscape Character

#### Conservation Area

The townscape character of Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area originates from its street plan and open spaces (refer section 4.1), its buildings, materials and details.

The use of the terrace as a form of design was influential during this period in urban planning. The terrace allowed efficient use of land with narrow plots, but provided the impact of a much grander building elevation. Thus terraces were constructed all over Britain during this period including for the wealth classes in Bath, London and Edinburgh.

The building style of the conservation area is strongly Georgian, an architectural style which commenced in Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and continued into the 1840s, even after Victoria took the throne in 1837. Georgian architecture is characterised by uniformity, symmetry and a careful attention to proportion. This can be seen in Thomas Telford's setting out of exact measurements for the facades of the new town (section 4.1.4).

The majority of buildings in Telford's plan for Pulteneytown were constructed from 1808 to c.1839 (fig 4B) during the transition to the Regency Period (c.1820s) when the stiff rules of the Georgian style began to be elaborated. A small number of original lots were not built on immediately (although the new town regulations could impose penalties if building had not been completed within 3 years of taking the feu) and others were released over time. This meant that buildings were constructed over a period of time and this can be seen in their architectural style, materials and scale even during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A small number of 'new' lots were released in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and this resulted in a number of Victorian buildings being erected whose style is different and more elaborate. Two good examples being Mackays Hotel (fig 26) and Nos. 15 and 16 Sinclair Street (fig 35a). Redevelopment which would have a significant impact the character of the new town did not occur until the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Builders in Pulteneytown produced several forms of Georgian buildings, firstly those simple Caithness stone facades of the majority of the houses in Upper Pulteneytown; secondly a smaller number of more refined individual houses which expressed the Regency style more clearly such as on Sinclair Terrace (section 4.2.4); and finally exceptional buildings such as Rosebank House (now demolished) and the Round House which was designed by Thomas Telford (section 4.2.4). Interestingly the terraced houses in Breadalbane Crescent (section 4.2.4) are arguably the most true to Georgian forms seen in the large cities, but in fact were constructed well into the Victorian era in the 1860s.

The general character, like other Scottish planned towns and villages of this period, is one of modest sobriety, flat fronted gable ended houses with simple 2 and 3 bay elevations with either no, or little, architectural adornment. Some exhibit subtle refinement of design and construction details such as raised and incised or channelled window margins, elaborated entrances with decorative doors and fanlights (e.g. fig 34). Throughout there is a coherence in the traditional palette of building materials and skills, including local Caithness flagstone, natural slate and timber windows and doors. A number of original stone boundary walls have been maintained, assisting in preserving both original fabric and the character of the earlier town.

In Upper Pulteneytown there are significant numbers of original late Georgian buildings (section 4.2.2). It is likely that internal alterations and adaptation has occurred, primarily in relation to kitchen and toilet provision (originally likely to have been external privies). It is particularly evident on Argyle Square

where blocked doorways suggest the houses were originally composed in several cases of smaller residential units (section 4.2.2).

In Lower Pulteneytown the building function varied from residential and office buildings, which were of modest design like the upper town, to larger warehouses. The character of the warehouses is stark, with simple window and door openings within a plain stone façade running sometimes 60 feet continuously to meet the original design regulations. There are fewer breaks in the facades, unlike the passageways in the residential town, but there are more frequent arched entranceways, a detail characteristic of the construction of Pulteneytown referred to locally as the 'Telford arch' (section 4.2.3; fig 29).

#### Out with the Conservation Area

This character continues in the traditional buildings immediately adjacent to the conservation area which were part of the 1813 Draft Feu Charter (refer section 5).

#### 4.2.2 Key Listed and Unlisted Buildings

The conservation area contains 58 list entries. Each list entry may cover more than one building or address (refer Appendix 2 and map 6.3). The earliest listings in the conservation area occurred in 1971, with significant additions in 1983, and a resurvey in 2001 with subsequent changes and additions to the listed building records effective in early 2002.

The conservation area also contains a significant number of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. These are identified on the Listed & Unlisted Buildings Map as 'positive buildings' (map 6.3). Such buildings may vary but are commonly good examples of relatively unaltered traditional buildings where their style, detailing and building materials contribute to the interest and variety of the conservation area. Notwithstanding those buildings identified through this appraisal, other individual buildings may be of some architectural or historic interest. Unlisted buildings should be considered on a case-by-case basis by planning management. Further advice on criteria for identification and evaluation of unlisted buildings is provided in Appendix 3.

It should be noted that the Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) includes information on undesignated historic environment assets, including unlisted buildings of local/regional importance, with information added on a case-by-case basis. Assets recorded in the HER are addressed in accordance with Policy 57 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

#### *Upper Pulteneytown*

It is worth noting that in the immediate surroundings of the conservation area there are no listed buildings except the St John the Evangelist Episcopal Church on Francis Street / Moray Place (1868-1870; Category B). This is despite a considerable number of buildings being contemporary with the construction of those within the conservation area and / or having significance to the industrial heritage of the town, such as buildings around the distillery area and on the old rope works site.

Within the conservation area boundary of Upper Pulteneytown, a review has taken place of those buildings not listed and comments provided below for review by THC.

*Argyle Square:* note some numbers do not relate to address points. Nos. 7, 8, 9 and 10 are not listed although they appear the same as neighbouring listed buildings; Nos. 30-33 should be consistent i.e. No. 30, 31, 32 and 33 (No. 32 does not appear on the list title but is described in the list description so

appears to be an error in the address points). All buildings on the north side are listed except No. 34 on the corner with Dempster Street.

*Breadalbane Crescent:* the list description for Nos. 10-13 Breadalbane Crescent does mention the cooperage building in the townhouse list description, but there is no detail and the cooperage is not in list title. The rest of this street from Lower Dunbar Street to Harbour Terrace appears to be listed although some house numbers missing (2, 3, 5, 7).

*Sinclair Street:* Nos. 1-13 all listed except No. 12, which is very similar to No.13 and seems to be an error (note there is no No.11). Nos. 15-20 all listed except No. 19. No. 14 is not listed yet is recorded as the first building on this terrace, built by October 1813 (lot 9 on the 1813 Draft Feu Charter; SRO/GD9/337/1 & 2).

*Breadalbane Terrace west terrace:* apart from Nos. 48 & 49 which were Category B listed in 1983, the remainder of listed buildings were Category C listed in 2002. A number of similar traditional houses forming this terrace are not listed including Nos. 33, 35 & 36, 39 & 40 which do not appear significantly different.

*Breadalbane Terrace east terrace:* Nos. 22-29 were listed in 1983, and considered by Historic Environment Scotland to date to c.1820 (HES, LB reports 42292, 42294, 42295). Nos. 1-19 were listed in 2002 varyingly dating from c.1810 (nos. 1-13) to c.1820 (HES, list descriptions). Only No. 8 and 10 (the Flower Shop) are not listed in this section. All the large public buildings on the north side of the street are not listed.

*Smith and Harbour Terraces:* no listed buildings, Nos. 16-19 Smith Terrace were de-listed in 2018.

HES Listed Building Records carry a Statement of Special Interest, and there is a useful summary of the development of Pulteneytown under the listing for 1 & 2 Argyle Square (HES, LB report 42267).

Upper Pulteneytown is stated as an 'A Group'. This group appears to include all the listed buildings except St Joachim's and the Wick Martyr's Free Church and the Carnegie Library. Whilst it may be obvious that the library is a later standalone building, it is not clear why the two churches are excluded (whilst two other churches are included) especially when they are the two earliest churches built and when in particular St Joachim's provides a focal point in views on Sinclair Terrace. Later listed Victorian buildings are included in this A Group listing which does not seem to concur with the basis of the Statement of Special Interest which states:

*"The Group listing is in recognition of the exceptional group value of these buildings as the core of Thomas Telford's 1809 scheme for the new town plan of Pulteneytown for the British Fisheries Society."*

If the principle is that of forming part of the core of Telford's design, then there are significant anomalies with this list in relation to the original street laid out and many buildings are not listed which formed part of the original design.

#### *Lower Pulteneytown*

In comparison to Upper Pulteneytown, there are very few listed buildings in the lower town. Considering the importance of this area as one of the earliest industrial planned sectors in Scotland this seems unusual. As with the upper town, HES has a statement of 'A Group' value:

*"The Group listing is in recognition of the exceptional group value of these buildings as the core of Thomas Telford's 1809 scheme for the new town plan of Pulteneytown for the British Fisheries Society."*

And this relates to the following listed buildings:



- 2 Williamson Street listed in 1983
- Steven & Co, Harbour Quay listed in 2002
- Telford Street (part) listed in 2002
- 19-27 Bank Row (odds) Wick Heritage Centre listed in 1983
- The Round House listed in 1971
- The Black Stairs listed in 2002
- (Old fish market, not in the conservation area)

The only other listed buildings in the conservation area in Lower Pulteneytown are:

- 6 and 7 Rose St, listed in 1983
- 18 Bank Row listed in 1998
- 42 Union Street (The North of Scotland Newspapers) listed in 2002

It does appear that buildings with comparative design details of other listed houses in the upper town, such as on Sinclair Terrace and Breadalbane Terrace, are not listed in the lower town, for example Telford House.

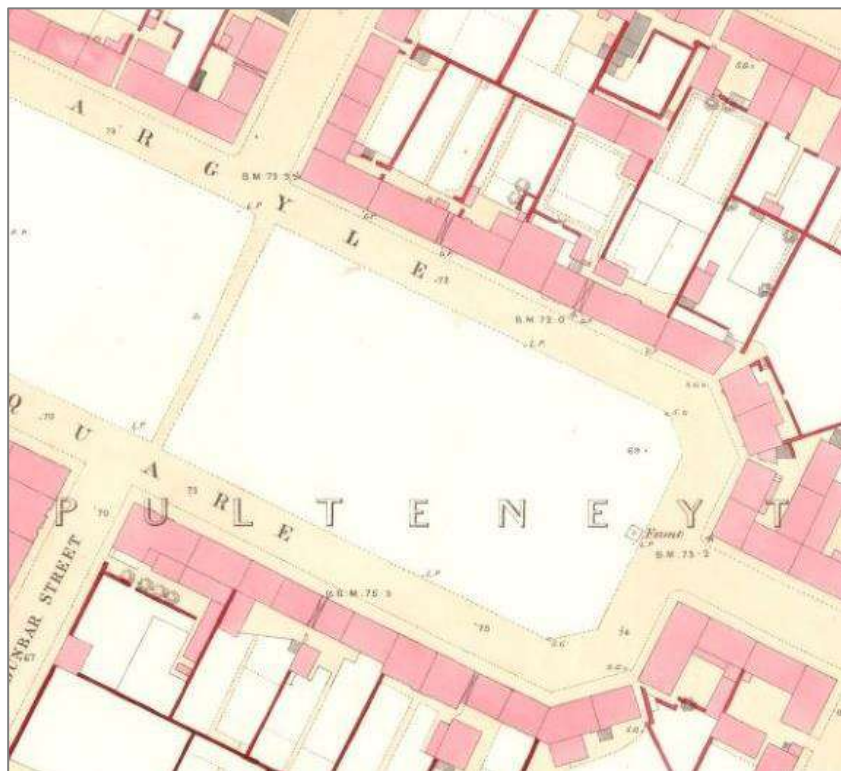
HES suggest dates for several of the listed buildings but there is no reference provided. There appear to be some anomalies such as two similar buildings at Nos. 28 and 29 Breadalbane Terrace and Nos.17 and 18 Breadalbane Crescent, the former block listed as c.1820 is Category C, and the opposite building listed as c.1860 is B listed. Both listed in 1983. All Argyle Square listings state 'c.1840' although there are evident design developments in materials, design and eaves height which would suggest a greater time span for construction (fig 20). Nos. 15-18 and 20-23 are recorded as being built by March 1818 (Lots 18, 19 and 20 on the 1813 Draft feu plan; & GD9/376/1).

#### *Building Examples*

A selection of key buildings and building groups which reflect the character, and illustrate the variety of building styles in the conservation area, are listed below.

## UPPER PULTENEYTOWN

### Argyle Square



Extract from the Ordnance Survey Town Plan 1872 © NLS

### No. 15 Argyle Square (south side) Category B listed



This house is part of one listed building record for Nos. 11-18 Argyle Square:

*“Thomas Telford, circa 1840. Terrace of, 2-storey, predominantly 2-bay, symmetrical, rectangular-plan, gabled town houses....Squared and tooled, long coursed Caithness stone slabs, some harled. Regular fenestration, irregular to rear.”* (HES, LB report 42269).

No. 15 (with Nos. 16-18 & 20-23) were the first houses to be constructed on Argyle Square and recorded in the Society’s Agent’s detailed report in March 1818 (GD9/376/1). No. 15 is a 3-bay frontage with additional windows flanking the central door. Two piend dormers and small central rooflight. Stout stone chimney stacks project from the gable walls with a simple tabling course below the cope. This property received grant assistance during the CARS for reinstatement windows and entrance door. Similar to a number of properties on Argyle Square, it is presumed there has been reconfiguration of the properties internally, as can be seen by the infilled doorway (No. 16, now a window; the painted house number can still be made out on the right of the window), suggesting this lot originally comprised two houses, possibly one at the rear.

### No. 12 Argyle Square (south side) Category B listed



This house is part of one listed building record for Nos. 11-18 Argyle Square. In comparison to No. 15, the house at No. 12 has a smaller frontage with no dormers or rooflights. (No. 13 next door was repointed with roof and chimney repairs with grant assistance during the CARS). Similar to a number of properties on Argyle Square, it is presumed there has been reconfiguration of the properties internally, as can be seen by the infilled doorways. No.12 was originally part of the lot with No. 11 (harled to the left) and the principal boundary can be defined by the slightly larger chimney stacks at the boundaries. Note the pend on the right to No. 13 visible on the Town Plan.

### Nos. 48-49 & 51, 52, 53 Argyle Square (north side) Category B listed



Nos. 48 & 49 are part of one listed building record for Nos. 35-49 Argyle Square.

Nos. 51-53 are part of one listed building record for Nos. 51-59 Argyle Square.

These houses on the north side of the square have more refined detail than the majority of the other houses on Argyle Square. All have well defined 3-bay, symmetrical frontages, with pronounced base courses and channeled quoins. All occupy the full width of the lot as one house. The walls are rendered, presumably imitating the original smooth renders of the Regency period which were often 'ruled out' to look like fine ashlar stonework. Similar Regency features are the expression of the margins around the doors and windows, which on Nos. 50-53 have delicate incised decoration, the entrance doors also have cornice hoods over, on decorative console brackets (Nos. 51-53) or pilasters (No. 48). Other original features include stepped skewputts at Nos. 48, 49 and with flat stone copes over the gable wallheads at Nos. 48-49 and 53-54. There is a pend at No. 53.

There are later alterations evident: No. 49 has adaptations to form a commercial shopfronts; No. 52 has canted dormers and a small central rooflight; No.53 has larger rooflights. All timber entrance doors appear to have been replaced (although the possible original feature of a rectangular fanlight has been retained), as have the original timber sash & case windows. The material for the render appears to be cementitious and finished in modern paint or dry dash (No. 53). At No. 48, the west side is enclosed by a blind gable end forming a narrow passage with its neighbour, as was required by the British Fisheries Society's building regulations.

**Nos. 10-13 Breadalbane Crescent Category B listed**



Built circa 1860-1865 and considered to be the “homes and workplaces of the herring fishing entrepreneurs” and wealthier merchants (Beaton, 1996, 41).

Symmetrical block of 4 terraced 3-bay townhouses of 2-storey with basement and attic, gable ended constructed of coursed Caithness stone. 4-panelled entrance doors with 3 pane rectangular fanlights above. Nos. 10 & 11 appear to retain original 6 over 6 timber sash & case windows, and small gabled dormers, the central dormer at No. 10 expressing the division between the two houses. Grey slates, with flat copes and raised skewputt, gable chimney stacks with simple tabling course below the copes. Rear yards are paved in Caithness flagstones and contain cooperages, long single storey former industrial buildings (refer below). Low stone boundary walls enclose front gardens with original decorative cast iron railings. Walls have saddle-backed copes and are terminating with tall stone piers with pyramidal caps at the entrance lanes to the cooperages.

Nos. 4, 6, 8 & 9 are very similar but comprise 5-bay townhouses. Outbuildings to the rear would have originally included stables, bothies for itinerant workers and cooperages.

**Coopage (to rear of Nos. 10-13 Breadalbane Crescent) Category B listed (with townhouse listing)**



Coopage behind No. 9 restored using CARS funding to form 2 houses (left).

**Nos. 14-18 Breadalbane Crescent (corner of Lower Dunbar Street) Category B listed**  
**Nos. 28 & 29 Breadalbane Terrace (corner of Lower Dunbar Street) Category C listed**



Nos. 14-18 (c.1860 in HES, LB report 42291) are a terrace of 2-storey and attic, 3-bay, symmetrical, gable ended houses constructed in coursed Caithness stone. Nos. 14, 15 & 17 retain original 4-panelled entrance doors with rectangular fanlights above. Traditional 6 over 6 timber sash & case windows, and canted dormers (No. 17 retains its possibly original 4 over 4 windows). Grey slates, with flat copes and raised skewputt at each end of the terrace; 3 (possibly originally 4) gable chimney stacks with simple tabling course below the copes. Some adaptation including small plate glass shop front with recessed entrance door at No. 16. Concrete roof tiles to Nos. 17-18. No. 17 & 18 appear vacant.

The building forming Nos. 28-29 Breadalbane Terrace, directly opposite Nos. 17 & 18 Breadalbane Crescent is almost a mirror image; although with a loftier façade and (possibly later) 2 over 2 traditional timber sash & case windows. As well as retaining these windows it also has an unusual arched panelled door (fig 34c) thought to be a local design. HES, considers this to be of an earlier date than the opposite terrace, c. 1820 (HES, LB report 42295) and a house is recorded on this lot in 1818 (SRO/GD9/376/1). Nos. 28-29 vacant.

**Nos. 1-13 Sinclair Street Category C (except No. 12)**



A very consistent terrace of 5 and 2-bay houses in four blocks separated by narrow lanes. All original main doors survive except at Nos. 5, 6 & 9, several of unusual design thought to have been made by local joiners and several with original fanlights. Of particular note are Nos. 7, 8 & 10 which have central roundels, and Nos. 12 & 13 with a delicate 6-panel doors with pilasters supporting a 3 oval fanlights above (Nos. 3 & 4 without fanlight detail). A number of doors also retain original heavy bronze door ironmongery. No. 13 ends the terrace, with an adjoining single storey block extending along MacLeay Street. A traditional garret window survives at the attic level.

**Nos. 17, 18 & 20 Sinclair Street Category B listed except No. 20 (Category C)**



A distinctive group of three 2-storey, 3-bay, symmetrical, gable ended houses with refined architectural design and detail to their frontages. No. 19 (unlisted) forms a short 2-bay elevation. No. 17 has a slightly recessed door entrance with Doric columns and pediment forming a portico. Unusual tripartite paneled door to centre, with very decorative fanlight above (below). Slightly recessed window bays at ground floor. Raised, broached and droved ashlar margins to upper storey openings; centre tripartite window, centre flanked by narrow blind windows; dividing band between floors, and 1st floor cill course. 6 over 6 timber sash & case windows.

No. 18 has a similar tripartite upper window, the style of which is repeated to the entrance door below, both sit within a pedimented central bay which breaks through the eaves line. Raised, blocked margins to openings. Original 4-panel door with fanlight above.

No. 20 has a simpler design, but unusually has a slightly advanced central bay which projects through the roof line; it also has the tripartite central door and window above, but without the raised margins and detail seen at Nos. 17 and 18. Very finely detailed original timber entrance door (below).

There has been some adaptation to No. 18 with a commercial premises to part of the ground floor with a large plate glass window disrupting the regular design. Next door, No. 19 is not listed and is a 2-bay property. No. 18 and 19 received grants for windows works during the CARS project.

The façade treatments vary across the buildings which diminishes its group impact. No. 17 has painted coursed Caithness stone; No. 18 is smooth rendered (and ruled out) and No. 20 has exposed Caithness stone with later ribbon cement pointing. HES dates these buildings to c.1830 (HES, LB reports 42331, 42332, 42333) however not part of the 1813 Draft Feu Plan and likely after 1840.



### Upper Pulteneytown public buildings



There are five churches in Upper Pulteneytown. St Joachim's RC Church (top left; 1833-34 William Robertson Architect Elgin; Category B) was the first to be constructed, on land gifted to the church after the contribution of Father Lovi during the cholera epidemic of 1832. The imposing pedimented and pilastered frontage closes views along Sinclair Terrace, the rich brown sandstone came from Moray. It was originally a seasonal church for catholic itinerate workers. The adjoining building (top right; Category C listed) was built in 1869 and designed as a school but eventually used as a convent and nursery (now converted to residential flats).

Standing opposite St Joachim's is the Wick Martyr's Free Church (centre left; Category B listed) dated 1839 on its finial; originally the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and after several changes was last the Wick & Keiss Free Church (not in use as such). Unusually the rear of the lot was not developed and remains a gap on the corner at Dempster Street. Three further churches were built in the upper town: Pulteneytown Parish Church, Argyle Square (centre right; 1842; Category C); former Pulteneytown Free Church, Dempster Street (fig 25; 1853; Category B; now Wick Baptist Church; not in the conservation area), and former Free Presbyterian Church, Breadalbane Crescent (bottom left; 1905; no longer Place of Worship).

There are only a small number of other public buildings in Pulteneytown, the oldest being the former Pulteneytown Academy on Sinclair Terrace (1838), now much altered and extended as the Assembly Rooms (CAMP, fig 9. Also on Sinclair Terrace the Carnegie Public Library (bottom right; 1898 Leadbetter & Fairley Architects), although slightly earlier in date the building leads heavily in the Edwardian style and is a graceful building occupying the corner with Francis Street; set back from both streets and entered through a projecting semi-circular portico. Now an art gallery / food bank.

## LOWER PULTENEYTOWN

### Mackays Hotel, Ebenezer Place/ Union Street / River Street, not listed



Built in 1883 by Alexander Sinclair as a Temperance Hotel, it is described by Beaton (1996, 37) as “filling a narrow triangular plot as regally as a ship’s prow...” with apex chimney stack and date stone below the incised Ebenezer Place. Ebenezer Place is in the Guinness Book of Records as the smallest street in the world at 6’9” (2.05m) across. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century function room extension next to the former Baptist Church (1868; currently owned by hotel but not in use).

### No. 42 Union St / Cliff Road, The North of Scotland Newspapers Category B listed



Terrace of 3 linked buildings of varying height spanning the site at the western tail of the steep bank that separates Lower and Upper Pulteneytown, with external steps connecting Union Street and Cliff Road. The building appears as a single storey cottage on Cliff Road, with 2 and 3-storey works and offices to the rear (Union Street). Until 2020, the home of the John O’Groats Journal and Caithness Courier. Key features include the typically Georgian elegant bow end in coursed Caithness stone with sandstone window margins. The plate glass and rubble face stonework to the shop front on Cliff Road is a later adaptation.



**Harbour Quay / Saltoun Street / Telford Street block. Category C listed**



Street block comprising two 3-storey, 5-bay, gable-ended storehouses constructed in coursed Caithness stone; partly lime harled during recent adaptation and restoration. Building on the corner with Saltoun Street has regular fenestration with a segmental-arch (originally a pend) at the centre at street level and above a former doorway at 1<sup>st</sup> floor above (now glazed); smaller windows to 3rd storey. Blind gable with stout chimney stacks, simple tabling course below the cope. Building on the corner of Telford Street, harled; previous large vehicle entrances slapped to centre and right. 2-storey walls ran the length of the plot on the side roads to enclose a herring curing yard; blocked windows were reinstated during restoration. The building recently adapted and brought back into use with SSE funding for use by the Beatrice Offshore Windfarm.

In 2002, HES stated that: “... this storehouse displays the best-preserved elevation of a typical Pulteneytown storehouse/curing yard although the interior curing yard had been covered over. The building materials of stone and slate, and the overall dimensions, height and length, for the storehouses that form the Lower Pulteneytown grid were drawn up by Telford as part of his overall town plan and were laid down in the BFS's Building Regulations. However, the central segmental arched pend that forms the central feature of the storehouses, where remaining, was not specified by Telford but appears to be a practical design that was widely adopted, thereby forming a local design type. The buildings are in effect complete fish processing factories rather than simply storehouses. The original layout, repeated throughout, was of a large gabled storehouse and offices building facing the main street and running the entire length of the feu, i.e. a whole or half block. The central archway led through a pend to a large open air flagstoned curing yard behind. The curing yard was surrounded on the remaining three sides by ancillary stores and workshops such as the salt stores, cooperage and smokeries. From the outside the continuous high walls of the yards, running round the entire block, hid the industry within.” (HES, LB report 48404).

Comprising 2 of the original lots auctioned in 1808 (lot 3 & 4 on the Draft Feu Charter 1813; fig 8), a building on Saltoun Street was recorded in 1813, the lot described as “...enclosed by a wall 9 feet high. Salt cellars and a cooperage in the yard are the only houses yet erected” (SRO/GD9/376/1, 1, 1818). The storehouse therefore built sometime after March 1818.

**Telford Street, former storehouse Category C listed**



Formerly disused 2-storey, 9-bay storehouse with central pend constructed in coursed Caithness stone slabs. Feued in 1814, but possibly built c. 1830 (HES, LB report 48410). Earlier alterations such as the large square windows to the ground level were present before more recent adaptation to housing funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This listed building abutting the Williamson Street terrace housing to the east now forms part of a larger housing development with other unlisted buildings on this section of Telford Street.

**Telford House / offices on Telford and Williamson Streets, not listed**



A wide 4-bay storehouse on Williamson Street with two pend entrances has been converted to office space and sits alongside the contrasting style of Telford House, possibly built as offices / housing. It has details typical of the more refined Upper Pulteneytown houses with unusual raised margins to the openings and moulded string courses to the ground floor lintols and 1<sup>st</sup> floor cills; unusually the gable end is not blank, as was common in the warehouses, and is pronounced by channelled quoins and banded cope and decorative skewputt; it also features a central garret window. This level of detail contrasts with the typically plain stone façades of the other lower town housing for example the block south of this on Williamson Street (fig 15).

**Former kipping kiln behind No. 16 Union Street not listed**



Thought to be an original kipping kiln later adapted for timber storage, at the rear of a Union Street lot in a former curing yard (1<sup>st</sup> Ed. OS Town Plan; Canmore ID 100253). The long ridge ventilator and the open slatted gable are typical features.

**Wick Heritage Centre, Nos. 19-27 Bank Row Category A listed**



The Heritage Centre comprises a complex of buildings including dwelling houses on the street frontage, curing yard, cooperage, kippering house/kiln, and blacksmith's. It forms part of the terrace backing onto the steep slopes below Upper Pulteneytown. Segmental arched pend leading to the yard enclosed by buildings some with very fine masonry detailing (fig 29). Buildings gifted to, and opened in 1981 by The Wick Society. CARS grant for comprehensive repair of roofs, and joinery including the shop front. HES (LB report 42286) states that the Wick Heritage Centre is listed Category A as the last surviving example of a traditional herring curing house in what was, from 1820 to 1914, the busiest herring port in Britain and northern Europe. Interiors of particular interest include the herring drying and smoking racks and the cooperage.

**The Round House, Harbour Place Category B**



The Round House was designed by Thomas Telford and built by George Burn in 1807, who was responsible for constructing Telford's original Wick bridge and the Inner Harbour. Later occupied by James Bremner who built the Outer Harbour. Occupying a commanding position overlooking the harbour, the house has a striking and elegant double bow front with over hanging eaves, the elegant design emphasised by the smooth rendered finish and shallow piend roof; the original long row of chimney stacks have sadly been reduced to a flat coping (refer Beaton, 1996, 44). CARS grant for reinstatement of windows and doors, and repair of the original 'Roman cement' render finish.

**Memorial Garden Bank Row not listed**



Surviving traditional building at the rear of one of the lots bombed during the Second World War and where the street fronting buildings were damaged and subsequently demolished. The top image illustrates the bomb damage adjacent to the garden on the corner at the Black Stairs © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection.

Having laid derelict for many years, the area is now a Memorial Garden to those killed in the Wick bombings and the building has been restored with a Caithness slab roof. (left image prior to restoration © Am Baile).

### 4.2.3 Materials and Local Details

The traditional buildings within the conservation area, and adjoining areas, are generally from the late Georgian period, with a very small number of Victorian buildings. This is reflected in their architectural detailing and construction materials.

#### *Masonry*

Masonry walls most clearly illustrate the period and status of a building. To construct the new town it is thought that local Caithness sandstone was quarried on the land purchased for the new town by the British Fisheries Society.

*“... to quarry and take stones, slates, flagstones, gravel, and clay, from their quarries on ground in the Barony of Hempriggs for the purpose of building upon the said lot ...”*

Draft Feu Charter, 1813 (SRO/GD/337/1)

The abundance of local stone for building is also described in the New Statistical Account which makes reference to the local stone found at the Castle of Girnigoes, a dark bluish calcareous flagstone, which continues along the coast to the cliffs southwards of the burgh of Wick, this stone differing from the general Caithness formations in being of thicker beds and much used for building (NSA, 1845, 125). The Account also describes the character of the stone:

*“The material of which these and all other stone erections in the parish are composed, is the universal clayslate, or dark-blue flagstone of the county. This, when the stones are well selected and squared, makes a beautiful wall. Buildings of it, however, from the darkness of its hue, have a very sombre appearance.”*

(NSA, 1845, 142-143)

The other main reference for the construction of Pulteneytown, is the terms and conditions of the feu charters laid down by the British Fisheries Society on the specifications of Thomas Telford which required the houses to be built of stone. In this document it was noted that,

*“The stones for building are so extremely good, that the mode of building with clay mortar and pointing with lime mortar (as has hitherto been generally practised) is sufficient; providing care be taken to use stones of the best quality”*

Specifications by Thomas Telford, 1813 (SRO/GD9/337/1)

Interesting though, the Account may suggest this method of bedding and pointing was not always followed:

*“Many houses in Pulteneytown, and throughout the landward part of the parish, are built without lime. The wind sifts through their walls, and makes them very cold.”*

(NSA, 1845, 143)

This specification and the availability of good quality building stone, created a material uniformity in the buildings in addition to the design criteria. What was not stipulated, but was fairly commonplace in other parts of Scotland at that time, was the application of a lime harl to the masonry walls. This method of finishing was common in smaller Scottish new towns where the rubble masonry walls could be made to appear more uniform and clean once harled and finished in limewash. This was not specified by Telford and that would suggest this was not his design intent. Nor is it mentioned in the Statistical

Accounts, the commentary above suggesting the opposite. This may be due to the availability of good quality stone which split naturally into regular courses and thus could be constructed in a more refined and presentable manner than in other regions. However, particularly in the Regency Period, rendering façades with smooth renders often then ‘ruled out’ to look like expensive ashlar masonry was popularised and Pulteneytown has examples of this (fig 30 & section 4.2.2). Reference to historic images, would suggest a small number of buildings had external finishes but they were the minority. Some buildings are now either rendered with modern cement based renders; a small number are painted; and some in Lower Pulteneytown have new lime-based harl applied.

The flagstone character of the Caithness stone created masonry walling with narrow courses and typically long stone lintols over openings. Where larger openings were required a stone arch was formed and this attractive structural detail is a strong characteristic on Pulteneytown found in both the upper and lower towns. The origin of the arch design is not clear, for as HES state (section 4.2.2) this was not specified by Telford, however it is referred to locally as the ‘Telford arch’ or the ‘basket / basket store arch’. Some buildings, such as the curing yard of the Wick Heritage Centre, exhibit very fine masonry detailing (fig 29). In some places small pinning stones are common, making up the gaps in the longer flagstones. The colour of the stone can vary quite considerably from a warm golden colour to a blue grey as described in the Account, often within the same stone. This gives an overall subdued light to mid brown appearance from a distance.

Another common feature within Pulteneytown is what appears to be the remnants of the masonry technique whereby individual stones are not cut off, but left to project into the adjoining building lot to allow bonding of each façade to the next. This technique is known as ‘tusking’. These stones can be seen in several locations where adjacent lots were not developed (figs 29 & 30).

The character of the walling, its stone size and shape, and the regularity of the coursing, can indicate the age of the building and its function. Generally the industrial herring houses had ‘cruder’ masonry with irregular stones and courses, although this was not always the case. Domestic properties more usually featured regularised masonry and overtime, or on more refined houses, sandstone (termed ‘freestone’) was introduced to improve the refinement of details such as openings, and this was noted in the Society’s minutes in 1830:

*“The number of houses is 240, the style of which is improving, for the most part coursed with blue stone [Caithness stone], many of them neatly finished with freestone [sandstones] round the door and windows”*

(Lockhart, 2002, 174)

Caithness stone continued to be used into the Victorian period, and the small number of Victorian properties in the conservation area use Caithness stone for the principle walling with sandstone for window dressings and more elaborate carved elements and details such as at Mackays Hotel, Nos. 15 and 16 Sinclair Street, and Nos. 28-32 Union Street.



Figure 29: Masonry details: a: very fine examples of the segmental arches used in Pulteneytown particularly in the industrial buildings and to access internal yards, here at the Wick Heritage Centre; b: squared blocks of a warm brown Caithness stone with lime mortar and slate pinnings; c: walling recently repointed in lime on Saltoun Street warehouse, note the stones are more irregular in shape and darker grey in colour; d: a similar wall on a domestic property with irregular stones and courses, the gaps made up in smaller stacked stones; e: shaped Caithness stones on a Victorian building, cut to size, and used with sandstone dressings for openings; f and g: examples of masonry with projecting stones, known as ‘tusking stones’ or ‘tuskers’; left for bonding into the adjoining façade; image g showing the dressed window stones for the next property.



a



b



c



d

Figure 30: Development of masonry and wall finishes: a: simple regularised courses of Caithness flagstone with openings formed directly by the squared stones with no pronounced margins; b: similar Caithness walling but with added refinement to the openings by using sandstone; c: an example of the Regency style where flat renders were applied and ‘ruled out’ to imitate fine ashlar masonry and with added detail around the windows, doors and quoins; d: a Victorian building with further regularisation of the Caithness stones, now more squared, considerable use of the more workable sandstone which could be carved to create ornament and detail unlike the flagstone.



### *Roof elements and finishes*

Telford's specification also required that,

*"All the roofs are to be covered with slates or tiles, preferring the former."*

Specifications by Thomas Telford, 1813 (SRO/GD9/337/1)

The roofs of the Georgian houses are pitched on timber rafters and sarking boards, and predominately gable ended (a small number are piend). It is likely that the timber was imported as there was no reference to using local timber in the feu charter, unlike other materials. Telford asked that roofs have a slate finish preferably, and the ability to take local 'slate' is mentioned in the feu charter. This may suggest use of heavy Caithness slate, however only a very small number of buildings today have a Caithness slate roof, for example the restored building in the Memorial Garden (section 4.2.2), and a cottage on Brown Place (out with the conservation area currently). Looking at historic images similarly indicates only a very small number of flagstone slate roofs and suggests that thinner slates were more commonplace probably brought in by boat from either the West Highland quarries or from the Welsh slate quarries. Historically there may also have been clay pantiles brought by boat and tiles do occasionally appear in older images on buildings in the internal yards (fig 31).

All Scots slate would have been laid in diminishing courses from eaves to ridge as was traditional practice, using as much material from the quarry as possible. Many slate roofs currently exhibit a more regular texture and pattern of slates with all slates being a similar size. This creates a more regular 'tiled' effect. This suggests Welsh slate which was quarried in regular sizes and usually not laid in diminishing courses. It also has a smoother and flatter texture across the roof. Generally the slate colour is a blue-grey, although several Welsh slates have a purple 'heather' tone and a very small number of roofs have a very strong purple coloured slate which is inappropriate to the tone of the surrounding roofscape. A significant number of roofs have inappropriate replacement concrete or ceramic tiles rather than slate. Glazed clay ridges seem to have been fairly commonplace, rather than zinc or lead ridges, and many survive or have been replaced in similar ridges.

In Georgian design, the façade was the prominent feature, and roofs were often partially hidden behind low parapet walls; dormers, if present, were set back on the roof and partially hidden by the parapet also. This parapet design was not used in Pulteneytown, and generally roofs simply have a small overhang for the eaves cast iron gutter. Similarly roof finishes on the Georgian buildings were generally continuous, i.e. without dormers. Telford's model elevations did not indicate dormers or skylights and there is no mention of either in the specification. Mass-produced cast iron skylights only became available from the mid-19th century. Attics may have been lit by a small gable window for example at No. 13 Sinclair Street if the gable end was exposed. However, with the often gable-to-gable construction, or only very narrow passageways between gables, dormers and small cast iron skylights are fairly common (possibly later additions). The earliest dormer designs appear to be either gabled or piend; either set back into the roof pitch or as half dormers breaking through the eaves line. A very good example of Georgian dormer construction is found on Nos. 4-13 Breadalbane Crescent where the modestly sized gabled dormers are set back into the roof (fig 32e). Later dormers became canted in design as seen at Nos. 28 and 29 Breadalbane Terrace (fig 32h).

Alterations to roofs have included new rooflights and dormers. If sympathetic designs are used this has limited impact on the traditional roofscape and character of individual buildings and groups. There are however a number of buildings with inappropriately large rooflights and/or modern box dormers (figs 36 & 37).

Flat stone copes are typically used to terminate gable end walls and may also occur at the dividing wall between two houses on one lot. Some copes may have been removed during replacement of roof coverings, and this is often indicated by a bulge in the roof at the dividing wall head or an exposed gable end which does not have copes. The flat copes are generally terminated with a squared skewputt.

Throughout the area, rainwater goods are traditionally cast iron, commonly half-round but with some ogee profile gutters and more elaborate downpipes on Victorian properties (fig 35c).



Figure 31: (top) George Cormack’s yard in Lower Pulteneytown in 1900s with pantiles on the roof of the single storey building and what looks to be a Caithness slate easing course at the eaves; a rough cobble stone finish to the yard; (below) Historic view over the roofs in Union Street illustrating the predominance of slate roofing but with other finishes including pantile on some industrial buildings. © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection

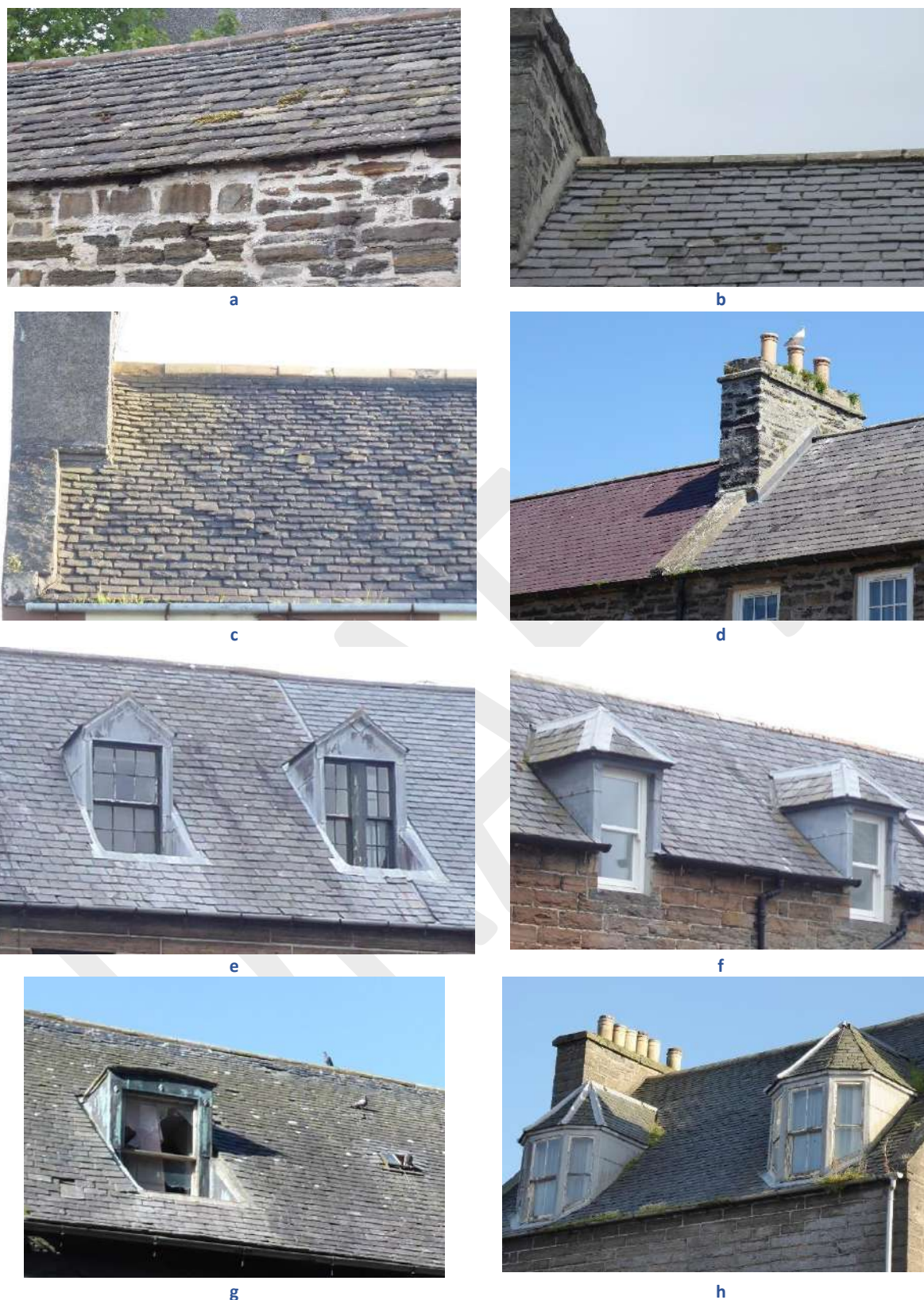


Figure 32: Roof finishes: a: new Caithness flagstone slate on the traditional building in the Memorial Garden; b: the more uniform size of slate on this roof suggests a Welsh re-slate; c: the smaller slate size and irregular texture suggests this is a Scots slate roof (Smith Terr); d: two replacement slate roofs, the one on the left inappropriate in colour; e: good example of Georgian dormers on Breadalbane Crescent; f: piend half dormers are found on a number of buildings (MacLeay St); g: an unusual curved top dormer faced in copper, and small skylight, on Union Street; h: later 19<sup>th</sup> century canted bay dormers with original timber windows on Breadalbane Terrace.

### *Chimneys*

Stout chimney stacks are a significant element in the appearance of the traditional domestic buildings in Pulteneytown and an important feature of the roofscape. In many cases, chimneys will retain their essential function as flues for heat and ventilation. Most early properties have stout prominent gable end stacks defining the original lot width, and a sometimes a further chimney stack projecting from the dividing wall between the two houses on the lot. The stack dimensions vary to suit the number of flues required both in breadth and width, and this variation was illustrated on Telford's model elevation (fig 18). However despite a range of sizes, on the Georgian houses these chimneys are almost entirely of the same design, with the thin tabling course separating the main stack from the top cope stones. Only on a very small number of later properties does the chimney stack gain more refinement such as those on Mackays Hotel. Industrial buildings in Lower Pulteneytown also had gable end chimney stacks in the same style as those on the residential area. A small number of chimneys have been removed, lowered or rebuilt which changes the composition of individual properties and the pattern of the roofscape, however the majority remain and contribute significantly to the character of the conservation area.

Chimney pots are still common, although a significant number have been lost or removed. The most common are cylindrical buff terracotta pots, but there are more decorative hexagonal pots (fig 33).



Figure 33: a typical Pulteneytown chimney with a thin flagstone slab forming a projecting tabling course detail before a further one or two courses of stone form the cope. Here with more elaborate hexagonal buff coloured chimney pots.

### *Windows and Doors*

Window and door openings in the earliest houses were simply formed using a flagstone lintel and squared stones forming the opening (fig 30a). Some margins are emphasised with raised banding sometimes with incised detail such as at Nos. 50-53 Argyle Square (fig 34). Dressed sandstone margins are less common but examples can be found such as Nos. 48 and 49 Breadalbane Terrace which has a refined Georgian façade complete with decorative ironwork balcony to the first floor windows (fig 30b).

Originally timber sash & case windows were most commonly of 12 panes (6 over 6) as can be found on a number of properties, and good examples can be seen on Breadalbane Crescent (section 4.2.2). Lying panes, where the fenestration has a horizontal emphasis, were popular in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and

several properties had this design, with original windows surviving on No. 2 Union Street, which also displays the Georgian 'blind window', a blank window used to maintain the symmetry of the elevation (fig 34). Other fenestration patterns include 2 over 2 (as original or mid-Victorian replacements) and which can be seen for example of No. 29 Breadalbane Terrace (fig 21). More unusual window patterns are reserved for public buildings such as churches with both St Joachim's and the Martyrs' Free Church having multiple pane windows. Examples of original windows or traditional windows of some age are fairly rare notwithstanding the examples above, although other examples may survive to rear elevations.

*"There is original and notable door carpentry, including both elegant panelling and robust turning, adding finesse to better quality terraces and enlivening the simpler houses. Fine door carpentry is a tradition in the north-east fishertowns..."*

(Beaton, 1996, 37-38)

There are a good number of surviving traditional entrance doors (fig 34 a-i), and as Beaton (1996) describes some are very attractive and distinctive, including a significant number of original doors on Sinclair Terrace (section 4.2.2), Breadalbane Terrace, Argyle Square, Union Street and Dempster Street (out with the conservation area). Most have rectangular fanlights above, often with decorative timber work dividing the glass in a number of designs including circles (No. 49 Breadalbane Terrace; fig 30b), ovals (No. 13 Sinclair Terrace, section 4.2.2 and No. 12 Sinclair Street fig 34c), and more elaborate shapes (No. 17 Sinclair Terrace; section 4.2.2). These small but refined details are important in defining the character of the properties, and conserving surviving joinery is an important consideration.

### *Shopfronts*

An important element in the character of most towns are its shopfronts. In Pulteneytown at the height of its population there was a need for services for the local population. This meant that previously there will have been buildings which serviced as shops, public houses etc. A survey gifted to the Wick Heritage Centre suggests there were concentrations of shops in Upper Pulteneytown. Today several shops survive on Dempster Street (out with the conservation area); and on the corner of Smith Terrace, Breadalbane Terrace and Macarthur Street. This latter location was a focal point previously with both the Pulteneytown Post Office and Cooperative store and bakery sited at this junction. In Lower Pulteneytown there are a few shops surviving on Bank Row, Union Street and on Harbour Quay.

Where shopfronts are formed in the regular Georgian facades, this can be disruptive as these buildings were not designed to accommodate large openings unlike later Victorian tenements which often incorporated shopfronts at street level. This pattern of forming large openings in earlier buildings seems to be the most common form of shopfront. Examples include No. 16 Breadalbane Crescent inserted into the Georgian 3-bay house (section 4.2.2); similarly the enlargement of windows to the property at the corner of Argyle Square and Lower Dunbar Street; and there are further individual examples in the conservation area on Bank Row and Union Street. It would not appear that many traditional shopfront components survive in these examples however, it should be borne in mind that earlier details may survive under modern fascias and panels. Where a proposed change of use may arise then opportunities should be taken to return the elevations to their original design intent if the existing shopfront is not of historical or architectural value.

The only traditional shopfront close to the conservation area is on Dempster Street, originally E. Campbell & Co. Grocers (fig 35d) and now New Start Highland (fig 35f). It retains a late Victorian shopfront and attractive mosaic entrance platt (fig 35e).



a: 3 Sinclair Terrace



b: 8 Sinclair Terrace



c: 12 Sinclair Terrace



d: 28 Breadalbane Terrace



e: 17 Argyle Square



f: 55 Argyle Square



g: 15 Breadalbane Terrace



h: 32 Dempster Street  
(not in CA)



i: 1 Bexley Terrace  
(not in CA; former Custom House)

Figure 34: Windows and doors: the variety, distinctive detail and carpentry skill evident in surviving original doors.



Figure 34: Window and doors: j: original lying pane windows at 2 Union Street; k: blind window on Smith Terrace; l & m: typical 6 over 6 Georgian window with internal shutters at 17 Breadalbane Crescent, with 4 over 4 pane dormer window to attic; n: distinctive multiple pane window on former Wick Free Church on Malcolm Street; p-r: examples of incised detail on door surrounds, console brackets and moulded lintels in Argyle Square; s: unusual window margins to Telford House in Lower Pulteneytown.

### *Victorian buildings*

As mentioned above, the Georgian style of building continued into the Victorian era, and in Pulteneytown it was not until the 1880s and later that a small number of buildings in a Victorian style were constructed on remaining vacant lots. They used similar natural materials, stone and slate, but with greater variety reflecting access to new markets with the introduction of rail, and improvements in material production. The original local Caithness stone was augmented with other sandstones for dressed masonry, and possibly Welsh slate. Roofs remained pitched and predominately gable ended but often articulated to create more complex roof forms. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, window design became more elaborate with the appearance of bipartite and tripartite forms. Projecting window bays, usually canted, were introduced but are not common in the conservation area. Windows remained timber sash and case, vertically proportioned, but glass sizes became larger and fenestration patterns changed to 2 over 2 panes, or 1 over 1 in the Victorian properties.

An example of this building type is Nos. 15 & 16 Sinclair Terrace (fig 35a), a tall 2 ½ storey semi-detached house with corbelled bay windows at the first floor and heavy moulded sandstone corbels and lintol hood over the entrances, and an elaborate front gablet above the eaves line stones. The rainwater goods are designed into the façade with decorative square pipes and acanthus holding brackets (fig 35c). The wall masonry is still Caithness stone, but the block size is smaller and refined into a neat coursed rubble contrasting with the blond sandstone dressings. A very similar, if less elaborate house, built sits on Union Street with the same bipartite gablet window and bay fronted dormer windows (1884; fig 30d).





Figure 35: Victorian buildings: a: Nos. 15 and 16 Sinclair Street are elaborate Victorian style houses which dwarf their Georgian neighbours and exhibit much of the change in design and material use by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; b: a more modest Edwardian house on Breadalbane Terrace built in 1911 with again more intricate stonework and decorative cast iron rainwater goods; c: decorative square downpipes and acanthus holding brackets at 15 and 16 Sinclair Street; d-f: just out with the conservation area, a late Victorian shopfront survives with a traditional terracotta mosaic entrance platt, originally E. Campbell & Co. Grocers. (Historic image © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection).

#### 4.2.4 Building Condition

The majority of the traditional buildings within the conservation area remain robust and functional, and on observation from the street level, the general condition of most buildings appears to be fair; however, there are elements in poor condition especially at high level, where there are noticeable repair and maintenance issues. Defects, particularly at roof level, can pose a safety issue especially on public streets. These include:

- blocked and defective gutters and downpipes
- cast iron rainwater goods with failed paint finishes and corrosion
- upper windows and timber work on dormers in poor condition
- vegetation growth particularly to masonry chimney stacks
- slated roofs in need of repair

Moreover however, there are a number of vacant buildings which are in poorer condition (refer section 8.3).

One of the greatest threats to any heritage site is the loss of primary fabric through lack of maintenance or inappropriate repair and replacement, reducing the authenticity of the site. Common and significant threats in Pulteneytown include the use of inappropriate modern materials and details for:

##### *Replacement windows and doors*

A significant number of original windows and entrance doors have been replaced, often in inappropriate fenestration design and materials. Replacements in uPVC, aluminium, and/or non-traditional fenestration patterns and opening methods have a negative effect on both the character and quality of individual buildings and a cumulative impact on the character of the conservation area as a whole. The Georgian buildings would originally have had generally 6 over 6 fenestration patterns. The loss of the window fenestration pattern and resultant varied replacement designs has left a lack of continuity over terraced frontages, a key component of the original design intent. A clear example of this is the loss of traditional timber sash and case windows and the 6 over 6 fenestration pattern which would have been used in Argyle Square, the centre piece of Telford's residential design. Only three houses retain this multiple pane design, most windows being replacement 1 over 1 in style, and many using inappropriate materials such as uPVC and non-traditional opening methods. The Georgian buildings would originally have had moulded panel entrance doors (fig 34). The replacement of a significant number of original doors has meant the loss of considerable local detail and high quality joinery work which contributed to the character and appearance of the area.

Replacement window and doors are often ill-fitted into the original stone opening and this can both reduce daylight levels and create poor thermal seals around the openings leading to heat loss.

##### *Masonry wall finishes including cement mortars and renders, and modern paints*

Masonry on several buildings and boundary walls has been repaired inappropriately including the use of cement mortars and poor working methods. The Caithness stone has weathered well generally but the pointing mortars have eroded and in particular on exposed or high level elements such as chimneys where pointing is particularly vulnerable to accelerated loss. This is evident in the level of vegetation growth on chimney stacks where plants have colonised and taken root in the open joints (fig 36). The extent of original Georgian lime harl and lime wash finishes is unclear, although there is evidence for several buildings having flat lime renders or plasters (refer section 4.2.3 *Masonry*). This has been

replaced by cement renders and modern paint finishes in some cases. Attention should be drawn to the risk associated with such impermeable materials and finishes and opportunities taken to repair in traditional materials when they arise.



Figure 36: two common examples of vegetation growth leading to different defects and courses of action: a: plants taken root in open mortar joints in the masonry chimney. This is significant and roots unattended will continue to grow into the masonry and expand, over time destabilising the chimney stack; b: grass growing in a presumably blocked gutter with debris forming a soil for the vegetation. Here the blockage will lead to dysfunction of the rainwater system and overflowing of rainwater over the masonry walls and potentially backing up under the roof slate into the interior of the building; c: inappropriate materials, felt tiles, applied to two traditional gabled dormers; d: concrete tile replacement roof with possible removal of stone copes at the gable wall head, replaced by a plastic edge trim; e & f: inappropriate tile roof replacements on the terraced rows in Argyle Square; e: two different tiles, one red in colour both with large replacement rooflights; f: again two different tile finishes with a new slate finish on the left and a later large canted bay dormer.

### *Replacement roof finishes*

A significant number of properties have been re-roofed in a mixture of alternative slate types and inappropriate modern materials such as concrete tiles and felt tiles. There are two concerns: firstly this creates an inconsistency in the character and appearance of the roofscape, in particular where buildings form groups or terraces, and in continuous gable-to-gable properties. Secondly, modern materials such as concrete tiles affect the detailing of the roof and result both in the loss of traditional slate (a diminishing resource) and potentially roof features such as a traditional stone copes (fig 36d). Uniformly sized tiles can also create difficulties with the waterproofing of the roof junctions, and do not have the flexibility to accommodate the natural movement and irregularity of older properties.



Figure 37: modern cement finishes applied to traditional buildings; also note on a: the large box dormer which has a negative impact on the building frontage and roofscape; and b: again shows the presence of concrete tiles, here next to a restored traditional Caithness slate on the roof to the right.

### 4.2.5 Public Realm

From its inception, the public realm was of utmost importance to Telford and the British Fisheries Society. Each feuar accepted responsibility for laying a Caithness flagstone pavement outside their house, and also making an annual payment toward to upkeep of the roads, which the Society laid out and topped in sea gravel (fig 12). Surface finishes for pavements, passages between houses, and some curing yards used large Caithness flagstone, whilst some yards used rougher stone setts / cobbles, sometimes irregular in shape (fig 31). Historic images illustrate that road finishes well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century remained as unmade finishes (figs 19 & 25), so it is likely that paved or sett finishes were only used for roads in key areas where a more durable finish was required for example for heavy traffic, possibly at the entrances to yards or slipways.

The legacy of this approach, and the quality of the material used, is evident today in surviving flagstones in industrial yards and residential passageways between houses. In some areas regeneration projects have contributed to reinstatement of these traditional surfaces. This includes for example the pavement to the housing development of Telford Street (c. 2004) where stones were inscribed with words and sayings from Caithnessian dialect as part of regeneration works. A similar approach was taken on Bank Row where a number of individual flagstones are engraved to illustrate historic businesses (fig 38b). A major feature of the public realm are the Black Stairs, painted by artist LS Lowry in 1936, and restored as part of the recent grant works. Traditional squared setts form the road surface leading from the Black Stairs to Harbour Quay, although the remainder of road surfaces are tarmac. It is recommended that any further enhancement or new work in the conservation area continues to use Caithness stone flags and stone setts and kerbs always with reference to retaining any original or surviving traditional finishes or parts thereof.

On the harbour, close to the Black Stairs, the former salt cellars are commemorated by the introduction of artwork gates designed with local school children adding quality and interest to the public realm of the harbour area (fig 38a). A considerable amount of interpretation of the area has also been set out as part of the educational remit of the recent regeneration schemes.

In the upper town, there are far fewer original or traditional surfaces, the roads and pavements being a mix of tarmac and modern paving with some damage. Generally there are concrete kerbs around the perimeter of the roads and pavements, in fair condition, however surviving stone kerbs can be found in some locations such as a section of Smith Terrace, now much worn after possibly 200 years of use. Whilst tarmac surfaces are generally unobtrusive on major routes, they do not enhance the conservation area and in particular key spaces such as Argyle Square. There are remnants of surviving finishes particularly in the original passageways and pends between houses (fig 38h) and also in some of the yards, for example at The Cooperage behind Breadalbane Crescent (section 4.2.2).

In the public space of Argyle Square, there is a mix of new elements both modern and traditional as well as some features which are dated and of poor quality (fig 38f). For example the modern stainless steel benches (fig 38c) contrast with standard black planters and various refuse bins. The footpaths through the square have been recently renewed in standard tarmac with concrete edging, however new Caithness feature stones have been introduced with add local interest and quality. The street finishes around the square are in fairly poor condition.

On the Academy Braes the original paths known as “shinglies” have also been tarmacked and have a fairly poor visual appearance not enhanced by the standard tubular handrails. There are surviving original low stone retaining walls to the paths and along Union Street which add character, and at the foot of the paths, the two entrance points on Union Street have original large stone steps (CAMP, fig 15).

The Black Stairs and Academy Braes are important pedestrian routes and allow movement through and between Lower and Upper Pulteneytown. A further long flight of steps exists next to the former Cooperative building leading from Braehead and Smith Terrace to the South Quay; this staircase currently lies just outside the conservation area boundary.

With properties generally built up to the building line, there are few boundary walls on the main street elevations. Exceptions are Nos. 4 -13 Breadalbane Crescent which sits back from the road with low stone walls and original decorative iron railings. A similar treatment of the boundary is repeated on a number of other buildings on the east side of Breadalbane Crescent such as the Assembly Rooms, church, Masonic Lodge and Breadalbane House Hotel which has very decorative railings. There are a number of quite substantial traditional stone boundary side walls, an important component defining original lots. Two good examples of this are the wall to the side of No. 18 Argyle Square on Upper Dunbar Street, and the wall enclosing the former Wick Free Church on Malcolm Street. Where they survive, it is important to retain these walls which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area and define the urban lots.

Street lighting throughout Pulteneytown and the adjoining areas is a mixture of traditional and modern styles often in the same streets and there are areas where the visual impact is quite confused. Similarly in Lower Pulteneytown there is often modern standard lighting and road signage fitted close to traditional buildings which detracts (fig 38d & i).

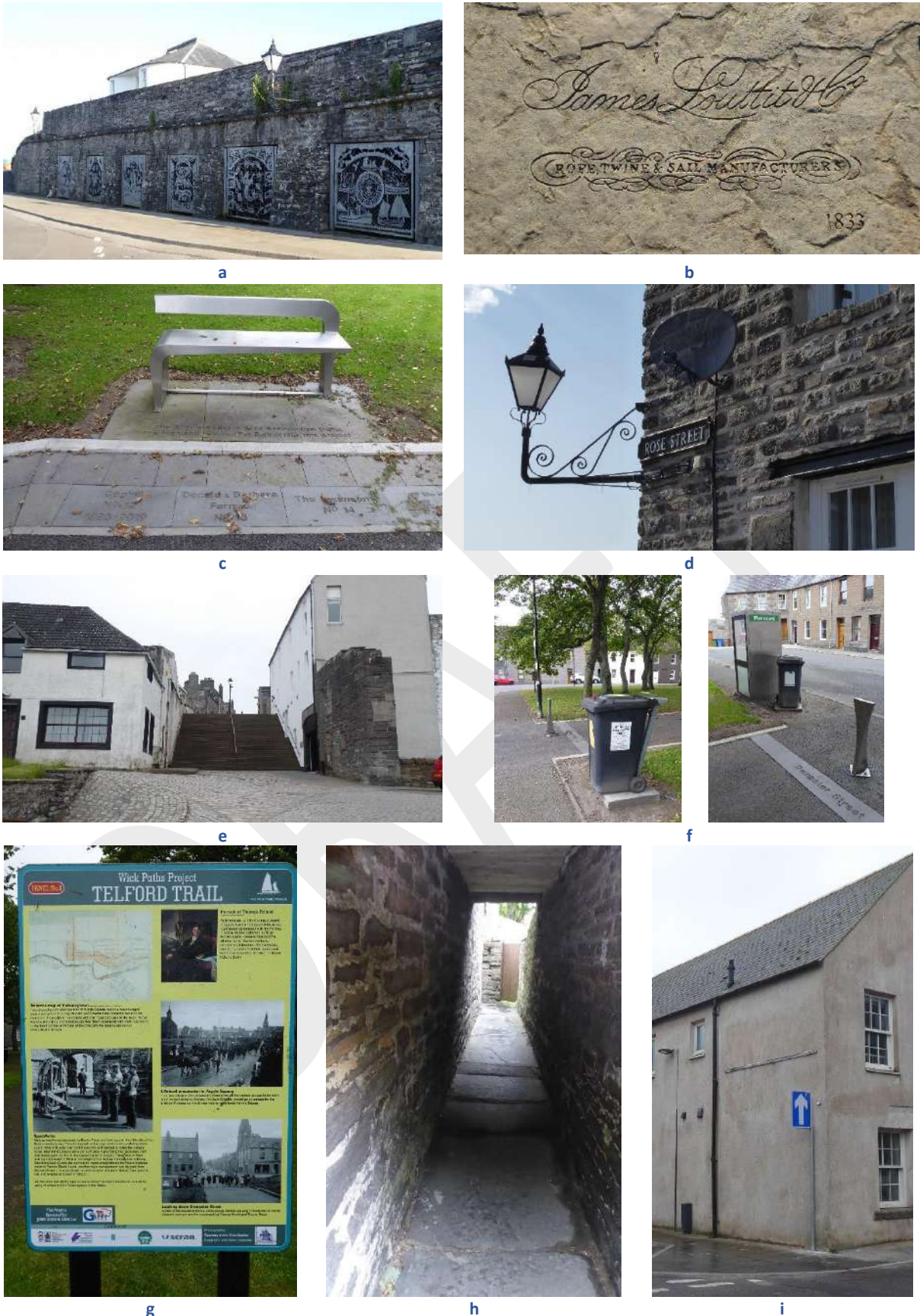


Figure 38: Public Realm: a: decorative panels to original salt cellars; b: new incised flagstone on Bank Row; c: modern bench Argyle Square with new Caithness stone feature slabs; d: traditional style lamp; e: Black Stairs; f: poor quality street furniture detracting from improvements in Argyle Square; g: interpretation board; h: typical pend with Caithness flagstone paving; i: juxtaposition on modern road signage next to traditional warehouse.

## 5.0 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY /CRÌOCH NA SGÌRE GLÈIDHTEACHAIS

### 5.1 BOUNDARY REVIEW

As part of the assessment, the appropriateness of the boundary of the conservation area was considered. In undertaking any review of the content and boundary of a conservation area, it is important to establish criteria against which options can be assessed. An overarching principle comes from the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. There are three main themes which may assist planning authorities in defining conservation areas:

- (a) Historical interest
- (b) Architectural interest including Character and Appearance
- (c) Setting and Physical Context

Two independent conservation areas were designated in 1970 (fig 39). These first conservation areas focused solely on Argyle Square, and Harbour Place / Terrace including the Round House. Lower Pulteneytown and a significant part of Telford’s original plan for Upper Pulteneytown were excluded. Following research for the regeneration of Pulteneytown from the 1990s, re-designation was made in 2000 to form the single Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area (fig 1). This re-designated conservation area extended to include the majority of Sinclair, Breadalbane and Smith Terraces, and northward to River Street and Harbour Quay encompassing Lower Pulteneytown. The re-designation excluding Braehead, South Quay and the harbour; and the boundary was not extended to the south, east or west of Argyle Square to encompass the remaining parts of Telford’s original plan for Upper Pulteneytown.

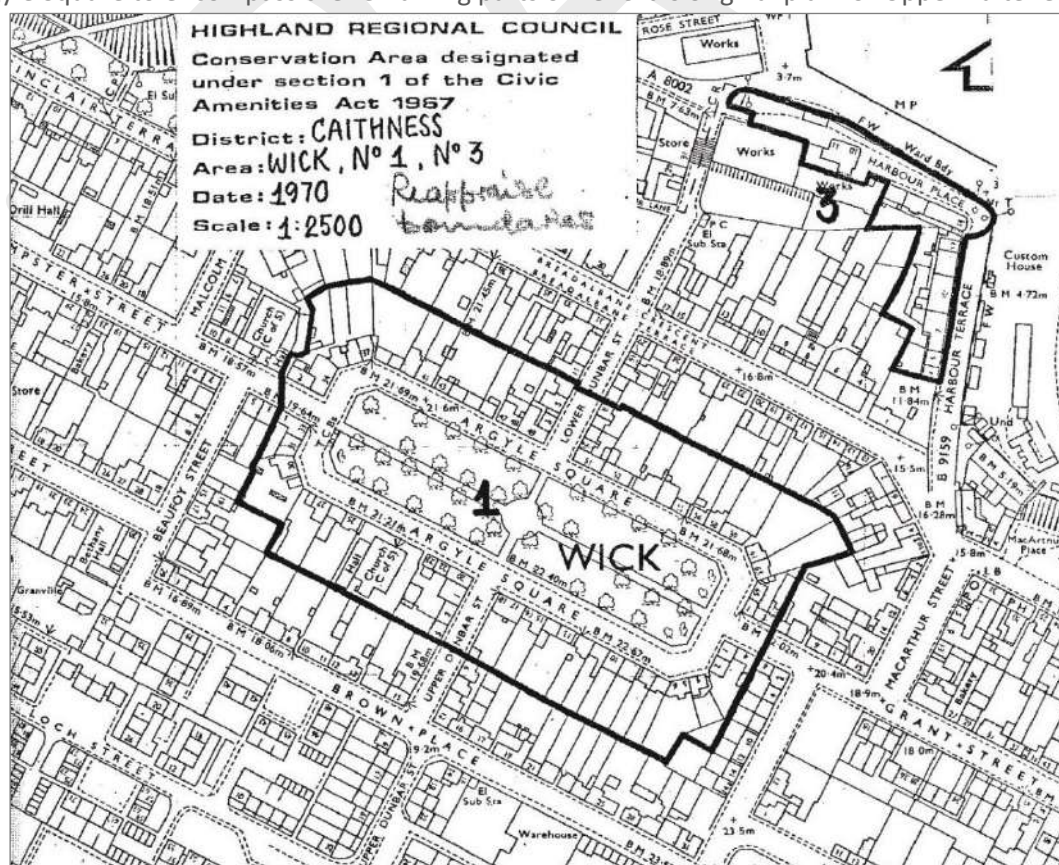


Figure 39: the first conservation areas in 1970 designated two parts of Pulteneytown.

This latter conservation area boundary decision, has created something of an anomaly, in that a significant part of the original new town which is of the same character and appearance as the conservation area, is not included within its boundary. Subsequently THC did propose to extend the current boundary in 2008 to encompass much of the original plan, but it is unclear if this was progressed beyond a Memorandum from the Director of Planning & Development (July 2008) following a brief conservation area report by Heritage Consultant and Chartered Architect Andrew Wright in which it was stated:

*“... the boundaries for Upper Pulteneytown as they stand at present appear to make little sense on grounds of merit, and on the evidence of the survival of historic buildings which were part of the original grid plan.”*

(Wright, Report of Project Outcomes, March 2008)

The extent of the area considered in this boundary review has been principally the Telford plan of 1813, and immediate vicinity, and the associated areas developed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Ordnance survey in 1872. This excludes remaining traditional buildings around the Pulteneytown Distillery both industrial and residential as well as the distillery complex itself. This does not infer these buildings are not of historic significance.

#### 5.1.1 Historical Interest

The designation of the conservation area is primarily a recognition of the importance and uniqueness of Pulteneytown as a new town designed by Thomas Telford for the British Fisheries Society, and its subsequent international success as a herring fishing centre. Therefore establishing the extent of Telford's new town plan is important to assess the level of the historic interest of the buildings and spaces which remain on the ground today. This has been done through analysis of three historic records:

1. The 1813 Draft Feu Charter (SRO/GD9/337/1) which includes street plans indicating the individual lots (e.g. figs 17 & 21) and on which some lots are shaded, indicating where buildings have been constructed by October 1813 (Telford Survey SRO/GD9/337/2). Therefore this record indicates both the earliest development in the new town, and its original extent. Refer to Map 6.1.
2. The 1839/1857 Admiralty Chart for the Port of Wick (fig 4B). It cannot be confirmed that this map represents the town in 1839 or 1857 however, the omission of a number of key buildings constructed in the 1840/50s suggests no update was made to the town plan, probably only the marine map in 1857. Either way, this is earlier than the 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Ordnance Survey, and an important reference which captures the 'first' new town, before additional lots, such as those on Breadalbane Crescent, were released in the 1860s. Refer figure 4 and Map 6.2.
3. The 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Ordnance Survey 1872 (fig 5), captures the new town in detail. There are some additions since the Admiralty Chart, but this survey predates later Victorian development such as the large public buildings on Breadalbane Crescent. Refer figure 7 and Map 6.2.

The key points to take from analysis of these maps are:

##### *The original extent of the feus in Upper Pulteneytown at 1813*

North: a grand row of single sided terraces facing north-eastward towards the bay, comprising Sinclair Terrace (note: only as far as the current No. 16), Breadalbane Terrace, and Smith Terrace (two blocks, extending to Vansittart Street).



South: Brown Place formed the south-westward boundary of the original design, with the rope works on its southern side creating a spatial break with the pattern of the residential new town. The long terrace of housing on the north side of Brown Place therefore formed a ‘book-end’ to the new town in the south. At the south-eastern corner, similar industrial uses: the brewery, mill and distillery, formed components which abutted or lay beyond the residential grid. Kinnaird Street and Moray Street, similarly to the seaward side, formed a row of terraces with Brown Place at the centre, again all three streets were initially single sided.

East: the eastward extent of the feus terminated with a street block set out at right angles to the coast line on Smith Terrace and enclosed by Huddart, Kinnaird and Vansittart Streets. The Admiralty Chart (fig 4) indicated there was some development east of this including Pulteney House (for the Society’s agent) and an early Customs House however, the area which would become Bexley Terrace, Nicholson Street and Murchison Street, was not part of the 1813 Draft Feu Charter and perhaps had been reserved for the Society’s use.

West: the 1813 plan includes lots on Dempster Street and extended past Francis Street on Thurso Street. Francis Street was the principal route into Wick from the south and formed a strong boundary to western expansion of Telford’s regularised plan. However a small number of lots were drawn out on the west side of Francis Street and on the south side of Thurso Street, which had earlier feus let prior to the British Fisheries Society involvement (SRO/GD9/376/1).

#### *The original extent of the feus in Lower Pulteneytown at 1813*

As outlined in section 4.1.4, the original extent of Telford’s plan comprised six and a half blocks enclosed by Miller Street and Martha Street, and Bank Row. Development west of this followed when works to reclaim more of the shore line created River Street and which saw development on the wedge of land between Union and River Streets and on the two blocks north of Martha Street.

#### *The Harbour infrastructure*

The Inner Harbour, completed in 1811, was an integral part of the design for the new town to support the herring industry. The Outer Harbour was developed shortly after and completed in 1831; its south pier extended in 1903. These essential harbour arrangements survive including stonework walling and harbour structures such as the listed south pier lighthouse (c.1905; squat tapering octagonal mass concrete tower), and the north pier lighthouse (later 19<sup>th</sup> century, hexagonal, cast-iron tubular legs, with wooden lantern). Whilst both lighthouses are listed buildings, currently none of the harbour infrastructure is included in the conservation area despite being an integral part of the design of the new settlement (figs 46 & 47).

#### *Summary of historical interest*

It is obvious therefore from an historical interest perspective that there are buildings and parts of streets currently in the conservation area which were not part of the original Telford Plan as at 1813, and perhaps more notably, there are larger parts of the Telford Plan and harbour infrastructure which are not within the conservation area.

### 5.1.2 Architectural Interest

The historic assessment is useful to establish the facts of the integrity of Telford’s design and intentions, but this must be measured against the physical structures which remain today, and the architectural interest, character and appearance of those. This includes assessment of:

- Positive contributions to architectural interest, character and appearance made by later development;
- Any losses;
- Inappropriate buildings or redevelopment which erodes architectural interest, and effects character and appearance in a negative way.

#### *Positive Contribution*

Map 6.3 illustrates listed buildings, as well as those which are unlisted but make a positive contribution to the traditional character and appearance of Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area and areas immediately adjoining it. Positive buildings (refer Appendix 3) may vary but are commonly good examples of relatively unaltered traditional buildings where their style, detailing and building materials contribute to the conservation area.

There are two points:

1. Positive buildings are often considered to provide a ‘complimentary function’ to listed buildings, however in Pulteneytown they go further in defining the character and appearance of the new town itself. Anomalies in the listing of buildings are highlighted in section 4.2.2.
2. The majority of buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character of the new town out with the conservation area boundary, are contemporary Georgian houses. As all of these buildings are unlisted (excluding the Episcopal Church on Moray Street), conservation area designation could provide an appropriate level of management of these important buildings and features.

#### *Losses and inappropriate redevelopment*

One of the strengths of Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area is the general integrity of the design layout and buildings, notwithstanding small pockets of redevelopment. This integrity continues in the south-western section of the new town which currently lies out with the conservation area i.e. Dempster and Moray Streets, and Brown Place (area C on Map 6.4).

Unfortunately at the south-eastern boundary of the conservation area, the adjoining section of the original new town has experienced significant losses through later 20<sup>th</sup> century housing redevelopment including some of the earliest developed lots from the new town. This has resulted in both the loss of the original houses and also an erosion of the form of the street blocks with lot boundaries not maintained, and buildings set back from the street line. The effected blocks lie east of Macrae Street, and the erosion of the street layout is particularly severe east of Huddart Street where the block pattern is not maintained and a new street (Royal Place) splits the original Huddart Street blocks. The only sections to remain are the seaward frontage on Smith Terrace and the corner turning into Vansittart Street (Area F on Map 6.4); two isolated rows on Huddart Street (Area E on Map 6.4); and a section of Macarthur Street and Grant Street (Area D on Map 6.4).

#### *5.1.3 Setting and Physical Context*

The physical context of the new town and the conservation area as it remains today is an important consideration in designation. This includes considering the built environment of and around the conservation area as well as its wider natural setting, geography and any physical constraints.

The nature of the site has defined the layout and subsequent development of lower and upper towns. The northern edge of the new town was constrained by the River Wick and the bay, and similarly Francis

Street and Cliff Road formed a manmade edge to development in the west. The south was originally restricted by the rope works, and now this area has been redeveloped with late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing, as has in large part the eastern boundary. Notwithstanding this latter section, the physical context of Pulteneytown remains generally well defined.

#### 5.1.4 Anomalies

The following items are considered to be anomalies in relation to the current conservation area boundary line and the principal themes listed in section 5.1.

1. Streets and buildings which formed part of Telford's original design and which remain intact in terms of street layout and original building design and construction are not within the current conservation area boundary, this includes the eastern row on Smith Terrace, most of Dempster Street, all of Moray Street and Brown Place, as well as sections Thurso and Francis Streets.

Comments:

*Thurso and Francis Streets: Map 6.4, Area A and Area B*

Francis Street forms a strong boundary to Pulteneytown and Telford's regularised block street plan did not extend beyond this point. A small number of lots were drawn out on the west side of Francis Street and on the south side of Thurso Street. In reality, the lots were not fully developed during the period of the growth of the remainder of Pulteneytown, with Francis Street only constructed as far as Moray Street by 1872. The first five lots on Thurso Street were taken to construct one large house facing away from the street; and lots 6-13 were let to a blacksmith in 1815, having previously been feued by the earlier proprietor Benjamin Dunbar (SRO/GD9/376/1). The Francis / Thurso Street corner was redeveloped in the Victorian period (fig 40). Today only a small number of individual houses remain of the character and appearance of the Georgian new town, and the original West Church has been lost and the site currently used as a petrol station and garage.



Figure 40: corner of Francis Street and Thurso Street looking west. Note the corner block redeveloped (1872-1905) and adjoining on Francis Street the earliest buildings constructed in 1815 but altered at street level.

*Dempster Street, Moray Street and Brown Place: Map 6.4, Area C*

All three streets were part of the original feus except the south side of Moray Street; the latter however having been developed by 1839/57. Whilst there has been incremental change, the majority of the original buildings remain, and the changes are comparable with those in the conservation area. Dempster Street (fig 42) forms a particularly important vista from Francis Street into Upper

Pulteneytown and in views to and from Argyle Square (fig 25). Similarly Brown Place (fig 44) forms the stop end or back to the Argyle Square lots and has a strong traditional character. The remaining warehouse, and walls of the contemporary rope works, should also be considered for inclusion in the conservation area, and /or as an independent listed building (fig 43).



Figure 41: north side of Moray Street.



Figure 42: traditional rows on the north side of Dempster Street with the former Drill Hall on the left.



Figure 43: industrial building which formed part of the rope works on Brown Place at Macrae Street corner.



Figure 44: Brown Place: (top) looking east at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the rope works on the right © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection; (below) the same view in 2020.

2. Streets and buildings which formed part of Telford's original design but have suffered from building losses and detrimental effects on the original street layout and are not within the current conservation area boundary, this includes Grant, Kinnaird, Huddart and Vansittart Streets. Bexley Terrace and Murchiston Street were not part of the feu plan, but were part of the Society's buildings including Pulteney House and the former Customs House (fig 34i).

Comments:

*Macarthur and Grant Street: Map 6.4, Area D*

A number of traditional buildings remain and maintain in part the character of Grant Street which is a principal route leading from Argyle Square. Part of Macarthur Street is within the conservation area although the current boundary excludes very similar adjoining buildings.

*Huddart Street: Map 6.4, Area E*

The eastern side of Huddart Street closes the vista from Argyle Square looking down Grant Road. A section of traditional buildings remains at the centre of the street although detrimental changes have occurred. A slightly later Victorian row of houses survives on the west side of the street however both sections are isolated by surrounding modern redevelopment.

*Smith Terrace and Braehead: Map 6.4, Area F*

The seaward facing Smith Terrace is the only part of Telford's design which retains its intended open 'terraced' outlook, over Braehead to the estuary. The eastern row, enclosed by Huddart and Vansittart Streets, was part of the Draft Feu Charter in 1813, and constructed by the date of the Admiralty Chart (fig 4B). Its eastern corner meets a terrace of traditional houses on Vansittart Street. These two surviving rows on Smith Terrace and Vansittart Street were originally feued by George Burn who constructed the Inner Harbour; the earliest houses possibly Nos. 5 & 6 Vansittart Street (by 1813) and a house, now lost, on the corner.

The open space of Braehead, formerly a drying green for the houses and now a popular public space, is important in maintaining the open views from these properties and in views to Pulteneytown from the harbour. The Pilot's House dating to 1908 is a unique and very attractive building which is unlisted. Whilst later in date than the majority of the new town, it is nevertheless an important part of the history of the port and should be protected through inclusion in the conservation area and / or listing.

On the corner where Smith Terrace meets Harbour Terrace, the former Cooperative store and ruinous bakery are a very prominent focal point and highly visible in views of the town. Adjacent, a long flight of steps have formed a historic route down the braes for many years. At the foot of the stairs is the traditional Fishing Mart (built 1892, Category C listed) thought to be the earliest-purpose built fish market in Scotland (fig 47). These important buildings, features and sites could be offered appropriate protection through inclusion in the conservation area.



Figure 45: (top) pre-1839 properties forming the eastern row of Smith Terrace and similar original houses on Vansittart Street (below) all part of Telford’s plan and having been feued by George Burn; part of Lot 1 on Vansittart Street was constructed by 1813, thought to be Nos. 5 & 6 on the left of the pend. Both rows out with the conservation area.

3. The infrastructure of the herring fisheries, including the inner and outer harbours, north and south piers, north and south lighthouses and the Fishing Mart are not part of the conservation area.

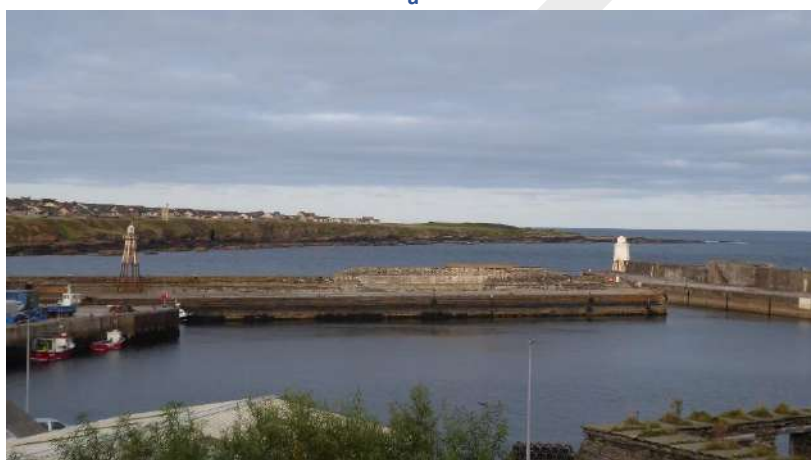
Comments:

*Inner and Outer harbours and South Quay: Map 6.4, Area G*

A fundamental part of the design of Pulteneytown is the infrastructure which forms its harbour (figs 46 & 47). The Inner and Outer Harbours provide the wider setting of the modern day town and have a significant influence on the character and appearance of Pulteneytown and activity within the area. Buildings and structures in this area have a direct impact on the town beyond and on the appearance of the town on seaward approaches. Several industrial buildings have a positive impact such as the small wooden fishing gear sheds (Beaton, 1996, 43; fig 47) on South Quay.



a



b



c



d



e



f

Figure 46: a: Inner Harbour, original stone walling on the right; b: Outer Harbour general view with both lighthouses; c-d: traditional stonework forming the outer harbour's south pier; e: eastern end of the north pier; f: flagstone quay at eastern end of the South Quay.





Figure 47: a: north pier lighthouse; b -c: south pier lighthouse; d-e: small traditional style timber fishing sheds on South Quay, d: with Braehead behind, note the small structure of the Pilot's House and beyond the traditional houses on Smith Terrace, all currently out with the conservation area; f: the Pilot's House; g: the historic Fishing Mart on the South Quay.

### 5.1.5 Recommendations

Map 6.4 identifies the areas described in section 5.1.4 for consideration. Initial recommendations on these areas are as follows:

Area A: physically detached short section; not recommended for inclusion.

Area B: important traditional survivors on prominent corner junction; inclusion may be problematic as the site is separated by Francis Street and therefore not continuous with the remainder of Pulteneytown.

Area C: part of the original Telford plan and of very similar character generally to the conservation area, and part of the physical fabric of Pulteneytown. Recommend inclusion in revised boundary, further detailed consideration of the section west of Macleay Street which has least cohesion, but makes an important contribution to the Francis Street junction (with Area B).

Area D: a mixture of building styles and including one or two later buildings; however reinforcement of the Macarthur Street frontage, and protection for traditional building remaining on Grant Street, could be beneficial; recommend for inclusion.

Area E: two detached blocks on Huddart Street. The central block is important in the vista from Argyle Square but the buildings have considerable detrimental change and it is not possible to create a coherent boundary without adding in a number of surrounding modern houses. The block on the west side is of later design (after 1872). Not recommended for inclusion.

Area F: housing rows on the important seaward facing Smith Terrace and return onto Vansittart Street. The green space is important in the setting of these buildings and is the location of the Pilot's House. The site at the corner of Smith and Harbour Terraces is a focal point in views of the upper town. Recommend for inclusion.

Area G: the harbour area is a fundamental part of Pulteneytown but is also a functioning port under the jurisdiction of the Wick Harbour Authority. Certain work to harbours does not require Planning Permission under Class 29 or Class 35 of the General Permitted Development Order (1992). It is understood that designation as a conservation area would not change that position, with the exception of demolition which may require Conservation Area Consent. The extent of the Harbour Authority's 'operational land' has been established. The Caithness Local Plan 2000 proposed extension of the conservation area to include the harbour (although this did not proceed). Although it is recognised that the harbour area is an essential part of Pulteneytown, conservation area designation would not bring the majority of development into planning control or enable a more robust level of protection for the harbour area. On balance it is, therefore, not recommended for inclusion.

#### *Addendum May 2021*

Further to public consultation of this draft Conservation Area Appraisal in 2021, the above recommended Areas C, D and F have been recommended for adoption within the boundary of a revised Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area. Further to consultation with the Wick Harbour Authority, the harbour area (Area G), is not recommended for inclusion within the conservation area boundary.

### 5.2 CHARACTER AREAS

The conservation area can be divided into two distinctive character areas on the lines of Thomas Telford’s original upper and lower towns. There is considerable continuity and commonality between the two character areas, but where differences exist these have been described and highlighted in the relevant sections of this report.

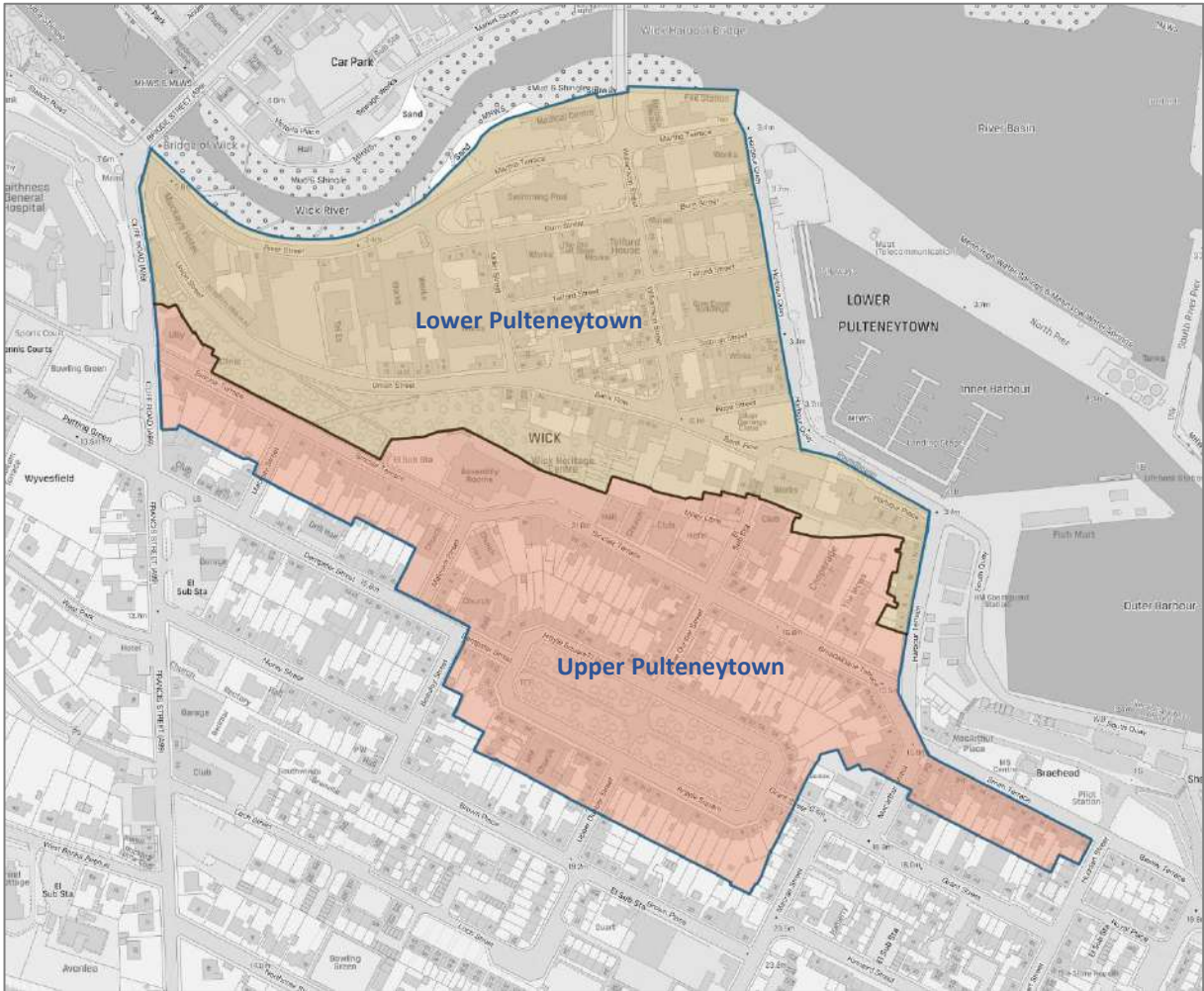


Fig 48: Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area could be considered to comprise two character areas of the upper and lower towns.

## 6.0 MAPS / MAPAICHEAN

The following maps are provided:

### 6.1 Draft Feu Charter Plan 1813

The feu lots listed and drawn on plan in the British Fisheries Society draft Feu Charter have been overlaid on a copy of the current Ordnance Survey map to illustrate the original extent of the Telford's planned new town.

### 6.2 Building Date Analysis

Building dates have been compiled from historic mapping and with reference to on site evidence.

### 6.3 Listed and Positive Buildings

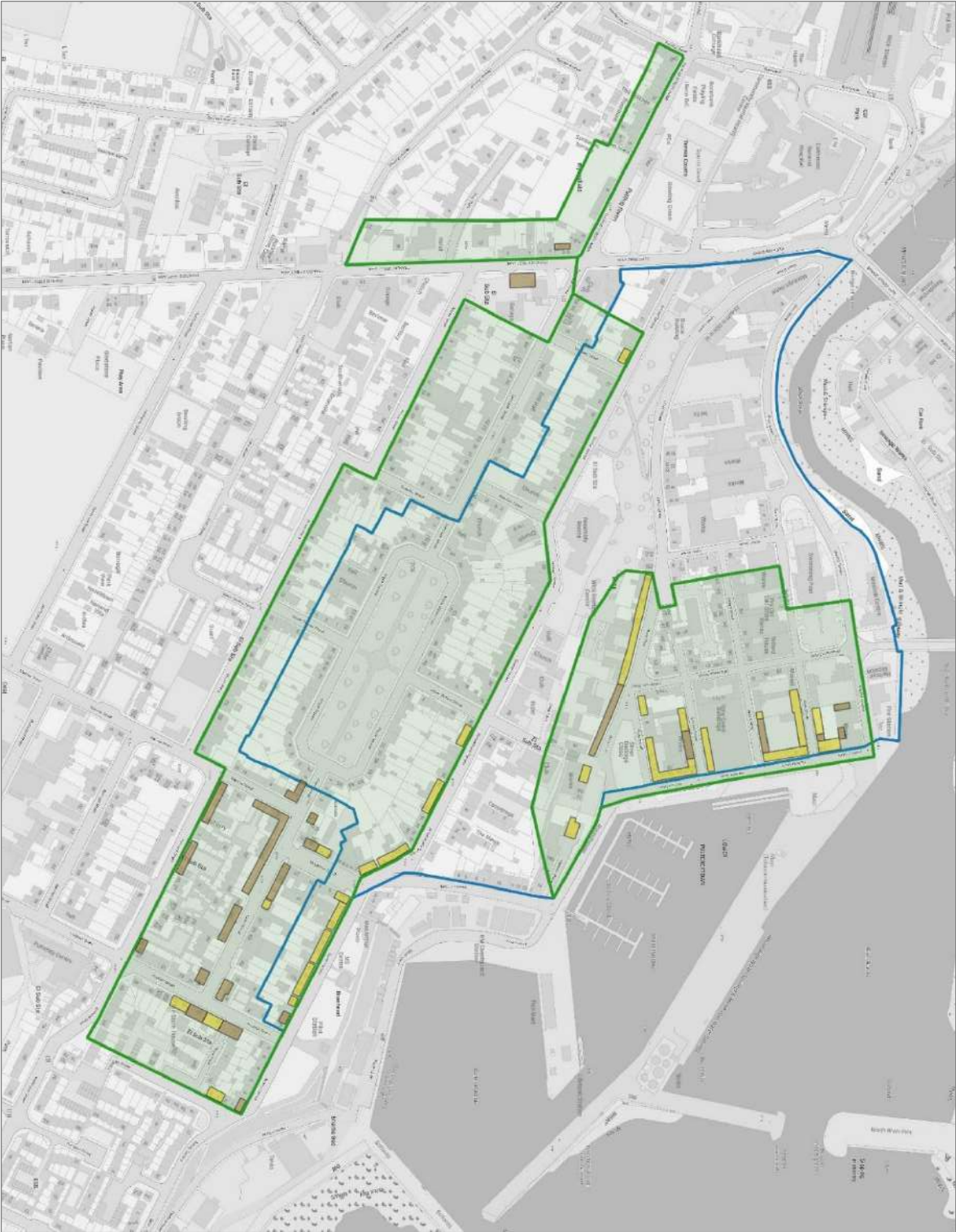
The contribution buildings make to the conservation area is indicated by they listed, positive, neutral or negative. Refer to Appendix 2 to for listed building addresses. Refer to Appendix 3 for a definition of positive buildings.

### 6.4 Boundary Map

Indicating current and proposed boundary considerations for discussion. Further explanation in section 5.

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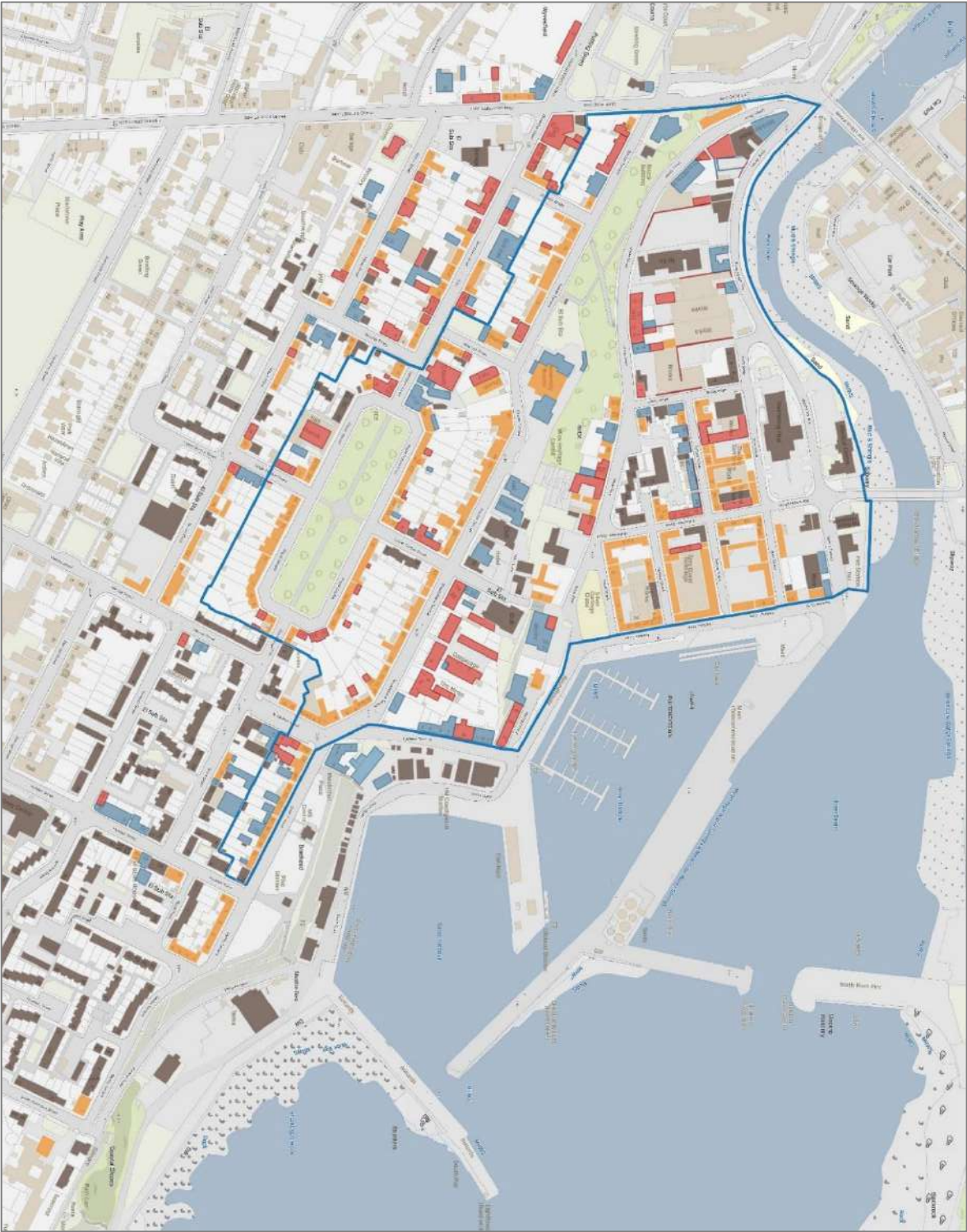
6.1: DRAFT FEU CHARTER PLAN 1813



- Draft Feu Charter Plans 1813**
- Shaded on 1813 plan
- Shaded on 1813 (later redeveloped)
- Extent of feu plans 1813
- CA boundary

Current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with the extent of the feus listed in the Draft Feu Charter and Plans 1813 & Telford’s Survey 1813 (SRO/GD9/337/1 & 2). Note there is very little development in the central and western part of the residential new town. Development has focused on the lots on Harbour Quay and Bank Row (fully built) and at the east end around Smith Terrace, Grant and Huddart Streets. © THC /Crown

6.2: BUILDING DATE ANALYSIS MAP



**Building Date Analysis**

- CA boundary
- after1905
- 1873-1905
- 1858-1872
- by 1857

Current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with probable construction dates from map evidence.

© THC /Crown

6.3: LISTED AND POSITIVE BUILDINGS MAP

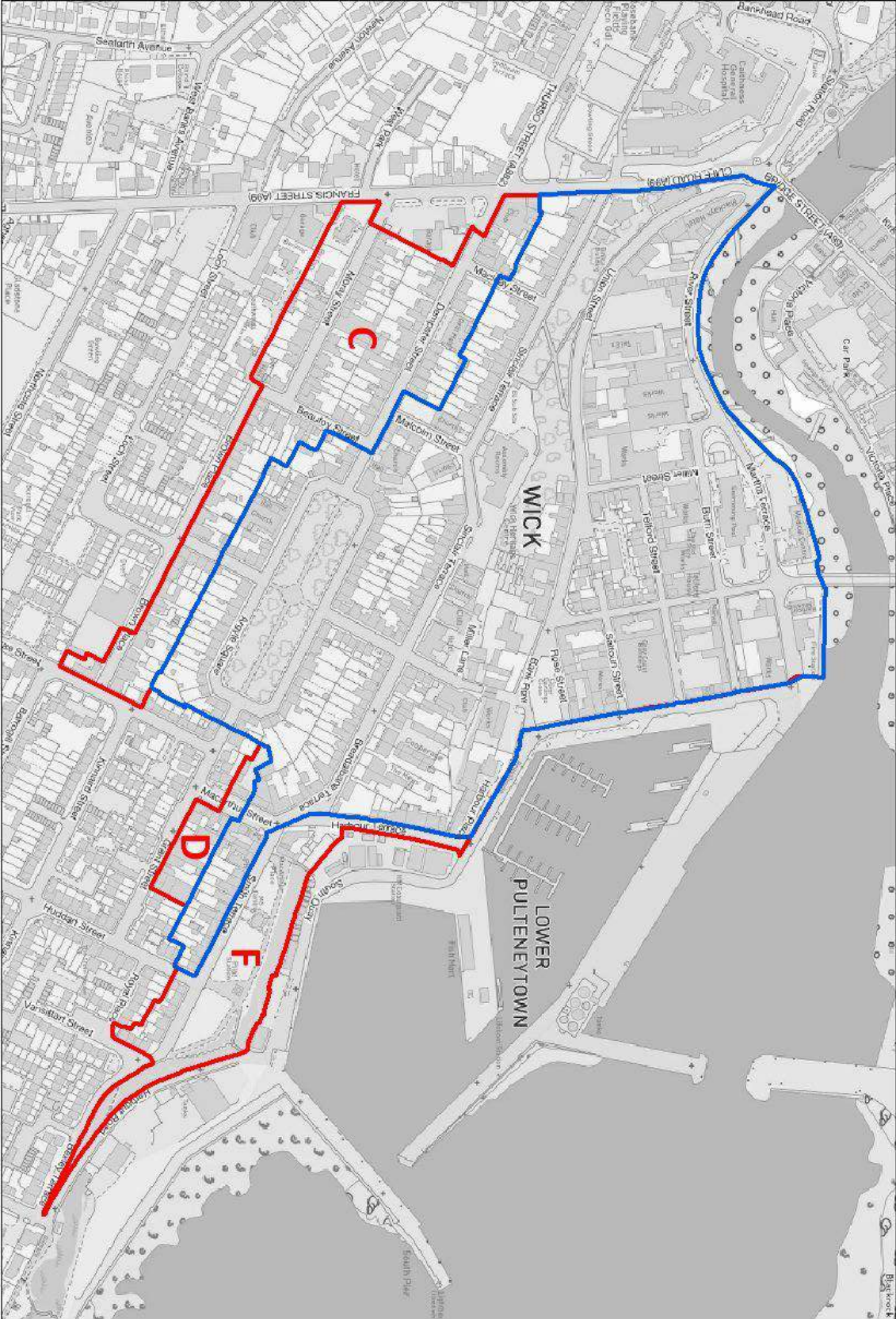


- Category A
- Category B
- Category C
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- CA boundary

Current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with listed buildings and positive, neutral and negative buildings.

© THC /Crown

6.4 BOUNDARY MAP: CONSIDERATIONS



Current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with current CA boundary in blue; and recommendations as per section 5.0 in red. © THC/Crown



## 7.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE/ MEASADH BRÌGH

### 7.1 SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES

Having carried out an assessment of the Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area it is now possible to identify the key features that define the special architectural and historic character of the area. These are:

- In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Wick became the largest herring fishing port in Europe (Beaton, 1996, 27) and Pulteneytown was as the heart of this successful fishing industry providing both warehousing and accommodation.
- Pulteneytown is the built legacy of the one of Scotland's leading protagonists of the Georgian era, Thomas Telford (1757-1834), and his client the British Fisheries Society.
- Pulteneytown is Telford's only fully executed town plan for the British Fisheries Society, and its most successful investment.
- Pulteneytown is a late Georgian planned town comprising two sectors: an upper residential town on a formal plan centred on Argyle Square and with the seaward facing Sinclair, Breadalbane and Smith Terraces; and a lower industrial grid iron layout, said to be possibly the earliest planned industrial area in Scotland.
- The integrity of the original plan and built form of Pulteneytown remains largely in place. There is a predominance of original Georgian buildings and a small number of later Victorian buildings, with little historic redevelopment on original lots.
- Buildings and structures exhibit construction methods individual to Wick, with locally quarried Caithness stone worked in traditional ways to create distinctive construction details such as the segmental arch frequently used in Lower Pulteneytown.
- The design of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Inner and Outer Harbours is still intact.
- Pulteneytown is today a local industrial hub and residential area within the town of Wick.
- Attractive natural setting on the Bay of Wick Harbour with its raised headlands.

Further notes on the comparative significance of the planned town are provided below for reference.

### 7.2 THE PLANNED TOWN IN SCOTLAND

The Planned Town movement had its origins in Scotland in the 1720s and 1730s. Early examples include Gartmore, Stirlingshire (1725), Ormiston, East Lothian (1735), and Callander, Perthshire (1739; first feus 1740). It is estimated that around 500 towns and villages were established from 1720 to 1850 in Scotland.

A new town required both vision and significant investment, often provided by aspiring landowners. In the case of Pulteneytown as part of the development of the British Fisheries Society's portfolio of settlements, the Society itself purchasing the land for Pulteneytown from the local landowner.

Pulteneytown had several other exceptions to the standard rules for new towns. Unlike other towns established during the period in the Highlands, it was not part of the Clearances and the movement of crofters to new industries. It was solely to promote the herring fishing industry and attract businessmen and workers in that industry. Many new towns and villages were founded on an industrial base but the success of such towns and villages varied widely depending on many factors. Some did not flourish due to geographic location, limited land for expansion, etc. Pulteneytown is a successful planned town and remains a vital component of modern day Wick despite the loss of its original industry.

### 7.3 COMPARATIVE EXAMPLES

Lockhart (2002) in his book on Scottish Planned Villages, notes that Pulteneytown, with a handful of other Scottish settlements, was exceptional chiefly due to the scale of the development including housing and infrastructure. The only comparisons being another fishing settlement at Branderburgh in Moray (harbours constructed from 1834; now part of Lossiemouth) and the ports of Ardrossan and Troon all founded after 1800.

#### *British Fisheries Society*

The most obvious comparison to make is with the other settlements supported or created by the British Fisheries Society. The Society was a typical late 18<sup>th</sup> century semi-charitable joint stock company founded in London through the Highland Society in 1786. Its first object was to establish fishing stations on the north and west coasts of Scotland, the first sites chosen were Ullapool, Tobermory (Mull), and Lochbay (Skye). All commenced before Pulteneytown, only Lochbay having a design by Telford.

Ullapool was laid out on a grid plan by former Annexed Estates Commission surveyor David Aitken and founded in 1788. It was built by the Society but had not attracted much business before the herring shoals abandoned the west coast of Scotland; it was sold by the Society in around 1840.

Tobermory was laid out on a grid plan by a Campbeltown surveyor George Langlands and the Duke of Argyll's factor on Mull, James Maxwell. It was successful in commercial terms but was distant from the herring grounds and failed to encourage the independent crofter- fisherman the Society had hoped for.

Lochbay had an earlier simple grid plan, by James Chapman surveyor, but this was rejected by Telford and replaced by his own design. Telford's design was highly sophisticated with crescents and two squares and far removed from a simple superimposed rectangular grid. Unfortunately only the straight main street and few other buildings were completed, a total of 27 lots. As with Ullapool, the location was effected by the loss of the herring shoals in the West, and the village failed to develop as a fishery and the Society sold its remaining land in 1844.

Unlike these villages, Pulteneytown was not to encourage crofter- fishermen but professional fishermen and no grants of arable land were to be given with the lots. The lots too were to be built by the feuers, not the Society. All the components were right in Pulteneytown to create a successful and thriving town which must have surpassed the initial expectations of the Society.

#### *Thomas Telford significance*

*"It was the only one of the Society's villages to be designed by him from scratch and the main section of the town, built within 20 years, was almost completely according to the plan he made"*

(Dunlop, 1982, 151)

As had been evident in Telford's design for Lochbay, and also in his first design in 1807 for Pulteneytown (fig 3), these were no ordinary planned towns along the lines commonly adopted by Scottish landowners.

*"Telford introduced into this austere planning traditional a refreshing element of architectural and planning sophistication."*

(Maudlin, 2000, 49)

His influences were of the highest level, including Thomas Baldwin's designs for the Bathwick estate in Bath, and the new residential squares of West London and Edinburgh.

Telford (1757-1834) was born in Westerkirk, Dumfriesshire and went on to be an apprentice stonemason, before his appointment as master mason at Somerset House at the age of 24. Sir William Pulteney made him Surveyor of Public Works for the County of Shropshire following Telford's work to Shrewsbury Castle in 1786. Pulteney joined the Board of Governors of the Society in 1790, and immediately recommended Telford as consultant surveyor.

*"Thomas Telford was a pioneering civil engineer, whose enormous legacy of roads, bridges, canals and harbours, has stood the test of time and is still in widespread use by the travelling public today. Born the son of a shepherd in Eskdale, Dumfriesshire, in 1757 and honoured by being buried in Westminster Abbey in 1834, he led a productive life constructing impressive structures across Britain – from the Caledonian Canal in Scotland to the Menai Suspension Bridge in Wales – to projects further afield, in Sweden, Poland, Panama, Canada and India. Telford was a key figure in the establishment of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) in 1818, he became its first President in 1820."*

(Mayor, 2007)

The importance of Pulteneytown therefore lies in the fact it is the only executed town plan made by Telford and furthermore,

*"Lower Pulteneytown realised in small scale Telford's monumental unrealised plan for a single span bridge, warehouse and embankment complex on the Thames of 1800 to 1802, pre-empting his schemes for Gloucester Docks, 1826 and St Katherine's Docks London, 1827-8..."*

(Maudlin, 2000, 49)

## 8.0 CONSERVATION ISSUES / CEISTEAN GLÈIDHTEACHAIS

There are a number of conservation issues which have had, or have the potential to, result in a detrimental impact on the conservation area. These are listed below. These issues are developed using SWOT analysis in the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Management Plan*.

1. The replacement of traditional materials and elements which is unnecessary and / or made inappropriately. As outlined in section 4.2.4 this has led to loss of historic fabric and a negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
2. Maintenance and repair requirements have been identified for both properties and the historic built environment.
3. There are buildings at risk.
4. There are disused buildings and vacant sites.
5. Modern development (generally new housing) in the area has not always been sympathetic to the character of the area in terms of materials, design and street pattern. This is particularly the case in later 20<sup>th</sup> century redevelopment of sites. Modern development has eroded the original new town plan in some places in terms of maintaining original lot boundary lines and street frontages.
6. The public realm in Upper Pulteneytown is generally utilitarian in character and can detract from the high-quality historic built environment.
7. The management of open green spaces and trees has been questioned in stakeholder consultation.
8. There is unprotected heritage out with the current conservation area boundary (section 5).

### 8.1 LOSS OF ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS AND BUILDING MATERIALS

The area as a whole has suffered a dilution of its special character due to the accumulative effect of numerous small incremental changes. Examples which have adversely affected buildings in the conservation area include:

- the replacement of original timber sash and case generally 6 over 6 pane windows with inappropriate materials such as uPVC and/or unsympathetic designs and/ or methods of opening;
- the replacement of original timber moulded panel doors with inappropriate materials such as uPVC and/ or unsympathetic designs and loss of the original door details often local designs;
- the replacement of natural slate roofs, particularly in concrete tiles;
- changes to chimney stacks and stone copes;
- loss of original dormer designs and details;
- inappropriate and poor quality repair and finishes to masonry;
- Inappropriate placement and insertion of new soil, drainage and gas pipes on principal elevations.

These changes in detailing and the loss of original features effect both the external appearance of individual buildings, building rows and the streetscape. It is important that future changes are managed, ensuring that appropriate materials and designs are used, in order to protect and enhance the character of the conservation area.

THC *Restriction of Permitted Development Direction 2001 (Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area)* was approved in February 2002, which removed permitted development rights on Classes 1, 7, 8 and 25. A number of additional classes (38-41, 43, 43a and 67) proposed by THC were not approved by the Scottish Executive. This Direction was for the full conservation area. This order was superseded by the new *Householder Permitted Development Rights 2012 (revised 2016)* which removed permitted development rights in conservation areas.

## 8.2 REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

There are properties and boundary walls in need of repair and maintenance, particularly to high level elements such as gutters and chimneys. This is important to:

- prevent the loss of original fabric and details;
- to prevent secondary damage for example a blocked gutter over spilling onto masonry or timber;
- to ensure public safety from falling debris;
- to contribute to the energy efficiency of the external building fabric.

During stakeholder consultation the issue of, in some cases, low property values in relation to the cost of high quality and traditional repairs was raised, commonly referred to as the conservation deficit. Further issues were raised around access particularly at high level for repair and maintenance which may require scaffold, mobile elevated working platforms, or roped access and contractors training in these fields. Safe access is imperative, but can incur higher repair costs.

## 8.3 BUILDINGS AT RISK

Full details of Buildings at Risk are provided in Appendix 4 of the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Management Plan*. There are 17 entries building on the formal Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland. These are:

### *Upper Pulteneytown*

- 28 and 29 Breadalbane Terrace (refer section 4.2.2; fig 21)
- 17 and 18 Breadalbane Crescent (refer section 4.2.2)
- Former Dounreay Social Club (cinema), 38 Breadalbane Crescent
- Former Cooperative store at 1-4 Macarthur Place (fig 49; not in CA)
- Former Cooperative bakery, South Quay (fig 49; not in CA)
- *18-19 Sinclair Street (Restoration in Progress)*

### *Lower Pulteneytown*

- 10-11, 12-14, 15-16 Union Street (fig 49; *upper floors are now in use at nos. 11 and 13*)
- 45 Telford Street
- Former Floor mill, River Street
- 10 Saltoun Street
- Deroofed building on Burn Street and adjoining dwelling Burn Street (fig 49)
- *Warehouse, Burn Street (part of the restoration of this block)*
- *Former Herring Curing Yard Harbour Quay / Saltoun Street/ Telford Street (Restoration in Progress)*
- *Former Herring Curing Yard Harbour Quay / Burn Street/ Telford Street (part of the restoration of this block)*

As noted several of these building have or are in the process of restoration and are shown in italics.

Other buildings with either levels of vacancy and/or in poor repair in the conservation area and not on the Buildings at Risk register are:

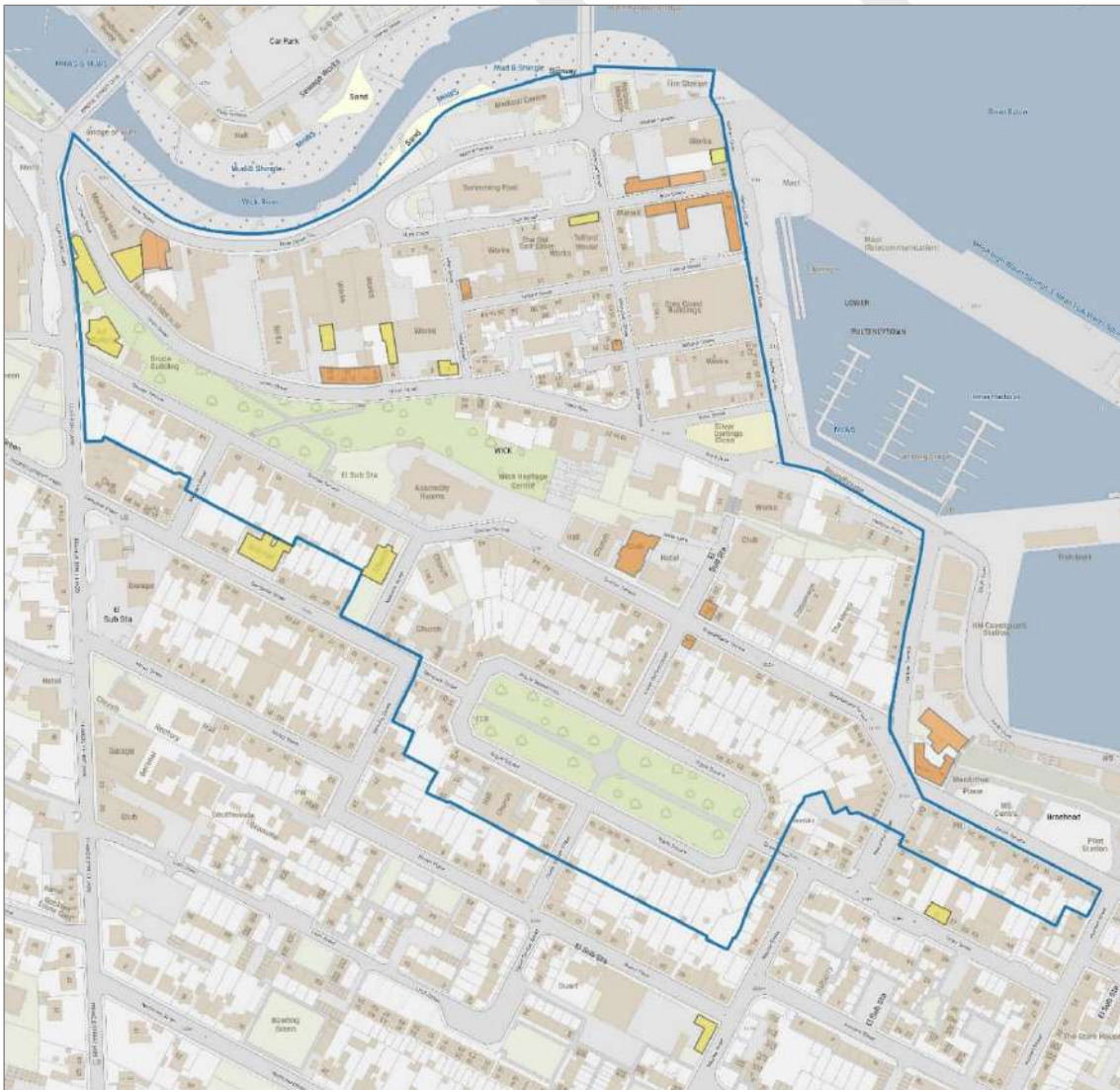
- 2 Union Street (fig 49)
- Former Kippering Kiln, rear of 16 Union Street (section 4.2.2)
- Former Wick Martyr's Free Church, Malcolm Street
- 31 -33 Grant Street

- Former Baptist Church, Union Street
- 4 Harbour Quay
- SW corner building on Williamson Street and Burn Street
- Buildings behind 5-6 Union Street
- Former Press Building, Union Street/Cliff Road

Other significant buildings with either levels of vacancy and/or in poor repair out with the conservation area (but within the area under consideration for expansion) and not on the Buildings at Risk register are:

- Former rope works warehouse Brown Place/ Macrae Street (fig 43)
- Former Drill Hall, Dempster Street

Buildings at Risk pose several concerns including the potential loss of original materials and building features, and ultimately the loss of buildings of historic or architectural importance. Particularly vulnerable are standalone vacant buildings and those which have lain vacant for a considerable time. Buildings at Risk can give the impression of economic difficulties and cause community concern. In general buildings at risk generate a sense of neglect.



Map indicating Buildings at Risk on Register in orange, and not on Register in yellow. Current Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area boundary outlined in blue. © THC/Crown



Fig 49 a: former Cooperative store at Nos. 1-4 Macarthur Place (not in CA); b: former Cooperative bakery, South Quay (not in CA); c: Nos. 15 & 16 Union Street; d: No. 2 Union Street; e: partially roofed buildings on Burn Street.

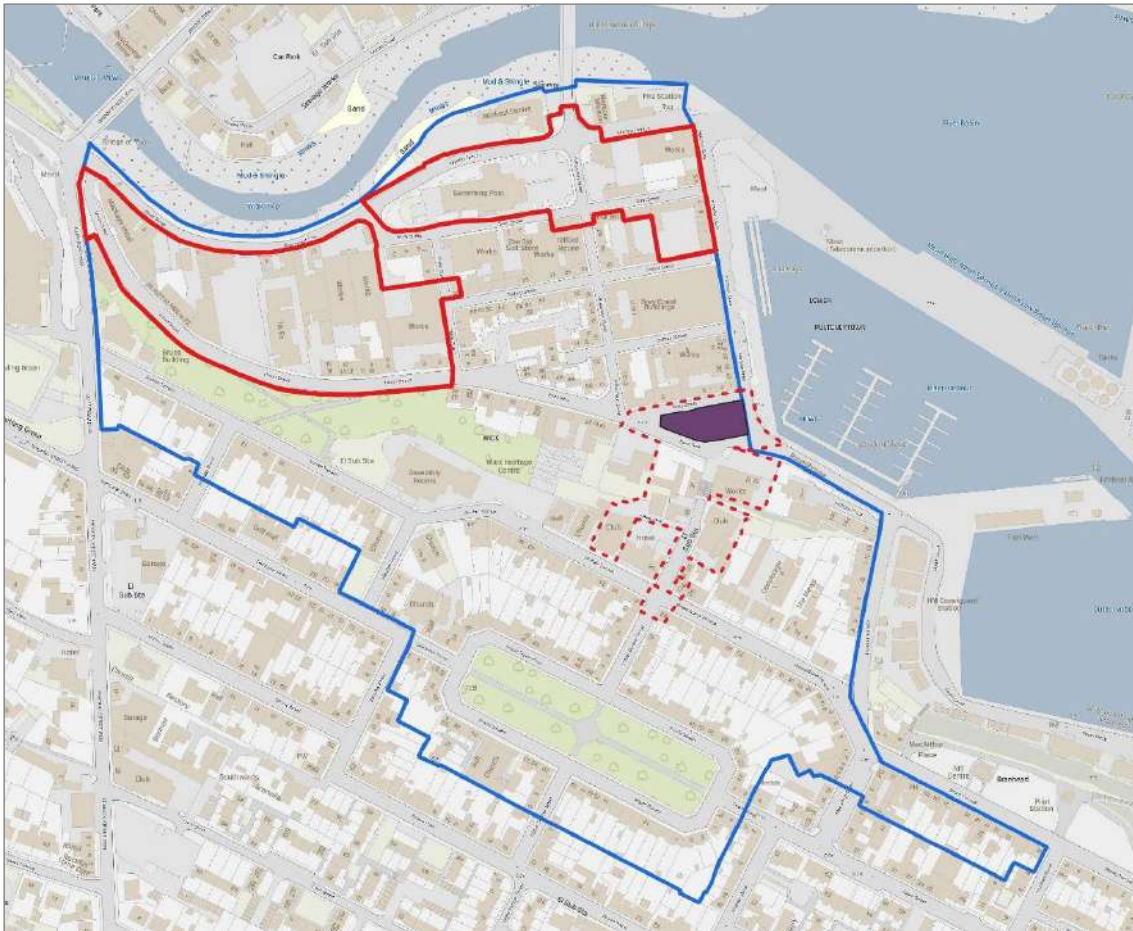
## 8.4 DISUSED BUILDINGS AND VACANT SITES

There are a number of vacant buildings and gap sites, often in association with Buildings at Risk. Three urban areas have been identified where opportunities for development may exist or arise in the future.

1. *Urban block: Martha Terrace / Williamson Street / Harbour Quay / Burn Street*
2. *Former boat builders yard / Rose Street and Bank Row*
3. *Urban block: Union Street / River Street / Miller Street*

Some of these buildings and sites are in partial or full use presently, and their inclusion does not in any way assume they are not viable, only that the physical form of the site or buildings could benefit from

repair, reuse and/or enhancement. These sites are detailed in Appendix 5 of the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Management Plan*.



Map indicating possible development sites. Current Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area boundary outlined in blue. © THC/Crown

## 8.5 QUALITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

There is a small proportion of new development in the conservation area. The most visual development dates from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and comprises the former local authority housing constructed over a number of periods, but in particular from the 1970s. In Upper Pulteneytown this is more prevalent immediately to the east of the conservation area boundary and impacts the conservation area as well as decisions on its further extension (section 5). Within the conservation area only a part of Lower Dunbar Street has been redeveloped in this style. In Lower Pulteneytown two blocks on Bank Row and Saltoun Street, west of Williamson Street have been negatively affected by similar development described in section 4.1.3 (fig 11). There are also a number of large modern sheds in the River Street / Union Street area, and the Telephone Exchange building, the scale and form of which impacts negatively on the conservation area (fig 14).

## 8.6 QUALITY OF PUBLIC REALM

The utilitarian nature of the public realm in Upper Pulteneytown does not reflect the character of the conservation area and is in contrast to the reintroduction of a high quality traditional pavement network in Lower Pulteneytown. It is vital to ensure that public works and street furniture do not detract from



the otherwise high quality historic environment. Where traditional and original finishes and architectural detail such as walls, railings and gates survive these should be appropriately maintained and repaired. Argyle Square is a significant feature and community asset; however, some elements of street furniture are of standard or poor design quality, such as the use of ‘wheelie’ bins for litter on the central path, and generally there is a lack of continuity in the design and materials used for information boards, seating and street furniture. In Lower Pulteneytown some streets have not been enhanced, for example Union Street where tarmac pavements are in poor repair (fig 50). Other reinstatement and enhancement measures have been effected by damage or introduction of other finishes which detract or create a cluttered appearance (fig 50).

## 8.7 MANAGEMENT OF TREES AND OPEN GREEN SPACE

Trees make an important contribution to the open space of Argyle Square and Academy Braes and should be properly managed and protected. The Academy Braes is a historic open green space with paths which criss-cross the slopes between the lower and upper towns. But the area has an unkempt feel with overgrown vegetation and local stakeholders report concern over the safety of mature trees, and that the overgrown nature of the space could have a negative impact. Legal responsibility for this area was unclear.



Mixed and cluttered street furniture: enhancement gained by using a traditional lantern and street sign is offset by cabling, satellite dish position and standard one-way road sign. Note the dropped kerb using Caithness flagstone.



Reinstated lime harling on prominent gable with traditional street sign alongside a standard flood light and two modern white lamps showing a lack of appropriate and coordinated design. Note dropped kerb constructed using textured concrete paving which is not in keeping with the Caithness flagstone.



Mixed and cluttered street furniture: enhancement gained by using a traditional lantern and street sign is offset by a grey standard relective bollard and poorly positioned satellite dish. The lantern has suffered impact damage.



Union Street was not part of the enhancement area for the the previous THI programme. The tarmac pavements are in poor repair and the managment of the green space has been highlighted. Both offer opportunity for enhancement.

Figure 50: inappropriate street furniture and unattractive streetscape.

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## 9.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT / COTHROMAN AIRSON GLÈIDHEADH IS NEARTACHADH

The purpose of this appraisal is set out in section 1. Part of the purpose is to provide a basis upon which programmes can be developed by, and in association with The Highland Council (THC) and key stakeholders to protect and enhance the conservation area. Opportunities for enhancement and priorities for future management have been identified.

The method of progressing and managing specific priorities is set out in the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP)*.

## 10.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW / SGRÙDADH AGUS ATH-SGRÙDADH

This document should be reviewed periodically as circumstances dictate by THC, and in conjunction with the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Management Plan*. It will be assessed with reference to current THC policy for the historic environment, local development plans, and government policy and guidance on the historic environment. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area including a photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action.
- An assessment of whether the recommendations detailed in both the appraisal and the management plan have been acted upon, and how successful they have been, particularly in relation to the conservation issues identified:
  1. Quality of traditional repairs and necessary replacement
  2. Maintenance and condition of the conservation area
  3. Buildings at Risk, disused buildings and gap sites
  4. Quality of new developments and building alterations
  5. Quality and condition of the public realm
  6. Management of setting, open and green spaces
  7. Protection of the heritage
- The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further protection or enhancements.

It is recommended that the review is carried out in consultation with the local community.

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- National Map Library of Scotland (NLS)

## APPENDIX 1: STAKEHOLDERS /EÀRR-RÀDH 1 LUCHD-ÙIDH

Stakeholders consulted during the process:

**Local Members and Ward Manager**

**Community Council**

**The Wick Society**

**Caithness Chamber of Commerce**

**Caithness Voluntary Group**

**Wick Harbour Authority**

**Subsea 7**

**Argyle Square Community Association**

**Old Pulteney Distillery**

**Mackays Hotel**

**Henderson Builders**

**THC Planning**

**For information**

**SSE - Beatrice Wind Farm**

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## APPENDIX 2: LISTED BUILDINGS / EÀRR-RÀDH 2 TOGALAICHEAN CLÀRAICHTE

### *Pulteneytown Listed Buildings within Conservation Area*

Name /Address	Category	Preferred Ref	Status Date	Amended Date
35-41 (inclusive nos) and 43, 44, 45, 46, 48 and 49 Argyle Square	B	LB42274	13/04/1971	18/01/2012
51-55 (inclusive nos) and 57-59 (inclusive nos) Argyle Square	B	LB42280	13/04/1971	
4, 5 and 6 Argyle Square	B	LB42268	13/04/1971	
22, 23, 24, 25 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB42292	14/09/1983	
11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18 Argyle Square	B	LB42269	13/04/1971	01/02/2002
48 and 49 Breadalbane Terrace	B	LB42296	14/09/1983	
Dempster Street, Wick Central Church (Church of Scotland)	B	LB42308	14/09/1983	
Malcolm Street, St Joachim's Roman Catholic Church	B	LB42316	15/08/1979	
Rutherford, undertaker Off Argyle Square	C	LB42271	14/09/1983	
Roman Catholic Convent, Malcolm Street	C	LB42317	14/09/1983	
7 and 9 Malcolm Street	C	LB42318	14/09/1983	
8 and 10 Dempster Street	C	LB42319	14/09/1983	
Sinclair Terrace, Carnegie Public Library	B	LB42324	14/09/1983	
Sinclair Terrace, Wick Martyrs' Free Church	B	LB42325	15/08/1979	
Bank Row, The Black Stairs	C	LB48390	05/02/2002	
1 and 2 Argyle Square	B	LB42267	13/04/1971	
62 and 63 Argyle Square	B	LB42283	13/04/1971	
65 Argyle Square and 1 Grant Street	B	LB42284	13/04/1971	
18 Bank Row	C	LB42285	14/09/1998	
19 - 27 (odd) Bank Row (Wick Heritage Centre)	A	LB42286	14/09/1983	
1 Breadalbane Crescent including rear garden wall	B	LB42287	14/09/1983	
4 & 6 Breadalbane Crescent including boundary wall, railings and stables	B	LB42288	14/09/1983	
8 and 9 Breadalbane Crescent including boundary wall, railings and stables	B	LB42289	14/09/1983	
10, 11, 12 13 Breadalbane Crescent including boundary wall and railings	B	LB42290	14/09/1983	
14, 15, 16, 17, 18 Breadalbane Crescent	B	LB42291	14/09/1983	
26 and 27 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB42294	14/09/1983	
28 and 29 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB42295	14/09/1983	
20 and 22 Argyle Square	B	LB42270	13/04/1971	
3 and 5 Dempster Street	C	LB42307	14/09/1983	18/01/2012

Harbour Place The Round House	B	LB42310	13/04/1971	
Name /Address	Category	Preferred Ref	Status Date	Amended Date
11 Malcolm Street	C	LB48406	14/09/1983	
6 and 7 Rose Street	C	LB42322	14/09/1983	
1 and 2 Sinclair Terrace	C	LB42326	14/09/1983	
3, 4, 5, 6 Sinclair Terrace	C	LB42327	14/09/1983	
7, 8, 9, 10 Sinclair Terrace	C	LB42328	14/09/1983	
13 Sinclair Terrace	C	LB42330	14/09/1983	
17 Sinclair Terrace	B	LB42331	15/08/1979	
18 Sinclair Terrace	B	LB42332	15/08/1979	
20 Sinclair Terrace	C	LB42333	15/08/1979	
2 Williamson Street	C	LB42334	14/09/1983	
30, 31, 33 Argyle Square	B	LB42272	13/04/1971	
15 and 16 Sinclair Terrace	B	LB48408	05/02/2002	
31 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48396	05/02/2002	
1, 2 and 3 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48391	05/02/2002	
5 and 6 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48392	05/02/2002	
12 and 13 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48393	05/02/2002	
15 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48394	05/02/2002	
17, 18, 19 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48395	05/02/2002	
37 and 38 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48398	05/02/2002	
41 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48399	05/02/2002	
42 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48400	05/02/2002	
46 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48401	05/02/2002	
47 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48403	05/02/2002	
42 Union Street, (North of Scotland Newspapers)	B	LB48411	05/02/2002	
Argyle Square, Pulteneytown Parish Church	C	LB49693	02/04/2004	
Harbour Quay, Storehouse including Curing Yard Wall to Rear (Steven and Co)	C	LB48404	05/02/2002	
Telford Street, (Storehouse)	C	LB48410	05/02/2002	
32 Breadalbane Terrace	C	LB48397	05/02/2002	

## APPENDIX 3: POSITIVE BUILDING DEFINITION / EÀRR-RÀDH 3 MÌNEACHADH AIR TOGALACH DEIMHINNEACH

### Positive Buildings

There is no specific criteria provided by the Scottish Government or Historic Environment Scotland for identification of those buildings which make a “positive contribution” to a conservation area although the term itself is used in statutory guidance and implied in the 1997 Act. For example:

Historic Environment Scotland (2010), ‘Managing Change – Demolition’, section 6.1

*“...presumption in favour of the retention of unlisted buildings in conservation areas where they make a **positive contribution** to the **character, appearance, or history of the area**. Many local authorities have prepared conservation area appraisals and these can be used to identify unlisted buildings which contribute positively to the character and appearance of an area.”*

Section 68 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. Urgent works to preserve unoccupied buildings in conservation areas:

*“If it appears to the Secretary of State that the preservation of a building in a conservation area is **important for maintaining the character or appearance of that area**, he may direct that section 49 shall apply to it as it applies to listed buildings.”*

Historic England has produced guidance available in ‘Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Historic England Advice Note 1’ (Second Edition Feb 2019).

Section 49: Positive contributors

*“Most of the buildings in a conservation area will help to shape its character. The extent to which their contribution is considered as positive depends not just on their street elevations but also on their integrity as historic structures and the impact they have in three dimensions, perhaps in an interesting roofscape or skyline. Back elevations can be important, as can side views from alleys and yards. Whilst designated status (i.e. nationally listed) or previous identification as non-designated heritage assets (such as through local listing) will provide an indication of buildings that are recognised as contributing to the area’s architectural and possibly historic interest, it will be important also to identify those unlisted buildings that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. A checklist of questions to help with this process can be found in Table 1. A positive response to one or more of the following may indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution, provided that its historic form and value have not been eroded.”*

- *Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?*
- *Does it have landmark quality?*
- *Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?*
- *Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?*
- *Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?*
- *Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings?*
- *Is it associated with a designed landscape, e.g. a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?*



- *Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?*
- *Does it have significant historic associations with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape?*
- *Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?*
- *Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?*
- *Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?*

And section 51: Locally important buildings:

*“Recommendations for new local listings could form part of the appraisal or, if there is no ‘local list’, the appraisal might recommend the introduction of local criteria for identifying important unlisted buildings (see Local Heritage Listing, Historic England Advice Note 7)). Local constructional or joinery details, including characteristic historic shop-fronts and unusual local features, often contribute to local distinctiveness.”*

For the purposes of this report, professional guidance has been provided by the author on the basis of the definition produced by the Scottish Civic Trust in previous Conservation Area Appraisals and is as follows:

*‘Positive buildings’ may vary but are commonly good examples of relatively unaltered traditional buildings where their style, detailing and building materials contribute to the interest and variety of the conservation area.*

Notwithstanding those buildings identified through this appraisal, other individual buildings may be of some architectural or historic interest. Unlisted buildings should be considered on a case-by-case basis by planning management.

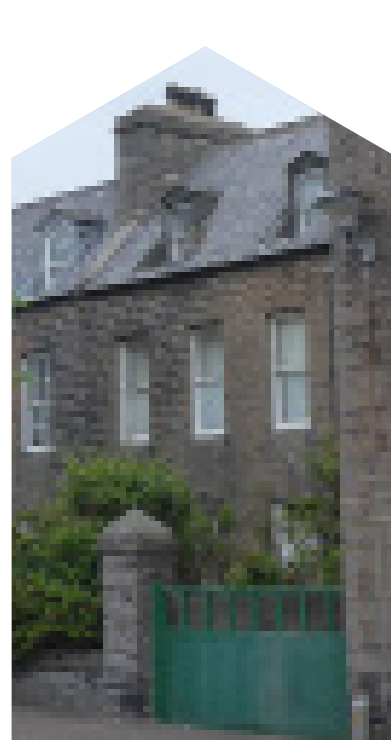
# Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Management Plan

## Plana Riaghlaidh Sgìre Glèidhteachais Pulteneytown Inbhir Ùige

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July 2021

Post-consultation Draft



# WICK PULTENEYTOWN CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

POST-CONSULTATION DRAFT: JULY 2021

DRAFT

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

### 1.0 PLANA STIÙIRIDH SGÌRE GLÈIDHTEACHAIS PULTENEYTOWN INBHIR ÙIGE

#### 1.1 CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that conservation areas “...are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas.

Two small conservation areas were designated in Pulteneytown by Caithness County Council in 1970. Following review those two areas were incorporated into the larger Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area designated in 2000 (fig 1). Recommendation for changes to that boundary are detailed in the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal* (DraftV2, 2020; fig 1). This report includes reference to areas within the proposed extension as applicable.

Conservation area status brings the following works under planning control:

- Demolition of unlisted buildings or structures
- Removal of, or work to trees
- Development including, for example, small house alterations and extensions, the installation of satellite dishes, roof alterations, stone cleaning or painting of the exterior.

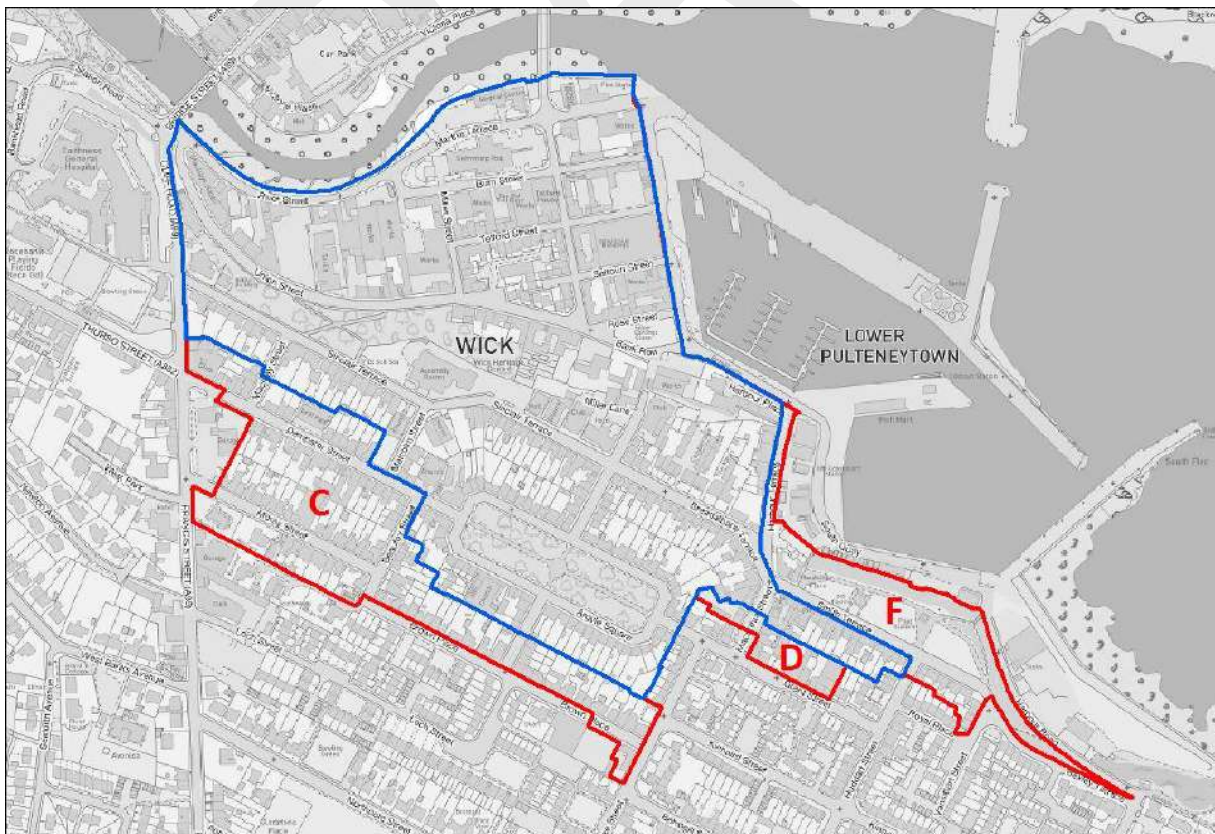


Figure 1: Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area, designated in 2000 outlined in blue; boundary extension recommendations as per Section 5.0 of the CAA in red. © THC /Crown

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of this management plan is to address the findings of the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal* and further consider its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The plan provides strategy and guidance on the management of change and development in the conservation area in order to preserve and enhance its special qualities, and its character and appearance as identified in the appraisal.

Clauses 74-76 of the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan; 2018) cover policy on Conservation Areas including under clause 74, that the Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area was to be reviewed. Clause 76 outlines, in line with Planning Advice Note 71 *Conservation Area Management* (2004), the issues to be included:

- Opportunities for planning action
- Opportunities for development
- Opportunities for enhancement
- Conservation strategy and guidance on key aspects
- Monitoring and review

This document seeks to provide THC with a valuable tool with which to inform its planning practice and policies for the area; and assist stakeholders. The successful management of conservation areas can only be achieved with the support of and input from stakeholders, and in particular local residents and property owners.

This management plan should be used in conjunction with the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal* and reference is made to relevant sections of the appraisal throughout this report.

## 1.3 METHOD

The commission has been undertaken on behalf of The Highland Council (THC). It is supported by a project Stakeholder Group (CAA, Appendix 1).

The final draft management plan for public consultation was prepared by Sonya Linskaill RIBA RIAS, Chartered Conservation Architect and Consultant in association with The Highland Council. The draft management plan was reviewed with the Stakeholder Group and by THC prior to publication for public consultation. The final approved report will be under the copyright of The Highland Council. Please note all historic images and maps are for illustration purposes only and must not be shared or copied.



## 2.0 WICK PULTENEYTOWN CONSERVATION AREA

### 2.0 RO-RÀDH AGUS ADHBHAR

#### 2.1 SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Pulteneytown is a late Georgian planned town laid out on the attractive natural setting on the Bay of Wick and its raised headlands. It comprises two sectors: an upper residential town on a formal plan centred on Argyle Square with the seaward facing Sinclair, Breadalbane and Smith Terraces; and a lower industrial grid iron layout, said to be possibly the earliest planned industrial area in Scotland (fig 2). Pulteneytown is the built legacy of the one of Scotland's leading protagonists of the Georgian era, Thomas Telford (1757-1834), and his client the British Fisheries Society. Pulteneytown is Telford's only fully executed town plan for the British Fisheries Society, and its most successful investment. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Wick became the largest herring fishing port in Europe (Beaton, 1996, 27) and Pulteneytown was at the heart of this successful fishing industry providing both warehousing and accommodation.

Pulteneytown today is a local industrial hub and residential area within the town of Wick. The integrity of the original plan and built form of Pulteneytown remains largely in place. The design of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Inner and Outer Harbours is still intact. There is a predominance of original Georgian buildings and a small number of later Victorian buildings, with little historic redevelopment on original lots. Buildings and structures exhibit construction methods individual to Wick, with locally quarried Caithness stone worked in traditional ways to create distinctive construction details such as the segmental arch frequently used in Lower Pulteneytown.

The conservation area can be divided into two distinctive character areas on the lines of Thomas Telford's original upper and lower towns. Further detail on the significance, character and appearance, materials and building types can be found in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

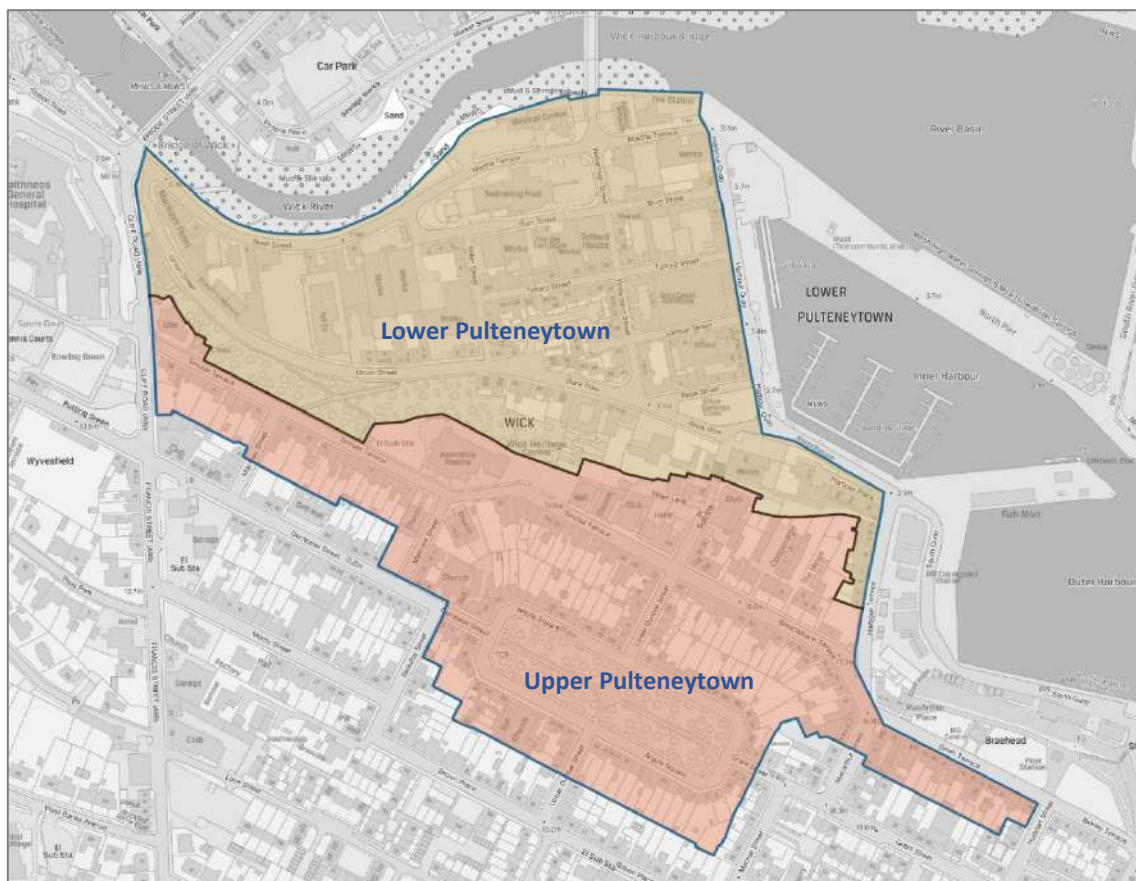


Figure 2: Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area comprises two character areas. © THC /Crown

## 2.2 BACKGROUND

A number of regeneration and repair initiatives have been undertaken in Pulteneytown over the past three decades. This commenced with The Wick Project from 1991, led by central and regional councils with Scottish Enterprise, which aimed to bring life back into neglected parts of Wick, including Pulteneytown. In recognition of the importance and vulnerability at that time of Lower Pulteneytown, The Highland Council prepared a regeneration strategy which led firstly to the designation of the lower town and a greater part of the upper town as a conservation area in 2000. Thereafter external funding was secured for the Lower Pulteneytown Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) from the Heritage Lottery Fund and several other funders. This heritage-led regeneration project operated from 2003 to 2008 with significant achievements in bringing vacant buildings back into use, particularly for housing and office space, as well as public realm reinstatement.

A further 5-year investment programme, the Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) ran from 2007 to 2013. The principle funder was Historic Environment Scotland (with CASE, ERDF, Communities Scotland, THC Private Sector Housing Grant, and THC Vacant and Derelict Land Fund). This scheme again achieved success in bringing Buildings at Risk back into economic use and repairing traditional proprieties. As well as physical regeneration in both these initiatives, focus was also placed on interpretation of the area’s rich Thomas Telford heritage as a means to encourage visitors and to support the economic growth of Wick.

Since 2013, strategic planning and active regeneration have continued. Of particular significance is the former Steven’s Yard urban block between Telford Street and Saltoun Street which are now the new operational, maintenance and service facilities for Beatrice Offshore Windfarm Limited opened 2019 supported by investment from SSE.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate some of the projects undertaken which focussed on repair, reuse, enhancement of the historic environment (buildings and streetscape), and heritage interpretation.

### 2.3 RELATIONSHIP WITH WICK TOWN CENTRE

Pulteneytown lies out with the formal designation of Wick Town Centre which is formed chiefly by the historic town centre on the north bank of the river. This means that certain projects and investment will appropriately focus on the Town Centre and not Pulteneytown. However, the *Wick Charrette* (2013) found that Lower Pulteneytown and the harbour form an important part of a wider ‘town centre’ offer. Going forward it is important for both parts of the town are supported, and that their relationship be carefully considered. Lower Pulteneytown offers complementary visitor attractions and services, as well as industry and employment.

The Wick Town Centre Health Check (2018) found that the key issues for the historic centre were around levels of vacancy and the poor condition of the built environment, as well as issues around the ease of movement of pedestrians and cyclists. These issues are not exclusive to the Town Centre, Pulteneytown still has vacancy and building condition problems, but also has shown considerable regeneration success with very positive examples which can inspire the Town Centre and which provide general levels of improvement for the whole town (figs 3 & 4).



Before and after of Telford/Saltoun Street east block adapted for Beatrice Offshore Windfarm Ltd, opened in 2019; SSE funded (left) © Google Maps 2008



Before and after of Telford/Saltoun Street west block adapted to provide 16 dwellings for Pentland Housing Association, opened in 2004; part of THI (left) © Google Maps 2008



Telford House adapted as office space for several Third Sector organisations, opened in 2004; part of THI



Before and after of Telford/Saltoun Street east block at Williamson Street with adaptation and reconstruction of traditional buildings to provide 11 new dwellings; part of CARS (left) © Google Maps 2008

Figure 3: repair, adaption, heritage interpretation and enhancement in Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area



Former Robertson of Tain adapted for Highland Housing Alliance; part of THI opened 2007

Former cooorage repaired and converted to two dwellings; part of CARS.



Repair of Black Stairs and streetscape enhancement using Caithness flagstones; part of THI 2008

Heritage project to form decorative metal work gates to former salt cellars; part of THI 2006



Telford/Burn St east block made wind & water tight during Beatrice development and CARS c.2012.



The Round House designed by Telford, repaired under the CARS.



Example of several smaller projects for traditional repairs and window reinstatement under the CARS



Courtyard of Wick Heritage Museum repaired under the CARS.

Figure 4: repair, adaption, heritage interpretation and enhancement in Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area

### 3.0 SWOT ANALYSIS

#### 3.0 MION-SGRÙDADH SWOT

Section 8.0 of the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal* identified issues which have had, or have the potential to, result in a detrimental impact on the conservation area. These issues are detailed below in respect of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

#### 3.1 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths and weakness are frequently internally-related.

**Strengths** can be defined as characteristics of the conservation area that give it distinctiveness and heritage significance.

1. Its setting at the mouth of the River Wick at Wick Bay and the enclosing raised headlands;
2. The harbour, an historic civic engineering construction and its role as a working port and marina;
3. The substantial survival of Telford's Planned Town, the grid iron streets of Lower Pulteneytown and the formal layout of Upper Pulteneytown;
4. The geographic division of Upper and Lower Pulteneytown and the definition / separation of the two areas;

5. The survival of a considerable number of the historic buildings, both residential and industrial which formed the original town;
6. Uniqueness of the survival of an industrial area;
7. Survival of buildings for the herring fishing industry e.g. smokehouses, yards, warehouses.

**Weaknesses** can be defined as characteristics of the conservation area that undermine its distinctiveness and heritage significance.

1. Erosion of the original street plan due to redevelopment and road management works;
2. Erosion of the geographic division of Upper and Lower Pulteneytown through development;
3. Loss of a number of the historic buildings, both residential and industrial which formed the original town;
4. Buildings at risk, in poor condition and in need of maintenance;
5. Dilution of character through loss of architectural detail and key building components;
6. Inappropriate development of buildings, including alteration, extension, repair / replacement;
7. Redundancy and change in its commercial activity and building use;

### 3.2 THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES




Threats and opportunities are commonly related to external factors and actions. If the analogy of a business is used, then threats are ‘elements in the environment that could cause difficulties for the business or project’, and opportunities are ‘elements in the environment that the business or project could exploit to its advantage’. It is important to understand the underlying cause of the threats in order to address each issue. The cause may be multi-faceted and generally falls under the following headings:





- Policy
- Management
- Guidance
- Practicalities

The issues outlined in Section 8.0 of the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal* can be summarised in six threats:

1. Loss of Authenticity
2. Vacancy and Underuse
3. Inappropriate Development including unsympathetic alterations
4. Quality of the Public Realm
5. Green Space Management
6. Lack of Statutory Protection for all Heritage Assets

The table below describes each threat and its probable causes. Section 4.0 then outlines opportunities and possible action.

<b>THREAT 1: LOSS OF AUTHENTICITY</b>		
<b>A: Loss of historic fabric</b>		
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
Unnecessary repair or replacement of materials, elements of a building, the building itself, and other parts of the historic environment such as boundary walls, railings, traditional streetscape etc.		
<b>B: Inappropriate repair</b>		
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
The repair or replacement of traditional components made inappropriately in terms of materials, methods and /or design.		
<b>C: Lack of preventative maintenance and timely repair</b>		
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
Maintenance and repair requirements have been identified for both properties and the historic built environment. A lack of preventative maintenance and timely repair will lead to the unnecessary loss of fabric.		
<b>PROBABLE CAUSES</b>		
<p><b>POLICY &amp; MANAGEMENT</b>                  Lack of statutory protection over much of conservation area until re-designation in 2000; and Article 4 Direction in 2002;                  Lack of awareness / adherence to policy by listed building property owners, and unlisted building property owners after 2002;                  Possible interpretation of policy;                  Lack of enforcement by THC;                  The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011 – which removed householder permitted development rights in a conservation area.</p> <p><b>GUIDANCE &amp; PRACTICALIITES</b>                  Lack of understanding of significance and value of the historic environment;                  Lack of awareness of traditional materials and skills;                  Lack of awareness of supplementary guidance;                  Lack of availability of suitable materials;                  Lack of availability of skilled contractors;                  Lack of (and cost of) safe access;                  Lack of investment in building maintenance and small repairs over time;                  Low property values v cost of appropriate repair;                  Environmental and economic concerns (e.g. double glazing);                  Ownership issues, co-owners, absent owners etc.</p>		
		
Loss of historic fabric	Inappropriate repair	Lack of preventative maintenance

<b>THREAT 2: VACANCY AND UNDERUSE</b>			
<b>A: Buildings at Risk</b>			
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>			
<p>Buildings at risk is usually a listed building, or an unlisted building within a conservation area, that meets one or several of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- vacant with no identified new use;</li> <li>- suffering from neglect and/or poor maintenance;</li> <li>- suffering from structural problems;</li> <li>- fire damaged;</li> <li>- unsecured and open to the elements;</li> <li>- threatened with demolition.</li> </ul> <p>Buildings at Risk can give the impression of economic difficulties and cause community concern. In general buildings at risk generate a sense of neglect.</p> <p>Refer Appendix 4</p>			
<b>B: Underused/vacant buildings and gap sites</b>			
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>			
<p>Some disused or partially vacant buildings in fair condition may not have been added to the Buildings at Risk Register but still give cause for concern.</p> <p>Gap sites can similarly give a poor economic impression and effect the physical character and appearance of the area.</p> <p>Refer Appendix 5</p>			
<b>PROBABLE CAUSES</b>			
<p>Individual buildings and sites will have their own specific reasons for underuse, vacancy or loss; however this may include:</p> <p><b>POLICY &amp; MANAGEMENT</b>                  Demolition without planned reuse;                  No requirement for Conservation Area Consent in large part of the area before designation in 2000.                  Small number of Listed Buildings in Lower Pulteneytown which would be protected under legislation.</p> <p><b>GUIDANCE &amp; PRACTICALITIES</b>                  Changing industrial needs and redundancy of use;                  Other economic reasons;                  Cost of repair and adaptation;                  Changed relationship to Town Centre;                  Levels of population, and activity;                  Absent owners; multiple owners.</p>			
			
Buildings at Risk Union Street	Vacancy & gap site Burn Street	Vacant building Breadalbane Terrace	



**THREAT 3: INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING UNSYMPATHETIC ALTERATIONS**

**DESCRIPTION**

Modern development in the area (generally post-war and later redevelopment) has not always been sympathetic to the character of the conservation area in terms of materials, design and street pattern. Modern development has eroded the original new town plan in some places in terms of maintaining original lot boundary lines and street frontages. Some later 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings are monolithic in form and occupy large or multiple plots. Unsympathetic alterations such as box dormers can severely alter the character of individual houses, and impact their neighbours and the area as a whole.

**PROBABLE CAUSES**

**POLICY & MANAGEMENT**

Causes of inappropriate alterations often for similar reasons as Threat 1 (refer above). Mid - later 20<sup>th</sup> century housing policy focussed on redevelopment for new homes often not recognising value of traditional buildings or opportunities for upgrading and repair. Similarly early regeneration in the 1980s and 1990s focused on clearance and new building for social and economic growth, e.g. the swimming pool site before the benefits of heritage value were fully understood. Lack of CA designation of much of Pulteneytown before 2000, i.e. no requirement for Conservation Area Consent.

**GUIDANCE & PRACTICALITIES**




Lack of appraisal of the significance, and character and appearance of the CA and cognisance of this in the design process.  
 Cost of conservation deficit to bring older buildings into good repair and adapt to new uses / standards;  
 Need for grant aid.  
 New housing standards.  
 Limited understanding of adaptability of traditional buildings.  
 Limited understanding of the sustainability of traditional buildings.









Inappropriate development



Unsympathetic alterations

<b>THREAT 4: QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<p>The public realm in Upper Pulteneytown is generally utilitarian in character and can detract from the high-quality historic built environment. Argyle Square is a significant feature and community asset; however, some elements of street furniture of standard or poor design quality.</p> <p>The public realm in Lower Pulteneytown has in parts been enhanced in recent years which contributes positively to the appearance. However some surfaces and street furniture remain utilitarian in character. Street furniture and the poor positioning of road signs can have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.</p>
<b>PROBABLE CAUSES</b>
<p><b>POLICY &amp; MANAGEMENT</b>                  Standard specifications have been used by the local authority.                  Lack of legal control over road signs;                  Lack of co-ordination of street furniture – over time / different departments / stakeholders.</p> <p><b>GUIDANCE &amp; PRACTICALITIES</b>                  Lack of adopted design and maintenance guidelines for Pulteneytown.</p>
<b>THREAT 5: GREEN SPACE MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<p>Trees make an important contribution to the open space of Argyle Square and Academy Braes, both historic open green spaces with well used pedestrian routes. The management of open green spaces and trees has been questioned in stakeholder consultation. The unkempt feel, resulting from overgrown vegetation, and concern over the safety of mature trees, are having a negative impact.</p>
<b>PROBABLE CAUSES</b>
<p><b>POLICY &amp; MANAGEMENT</b>                  No management plan for these areas.</p> <p><b>GUIDANCE &amp; PRACTICALITIES</b>                  Legal responsibility for some areas is unclear;                  Role of local authority in maintenance and management unclear;                  Wish to maintain biodiversity.</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Public realm Argyle Square</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Green space / paths Academy Braes</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Road signs Lower Pulteneytown</p> </div> </div>

<b>THREAT 6: LACK OF STATUTORY PROTECTION FOR ALL HERITAGE ASSETS</b>		
<b>A: Buildings from Telford Plan</b>		
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
Large sections of unprotected traditional buildings of heritage importance out with the current conservation area (CAA, Section 5.0) and/or not listed (CAA, Section 4.2.2).		
<b>B: Harbour historic infrastructure</b>		
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>		
The fundamental part of Wick Pulteneytown historically and today is not within the conservation area. The harbour is significant both in terms of the character and appearance of Wick Pulteneytown, and its social and economic life.		
<b>PROBABLE CAUSES</b>		
<p><b>POLICY &amp; MANAGEMENT</b> Harbour is operated by an independent Harbour Authority Trust accountable under the Harbours Act. Development on harbour land can fall out with planning legislation and management</p> <p><b>GUIDANCE &amp; PRACTICALITIES</b> Extent and integrity of Telford Plan was not fully understood without detailed appraisal in 2000 and full area was not designated; Focus for Conservation Area designation was on urban form and buildings, with harbour not included at that time; Listing of buildings appears to have focused on Upper Pulteneytown on the core of Telford’s Plan with other buildings from the period left unlisted, and little significance placed on the importance and uniqueness of the industrial sector in Lower Pulteneytown.</p>		
		
Some of the rows on Dempster Street, not in the conservation area or listed.	Pre 1857 houses on Smith Terrace, not in conservation area or listed.	Industrial building from rope works, not in conservation area or listed.
		
Wick harbour plays a fundamental role, but is not within the conservation area.	Contemporary buildings, left on Argyle Square are listed; on right Telford House is not.	

## 4.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

### 4.0 COTHROMAN AIRSON GLÈIDHEADH IS NEARTACHADH

This section outlines opportunities to preserve and enhance Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area to address the threats described in Section 3.2. Where appropriate the most relevant legislation and policy is summarised followed by recommendations for proactive management by THC. Relevant further reading is provided in Section 7.0. Appendices are provided with detailed information on Buildings at Risk (Appendix 4) and Development Sites (Appendix 5).

#### 4.1 APPROPRIATE REPAIR AND MANAGING SMALL CHANGES

##### *TO ADDRESS THREAT 1: LOSS OF AUTHENTICITY*

One of the greatest threats to any conservation area can be the accumulative effect of small incremental changes which together have a significant negative impact on its authenticity and character and appearance. This can include for example changes to traditional window designs, removing chimneys or skew copes during roofing works, and loss of original timber doors. As well as smaller alterations like box dormers or even fitting satellite dishes and pipework without consideration of the historic building and its environment.

##### 4.1.1 POLICY

###### *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997*

This threat chiefly relates to the management of ‘change’ to historic buildings and their immediate setting. This change is regulated by statute, guided by both national and local historic environment policy, and managed by the local planning authority through the Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent processes (with Historic Environment Scotland as a statutory consultee in relevant cases).

###### *Conservation Area Designation and Permitted Development Rights*

A lack of statutory protection over much of the conservation area until review and re-designation in 2000; and continuation of Householder Permitted Development Rights until a subsequent Article 4 Direction in 2002 (Section 4.1.2), is thought to have played a part in the presence of inappropriate repair and alteration to domestic property. This meant that unless a building was non-domestic, or listed, the owner did not require to apply for Planning Permission for certain types of small changes in its appearance.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011 (effective from Feb. 2012) has subsequently removed householder permitted development rights in a conservation area, requiring owners for any such works to apply for Planning Permission. This new legislation provides the opportunity for the planning authority to guide change and achieve steady positive enhancement.

###### *Local Strategy*

THC’s overarching [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) (HHES, 2013) is a material consideration when proposals for development are being considered. In relation to loss of authenticity, there are specific strategic aims on the use of traditional materials and skills.

#### 4.1.2 MANAGEMENT

##### *Managing change within the conservation area*

The management of change of listed buildings in a conservation area is well established and should follow current national and local guidance on conservation principles and best practice. The management of unlisted buildings can be more problematic. Therefore as part of the appraisal process, unlisted but ‘positive buildings’ have been identified (CAA, Map 6.3). Generally, these are individual or groups of traditional buildings which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area (as defined in Appendix 1). THC should consider applications for change (i.e. repair which includes necessary replacement of original materials and features; alterations and extensions) to positive buildings extremely carefully and should refuse any which adversely affect their architectural or historic interest. Nonetheless, it should not be assumed that for buildings which are indicated to have a ‘neutral’ or ‘negative’ impact on the area, a lesser standard is acceptable. Applications for any building where proposals would result in an adverse impact to the character of the conservation area should be refused. Taking a consistent approach across all buildings on the standards of repair, alteration and new design in the conservation area will assist this process and the protection and enhancement of the conservation area. Further guidance on these aspects is given in the relevant sections which follow.

##### *Enforcement*

Notwithstanding the issue of late conservation area designation, and Permitted Development Rights, there are still examples of inappropriate change in the conservation area since 2002 and to listed buildings. Buildings were generally listed in either 1971 or 1983, excepting a significance part of Breadalbane Terrace in 2002 (refer Map 6.3 and CAA Appendix 2). This indicates that for example inappropriate change to properties on Argyle Square, which has been a conservation area since 1970 and where virtually all buildings were listed in 1971, has occurred due to other management factors.

THC’s Article 4 Direction *Restriction of Permitted Development Direction 2001 (Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area)* was approved in February 2002, which removed permitted development rights on Classes 1, 7, 8 & 25 of the 1992 Order over the full conservation area, this included:

- *Class 1 = the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house;*
- *Class 7 = the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure.*
- *Class 8 = the formation, laying out and construction of a means of access to a road;*
- *Class 25 = the creation of a hard surface within the curtilage of an industrial building or warehouse to be used for the purpose of the undertaking concerned.*

It is thought some of this work will have been carried out without consent perhaps due to a lack of awareness, or a different interpretation of ‘change’ in previous decades. However, THC planning authority should be committed to the issuing of planning enforcement notices in cases of unauthorised development within the conservation area and to listed buildings, including inappropriate repairs, alteration or extension in ways that affects its character, as well as any unauthorised demolition of buildings or structures. The [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) supports this intervention.

### 4.1.3 GUIDANCE

As described above, processes have existed since 2002 to protect and prevent against the threat of inappropriate repair and change. Therefore the weakness may lie in levels of awareness in the general public; an inconsistent approach from the local authority across officers and councillors; and a tendency to accept a ‘precedent’ approach once inappropriate change has occurred particularly for the general public. It has to be recognised that many inappropriate changes and alterations to unlisted buildings in the conservation area may have occurred prior to 2002 when no measures were in place to control these changes, for example the use of upvc windows and doors, and concrete roof tiles in the 1980s and 1990s.

#### *Supplementary Guidance*

In recent years a considerable amount of guidance has been produced by Historic Environment Scotland for both property owners and professional practitioners. This is augmented by THC’s supplementary guidance on specific matters such as [Historic Windows and Doors](#) and [Shopfronts](#) which can be used in determining applications. In all applications reference should be made to the Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal for historic character and appearance and examples; and THC’s overarching [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) to inform the heritage approach. The following inappropriate repair and change issues were identified in the appraisal process; key principles and existing guidance is indicated to provide solutions.

Replacement of original timber sash & case generally 6 over 6 pane windows with inappropriate and unsustainable materials such as uPVC, and/or unsympathetic designs, and/or methods of opening.

#### **Solution:**

Follow THC [Supplementary Guidance Historic Windows and Doors](#)  
Refer to Historic Environment Scotland’s [Managing Change Windows](#).

Replacement of original timber moulded panel doors with inappropriate and unsustainable materials such as uPVC, and/ or unsympathetic designs, and loss of the original door details often local designs.

#### **Solution:**

Follow THC [Supplementary Guidance Historic Windows and Doors](#)  
Refer to Historic Environment Scotland’s [Managing Change Doorways](#).

Replacement of natural slate roofs, particularly in concrete tiles.

#### **Solution:**

Presumption to use natural slate only (or other traditional finishes as applicable).  
Refer to Historic Environment Scotland’s [Managing Change Roofs](#).

Changes to chimney stacks and stone skew copes including removal and lack of reinstatement.

#### **Solution:**

Presumption against removal, where opportunities arise reinstate to original detail.  
Refer to Historic Environment Scotland’s INFORM Guides [Damp Gables](#) and [Domestic Chimneys and Flues](#).

Loss of original dormer designs and details; inappropriate new dormer designs.

**Solution:**

Presumption against oversized and box-form dormers;  
Support local precedents for building type adopting traditional and local forms.  
Refer to Historic Environment Scotland's [Managing Change Roofs](#).

Inappropriate and poor quality repair and finishes to masonry.

**Solution:**

Presumption against use of cementitious mortars and renders unless historic evidence;  
Presumption against application of render/harl unless historic evidence;  
Retain stonework detail and mortar pinnings and character in repair.  
Refer to Historic Environment Scotland's [Managing Change External Walls](#).

Inappropriate placement and insertion of new soil, drainage and gas pipes, satellite dishes and cabling on principal elevations.

**Solution:**

Presumption to install on rear elevations and which are not within sight from the public realm, or internally where possible;  
Remove and rationalise when opportunity arises or replacement is made.  
Refer to Historic Environment Scotland's [Managing Change External Fixtures](#).

#### 4.1.4 PRACTICALITIES

##### *Skills*

Whilst legislation and policy set out to prevent loss and manage change, ultimately it is the work on the ground which creates successful outcomes for the historic environment. This requires knowledge and suitable skills in the materials and methods required to repair and alter appropriately historic buildings. THC should seek opportunities to promote its [HHES](#); Strategic Aims 20-24.

##### *Local Authority Advice*

THC's planning team can provide advice on traditional repairs, as can Historic Environment Scotland Technical Research team. In addition, it is important to ensure that communications from all THC departments (e.g. planning, building standards, housing, environmental health) follow best practice for repair and small alterations to traditional buildings in Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area, so that a consistent message or appropriate referrals are made. This should include sharing the findings of the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation area Appraisal and Management Plan* with relevant departments.



Figure 5: illustrating the importance of following window guidance fully. On the left an image from the 1930s showing likely original window and door design with below the building in 2000 with the same window pattern (door built up). The building in 2019 (right) has new replacement windows which have not replicated historic evidence and the opening form does not comply with current guidance that window opening methods should not disrupt the elevation. 6 over 6 pane windows may be the correct pattern for some earlier buildings in the conservation area, but the date of this property in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century would suggest it is less likely and such windows would rarely combine ‘horns’ in the original design. The reinstatement of the door is however a positive enhancement.

#### 4.1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Raise awareness of relevant policy with all stakeholders
- ◆ Clearly explain what constitutes ‘change’ to an historic building
- ◆ Consider change to unlisted buildings carefully and consistently
- ◆ Intervene, including taking enforcement action, in cases of breach of legislation
- ◆ Highlight existing THC Development Guidance and HES Managing Change Guidance aimed at traditional property owners
- ◆ Consider if any additional Development Guidance is required as part of THC Historic Environment Strategy and/or if Wick Pulteneytown specific guidance is required.
- ◆ Publicise and publish the CAA and CAMP as widely as possible to raise awareness of the special character of the conservation area.



## 4.2 PROACTIVE REPAIR & PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

### TO ADDRESS THREAT 1: LOSS OF AUTHENTICITY

It is important that all buildings are adequately maintained and repaired. This ensures the longevity of the building fabric, that it is energy efficient, and does not pose a risk to public safety. In the case of traditional buildings the use of appropriate materials and techniques is vital. So too is the involvement of building professionals and contractors with suitable levels of experience and skills.

#### 4.2.1 POLICY

*The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.*

There are a number of provisions under this Act which relate to powers the local authority has to ensure home owners keep their buildings in a reasonable standard of repair. This includes:

- Section 30 Works Notices where buildings are in disrepair.
- Section 42 Maintenance Orders  
It is the responsibility of private home owners in a property to co-ordinate in maintaining the fabric of the building to a reasonable standard. Where this is not happening voluntarily, Section 42 allows the local authority to serve Maintenance Order. The Maintenance Order requires owners to prepare a Maintenance Plan for the local authority by a specified date. If an acceptable plan is not submitted or an approved plan is not fully implemented, then the local authority has powers to put its own plan in place and enforce any necessary work, any cost incurred is recoverable from the owners.

*Building (Scotland) Act 2003*

- Section 30 gives powers for the local authority to serve a Dangerous Building Notice on owners, and undertake work itself if action is not taken within set time limits or the danger is immediate. This can apply to all buildings, not just residential.

Further legislation specific to taking action on listed buildings and in conservation areas is outlined in Section 4.3.1.

#### 4.2.2 MANAGEMENT

The issue of Notices and Orders under the above legislation is often left as a last resort for local authorities and once repair and maintenance concerns have become severe or a danger to the public. This is far too late in terms of best practice to protect the historic environment and to save resources (materially, financially etc.). As will be discussed under the following Buildings at Risk section, a commitment to monitoring the condition of at risk buildings is recommended, moreover a similar commitment to monitor all buildings in the conservation area could become part of the regular conservation area appraisal and management plan review. This would encourage timely action when early or consistent deterioration is evident.

Responsibility for building condition and standards fall under several local authority departments: housing, building standards, planning and environmental health. This means that good communication and procedures for the sharing of information are required to ensure a consistent approach is taken and appropriate referrals are made, to protect the historic environment of Pulteneytown.

#### 4.2.3 GUIDANCE

The [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) highlights the importance of maintenance as does THC's [Sustainable Design Guide](#) which reinforces that maintenance has to be part of new design.

##### *Other guidance and advice*

THC's planning team can provide advice on maintenance and traditional repairs, as can Historic Environment Scotland Technical Research team. Historic Environment Scotland has produced the informative [Maintaining your home - A short guide for homeowners](#) and two useful websites are hosted by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and Under One Roof. The latter site also providing advice for those in multiple ownership properties.

#### 4.2.4 PRACTICALITIES

Proactive and practical approaches such as the THC's [Care & Repair service](#) which is part of the local authority's [Scheme of Assistance](#) are positive. It is recommended that opportunities for departments to interact in such initiatives are investigated.

A number of initiatives have been trialled in Scotland and the UK on proactive maintenance including a subsidised inspection and reporting service piloted for Historic Environment Scotland by Stirling City Heritage Trust, the Traditional Buildings Health Check. In England, the Gutter Clear and Maintenance Booker services which commenced for churches have recently been extending to other historic buildings. Some local authorities in Scotland have also undertaken one-off exercises such local gutter clearing initiatives by Fife Council. The practicalities of affordable safe access can be a hurdle to maintenance and this was mentioned by members of the stakeholder group. Looking at ways in which the local authority could assist in safe access or work with stakeholders and community groups to tackle street-based maintenance works would be worth exploring. Maintenance is usually a requirement of receiving grant assistance and properties, particularly those completed under the THI, are now showing significant maintenance needs which should to be addressed before defects result.

#### 4.2.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Monitor and review the conservation area regularly including in relation to maintenance and condition of traditional buildings
- ◆ Take action timeously, including legal action if required, to resolve fabric issues before neglect or defects set in
- ◆ Investigate the further potential of the Scheme of Assistance and THC's Care & Repair service to assist protection of the traditional buildings in Pulteneytown
- ◆ Investigate the potential to encourage or set up other practical maintenance schemes to assist owners in safe access maintenance in Pulteneytown

## 4.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDINGS AT RISK

### *TO ADDRESS THREAT 2: VACANCY AND UNDERUSE*

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) maintains a Register of buildings that are at risk from deterioration due to neglect, vacancy or threat of demolition on its [Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland](#) (BARR). Buildings deemed to be at risk can be suggested to the Register by both public bodies and individuals.

Appendix 4 details all properties on the BARR, as well as those considered potentially at risk during the CAA site visit in July 2019, both in the current conservation area boundary and in the proposed extension area.

#### 4.3.1 POLICY

*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997*

In addition to Section 30 of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 (refer Section 4.2.1), under the Planning Act there are a number of relevant measures to protect historic buildings:

- Section 42 Compulsory Acquisition of a listed building in need of repair;
- Section 43 Repairs Notice as preliminary to acquisition under section 42;
- Section 47 Acquisition by agreement;
- Section 49 Urgent Works to preserve unoccupied listed buildings;
- Section 51 Grants for repair and maintenance by local authorities to listed buildings;
- Section 66 Control of Demolition in conservation areas;
- Section 68 Urgent Works to preserve unoccupied buildings in conservation areas;
- Section 69 Grants or loans to preserve or enhance conservation areas.

#### 4.3.2 MANAGEMENT

Buildings at Risk pose several concerns including the potential loss of original materials and building features, and ultimately the potential for loss of buildings of historic or architectural importance. Particularly vulnerable are standalone vacant buildings and those which have lain vacant for a considerable time. Buildings at Risk can give the impression of economic difficulties and cause community concern. In general buildings at risk generate a sense of neglect.

##### *Buildings at Risk Register*

There are 17 entries on the formal Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland (at March 2020), some of which have, or are in the process of, being restored. There are other potential BAR which are not on the Register. The Register not only provides an important record, it can encourage opportunities for reuse, and a Building at Risk may be prioritised in applications for grant funding. Regular monitoring allows the local authority to be alert to potential buildings at risk in the conservation area and it should aim to assist where possible to keep vulnerable historic buildings in use. Monitoring is supported by Strategic Aim 7 of the [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) (2013).

##### *Buildings at Risk Strategy*

Buildings at Risk represent our most fragile historic assets and assistance should be a priority in heritage management. Preparing a BAR strategy, potentially with a local stakeholder group, is the first step. This is advocated by Strategic Aim 8 of [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) (2013).

A strategy could agree priorities for action (be that on their level of risk, condition, potential for reuse etc.) and facilitate discussions on the way forward with those buildings which have the most potential or are in the most need of action. It could also provide a point of contact for interested parties. A strategy should:

1. Prioritise and allocate actions: following adoption of a BAR strategy, consider actions on priority buildings and which organisations are best placed to take individual actions forward;
2. Consider feasibility studies where appropriate. This can provide background information, assess significance of the asset, and suitable uses and/or adaptation of the fabric. This can assist potential owners or developers in decision making to find the best outcome.
3. Consider establishing BAR ‘guardians’ who can monitor the buildings at regular intervals and update the THC, stakeholder group and BARR.
4. Prepare Development Briefs for priority and significance sites to stimulate interest in their redevelopment.

#### *Planning Management approach*

The Wick Charrette (2013) consultation emphasised the important of regeneration and enhancement of the assets which make up Wick’s distinctive built environment,

*“Local people are rightly passionate about the rich built and cultural heritage that the town possesses, and there is a strong desire to ensure that local landmarks such as the Carnegie Library and the Old Bakery can be preserved and utilised productively in advance of perhaps new development in less central locations. This could suggest that a policy of sequential testing of sites be developed to direct development towards the central area, and to adapt and re-use existing building structures wherever possible.”*

(Wick Charrette, 2013, 25)

There are two important strategic aims on Sustainable Development in the [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) (2013) which support this public view and provide guidance for decision making on buildings at risk. These aims underline the requirement to encourage reuse of existing vacant buildings over new build construction wherever possible, and to follow Historic Environment Scotland policy and guidance on demolition. Demolition should not be considered for any building or structure *“...which is considered to be of any value, either in itself or as part of a group...”* (SHEP, 3.35, 40).

#### 4.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Update the BARR including updates of status, restoration projects and potential additions
- ◆ Prepare a BAR strategy, potentially with a stakeholder group
- ◆ Consider support for feasibility studies where appropriate
- ◆ Be alert to potential buildings at risk and seek to keep vulnerable buildings in use
- ◆ Establish BAR ‘guardians’ to monitor the buildings at risk
- ◆ Prepare Development Briefs for priority and significance sites
- ◆ Follow sustainability aims and encourage reuse of existing vacant buildings over new build construction wherever possible

- ◆ Only consider demolition as a last resort
- ◆ Take action timeously the resolve disrepair issues, including taking legal action, before neglect or defects set in.

DRAFT

## 4.4 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### TO ADDRESS THREAT 2: VACANCY AND UNDERUSE

As outlined in Section 2.1 there has already been considerable reuse and sensitive redevelopment of sites and historic buildings in both Lower and Upper Pulteneytown. However, challenges and opportunities remain including a number of sites which incorporate some of the buildings at risk discussed in Section 4.3 and detailed in Appendix 4.

Several strategic documents and consultations have occurred over the last 30 years each highlighting possible types of reuse. Several of these have come to fruition, in particular there has been a significant rise in good quality housing provision in the last 15 years as well as office accommodation. Other uses which were mentioned during the THI project included workshops, studios, specialist retail, and community arts facilities (Wick Overall Vision Plan, BDA<sup>plus</sup> 2006), and more recently,

*“...there is a need and an opportunity to enhance the “experience economy” in the heart of town. This would include sensitive regeneration of the built environment, mixed-uses including residential, creative industry and cultural uses, cafes and restaurants and an accessible, vibrant waterfront.”*

(Wick Charrette, 2013, 17)

#### 4.4.1 POLICY

##### *Highland Historic Environment Strategy*

The [HHES](#) (2013) is a material consideration when proposals for development are being considered. It details strategic aims for the historic environment, some of the most relevant being Strategic Aims 2 & 3 Economics.

##### *Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan*

THC’s broad site approach is defined in its Local Development Plans, for Wick this is the [Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan](#) (CaSPlan; 2018). This plan will be used to guide development and investment in Wick from August 2018 toward 2035. The aims of this Conservation Area Management Plan accord with its outcomes.

##### *Wick Settlement Plan*

In the Wick Settlement Plan (Clauses 123 – 129, CaSPlan, 2018, 51), those clauses most relevant to the conservation area are repeated below:

Clause 124: *“Over recent years there has been renewed focus on the harbour and its role in supporting the growth of the renewable energy sector. There is need for the harbour to upgrade and expand its facilities to meet the needs of this growing industry. This is reinforced by the announcement that Wick will serve as the service base for the construction and operation of the Beatrice offshore windfarm. Renewed investment in the harbour may provide significant opportunities to regenerate the more central areas of the town.”*

Clause 125: *“The harbour sits within Pulteneytown which is a key part of the area’s heritage. [...] Pulteneytown was designed by Thomas Telford in the early 1800s as a herring fishing town and harbour at the estuary of the River Wick. Many of the historic buildings are empty or derelict and offer opportunities for conversion and redevelopment into commercial, tourism, community or residential uses.”*

Clause 126: *“The town centre remains the economic, social and cultural focal point of the town. The Town Centre First Policy will help to maintain this function by directing development which generates significant footfall towards the centre and restrict competing uses in other areas. Proposals for town centre regeneration and riverside rejuvenation, including greater accessibility, were also identified during the Wick Charrette. The principle of these changes is supported and reflected by sites around the river being allocated for development.”*

The relevant Placemaking Priorities in Wick are **highlighted** below:

- **Consolidate the existing town** with allocations which help to round off or infill rather than expand Wick in any one particular direction.
- Encourage all footfall generating uses towards the town centre to help enhance its vitality and vibrancy.
- **Support the expansion of Wick Harbour** to attract renewable energy sector opportunities which will help to revitalise the local economy.
- **Enhance Lower Pulteneytown** through building on the vibrant uses which already exist together with the **regeneration of vacant and derelict sites**.
- Employ a flexible approach to encourage the **reuse/redevelopment of surplus Council owned buildings**.
- **Conserve and promote the history and heritage of the town** and surrounding area to help create a positive image and attract more visitors.
- The creation of a new home for the National Nuclear Archive and North Highland Archive provides a range of wider employment and tourism opportunities.
- Development should contribute towards the delivery of the priority actions identified in the Council's **Wick Active Travel Audit**

#### *Wick Site Allocations*

Within the conservation area, and proposed boundary extension, there are two site allocations, WK22 Wick Harbour (refer Section 4.9 in relation to the former Co-Op and bakery) and WK12 Lower Pulteneytown.

WK12 covers the majority of the Lower Pulteneytown Character Area, with the exception that the properties on the south side of Bank Row, Harbour Place and Harbour Terrace are not included. The former Cooperative store and bakery have been allocated to WK22 (industrial use) although their former use was retail and in particular the upper building should be associated with the residential part of Upper Pulteneytown (compare figs 2 & 6).

WK12 is designated as ‘mixed use’, and uses may include housing, community, business, tourism, leisure, industrial, or retail; there is an Indicative Housing Capacity of 25 units. The Developer Requirements are:

*“Flood Risk Assessment may be required (no development in areas shown to be at risk of flooding); Sensitive siting and design due to being within a Conservation Area and due to the proximity of Listed Buildings and residential properties; Contaminated land survey and protected species survey may be required for specific sites; Part of Active Travel Network.*

(CaSPlan, 2018, 56)

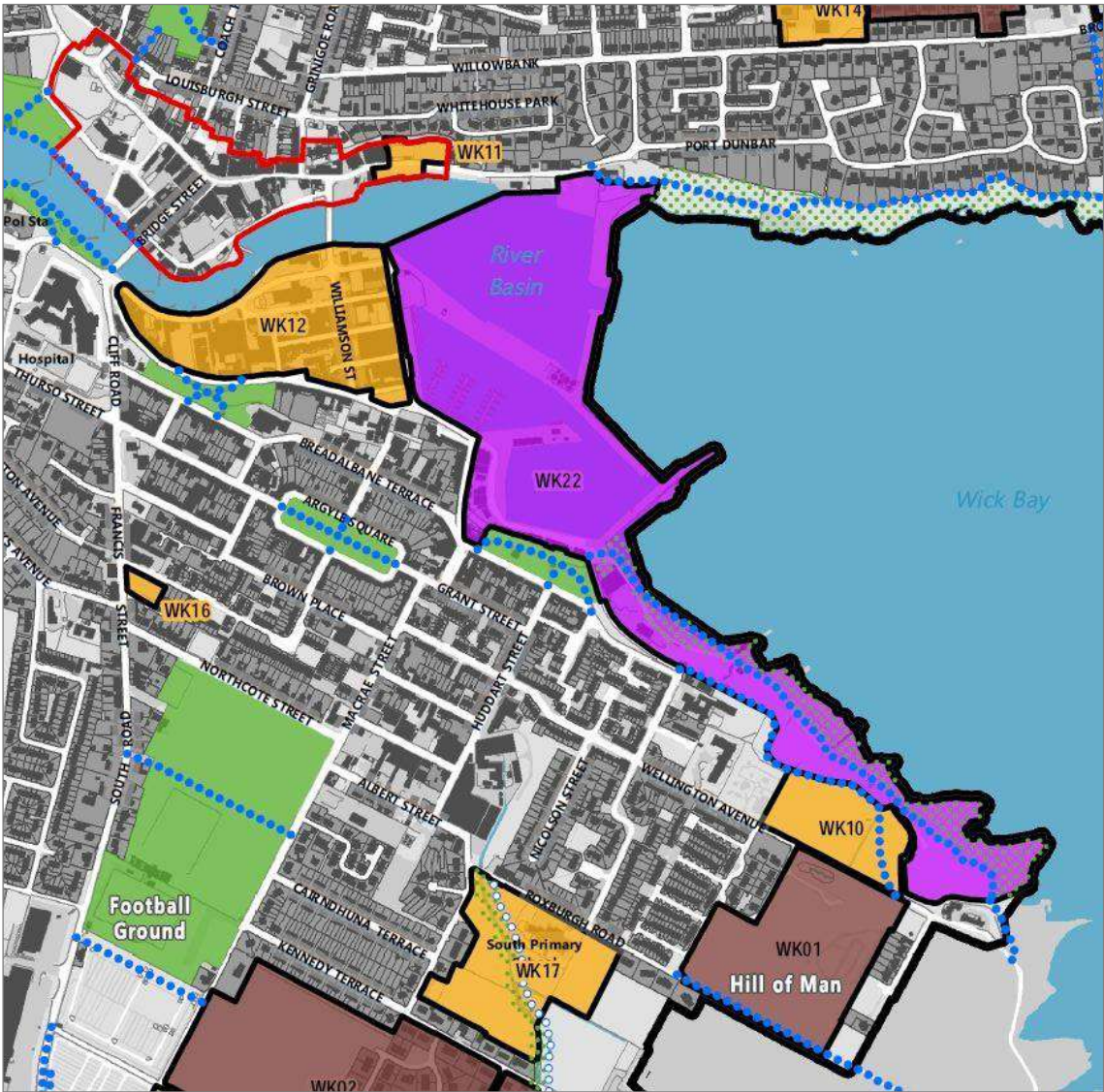


Figure 6: extract from CaSPlan 2018 showing Wick Settlement Plan © THC/Crown



#### 4.4.2 MANAGEMENT AND GUIDANCE

##### *Development Briefs*

No specific development sites are identified within the CaSPlan WK12 site allocation. THC could go further by preparing detailed guidance in a Development Brief. A brief could be for a specific site, urban block or potentially consider a large central area focused on the river and harbour which could incorporate aspirations for the Town Centre (similar to the Wick Charrette area). Appendix 2 sets out the criteria which may be included in a development brief.

##### *Other Possible Studies*

Appendix 2 sets out further detail on the following studies which may be applicable to development of historic buildings and sites. These include:

- Feasibility Studies
- Conservation Management Plans; Conservation Statements
- Heritage Statements

In advising owners and developers on specific sites, THC may wish to indicate which type of document is appropriate.

In addition to the suggestions above, THC may consider if any other information is required to manage the levels of underuse and vacancy in Pulteneytown. For example, the *Wick Town Centre Health Check* (2018) recorded vacancy and condition of retail and business units in the historic town centre, and retail surveys are commonly made by local authorities to monitor change in that sector. In Pulteneytown the level of retail activity may not merit such studies, however a baseline on general vacancy could be helpful. This may be an activity which could be led by a stakeholder group or agency with support from THC.

#### 4.4.3 PRACTICALITIES: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES

##### *Urban Blocks*

Three urban blocks have been identified where opportunities for development may exist or arise in the future. Such blocks include Buildings at Risk, underused or vacant buildings, and inappropriate or negative development. The blocks are:

1. *Urban block: Martha Terrace / Williamson Street / Harbour Quay / Burn Street*
2. *Former boat builders yard / Rose Street and Bank Row*
3. *Urban block: Union Street / River Street / Miller Street*

Some of these buildings and sites are in partial or full use presently, and their inclusion does not in any way assume they are not viable, only that the physical form of the site or buildings could benefit from repair, reuse and/or enhancement. Their inclusion allows the opportunity for dialogue on potential business planning and location. This method has been successful in the past freeing up sites for enhanced use. Several of these sites have been under consideration by THC and other agencies for several decades and various strategies have been prepared in the past.

A detailed description of each site is provided in Appendix 5. This could be used as a foundation for a Development Brief for each site.

### *Negative buildings*

A number of later 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings have been constructed in the conservation area which are negative in terms of form, scale and or materials, for example the British Telecom building and the swimming pool (refer Section 4.5.2; figs 7 & 8). Appropriate redevelopment of these sites using a Development Brief, should be considered and promoted by THC should they become available.

There is a presumption against demolition in a conservation area, however where a building is identified as having no heritage significance and is of an inappropriate design which has a negative impact of the conservation area, then its replacement with a high quality building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area should be supported. Conservation Area Consent is required for demolition in the conservation area, accompanied by a planning application for redevelopment of the site (SHEP, 3.59, 40); further procedural guidelines on determining such applications is provided by Historic Environment Scotland.

#### 4.4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Review sites proposed in this CAMP and consider producing Development Briefs
- ◆ Consider support for feasibility studies where appropriate
- ◆ Advise owners and developers on requirements for Conservation Plans, Conservation and Heritage Statements
- ◆ Consider the need for further data collection on vacancy in the conservation area
- ◆ Follow sustainability aims and encourage reuse of existing vacant buildings over new build construction wherever possible
- ◆ Only consider demolition as a last resort
- ◆ Follow CAMP recommendations for Buildings at Risk on development sites

## 4.5 QUALITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

### *TO ADDRESS THREAT 3: INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING UNSYMPATHETIC ALTERATIONS*

There is a small proportion of later development (i.e. after 1905) in the conservation area (fig 7 & CAA, Map 6.2). This is principally in Lower Pulteneytown and involved redevelopment of a number of former redundant industrial sites, such as the gas works in the mid-1990s, which occurred shortly before the greater part of Lower Pulteneytown was designation as a conservation area in 2000. In Upper Pulteneytown, redevelopment was more prevalent immediately to the east out with the conservation area boundary and comprises local authority housing constructed over a number of periods, but most notably from the 1970s.

As highlighted in Section 4.4 there are opportunities for new development within the conservation area including potential reuse and adaptation of existing buildings, and new buildings, in particular in Lower Pulteneytown. New development may also arise from owners wishing to alter or extend existing property.

#### 4.5.1 POLICY

A significant number of the developments from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are inappropriate to the character and appearance of the conservation area and have a negative impact. They do not in any way set a precedent for current standards for new buildings or refurbishment. With our heightened understanding and regard for Wick's cultural and built heritage, policies and guidance are now in place to protect the conservation area.

In all cases, in assessing planning applications within the Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area (or which might impact on its setting) THC should carefully consider the proposals in relation to the Local Development Plan policies (HwLDP 2012 & CaSPlan 2018). This includes THC's overarching vision to create "*high quality places*" where the "*...built and cultural heritage is celebrated and valued assets are safeguarded.*" (CaSPlan, 2018, 1).

The [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) (HHES, 2013) is a material consideration when proposals for development are being considered. Strategic Aims 30, 31 and 33 relate to the Design Quality of buildings.

[Planning Advice Note 68 Design Statements](#) (PAN 68, 2003) affirms that design is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

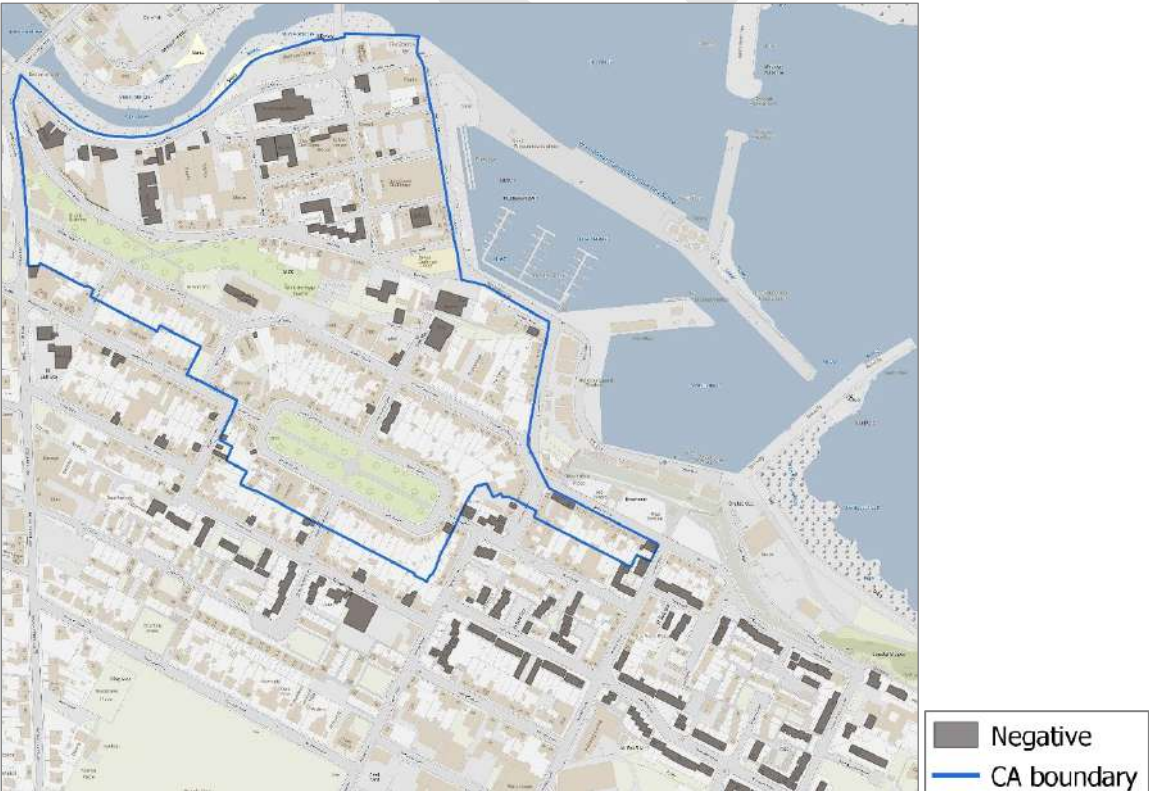


Figure 7: (top) Current Ordnance Survey map overlaid indicating 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings.  
© THC /Crown

Figure 8: (below) Current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with negative buildings.  
© THC /Crown

## 4.5.2 MANAGEMENT

### *Positive and Negative Buildings*

To aid management, the appraisal sought to identify buildings which make a ‘positive’ contribution to the conservation area but are not listed (‘positive buildings’) and also those which make a neutral contribution or cause a negative impact (fig 8; CAA Map 6.3). Whilst these terms are frequently used in Scotland’s historic environment sector, there are no definitions in legislation or policy. Historic England offers a useful checklist for buildings which make a positive contribution and this is outlined with an explanation of the term ‘positive buildings’ in Appendix 1.

If positive buildings can be said to be characterful due to the presence of distinguishing features (as outlined in the character appraisal) then ‘negative buildings’ can be defined as absent of those distinguishing characteristic features. Negative buildings in the conservation area can be categorised in two forms:

1. Traditional buildings of value which have been altered to such a degree that their current appearance has a negative impact on the building, its neighbours and the conservation area (figs 9 & 10). This is not to say they have no value or significance in respect of the authenticity of the site, however it means that opportunities to enhance such buildings and restore traditional appearance and character should be sought when either individual opportunities arise, or as part of a broad site approach.
2. Any building where its form, scale, materials, colour and/or quality detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area (fig 11).

## 4.5.3 GUIDANCE

### *National Guidance*

Historic Environment Scotland has published guidance in [New Design in Historic Settings](#) (2010) to promote the key principles. These principles can be used by the local authority as a checklist in assessing planning applications and are summarised in Appendix 3.

### *Design Statements*

[Planning Advice Note 68 Design Statements](#) (PAN 68, 2003) provides detailed advice on when design statements should be used and what they should include. PAN 68 recommends that local authorities should set out in local plans the circumstances where they will expect design statements to be prepared.

It is recommended that THC consider design statements for any new development which may have an impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area. Appendix 3 provides further details.

### *Additional Design Guidelines for Wick Pulteneytown*

The [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) (HHES, 2013) provides broad strategic aims for new design, however THC could consider specific guidance. The checklists in Section 4.5.4 could provide a basis for more detailed guidelines for Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area.



Figure 9: Inappropriate alterations: the importance of retaining architectural detail can be illustrated by comparison of the historic image of Assembly Rooms on Sinclair Terrace and its form in 2019. Constructed as the Pulteneytown Academy in 1838, stripping the building of its architectural features has removed much of the building's original character. Note historic image shows original 'sea gravel' on road and Caithness stone pavement and kerb. © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection.



Figure 10: Inappropriate alterations: an example of past unsuitable change to a traditional building of heritage value which results in a negative impact. The original Caithness stone has been covered by a modern cement finish, the original windows and doors have been replaced; the window design and opening method has been altered; a large box dormer has been constructed which changes the form of the roof and obscures the original pitched slope; the original slate finish has been replaced in concrete tile. Buildings such as this can be enhanced and restored when opportunities arise through planning management.



Figure 11: Inappropriate design: an example of a later 20<sup>th</sup> century building design which is inappropriate to the character and appearance of the conservation area in terms of form (low horizontal emphasis and flat roof), materials and colour, the bright white is in stark contrast to the adjacent stonework and draws further attention to the building. Buildings such as this may offer opportunities for redevelopment or enhancement through planning management.

#### 4.5.4 PRACTICALITIES: PLANNING CHECKLISTS

##### DESIGN FORM

New development, building alterations and extensions should accord with the prevailing form of the historic environment in terms of scale, massing and historic layout.

Pulteneytown was built following the strict guidelines of the British Fisheries Society as set out by designer Thomas Telford (refer CAA Sections 3.4.3, 4.1.3, 4.1.4). This places greater significance on, and requires greater scrutiny of planning proposals, to such factors as height, plot width and street pattern and a requirement to respect the historic urban structure.

Specific guidance for New Design Form in Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area:

- ◆ Orientate buildings to the street; virtually all principal elevations address the street and are built hard to the street line, rebuilding to the street line should be a requirement including corner locations for existing gap sites;
- ◆ Retain the principles of the Telford plan as the defining feature of the street pattern; respect the hierarchy of the street layout;
- ◆ Maintain /reinforce the courtyard layout within blocks in Lower Pulteneytown with pend access to principal streets;
- ◆ Retain pends and closes where they exist and encourage reintroduction where lost or original street arches survive;
- ◆ Consider carefully any changes to the density on a site, in particular in Upper Pulteneytown;
- ◆ Adopt appropriate building and storey heights; do not exceed the historic building heights; respect the hierarchy of building type to height, e.g. warehouses, residential, secondary support buildings;
- ◆ Use simple double pitched roofs 43-47 degrees traditionally, avoiding using the wide shallow pitches on some later 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings; piend roofs also acceptable dependant on location;
- ◆ Flat roofs should be avoided;
- ◆ Skews and chimney stacks can articulate the building form and should be encouraged where there is a function or construction justification;
- ◆ Articulate across the length of a building, for example the number and definition of bays; observe the 'rhythm' of the street / urban block;
- ◆ Consider the proportion of openings; support vertically emphasis;
- ◆ Consider subdivision of fenestration and openings in relation to historic patterns;
- ◆ Extensions should be subservient in scale and volume to the original structure;
- ◆ Extensions to an existing gable, the roof ridge should not be greater in height than the main roof ridge;
- ◆ Box dormer roof extensions should not be supported.



## SETTING

New development, building alterations and extensions should accord with the setting of the conservation area including both the urban setting and the wider landscape setting of Wick harbour, river and headlands.

The topography of the site was fundamental in the design layout of the upper and lower towns and generates differing characteristics and views to and from each area.

The immediate setting of the development is also important: the treatment of the plot, its boundaries and the streetscape.

Specific guidance for New Design Setting in Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area :

- ◆ The setting of any new development in relation to existing buildings on the urban block or terrace and neighbouring blocks which may be impacted; relationship to any landmarks;
- ◆ Establish views to and from the site and protect significant views within the public realm. Refer to section 4.1.6 of the conservation area appraisal. Be aware that rear as well as front elevations can impact on views for example the rear elevations of properties on Breadalbane Crescent. Be cognisant that views may change over time, for example mature trees on the open green spaces of Academy Braes have changed the views between the upper and lower towns. Where gap sites are to be developed there may be opportunities to create new views, visual connections and desire lines.
- ◆ Trees and private gardens should be maintained and managed as an important asset. Any proposed new development should protect important trees and green space; there should be a reluctance to approve the removal of green space for hard landscaping;
- ◆ Existing stone boundary walls and other established traditional boundary enclosures such as ironwork railings, gates, and stone piers should be retained; encourage repair and reinstatement as part of new development where site appropriate;
- ◆ New boundary treatments should use traditional materials and be of appropriate design to suit the locality;
- ◆ Materials for hard landscaping, roads and pavements should be high quality and carefully considered including: the original character of surfaces, suitability for traditional surface finishes; existing finishes and any recent reinstatement; refer Section 4.6;
- ◆ Wherever possible, extensions should be confined to the rear of properties and their impact on the conservation area fully considered; there should be no relaxation of the design standards.

## MATERIALS AND DETAILING

Much of the 'quality' of new development, alterations and extensions is derived from the choice and successful use of materials and their detailing. Where traditional materials are no longer available, or not selected for other good reasons, then the use of 'new' materials which are alien to the conservation area should be very carefully considered and controlled through the planning process.

Specific guidance for New Design Materials & Detailing in Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area:

- ◆ Use materials which are high quality and which support sustainability;
- ◆ Seek to retain, repair / restore and or recycle materials on existing sites;
- ◆ Seek to retain and repair / restore architectural features on existing sites;
- ◆ Support the use of traditional materials where appropriate; materials such as timber, natural slate, lead and stone, not only harmonise with the historic environment but are repairable (not requiring replacement in a limited time span);
- ◆ Consider future maintenance of and safe access to the external fabric in new design and detailing; do not accept alterations which restrict future maintenance;
- ◆ Do not approve materials such as UPVC gutters or concrete tiles which are not considered appropriate to the historic environment;
- ◆ Allow colours which complement the palette of materials traditionally found in the conservation area and have regard to historical precedent; use colour sparingly such as to emphasise design features on a case by case basis and with care;
- ◆ Wall finishes in natural stone should generally follow historic materials i.e. Caithness stone and some sandstones; coursing, colour, texture and pointing to be carefully considered in respect of individual designs;
- ◆ Where natural stone walls remain they shall be repaired and incorporated into any new designs;
- ◆ Where stonework is not currently painted or rendered, a coating should not be applied unless traditional evidence of a historic coating can be provided, or there are strong technical reasons;
- ◆ Renders and harling should generally follow historic pattern and appearance which included traditional lime harling (hand cast finish) and smooth flat renders on more refined facades. Historic evidence and the urban context of other properties should always be taken into account. Heavy wet dash and dry dash cement finishes are not appropriate. The use of self-coloured proprietary renders may be considered appropriate on new buildings but always in the context of the site and relationship to any historic buildings;
- ◆ Brick is not commonly found in the conservation area and should be discouraged; modern walling materials such as artificial or reconstituted stone and concrete block are also not appropriate.

## MATERIALS AND DETAILING (cont.)

- ◆ The use of materials should reflect the location and hierarchy of the building, for example stone or rendered finishes will be more applicable to the principal streets, however development within lots and to the rear of sites could use a different palette of materials including timber cladding and corrugated metal sheets (traditional profiles) for example taking inspiration from the previous historic buildings; natural products such as zinc or lead sheeting could also be considered;
- ◆ Pitched roof finishes are general a grey/blue slate, a number of major repairs have been undertaken in new slate which is stronger in colour and smoother in finish which should not be considered as a precedent. Select new slate with care to match the traditional roofscape of the conservation area in terms of texture, colour, course grading and thickness. It is particularly important to look at neighbouring properties and the roofscape of the street in general as well as any on site or documentary evidence of the original roof finish. Interlocking concrete tiles, artificial slate and felt tile roofs are not appropriate;
- ◆ Flat roof finishes should follow traditional precedent such as lead or zinc sheet with associated detailing; roofing felts or other modern proprietary coatings are not appropriate;
- ◆ Rainwater goods should be cast-iron or aluminium; use of uPVC rainwater goods is inappropriate and not sustainable. Placement of downpipes should be carefully considered in respect of principal elevations.
- ◆ Windows should normally be of timber construction for painting and detailed on an individual basis to suit the building and site context; operating systems generally to be traditional methods including sash and case or side hung casements and which do not disrupt the building elevation when open;
- ◆ Doors should normally be of timber construction for painting and detailed on an individual basis to suit the site context; surviving original local designs could be used for reference;
- ◆ uPVC windows or doors are inappropriate;
- ◆ Follow THC's Supplementary Guidance [\*Historic Windows & Doors\*](#)
- ◆ Shopfront design including materials and detailing should adhere to THC's Supplementary Guidance [\*Shopfront Design Guide\*](#).
- ◆ Materials for extensions and alterations should follow the general guidance for all New Design.

#### 4.5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Adopt *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal* as supplementary guidance in planning process for new development;
- ◆ Adhere to THC's [HHES](#) Strategic Aims for Design Quality;
- ◆ Understand and take a consistent approach on the interpretation of positive and negative buildings;
- ◆ Request a Design Statement for all significant new design in the conservation area; integrate this requirement into Design Briefs for development sites and future LDP site allocations;
- ◆ Produce Development Briefs for larger sites;
- ◆ Seek enhancement or redevelopment of large sites if opportunity arises;
- ◆ Consider producing specific new design guidance for Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area;
- ◆ Promote the use of existing design guidance from the Scottish Government and HES.

DRAFT

## 4.6 QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM

### TO ADDRESS THREAT 4: QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM

Considerable investment in the enhancement of the public realm, especially in Lower Pulteneytown, has taken place over the last 20 years. This commenced with reintroduction of traditional street surfaces, lighting and railings on the north side of River Street, and continued in Lower Pulteneytown under the Townscape Heritage Initiative (2003-2007). The latter involved repair of the Black Stairs, artistic metal work to the former salt cellars entrances, and creation of the Telford Trail (with the Wick Paths Project) including carved flagstones and interpretation boards. Further public realm works were not part of the CARS programme (2007-2013), which would suggest that the last significance investment in the public realm was approximately 15 years ago.

#### 4.6.1 POLICY

##### *National Planning Policy*

[Scotland's National Planning Framework](#) (NPF3, 2014) promotes quality, sustainability and resilience in the public realm, alongside improving accessibility and sustainable transport, whilst seeking to reduce the impact of car use on town centres.

##### *The Highland Council Planning Policy*

The [Highland-wide Local Development Plan](#) (HwLDP, 2012, 91) states that its retail policies are designed to encourage economic opportunities as well as improvements to the public realm of meeting places and social spaces.

##### *Wick Active Travel Audit*

The [CaSPlan](#) (2018) provides place making priorities for Wick (refer Section 4.4.1), one of which is that development should contribute towards the delivery of the priority actions identified in the Council's [Wick Active Travel Audit](#). This audit from 2011, recommends priorities for improved pedestrian and cyclist movement throughout Wick. It acknowledges that Wick has a 'walking culture' with higher than national average results for those who walk to work, but it also highlights problematic areas such as movement at the south end of both bridges where crossing is difficult for pedestrians and sightlines limited for cyclists.

Parts of the conservation area, and the proposed extension area, are included in the audit's recommended priorities, these are:

- Audit Priority 3: A99 Active Travel Improvements

This includes recommendations to:

- Widen the pavement of Cliff Road;
- Possible improvements to the cross roads of Cliff Road at Dempster Street junction;
- Introduction of traffic signals in lieu of the roundabout at the Bridge of Wick; this junction includes the landmark MacKays Hotel at the entry to the conservation area.

- Audit Priority 6: Old Wick Spurs

This priority looks to improve links from Old Wick and Upper Pulteneytown to South Road. This could include:

- Work to Argyle Square such as improved or feature lighting at night;

- Structural works on Dempster Street, Grant Street and Huddart Street potentially altering the current design; all either in the conservation area, proposed extension, or immediately adjacent to that.
- DDA compliant flush dropped kerbs with appropriate tactile paving at the junctions of Dempster Street with Malcolm and Beaufoy Streets, and along Grant and Huddart Streets.
- Dempster Street is noted as having a poorly maintained mono-block surface and the audit proposes consideration be given,

*“...to widening the footway and replacing the surfacing with a more uniform high quality tarmac pavement.”*

(Halcrow, 2011, 31)

In response to Priority 3 and 6, it should be noted that the pavement and road widths in Pulteneytown, including Dempster Street, were set out as a regulation of the Telford Plan (refer CAA Section 4.1.3). THC should make a carefully assessment of the visual impact on the character of the streetscape, particularly on the important vista of Dempster Street, of any proposed works. Proposals should be submitted to THC planning for preliminary discussion should the above recommendations be progressed.

Similarly, tarmac is not an appropriate finish in historic environments, even if used widely. If improvements were to be made, the reinstatement of Caithness stone and repair/reinstatement of granite kerbstones is considered more in keeping to the character and appearance of the conservation area and surrounding streets. This approach has been used in Lower Pulteneytown.

This priority also recommends that changes are made to assist DDA compliance. Whilst this is a desirable functional change to improve access and movement for all, the method and materials for this intervention need to be carefully considered and sensitively designed to the historic environment and not be standard coloured concrete paving blocks (fig 14).

- [Audit Priority 7 Upper Pulteneytown to Wick](#)

This priority looks to improve the link between Upper Pulteneytown and Wick town centre with a principal route through Argyle Square via the Black Stairs and Williamson Street to Wick Harbour Bridge. It is suggested that THC build on the earlier restoration work, and that the traditional finishes are extended onto Upper and Lower Dunbar Streets. The audit acknowledges the importance of the Black Stairs as a pedestrian link and proposes opportunities to promote the route including further branding or public art.

The audit recommends that as Lower Pulteneytown is regenerated, it is essential that provision for walking and cycling are taken into account. This broadly aligns with suggestions in the [Wick Charrette](#) (2013) around a more pedestrian friendly public realm on Harbour Quay and the side streets leading from Harbour Quay to Williamson Street. However, the charrette’s suggestion may counter the audit’s principle that Williamson Street is the main pedestrian link. Further development of preferences around public realm improvements and pedestrian prioritisations would be required to come to solutions which suit both movement of people and traffic, and what may be the best fit for any interventions in the historic environment. Any work to alter or reduce traffic flow must be carefully considered as it could have a detrimental effect on the character of the area and impact upon its vitality and viability.

- [Audit Priority 7 Roundabout at Martha Street /Wick Harbour Bridge](#)

The audit recommends examining the feasibility of removing this roundabout if harbour traffic permits. This could offer an opportunity for enhancement in the conservation area. This form of road movement and design is alien to the historic street pattern and is an issue in many conservation areas. The relationship of the historic built environment to modern vehicular traffic requirements can be challenging, with standard engineering solutions often at odds with the principle to protect and enhance the conservation area. This roundabout is an example of that, its construction effectively required the removal of the corner buildings from each urban block (fig 12).

The Wick Charrette (2013) suggested the concept of an ‘arrival square’ at this junction to improve the sense of arrival into Lower Pulteneytown from Wick Harbour Bridge. Whilst removal of the roundabout could be beneficial to the character of the conservation area, the introduction of a public square would be difficult to justify in relation to the urban structure and grain of Lower Pulteneytown. Regeneration and reinforcing the historic environment at this point would be preferable with focus on public space maintained on the harbour quayside and river fronts.



Figure 12: view towards Williamson Street with the expanse of the former swimming pool car park in the foreground having a negative impact on the conservation area. The original buildings on this block and the corner buildings to the east on Burn Street have been removed effected in part by the introduction of a roundabout (on left). Reinstatement of street fronting buildings or a suitable high quality finish to the car parking area would be beneficial to the conservation area.

#### 4.6.2 MANAGEMENT

Strategic Aim 32 (Design Quality) of the [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) (2013) supports protection of the historic public realm and high quality enhancement.

Conservation areas require considered management and maintenance of the public realm, and the use of appropriate signage and materials for traffic management and street furniture. The effective working relationships between different council departments and relevant external agencies, especially public utility companies, are vital.

There are three main themes for management of the public realm in the Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area:

1. Protection and Maintenance
2. Design
3. Enhancement

#### *1. Protection and maintenance*

This includes:

- Maintenance and appropriate repair of original surviving surfaces and features.
- Appropriate management of restored high quality surfaces and reinstated / high quality street furniture, lighting, public art and interpretation etc.

One of the most common difficulties can be managing the impact of work undertaken by utility companies who can undertake work using permitted development rights. Examples can be found where utility companies, after opened up newly restored and high quality street surfaces, have repaired in standard tarmac. The benefit of the enhancement and high quality public realm is immediately diluted, as is the usually considerable public investment made in resurfacing. Where original materials or details are lost this cannot be recovered and further dilutes the character and authenticity of the historic place. As PAN 71 states,

*“It is essential for planning authorities, roads authorities and utility companies to work together to identify sensitive areas and agree a commitment to sensitive reinstatement”*

*“The Scottish Road Works Register system is used by utility companies to notify road authorities of their intention to carry out works. If the conservation area is identified on the system as an area of ‘special designation’, the local authority may, in certain cases, be able to prescribe the specification for reinstatement. This should be based on an agreed maintenance schedule. Local authorities should ensure that the Register contains up to date and accurate information”*

(PAN 71, 2004, 12)

PAN 71 mentions a ‘maintenance schedule’ and it would be useful to have an agreed document such as this with specifications for materials and details of the public realm which all bodies, including local authority departments can access. This can also be used to identify any potential difficulties, for example in procurement of materials, or training needs for local operatives.

It is also important that street furniture is be well maintained to ensure the recent investment is protected and that neglect does not set in which bring down the appearance of the area. It appears that traditional lantern lighting was installed in most of Lower Pulteneytown (except Union Street) both lighting standards and wall mounted lights. The wall mounted lanterns have suffered from impact damage. In addition modern flood lights are attached to several buildings including prominent harled gable ends, which detracts from the attractive traditional finish and could damage the harl.



## 2. Design

### *Interaction of public and private spaces.*

The local authority should look to coordinate through development management the interface of public and private spaces, for example where pavement finishes meet a large private parking area, or loading areas next to industrial buildings. A consistent approach to materials and quality standards across private planning permissions and public authority design decisions will harmonise the appearance of open spaces and streets throughout the conservation area.

### *Parking, road markings and signage*

Parking can pose a challenge to character and appearance in conservation areas, both on-street parking and larger designated car parks. Provision of parking will relate to broader local authority strategy on traffic management and recommendations such as those in the Wick Active Travel Audit. Effective traffic movement, loading and parking are an essential part of many businesses so it is not to say parking should be excluded from a conservation area, just that its location and physical appearance be given particular consideration. Parking may be under local authority or private ownership.

In Lower Pulteneytown there is parking on-street and at larger premises such as the medical centre, former swimming pool and recently for the Beatrice facilities on Telford Street (fig 13). Each of these car parks create large expanses of tarmac often having a negative visual impact emphasised by boldly coloured traffic signage. Whilst safe movement for parking is essential there are likely to be more sensitive means to provide this such as the use of alternating surface textures and suitable colour changes.

In any future developments consideration should be given to the most appropriate location, design and materials for parking areas which will minimise the impact on the conservation area, and opportunities to enhance existing poor quality parking areas taken when they arise such as at the former swimming pool site (fig 12). In both this case, and on Telford Street, the reinstatement of street fronting buildings should always be a preferred option to open and visual parking provision.

### *Street furniture and signage.*

The public realm is effected by the design and quality of street furniture and signage. Streetscape can become unattractive and cluttered if there is:

- An overuse of street furniture;
- Redundant items are not removed (excepting items of historic significance);
- A lack of co-ordination and different elements are added over time by different organisations;
- Standard, off-the-shelf designs are used;
- Items are not maintained.

For example, Argyle Square is a significant feature and community asset; however, some elements of street furniture are of standard or poor design quality, such as the use of ‘wheelie’ bins for litter on the central path, and generally there is a lack of continuity in the design and materials used for information boards, seating and street furniture. A coordination of approach and an overall vision of the streetscape is required. This could start with a public realm / streetscape audit to fully record the existing fabric and plan accordingly for future management, change and enhancement opportunities. This audit may be undertaken by a local community group with appropriate support and guidance from THC; this would also allow for feedback on the streetscape through community representation. A regular monitoring programme should be put in place.



Figure 13: Parking and changes to traffic movement introduced as part of the regeneration of the eastern urban blocks either side of Telford Street: (top) open parking area created from former curing yards after loss of internal and street fronting buildings; parking area is highly visible; (centre) partly obscured parking within the block is a more sensitive approach although the finishes are still standardised they are less visible from the public realm; (below) to facilitate new uses Telford Street has been made one way with the standard blue signage standing out against the traditional finishes.

### 3. Enhancement

Notwithstanding a detailed street audit, the following priority areas could benefit from streetscape enhancement as carried out in Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area:

- MacKay Hotel corner (with *Wick Active Travel Audit* recommendation to remove roundabout);
- Union Street was not part of the enhancement carried out under the THI programme. The tarmac pavements are in poor repair and management of Academy Braes has been highlighted along with redevelopment opportunities;
- South Side of River Street (with future redevelopment opportunities);
- Roundabout at Wick Harbour Bridge and swimming pool car park (with any action in line recommendations in the *Wick Active Travel Audit* / redevelopment of the pool site).
- Argyle Square and radiant streets (in line with areas recommended in the *Wick Active Travel Audit*).

#### *Suitable surface finishes*

It is recommended that any further enhancement or new work in the conservation area continues to use Caithness stone flags, stone setts and kerbs always with reference to retaining any original or surviving traditional finishes or parts thereof and with reference to historic images.

#### 4.6.3 GUIDANCE

As mentioned above, THC should look to create a ‘maintenance schedule’ or similar document with records of the material specifications and details used in the public realm. This could also provide guidance of appropriate materials and design for new development and enhancement schemes. This document should be accessible to all local authority departments and external bodies working in the public realm.



Mixed and cluttered street furniture: enhancement gained by using a traditional lantern and street sign is offset by cabling, satellite dish position and standard one-way road sign. Note the dropped kerb using Caithness flagstone.



Reinstated lime harling on prominent gable with traditional street sign alongside a standard flood light and modern white lamps lacking appropriate and coordinated design. Note dropped kerb constructed using textured concrete paving which is not in keeping with the Caithness flagstone.

Figure 14: inappropriate street furniture and unattractive streetscape.

#### 4.6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Maintain and manage the public realm including restored and original street surfaces, street furniture, lighting and public art
- ◆ Review [Wick Active Travel Audit](#) recommendations in respect of the findings of the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Appraisal*; take forward any interventions in the historic environment of the conservation area, the proposed boundary extension, and its immediate environs with regard to its significance, character and appearance;
- ◆ Investigate if reinstated areas of Pulteneytown streetscape can be entered as ‘special designations’ in the [Scottish Road Works Register](#);
- ◆ Prepare a ‘maintenance schedule’ with specifications for materials and details of the public realm of Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area and share with relevant local authority departments and external agencies as applicable;
- ◆ Any road management in the conservation area should aim to follow traditional traffic movement patterns and not force over-engineered solutions on the historic environment.
- ◆ Further enhancement or new work in the conservation area should continue to use Caithness stone flags, stone setts and kerbs and retain any original or surviving traditional finishes or parts thereof.
- ◆ THC should look to coordinate the interface of public and private streetscape with a consistent approach to materials and quality standards to harmonise the appearance of open spaces and streets throughout the conservation area.
- ◆ Avoid large open car parks; look to incorporate car parking within sites out of public view.
- ◆ Where car parking is visible from the public realm, aim to reduce its impact with sensitive selection of surface materials, minimal signage and the road markings only required for road safety; consider use of colour carefully.
- ◆ Undertake a streetscape audit, potentially with a stakeholder or community group, to assess the condition and design of the public realm and priority actions.
- ◆ Consider public realm enhancement at:
  - MacKay Hotel corner (with *Wick Active Travel Audit* recommendation to remove roundabout);
  - Union Street (with green space management of Academy Braes / future development opportunities);
  - South side of River Street (with future redevelopment opportunities);
  - Roundabout at Wick Harbour Bridge and swimming pool car park (with any action in line with recommendations in the *Wick Active Travel Audit* / redevelopment of the pool site).
  - Argyle Square and radiant streets (in line with areas recommended in the *Wick Active Travel Audit*).

## 4.7 GREEN SPACE MANAGEMENT

### TO ADDRESS THREAT 5: GREEN SPACE MANAGEMENT

Although Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area is predominantly a ‘built’ environment, there are a number of significant green and open spaces:

- Argyle Square
- Academy Braes
- The Memorial Garden on Bank Row
- Braehead (proposed conservation area extension)
- Bank Row, the Round House, Harbour Place and Breadalbane Crescent terraces: land and gardens to the rear forming the transitional slope between Upper and Lower Pulteneytown.
- Nos. 4-13 Breadalbane Crescent front gardens.
- Private green space and gardens to the rear of residential properties.

Section 4.1.5 of the Conservation Area Appraisal provides further information on these sites.

#### 4.7.1 POLICY

##### *National Planning Policy*

Both NPF3 (2014) and SSP (2014) support open and green spaces:

*“Planning should protect, enhance and promote green infrastructure, including open space and green networks, as an integral component of successful place making.”*

(SPP, 2014, 50)

[Planning Advice Note 71](#): *Conservation Area Management (2004)* also emphasises the importance of trees and woodland management in conservation areas.

##### *Local Planning Policy*

Public spaces can form a green network, and reference is made to the role of Argyle Square in routes through Wick as a recommended priority in the *Wick Active Travel Audit* (Section 4.6.1). The existing routes across Argyle Square, Academy Braes and Braehead are all designated core paths in the CaSPlan (2018) with each allocated as green space.

##### *Private Green Space*

Private green space is more difficult to legislate, however planning permission is required in the conservation area for example for the introduction of certain types of hard landscaping, and smaller scale residential development can be managed through the planning process. Larger new developments are required to consider green and open space and trees in the design of the development.

##### *Tree Policy*

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in the conservation area or its immediate boundaries, however mature trees make an important contribution to soften an otherwise hard urban design and are prominent in distant views of the upper town. All trees within a conservation areas are protected under Section 172 of the [Town and Country Planning \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#). Before carrying out any felling or surgery works to a tree in a conservation area, owners are required to seek permission from the local authority giving details of the intended works. Councils can serve a Tree Preservation Order to protect

individual trees or woodlands, and can also protect and promote tree planting through conditions in planning consents. Planning Conditions for development can include requirements to retain trees, management of new and existing trees and opportunities for new planting.

#### 4.7.2 MANAGEMENT

Green and open space management will include the maintenance of grass, pathways and railings, trees and other planting. It also requires planning for future planting, tree management, and repair or renewal of street furniture in public spaces (refer Section 4.6). Trees in particular make an important contribution to the open space of Argyle Square and Academy Braes and should be properly managed and protected. The Academy Braes is a historic open green space but the area has an unkempt feel with overgrown vegetation. Local stakeholders have raised concern over the safety of mature trees, and the overgrown nature of the space could have a negative impact. Legal responsibility for this area has been questioned, although it is defined as public green space in the [Wick Greenspace Audit \(2010\)](#)

It is recommended that THC undertake a review of the condition of public open green spaces in Pulteneytown including Argyle Square, Academy Braes and Braehead. Such a review should involve local community groups and the appropriate stakeholders such as Argyle Square Community Association. The review should take the opportunity to clarify ownership and maintenance responsibilities, and lead to production of a Management Plan for each space which provides details of, but is not restricted to, the following:

- Define regular maintenance regimes;
- Identify important trees and species to be managed through a tree survey;
- Define strategy for maintenance of planting, for example 'semi-natural' environment;
- Identify significant built features, such as original steps and walling at the Academy Braes, to be protected (fig 15; CAA Section 4.2.5);
- Record current street furniture, its condition and any new requirements;
- Establish design criteria, species, materials and methods to be used in maintaining the space;
- Set out a vision for enhancement.

This work could form part, or share information with, the streetscape audit discussed in Section 4.6 and any plans under the *Wick Active Travel Audit*. A combined approach is essential.



Fig 15: the well-established route across Academy Braes, leading to the upper town, and originally Pulteneytown Academy (now the Assembly Rooms); the original Caithness stone walling and steps remain although the former rough shingle path has been tarmacked with a standard modern metal handrail fitted. A management plan for this green space should include architectural features such as the walling and steps and plans for their retention, maintenance and future repair using appropriate materials and methods. Whilst the green space is semi-natural (rather than a formal landscape) it is very overgrown.

#### 4.7.3 GUIDANCE

THC has supplementary guidance on [Trees, Woodlands and Development](#).

#### 4.7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Follow national and local policy on promotion of green open spaces and networks to enhance the conservation area.
- ◆ Resist the loss of private and public green space
- ◆ Encourage the introduction of appropriate open green space, trees and green routes in new development / redevelopment of sites where applicable to the historic environment.
- ◆ Protect existing trees in the conservation area
- ◆ Review the condition of key open green spaces: Argyle Square, Academy Braes and Braehead; clarify ownership and maintenance responsibilities.
- ◆ Prepare Management Plans for the key open green spaces of Argyle Square, Academy Braes and Braehead in consultation with stakeholders, the local community and residents.
- ◆ Identify and protect original built features in open spaces
- ◆ Promote THC's [Trees Woodlands and Development, Supplementary Guidance](#)

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## 4.8 REVIEW HERITAGE PROTECTION

### TO ADDRESS THREAT 6: LACK OF STATUTORY PROTECTION FOR BUILDINGS FROM TELFORD PLAN

#### 4.8.1 POLICY

The [Highland Historic Environment Strategy](#) includes the following relevant strategic aim:

*“Strategic Aim 9 (conservation areas): To ensure that all areas of special historic or architectural interest within Highland are assessed and where appropriate designated as conservation areas.”*  
(HHES, 2013, 11)

The CaSPlan (2018, Clause 74) further identified that there was potential to review the Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area. Following Scottish Government guidance in *PAN 71 Conservation Area Management* (2004) a full appraisal of the character and appearance of Pulteneytown and its immediate environs was carried out during 2019.

#### 4.8.2 MANAGEMENT

The *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal* identifies heritage assets that are significant but which are not currently protected by legislation.

##### *Conservation Area*

Section 5.0 of the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal* sets out recommendations for conservation area boundary review including proposals for extension of the conservation area.

##### *Listed Buildings*

The appraisal further identified apparent anomalies in the designation of listed buildings and unlisted buildings and recommended that THC discuss this further with Historic Environment Scotland (refer CAA Section 4.2.2).

#### 4.8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Consult on the proposed boundary extension for the conservation area as described in Section 5.0 of the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal*
- ◆ Re-designate the conservation area as applicable following the outcome of boundary consultation
- ◆ Review information provided on anomalies in listed building designation; take forward with HES as applicable.



## 4.9 EXTEND HERITAGE PROTECTION

### *TO ADDRESS THREAT 6: LACK OF STATUTORY PROTECTION FOR HISTORIC HARBOUR INFRASTRUCTURE*

Wick Harbour is governed by the Wick Harbour Authority (WHA). It a ‘trust port’, an independent statutory body governed by its own local legislation and run by an independent board. Wick Harbour Authority was established as part of the Modernising of Trust Ports initiative, with its constitution set out in the Wick Harbour Revision Order 2005. A lease between Wick Harbour Authority and Beatrice Offshore Windfarm (BOWL) saw signed on October 2017, the final step in BOWL’s commitment to using Wick Harbour as the long-term operational base for the Beatrice Offshore Windfarm. BOWL’s Operations and Maintenance Base was officially opened in July 2019 in Lower Pulteneytown.

#### 4.9.1 POLICY

##### *Harbours Act*

Harbours come under the Harbours Act 1964 and in Scotland any works to a harbour are regulated by application made to Transport Scotland, with decisions made by the relevant Scottish Ministers. Permission takes the form of a Harbour Revision Order under Section 14 or Harbour Empowerment Orders under Section 16 of the Harbours Act 1964. In making applications for Harbour Revision Orders, the WHA is expected to consult widely with local agencies and the community including the local planning authority.

##### *Planning Permission*

Application for a Harbour Revision Order may run alongside any other consent that is required. This would include Planning Permission where the works fall out with those that would otherwise be authorised by Class 29 or Class 35 of the [General Permitted Development Order \(1992\)](#).

#### 4.9.2 MANAGEMENT

##### *Conservation Area*

As outlined in Section 4.8.2, the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal* considered a number of boundary extensions, one of which was Wick Harbour, considering its heritage significance, and its relationship to the town. Refer to Section 5.0 of the appraisal for further information.

##### *Addendum May 2021*

Further to public consultation of the draft Conservation Area Appraisal in 2021, and consultation with the Wick Harbour Authority, the harbour area is not recommended for inclusion within the conservation area boundary.

##### *Local Development Plan*

Wick harbour is part of the allocated site WK22 in the CaSPlan (2018, 58; fig 6). This site covers the harbour area and buildings below Harbour Terrace on South Quay, and including the Buildings at Risk at the head of Macarthur Place (refer Appendix 4). Allocated site WK22 sets out planning requirements, including that a developer should prepare a masterplan or development brief in consultation with relevant environmental agencies and other stakeholders, to be agreed with THC.

#### 4.9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Re-designate the conservation area to include the former Co-Op and bakery but to exclude land controlled by the Harbour Authority, as a result of the boundary consultation.

## 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.0 BUILEACHADH

Section 4.0 outlined in detail opportunities to address each threat to Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area. Planning authorities have a duty to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, although there is no imposed timeframe for doing so. The management plan provides a basis upon which actions and programmes can be developed by, and in association with, The Highland Council (THC) to protect and enhance the conservation area. Such actions may require to be assessed on a priority basis especially if out with the core statutory obligations of the local authority, and as resources allow. The plan should not be seen in isolation of other initiatives through which elements of the plan may be delivered.

The following key aims and objectives will be adopted to support the ongoing management of Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area.

#### 5.1 AIMS

- ◆ Safeguard the distinct identity of Wick Pulteneytown;
- ◆ Protect its historic environment and open spaces;
- ◆ Maintain the investment and regeneration achieved;
- ◆ Support further enhancement and regeneration opportunities;
- ◆ Prevent detrimental change;
- ◆ Improve repair standards;

#### 5.2 OBJECTIVES

1. Manage change in the Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area so that,
  - a. Historic fabric is not lost unnecessarily;
  - b. Architectural detail is retained;
  - c. Inappropriate repair is prevented.
2. Where change is acceptable or necessary,
  - a. Ensure repair or replacement is based of historic evidence;
  - b. Use sustainable/traditional materials appropriate to the building and conservation area;
  - c. Take a consistent approach following national and local supplementary guidance.
3. Support continued regeneration,
  - a. Secure new viable uses for Buildings at Risk;
  - b. Define and promote development opportunities.

4. Accept only high quality new design,
  - a. Raise standards of small alterations and extensions;
  - b. Set parameters for high quality design in new development.
5. Enhance the public realm with improved active travel connections to other parts of Wick town.
6. Proactively manage and maintain green and open spaces and trees.
7. Pulteneytown’s heritage is appropriately protected.

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## 6.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

### 6.0 SGRÙDADH AGUS ATH-SGRÙDADH

This document should be reviewed periodically as circumstances dictate by THC, and in conjunction with the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal*. It will be assessed with reference to current THC policy for the historic environment, local development plans, and government policy and guidance on the historic environment. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area including a photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action.
- An assessment of whether the recommendations detailed in both the appraisal and the management plan have been acted upon, and how successful they have been, particularly in relation to the conservation issues identified:
  1. Quality of traditional repairs and necessary replacement
  2. Maintenance and condition of the conservation area
  3. Buildings at Risk, disused buildings and gap sites
  4. Quality of new developments and building alterations
  5. Quality and condition of the public realm
  6. Management of setting, open and green spaces
  7. Protection of the heritage

The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further protection or enhancements.

It is recommended that the review is carried out in consultation with the local community.

## 7.0 FURTHER READING AND GUIDANCE

### 7.0 TUILLEADH LEUGHaidH AGUS STIùIRIDH

#### APPROPRIATE REPAIR AND MANAGING SMALL CHANGES

##### *Legislation*

*Town and Country Planning Act (Scotland) 1997*

*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997*

*The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011*

##### *THC Development Guidance*

*Highland Historic Environment Strategy*

*Historic Windows & Doors*

*Shopfront Design Guide*

##### *Historic Environment Scotland Managing Change Guidance Notes*

*Boundaries*

*Doorways*

*External Fixtures*

*External Walls*

*Micro-renewables*

*Roofs*

*Shopfronts and Signs*

*Windows*

Historic Environment Scotland INFORM Guides (individual subjects)

Historic Environment Scotland Short Guide series

*Short Guide 1: Fabric Improvements for Energy Efficiency*

*Short Guide11: Climate Change Adaptation for Traditional Buildings*

#### PROACTIVE REPAIR & PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

##### *Legislation*

*The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006*

*Building (Scotland) Act 2003*

##### *The Highland Council Advice*

Scheme of Assistance

Care & Repair Service

##### *Historic Environment Scotland*

*Maintaining your home: A short guide for homeowners*

##### *Other Advice*

SPAB website

Under One Roof website

Traditional Buildings Health Check website

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### *Legislation*

*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997*

*Building (Scotland) Act 2003*

### *Guidance*

The Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland website and Toolkit online

Historic Environment Scotland *Managing Change Use & Adaptation of Listed Buildings*

Historic Environment Scotland *Managing Change Demolition of Listed Buildings (2019)*

Architectural Heritage Fund website: Viability Grants

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### *Policy*

*Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan; 2018).*

### *Conservation Plans*

BS7913:2013 *Guide to the conservation of historic buildings.*

*The Conservation Plan* (2013) James Semple Kerr

Historic Environment Scotland, *Conservation Plans*

Heritage Lottery: <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/conservation-planning-guidance>

### *Advice*

Architectural Heritage Fund

Heritage Network

## QUALITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

### *THC Supplementary Guidance*

Historic Windows and Doors

Shopfront Design Guide

### *Scottish Government policy and advice*

Planning Advice Note PAN 68 *Design Statements*

*Designing Streets: A Policy Statement for Scotland*

*Creating Places: A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland*

### *Historic Environment Scotland*

*New Design in Historic Settings* (2010)

*Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Boundaries*

*Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Setting*

*Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Extensions*

### *Historic Photographs*

Wick Heritage Society Johnston Collection

Am Baile

Canmore.

SCRAN

## QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM

*The Highland Council*

*Wick Active Travel Audit*

*Scottish Government*

*Planning Advice Note 65: Planning and Open Space*

*Planning Advice Note PAN 71: Conservation Area Management*

*Designing Streets: A Policy Statement for Scotland*

*Creating Places: A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland*

*Historic Environment Scotland*

*New Design in Historic Settings*

## GREEN SPACE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

*Scottish Government*

*Planning Advice Note PAN 71: Conservation Area Management*

*The Highland Council*

*Trees Woodlands and Development, Supplementary Guidance*

## APPENDICES

1. Positive Building Definition
2. Development Briefs and other studies
3. New Design Guidance
4. Buildings at Risk
5. Development Sites

## APPENDIX 1: POSITIVE BUILDING DEFINITION

### EÀRR-RÀDH 1 MÌNEACHADH AIR TOGALACH DEIMHINNEACH

#### Positive Buildings

There is no specific criteria provided by the Scottish Government or Historic Environment Scotland for identification of those buildings which make a “positive contribution” to a conservation area although the term itself is used in statutory guidance and implied in the 1997 Act. For example:

Historic Environment Scotland (2010), ‘Managing Change – Demolition’, Section 6.1

*“...presumption in favour of the retention of unlisted buildings in conservation areas where they make a **positive contribution** to the **character, appearance, or history of the area**. Many local authorities have prepared conservation area appraisals and these can be used to identify unlisted buildings which contribute positively to the character and appearance of an area.”*

Section 68 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. Urgent works to preserve unoccupied buildings in conservation areas:

*“If it appears to the Secretary of State that the preservation of a building in a conservation area is **important for maintaining the character or appearance of that area**, he may direct that section 49 shall apply to it as it applies to listed buildings.”*

Historic England has produced guidance available in [‘Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Historic England Advice Note 1’](#) (Second Edition Feb 2019).

Section 49: Positive contributors

*“Most of the buildings in a conservation area will help to shape its character. The extent to which their contribution is considered as positive depends not just on their street elevations but also on their integrity as historic structures and the impact they have in three dimensions, perhaps in an interesting roofscape or skyline. Back elevations can be important, as can side views from alleys and yards. Whilst designated status (i.e. nationally listed) or previous identification as non-designated heritage assets (such as through local listing) will provide an indication of buildings that are recognised as contributing to the area’s architectural and possibly historic interest, it will be important also to identify those unlisted buildings that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. A checklist of questions to help with this process can be found in Table 1. A positive response to one or more of the following may indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution, provided that its historic form and value have not been eroded.”*

- *Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?*
- *Does it have landmark quality?*
- *Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?*
- *Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?*
- *Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?*
- *Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings?*
- *Is it associated with a designed landscape, e.g. a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?*



- *Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?*
- *Does it have significant historic associations with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape?*
- *Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?*
- *Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?*
- *Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?*

And Section 51: Locally important buildings:

*“Recommendations for new local listings could form part of the appraisal or, if there is no ‘local list’, the appraisal might recommend the introduction of local criteria for identifying important unlisted buildings (see Local Heritage Listing, Historic England Advice Note 7)). Local constructional or joinery details, including characteristic historic shop-fronts and unusual local features, often contribute to local distinctiveness.”*

For the purposes of this report, professional guidance has been provided by the author on the basis of the definition produced by the Scottish Civic Trust in previous Conservation Area Appraisals and is as follows:

*‘Positive buildings’ may vary but are commonly good examples of relatively unaltered traditional buildings where their style, detailing and building materials contribute to the interest and variety of the conservation area.*

Notwithstanding those buildings identified through this appraisal, other individual buildings may be of some architectural or historic interest. Unlisted buildings should be considered on a case-by-case basis by planning management.

## APPENDIX 2: DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS AND OTHER STUDIES

### EÀRR-RÀDH 2 BRATHAN LEASACHAIDH AGUS SGRÙDAIDHEAN EILE

#### *Development briefs*

Development briefs can:

1. Stimulate interest and guide opportunities for development, regeneration and enhancement;
2. Inform decisions on future planning applications;
3. Be adopted as supplementary guidance.

A development brief may include:

- Potential development sites and land ownership;
- Suitable land uses;
- Site context / setting;
- Appropriate siting of development;
- Protected views;
- Site constraints, environmental designations, contaminated land, flood risk;
- Opportunities for public realm or green space enhancement;
- Development objectives;
- Site-specific issues;
- Sensitive sites including listed and positive buildings, and other significant elements in the historic environment;
- Historic street pattern, street frontage lines and urban grain;
- Relationships to adjacent buildings and sites;
- Design criteria on scale, height, form, massing, emphasis;
- Appropriate building materials;
- Site permeability and routes for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Strategy for vehicles movement and parking requirements;
- Historic surface treatments;
- Hierarchy of key buildings/structures;
- Heritage value and significance;
- Archaeological potential.

The list is not exhaustive and should be compiled to suit the specific site be that an individual building, urban block or larger area.

#### *Feasibility Studies*

Where there is potential interest in reuse of a building or site, possibly with a new use and adaption required of an existing building, then the owner, developer, or other party can commission a feasibility study to test if their idea is viable (physically and financially). Such studies have the potential to unlock difficult sites, and may consider more than one option.

Funding can be available for certain groups from heritage bodies to assist in the cost of such studies, or a contribution from public funds may be considered where there is wider potential benefit and the project meets current strategy.

An experienced team of professionals is required with suitable knowledge of the historic environment and experience of bringing traditional buildings back into use. In some cases the assistance from a building preservation trust (BPT) may be beneficial.

*Conservation Management Plans; Conservation Statements*

To address several of the guidelines in a development brief, planning submission, or in making plans for these often challenging sites, an owner or developer in conjunction with a suitably skilled professional design team, should consider researching their asset to produce information to guide their decision-making process and illustrate this to others (local authority, funding bodies etc.). The type of report and level of detail will be appropriate to the site and level of intervention. For large and/or complex sites of significant heritage value, a Conservation Management Plan should be prepared in advance of any design proposals. A shorter Conservation Statement may be used where the site is simpler and/or less adaptation is envisaged.

*Heritage Statements*

Heritage Statements vary slightly in that they are often made after design proposals to explain and justify the proposals. They therefore have a different use than the more preparative conservation plans and statements.

*Planning Management guidance*

In advising owners and developers on specific sites, THC may wish to indicate which type of document is appropriate. Recommendations are given for individual cases below.

	CONTENT		APPLICATION
	Heritage Significance	Conservation Management	
<b>Conservation Management Plans</b>	Detailed assessment	Detailed guidance with policies and action plans	Ongoing management of complex heritage assets Required for HLF grants >£2m
<b>Conservation Statements</b>	Detailed assessment	General <i>detailed where relevant</i>	Similar to above, suitable for less complex sites or where no major development is envisaged
<b>Heritage Statements</b>	General <i>detailed where relevant</i>	Focus on impact of specific proposals on the heritage identified	One-off requirement for: LBC and SMC applications Planning applications affecting designated heritage assets or demolition of non-designated heritage assets

Table after ‘Conservation and Heritage Statements’ Humble, 2019.

## APPENDIX 3: NEW DESIGN GUIDANCE

### EÀRR-RÀDH 3 STIÙIREADH AIRSON DEALBHADH ÙR

#### *Principles for New Design in the Conservation Area*

Historic Environment Scotland's [New Design in Historic Settings](#) (2010) promotes the key principles for new design in historic places.

It emphasises that there is not one solution, and that it is the 'approach' of the designer which is critical to a successful design.

This approach should include their analysis and evaluation to the historic environment setting.

This is why specific guidelines can be difficult, i.e. it is not just a case of using the 'right' materials or building to a certain height. Guidelines can only give an outline for the designer, every design brief will be different and a level of flexibility has to be allowed to generate successful creative design responses.

General principles to be considered in new development in historic settings set out by HES (2010) are:

- Urban structure (the pattern of development blocks, streets and buildings);
- Urban grain (the pattern of streets and spaces; permeability);
- Density and mix;
- Scale (height, massing and hierarchy of the existing buildings);
- Materials and detailing;
- Landscape (topography and setting);
- Views and landmarks;
- Historical development.

These principles can be used by the local authority as a checklist in assessing an application's response to each. Furthermore guidance should emphasise the following overarching principles:

- The historic environment is a resource that must be protected;
- Successful new buildings will enhance the historic environment and its sense of place;
- Cultural and economic value can be added to new buildings placed in the historic environment;
- Pastiche of historic styles and replication of architectural features with no function should be avoided.

#### *Design Statements*

[Planning Advice Note 68 Design Statements](#) (2003) provides detailed advice on when design statements should be used and what they should include. PAN 68 recommends that local authorities should set out in local plans the circumstances where they will expect design statements to be prepared.

It is recommended that THC consider design statements for any new development which may have an impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area. The Design Statement should explain and illustrate the principles and concept behind the design and layout of the proposed development

and demonstrating how the proposal relates both to the site and its wider context. Applicants can use the conservation area appraisal to assist in this.

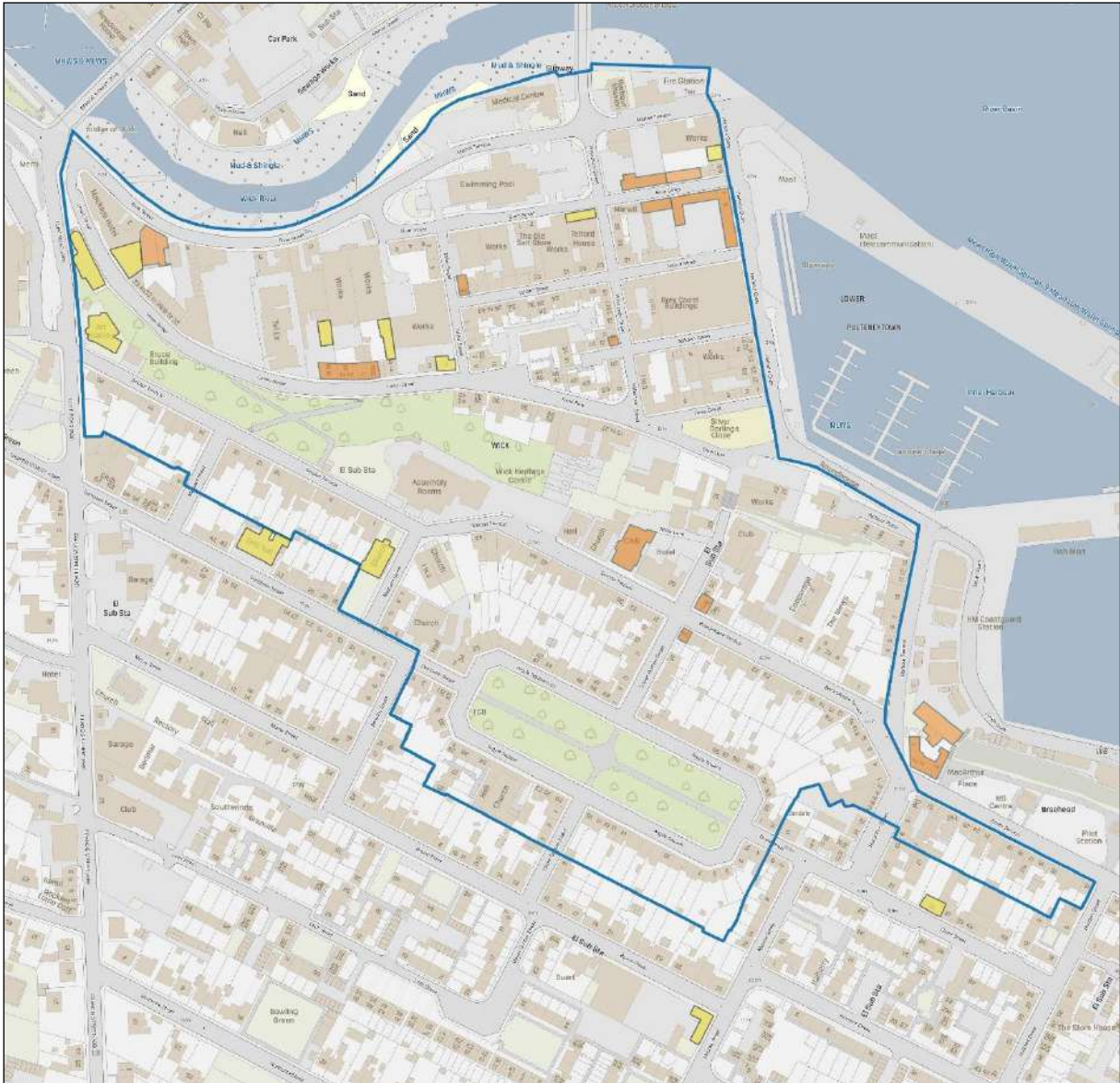
Applications for more significant change such as those involving the infilling of gap sites and/or demolition and replacement with new buildings, should be encouraged to include 3-dimensional representations of the building context including urban blocks and street elevations, the extent of context should be advised by the planning authority based in individual cases.

Historic photographs may be consulted to inform the design of new development, building alterations and extensions. Photographic information can be sought from the Wick Heritage Society Johnston Collection, Am Baile, Canmore and SCRAN.

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## APPENDIX 4: BUILDINGS AT RISK



## EÀRR-RÀDH 4 TOGALAICHEAN ANN AN CUNNART








Map indicating Buildings at Risk on Register in orange, and not on Register in yellow. Current Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area boundary outlined in blue. © THC/Crown

This appendix can be read in conjunction with the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA)* and the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) Appendices 5: Development Sites*.

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Building Address	BARR category BARR condition BARR last entry	Comment CAA site visit July 2019 / information
<b>Upper Pulteneytown</b>		
<b>18-19 Sinclair Street</b> (refer CAA section 4.2.2)	Restoration in Progress Condition: Fair 09/2016	No longer considered at risk
<b>28 &amp; 29 Breadalbane Terrace</b> (refer CAA section 4.2.2 & fig 21)  2020	At Risk Condition: Fair 09/2013	Building remains vacant and at risk. No apparent action, condition slightly deteriorated since 2013. Original doors and windows still in place.  Listed Building. Good example of earlier housing on prominent corner block with surviving traditional external joinery and dormers.  Included in CAMP Appendix 5-2.
<b>17 and 18 Breadalbane Crescent</b> (refer CAA section 4.2.2)  2020	At Risk Condition: Fair 09/2013	Building remains vacant and at risk; No apparent action, condition slightly deteriorated since 2013. Original door, windows, shutters and dormer still in place.  Listed building. End house of prominent corner terrace with surviving original external joinery and dormer.  Included in CAMP Appendix 5-2.
<b>Former Dounreay Social Club</b> 38 Breadalbane Crescent	At Risk Condition: Fair 09/2013	Building remains vacant and at risk. Condition had deteriorated with roof becoming dangerous. Roof cover removed in 2019 under Dangerous Building Notice. Structure now open to the elements, not clear if wallhead have been stabilised / capped.

 <p>© HES 2013</p>  <p>Roof in 2020</p>		<p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-2.</p>
<p><b>Former Cooperative Store</b> 1-4 Macarthur Place (CAA fig 49)</p>  <p>© HES 2013</p>  <p>2020</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: Fair 09/2013</p>	<p><b>Property in proposed CA boundary extension</b></p> <p>Building remains vacant and at risk. No apparent action, condition deteriorated since 2013.</p> <p>Positive building. Very prominent focal point and highly visible in views from the town, river and harbour.</p> <p>Note this site is in CaSPlan WK22 site allocation as industrial use. Wick Charrette suggested reuse as residential.</p>
<p><b>Former Cooperative Bakery,</b> South Quay (CAA fig 49)</p>  <p>©HES 2013</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: ruinous 11/2017</p>	<p><b>Property in proposed CA boundary extension</b></p> <p>Building remains ruinous and at risk. No apparent action, condition deteriorated since 2013, notably condition of wallhead cappings and vegetation growth to chimney.</p> <p>With former Coop, a very prominent focal point and highly visible in views from the town, river and harbour.</p> <p>Note this site is in CaSPlan WK22 site allocation as industrial use. Wick Charrette suggested reuse as residential.</p>



 <p>2020</p>		
<p><b>Former Wick Martyr’s Free Church, Malcolm Street</b></p>  <p>2019</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p>1839, originally the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and after several changes was last the Wick &amp; Keiss Free Church (not in use as such in June 2019).</p>
<p><b>Former Drill Hall, Dempster Street</b></p>  <p>2019</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p><b>Property in proposed CA boundary extension</b></p> <p>Former Drill Hall built as such between 1872-1905. Sold in 2019, but back on market in Sept 2020.</p> <p>Unusual and prominent building within the residential setting of Dempster Street.</p>
<p><b>Carnegie Library</b></p>  <p>2020</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p>Refer text at end of table.</p>
<p><b>31 -33 Grant Street</b></p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p><b>Property in proposed CA boundary extension</b></p> <p>Traditional houses on Grant Street, vacant and in fair condition. Part of original lots feued in 1812-1813.</p>

 <p>2020</p>		<p>Important survivor providing character in a street negatively affected by original building loss.</p>
<p><b>Lower Pulteneytown</b></p>		
<p><b>10-11 Union Street</b> (Refer historic images and CAA fig 34)</p>  <p>© HES 2013</p>  <p>2020</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: Fair 09/2013</p>	<p>Upper floor (No. 11) possibly in use; ground floor (No.10) remains vacant however new window and doors in 2020 suggest activity (note original door recorded in 2019 removed).</p> <p>Positive building. Part of coherent terraced row forming the frontage of industrial yards.</p> <p>Ground, rot and structural reports undertaken during CARS and provided to all owners (reports not found); concluded subsidence is <b>not</b> an issue.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-1.</p>
<p><b>12-14 Union Street</b></p>	<p>At Risk Condition: Fair 09/13</p>	<p>Upper floor (No. 13) now in use; ground floor (No. 14) remains vacant, boarded up and at risk. No. 12 has new window and door in 2020 suggesting activity (note original doors at Nos. 12 &amp; 13 recorded in 2019 removed).</p> <p>Positive building. Part of coherent terraced row forming the frontage of industrial yards.</p>

 <p>© HES 2013</p>  <p>2020</p>		<p>Ground, rot and structural reports undertaken during CARS and provided to all owners (reports not found); concluded subsidence is <b>not</b> an issue.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-1.</p>
<p><b>15-16 Union Street</b> (CAA fig 49)</p>  <p>© HES 2013</p>  <p>2019</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: Fair 09/2013</p>	<p>Building remains vacant and at risk. No apparent action, condition deteriorated particularly roof and guttering since 2013. Original door and dormers still visible in 2020.</p> <p>Positive building. End house of coherent terraced row forming the frontage of original curing &amp; timber yards. <i>Note block original extended to the west with an adjoining pend to yard.</i></p> <p>Ground, rot and structural reports undertaken during CARS and provided to all owners (reports not found); concluded subsidence is <b>not</b> an issue.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-1.</p>

<p><b>Former Kippering Kiln</b> rear of 16 Union Street (CAA section 4.2.2)</p>  <p>2019</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p>Condition in need of maintenance with heavily blocked / defective gutters.</p> <p>Positive building, surviving example of later 19<sup>th</sup> century smokehouse/kippering kiln within former curing yard (1st Ed. OS Town Plan); converted for storing timber. Ref Canmore ID 100253.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-1.</p>
<p><b>2 Union Street</b> (CAA figs 34 &amp; 49)</p>  <p>Side and front elevations in 2019</p>  <p>Side and rear elevations in 2020</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p>Use of building not known, appears largely vacant; possibly partial commercial ground floor use. Condition in need of urgent maintenance at high level and external joinery. Original lying pane windows survive to upper floors including tall stair window.</p> <p>Positive building, prominent and very good surviving example from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century fronting former curing yard. <i>Note building previously had traditional canted dormers ref Johnston Collection JN20693B006</i></p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-1.</p>
<p><b>45 Telford Street</b></p>  <p>2020</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: Poor 09/2013</p>	<p>Building remains vacant and at risk. Appears gutters have been cleared and rainwater pipes repaired since 2013.</p> <p>Currently defined in CAA as negative building due to condition and loss of roof form.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-1.</p>
<p><b>Former Floor Mill</b> River Street (CAA fig 49)</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: Ruinous 09/2013</p>	<p>Building remains vacant and at risk. A proportion of wall head masonry has been reduced since 2013.</p> <p>Property owned by MacKays Hotel.</p>






 <p>© HES 2013</p> <p>2019</p>		<p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-1; with further information.</p>
<p><b>Former Baptist Church</b> Union Street</p>  <p>2019</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p>Not in use. In fair condition.</p> <p>Positive building constructed in 1868.</p> <p>Property owned by Mr Lamont, MacKays Hotel</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-1.</p>
<p><b>10 Saltoun Street</b> (and 11 Williamson Street)</p>  <p>© HES 2013</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: Good 09/2013</p>	<p>Building remains vacant and at risk. No significant change apparent since 2013.</p> <p>Positive building on prominent corner.</p>
<p><b>De-roofed building</b> Burn Street (CAA fig 49)</p>  <p>© HES 2013</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: Poor 09/2013</p>	<p>Building remains vacant and at risk. No apparent action, condition deteriorated since 2013. Traditional timber windows survive at upper floor. Possible flat roof not seen.</p> <p>Important industrial survivor enclosing the south side of one of the original 1808 feus, constructed prior to 1813, possibly store house, offices or housing.</p> <p>Continuous frontage with roofed building on the neighbouring</p>

 <p>2020</p>		<p>western lot (see below). Ruinous building on eastern lot mentioned in same BARR listing.</p> <p>Discussion in early CARS report of joint redevelopment of sites on this block. Buildings were priority project under CARS in 2008 but did not proceed. Also THC considered conversion to housing c. 2000 as pilot under Empty Homes Initiative.</p> <p>Included in Appendix 5-3.</p>
<p><b>Corrugated roofed building</b> Burn Street</p>  <p>© HES 2013</p>  <p>2019</p>  <p>2019</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: Poor 09/2013</p>	<p>Building remains vacant and at risk. Battens added to roof; loss of upper window and building envelope no longer secured, condition deteriorated since 2013; chimney stacks removed since 2008.</p> <p>Important industrial survivor enclosing the south side of one of the original 1808 feus, constructed prior to 1813, possibly store house, offices or housing. Continuous frontage with neighbouring building on the eastern lot (see above).</p> <p>Discussion in early CARS report of joint redevelopment of sites on this block. Buildings were priority project under CARS in 2008 but did not proceed. Also THC considered conversion to housing c. 2000 as pilot under Empty Homes Initiative.</p> <p>Included in Appendix 5-3.</p>
<p><b>Former Herring Curing Yard</b> Harbour Quay / Saltoun Street/ Telford Street</p>	<p>Restoration in Progress Condition: (was) Poor-Fair 09/2017</p>	<p>Former Steven’s Yard buildings, no longer considered at risk, restoration and reuse completed and new operational, maintenance and service facilities for Beatrice Offshore Windfarm Limited opened 2019.</p>

 <p>© HES Harbour Quay south building before restoration 2013</p>  <p>Harbour Quay after works 2020</p>		
<p><b>Former Herring Curing Yard</b> Harbour Quay / Burn Street/ Telford Street</p>  <p>© HES; Telford Street yard in 2013</p>  <p>Burn Street, fabric restored 2019</p>  <p>Harbour Quay 2020</p>	<p>Restoration in Progress Condition: (was) Fair 01/2017</p>	<p>South building on Harbour Quay in use (Harbour Chip Shop). Remainder vacant. Rainwater goods causing fabric damage in Sept. 2020. Still at risk.</p> <p>Important industrial survivors forming two of the original 1808 feus, constructed as a herring houses prior to 1813.</p> <p>BARR mentions acquired by Highland Housing Alliance with grant-aid from the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund in 2013.</p> <p>Wick Charette 2013 stated there were outline plans for redevelopment for Wick Visual Arts Centre.</p> <p>CARS report notes that this block was sold by THC to Beatrice Offshore Windfarm Ltd (BOWL) in 2017. Subsequently external fabric repaired to be made ready for development and an options appraisal and development brief was produced by Highlands &amp; Islands Enterprise with CARS funding.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-3</p>

 <p>Rainwater disposal causing fabric damage in 2020</p>		
<p><b>Warehouse, Burn Street</b></p>  <p>© HES 2013</p>  <p>Partly restored 2019</p>	<p>At Risk Condition: (was) Poor 10/2016</p>	<p>Part external fabric repair with new roof covering and secured openings; masonry in need of repair and rainwater goods causing damp conditions in Sept. 2020 (see above). Still at risk.</p> <p>Important industrial survivor, one of the original 1808 feus, constructed as a herring house prior to 1813.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-3</p>
<p><b>Former Rope Works</b> Brown Place/ Macrae Street (figs 4 &amp; 43)</p>  <p>From Brown Place 2019</p>  <p>From Macrae Street 2019</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p><b>Property in proposed CA boundary extension</b></p> <p>Vacant property, appears secure and in fair condition externally.</p> <p>Positive building surviving from the once extensive Rope Works on Brown Place opened by 1839.</p>
<p>No. 4 Harbour Quay</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p>Façade only appears to remain (site not accessed).</p>



 <p>2020</p>		<p>Important part of the Harbour Quay frontage.</p> <p>Mentioned in early CARS report; possible conversion as commercial unit and maisonette above.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-3</p>
<p>SW corner building on Williamson Street and Burn Street</p>  <p>2019</p>	<p>Not of BARR</p>	<p>Single storey building next to Caithness Voluntary Group building on Williamson Street. In poor condition.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-3</p>
<p>Buildings behind 5-6 Union Street</p>  <p>2020</p>  <p>2020</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p>Substantial 2-storey building and attached single storey building enclosing former yard (with large area of surviving Caithness flagstone finish and small garden).</p> <p>2-storey building in fair - poor condition, but retaining slate roof and some 2 over 2 timber windows and possibly other original features; single storey building has original pitched roof replaced in metal sheet and in poorer condition.</p> <p>Important survivors providing an example of the enclosure of yards with smaller buildings, evident on 1872 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Town Plan, including the garden.</p> <p>Included in CAMP Appendix 5-1</p>
<p>Former Press Building, Union Street/Cliff Road</p>  <p>Cliff Road 2020</p>	<p>Not on BARR</p>	<p>Recently vacated by North of Scotland Newspapers, possibly bought to convert to a bistro.</p> <p>Condition fair, but in need of maintenance and repairs to prevent becoming at risk.</p> <p>Refer CAA section 4.2.2.</p>



### *Carnegie Library*

Opened in 1898, the building is a fine example of a purpose-built library constructed with philanthropist Andrew Carnegie's support. The library became redundant in its original intended use when the local authority decided to move the town's library to the new building, the East Caithness Community Facility on Newton Road (with Wick Academy and new swimming pool). The Wick Carnegie Library is still run by the Highland Council and is currently used to house the St. Fergus Gallery on the upper floor and a foodbank on the ground floor. The use appears to be partial and uncertain.

The library is a significant building of architectural and social value on a prominent corner site. During the Wick Charrette in 2013, consultations revealed considerable local concern as to the fate of the building and strong views were expressed that an appropriate and viable new use for the building be considered in conjunction with plans for the new school. It was suggested that a potential new use could be as a 'Carnegie Arts Centre' to house the Wick Society's Johnstone Photographic Collection or other art related uses.

### *What's needed:*

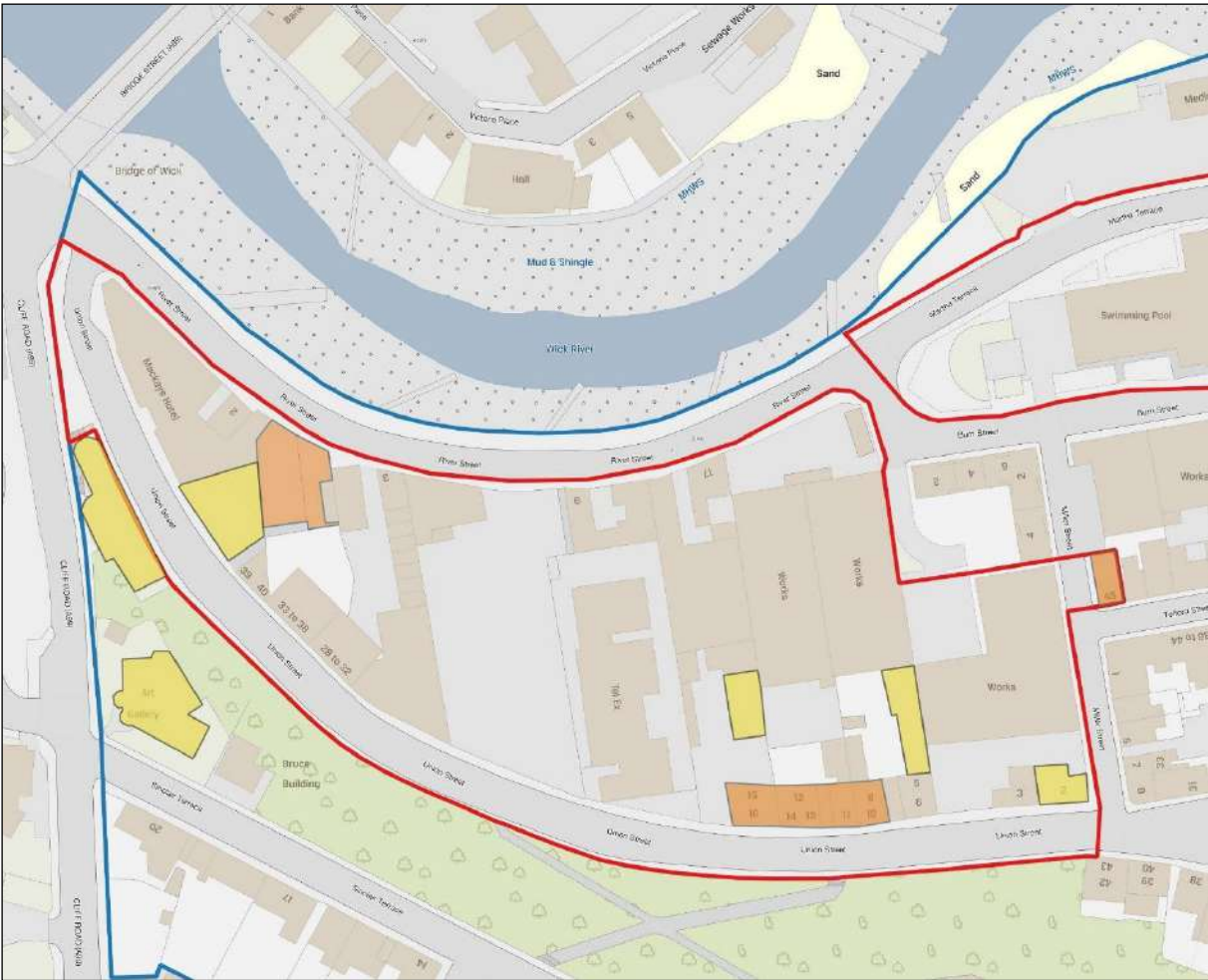
- conservation management plan OR statement (depending on anticipated future)
- monitoring of condition and regular maintenance,
- protection of the interior and original fixtures so that any temporary less compatible uses don't unwillingly damage original and significant elements of the interior design.
- The building is listed and Listed Building Consent is required for any works that effect the building's character including internally and externally.

APPENDIX 5: DEVELOPMENT SITES

EÀRR-RÀDH 5 COTHROMAN LEASACHAIDH

DEVELOPMENT SITE 1

URBAN BLOCK: RIVER STREET / MILLER STREET / UNION STREET



Map of possible Development Site 1 (outlined in red) indicating Buildings at Risk on Register in orange, and not on Register in yellow. Current Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area boundary outlined in blue. © THC/Crown

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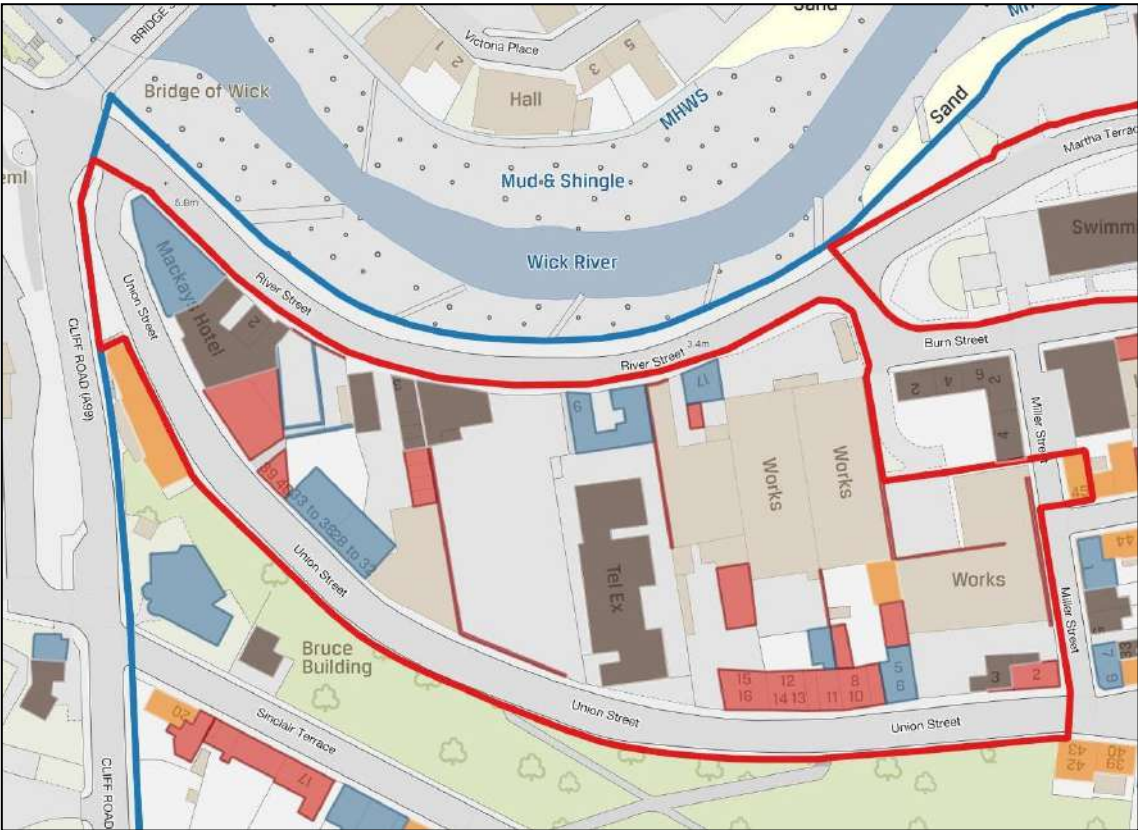


Figure 1: Building Date Analysis Map: current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with probable construction dates from map evidence. Orange by 1857; red 1858-1872; blue 1873-1905; grey after 1905. © THC /Crown, refer CAA Map 6.2 for full conservation area.

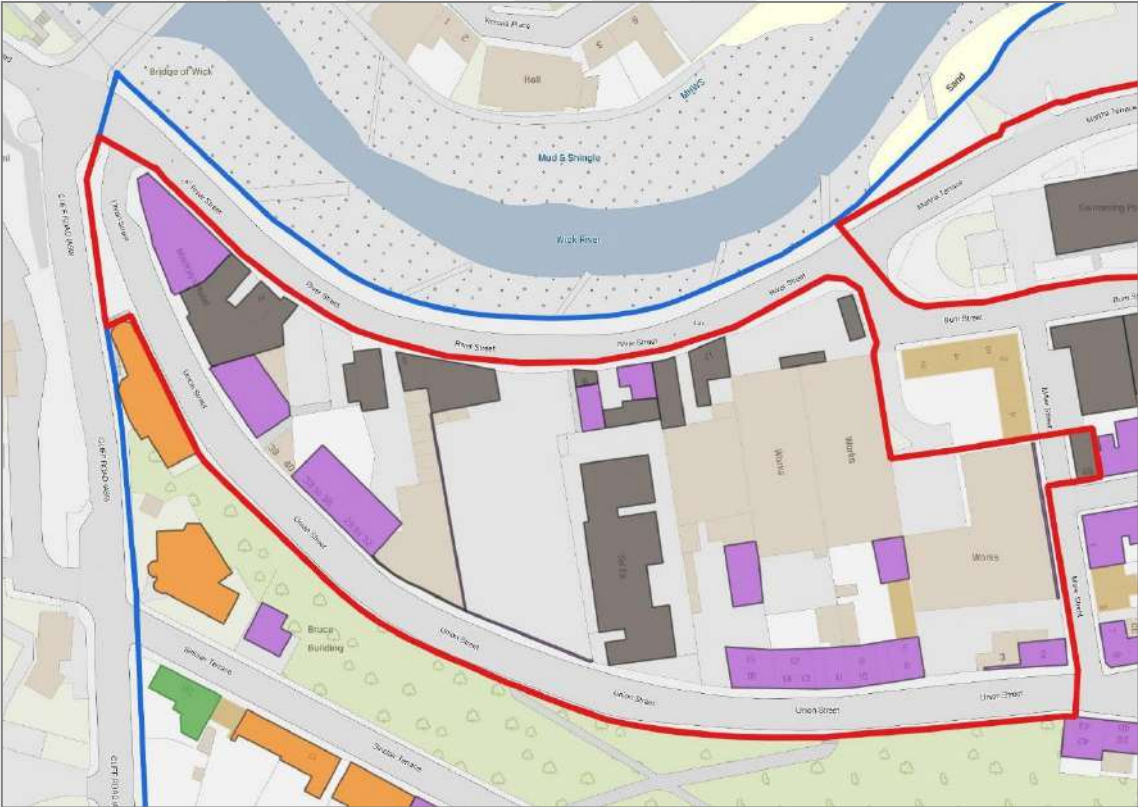


Figure 2: Listed & Positive Buildings Map: current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with listed buildings and positive, neutral and negative buildings. Red Category A, Orange Category B, Green Category C, Purple positive, Beige neutral and grey negative buildings. © THC /Crown, refer CAA Map 6.3 for full conservation area.

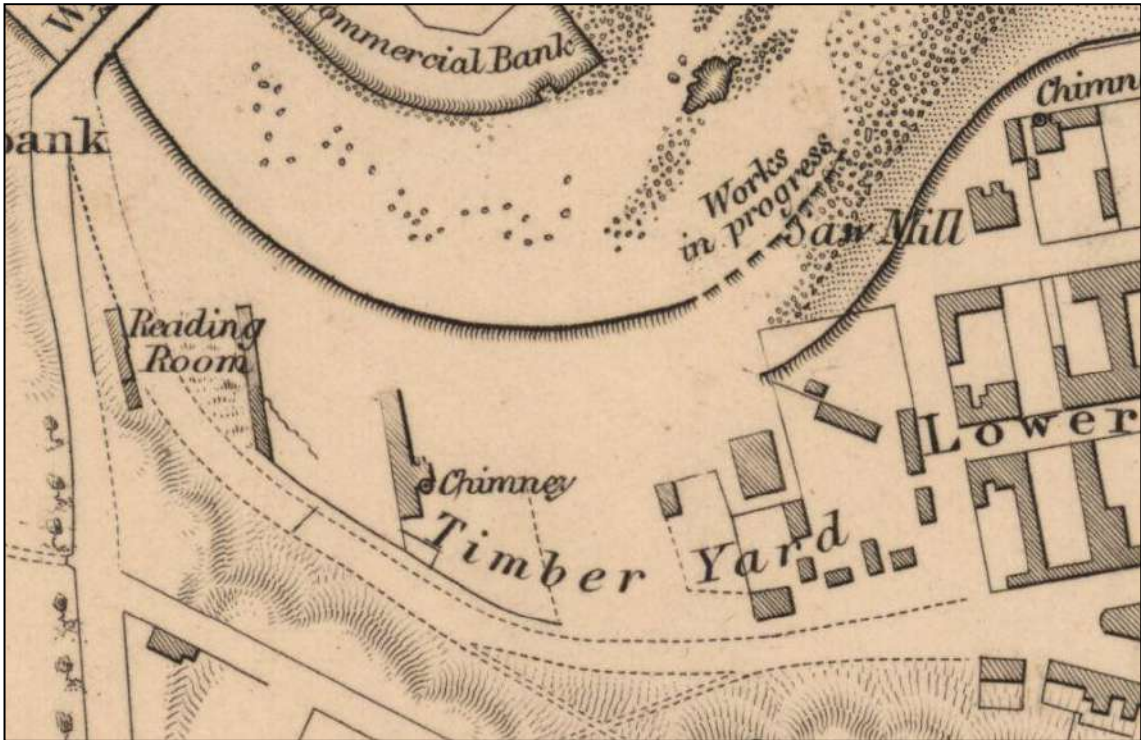


Figure 3: The Admiralty Charts of Scotland: The Port and Vicinity of Wick (surveyed 1839; additions 1857) © NLS



Figure 4: 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. OS 25 inch map 1873 (surveyed 1872) © NLS

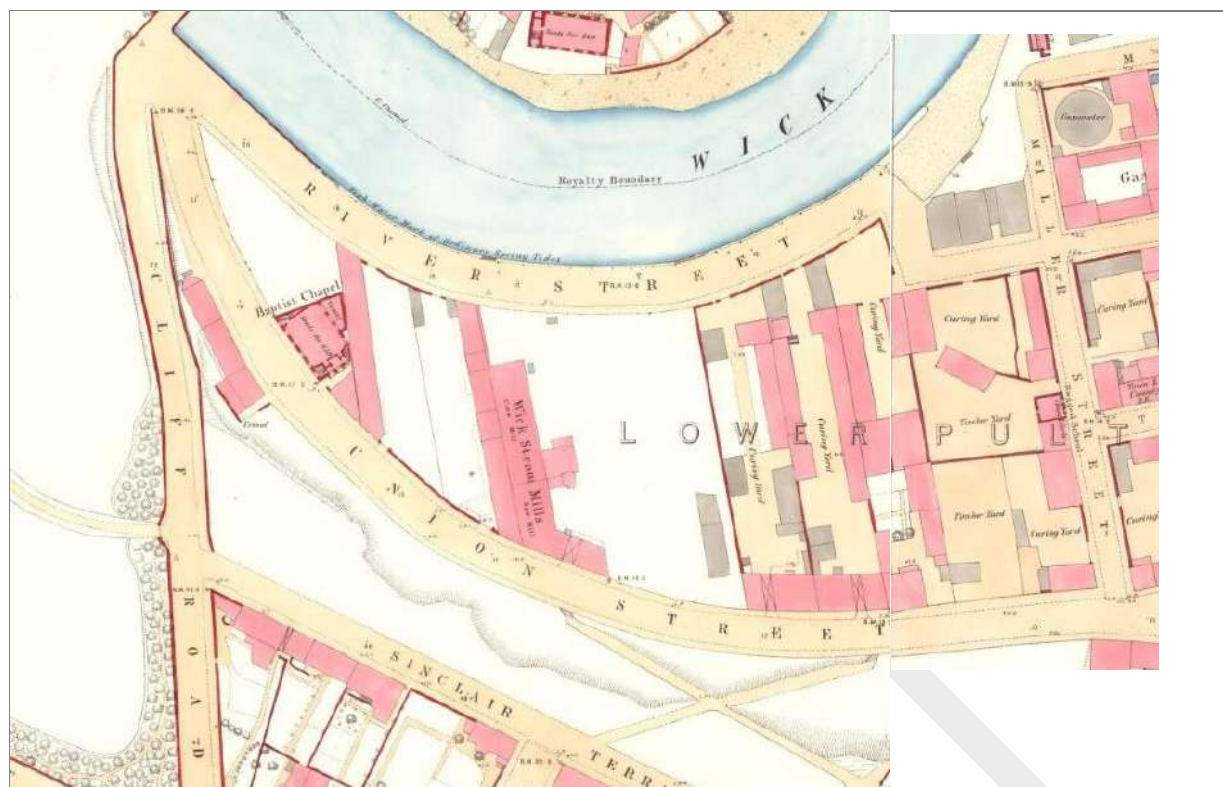


Fig 5: 1st Ed. OS Town Plan 1873 (surveyed 1872) © NLS


*Extent of the proposed site:* refer map.

*Background:* This area of Lower Pulteneytown developed from the mid-19th century (refer CAA, Map 6.2) after additional river works had taken place to reclaim land and create River Street. The Admiralty Charts of Scotland: *The Port and Vicinity of Wick* (surveyed 1839; additions 1857), and the 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Ordnance Survey Town Plan captures this work in progress (figs 3 & 4). As such the area was not described in Telford’s original plans, and west of Miller Street, Telford’s grid iron plan was not continued and the plots are generally long narrow strips extending from River Street in the north to Union Street in the south. These lots appear to have originally housed supportive industries including mills and timber yards as well as additional curing yards. Street fronting buildings were constructed on Union Street with industrial buildings generally laid out at right-angles on long narrow footprints. This created an irregular frontage along the river which is still evident and presents an inconsistent form to the riverside and the historic burgh in the north. At the far western end of the area, as River and Union Streets merge, the lots become increasingly truncated until they terminate in the narrow triangular site now occupied by Mackays Hotel (1883).

*Archaeological potential:* Industrial archaeological potential from previous use and buildings on site.

*References:* Admiralty Charts of Scotland: *The Port and Vicinity of Wick* (surveyed 1839; additions 1857); Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Surveyed 1872: Town Plan & 25 inch series; OS 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Surveyed 1905. The Wick Society: Johnson Collection photographs ref: JN20695B006 (fig 7), JN20226B003 Sutherlands Sawmills 1890s; JN20221B003 Union Street 1930s; JN20625B006 Union St roofs; JN20219B003: Union Street; JN22086B019 west end of Union Street; JN20702B006 Academy Braes (fig 8). Canmore photographs ref: SC00435464 Lumberyard 1974, SC00435471 & 3 Flour Mill 1974.

Note the thumbnail images below are for reference purposes only.

<b>The Wick Society: The Johnston Photographic Collection</b> Note additional relevant images may be available		
		
JN20221B003 Union Street 1930s	JN20226B003 Sutherlands Sawmills 1890s	JN20219B003: Union Street
		
JN20625B006 Union St roofs at eastern end	JN22086B019 west end of Union Street	
<b>Canmore photographs</b> Note images available to view on Canmore website, additional relevant images may be available off-line		
		
SC00435464 former Smokehouse now lumberyard 1974	SC00435471 Flour Mill 1974	SC00435473 Flour Mill 1974

*Ownership:* Mixed; there appears to be a small number of businesses which occupy five large plots: the MacKays Hotel, W&A Geddes Ltd (agricultural supplies, 2 plots), British Telecom and D Sutherland & Son Ltd (timber merchant), as well as potential other private owners.

*Current use:* the urban block has a mixture of industrial uses (supply and servicing), residential flats and a small number of other commercial and retail outlets.

*LDP:* Mixed use

*Sites currently (or potentially) at risk, vacant or underused:*

Formal and potential Buildings at Risk include (refer CAMP Appendix 4 for further detail and images):

- 2 Union Street;
- Buildings behind 5 & 6 Union Street;
- 10 - 16 Union Street;
- Former kippering kiln to rear of 16 Union Street;
- Former Baptist Church, Union Street;
- Former Flour Mill, River Street;
- 45 Telford Street.



Figure 6: Aerial view of part of the area, 2013 (Canmore ref SC 1347011) ©HES



Figure 7: Historic view over the roofs in Union Street illustrating the predominance of slate roofing and also the original building forms with long double pitched roofs extending at right angles to the Union Street frontage. © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection. Note kippering kiln with its distinctive ventilator.





Figure 8: one of several historic images of Academy Braes which also captures part of Union Street (1920s). A gap site or yard (now the Telecom building) is visible on the right with the gable wall of what is thought to be the former Wick Steam Mills beyond (now largely demolished although external walls may survive). © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection.

*Reference in other documents:* the Wick Charrette (2013) made two suggestions for this area. Firstly infill residential redevelopment along Union Street to create a residential frontage facing the Academy Braes. The charrette noted concern over the ‘derelict properties’ on Union Street and their structural condition. Through research for the CAA, it is understood that ground, rot and structural reports were undertaken during the CARS and provided to all owners. The reports concluded subsidence is not an issue. Since then two upper flats have been marketed for sale during 2019, and work has taken place in 2020. The charrette noted that it was thought at that time there was little demand for new private or social housing in Wick. The CaSPlan (2018) gives an Indicative Housing Capacity of 25 units for site allocation W12 Lower Pulteneytown.

Secondly, the charrette noted the following, suggesting a ‘residential live/work and workspace’ allocation.

*“The western parcel of Lower Pulteneytown is currently given over to mostly industrial uses, several of which occupy key frontages facing onto the river and do little to improve the visual setting of the riverbank. There may be opportunity in the future as perhaps industrial users need to grow and relocate, for a more sensitive finely grained form of development to take root here, with a mix of business uses/ workshops and homes.”*

(Wick Charrette, 2013, 35)

*Negative buildings and structures:*

Buildings at risk and gap sites can have a negative impact on the built environment. In addition CAA Map 6.3 (and fig 2) indicate other buildings and structures where their design, condition or vacancy is

having a negative impact and which offer opportunity for enhancement or redevelopment. In the urban block this includes:

- British Telecom building (monolithic scale, form and articulation of the building, materials used, position on plot).
- Later 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings particularly low single storey and flat roofed structures such as the MacKays Hotel extension and nearby business premises fronting River Street; as mentioned the inconsistency of the form and scale of the River Street buildings has a negative impact on the river frontage and views from Wick Town Centre.
- Union Street the large cement rendered wall enclosing a full plot width (fig 10).
- The loss of the traditional roof form at 45 Miller Street creates a negative impact.

## DESIGN NOTES:

*Significant visible structures (other than buildings):* a number of Caithness stone walls survive from earlier industrial buildings and have significance both in terms of original fabric (authenticity) and the sustainable use of materials. In some cases large industrial sheds appear to incorporate surviving walls but may have been either reconfigured (widened), re-roofed, extended etc. Further survey and analysis would be required to determine the extent of original building fabric and elements prior to any development or application for demolition. The 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. OS Town Plan (surveyed 1872; fig 5) is a useful reference for historic detail including significant walls; as are historic images.

The 2 –storey building at No. 2 Union Street forms the corner with Miller Street and previously enclosed a curing yard. A single storey masonry wall extends on Miller Street originally forming the elevation of a building in the curing yard, and continuing on the neighbouring site with evidence of previous openings possibly part of the former Ragged School on that plot.

Part of the W&A Geddes site (west of the Telecom building) looks to retain high (2- 2½ storey) masonry walls from the former Wick Steam Mills (corn and saw mills) on this site (refer OS Town Plan & Johnston images). The Union Street elevation (or part thereof) of the mill building is still standing with its central arched pend opening (fig 9). This building is thought to have been 2-storey and visible in historic images (fig 8).

On the south side on Union Street, there are low stone retaining walls to the Academy Braes, original stone steps and high quality stone walling details (fig 11).

Original paving survives in the yard and pend behind 5 & 6 Union Street and provides considerable character (fig 11). Further traditional finishes may remain within these lots.

*Important characteristics:* curved frontage of Union Street; high walls defining original lots; surviving industrial buildings or parts thereof; surviving traditional buildings on Union Street and River Street; the landmark Mackays Hotel; the former Baptist church. Historic views (fig 7) over the roofs in Union Street illustrating the predominance of slate roofing with other traditional finishes including pantile on some industrial building.

*Views:* currently the high walls and deep plot sizes provide little visual connection across the site, from Wick town centre, and the riverside. This also can have a negative impact on the perceived safety of Union Street, and has been raised as a concern by visitors walking to the Wick Heritage Centre from the town centre.

*Connectivity:* without a regular street plan across this urban block, it is impenetrable and discourages pedestrian or cyclist movement from north to south. For example the Academy Braes provide a route from Upper Pulteneytown to Union Street, but there is no further direct connection through to River Street. This may be worth exploring in any development opportunity. Such permeability in the street plan could enhance levels of activity and the sense of security on both Union and River Streets with increased visual connection. There are potentially attractive views across the site connecting the green space and traditional terrace rows of Upper Pulteneytown with the glimpses of the old town of Wick across the river. Historically there appears to have been more visual connection through the open yards.



Figure 9: (top) part of the surviving elevation of the former Wick Steam Mills on Union Street with arched opening; (below) masonry side elevation also remaining.



Figure 10: high masonry wall enclosing a plot on Union Street has a negative impact in terms of scale, materials, quality and monolithic style. It is unclear if original masonry fabric may survive below the rendered finish; earlier buildings on this site can be seen in historic images (e.g. fig 8)



Figure 11: (left): flagstone pavement to yard behind 5 & 6 Union Street; (right) high quality masonry walling and stone steps at the entry points to Academy Braes.



Figure 12: view looking across the open yard adjacent to the British Telecom Building, suggesting the potential for new visual connections and views to be designed in any new development.

DRAFT

## DEVELOPMENT SITE 2

### URBAN BLOCK: ROSE STREET / HARBOUR QUAY/ BANK ROW



Map showing former boat yard site in purple with a possible extended Development Site 2 (dotted outline in red). Buildings at Risk on Register in orange, and not on Register in yellow. Current Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area boundary outlined in blue. © THC/Crown

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Figure 1: Building Date Analysis Map: current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with probable construction dates from map evidence. Orange by 1857; red 1858-1872; blue 1873-1905; grey after 1905. © THC /Crown, refer CAA Map 6.2 for full conservation area.



Figure 2: Listed & Positive Buildings Map: current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with listed buildings and positive, neutral and negative buildings. Red Category A, Orange Category B, Green Category C, Purple positive, Beige neutral and grey negative buildings. © THC /Crown, refer CAA Map 6.3 for full conservation area.

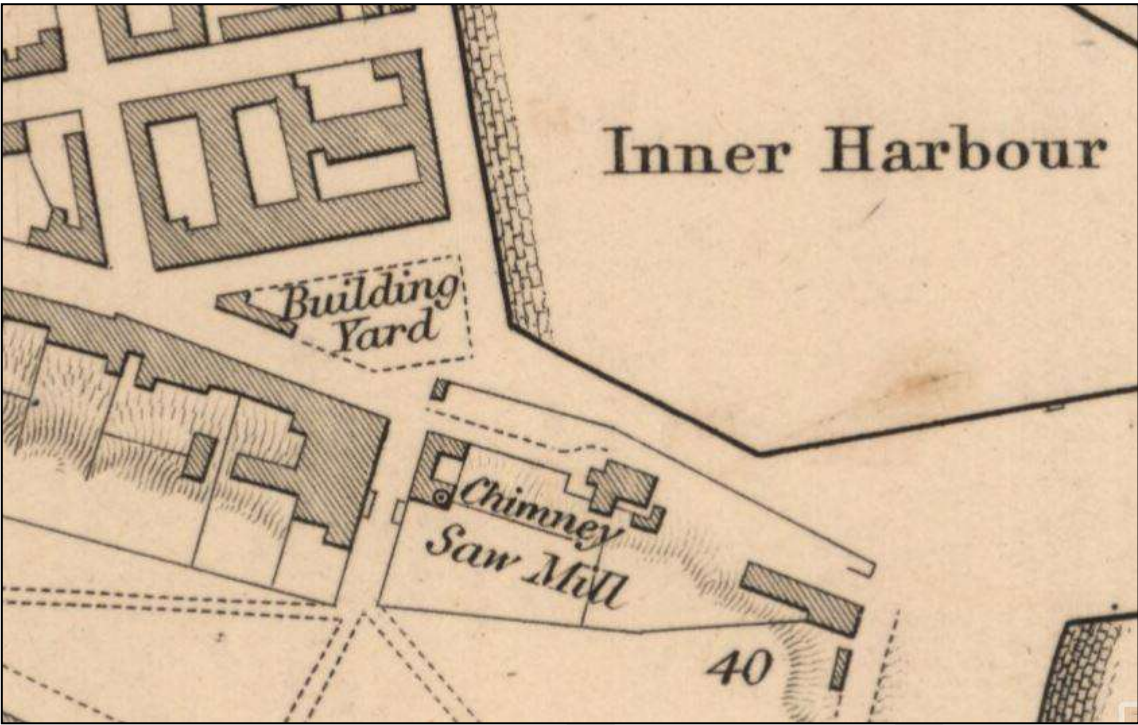


Figure 3: The Admiralty Charts of Scotland: The Port and Vicinity of Wick (surveyed 1839; additions 1857) ©NLS

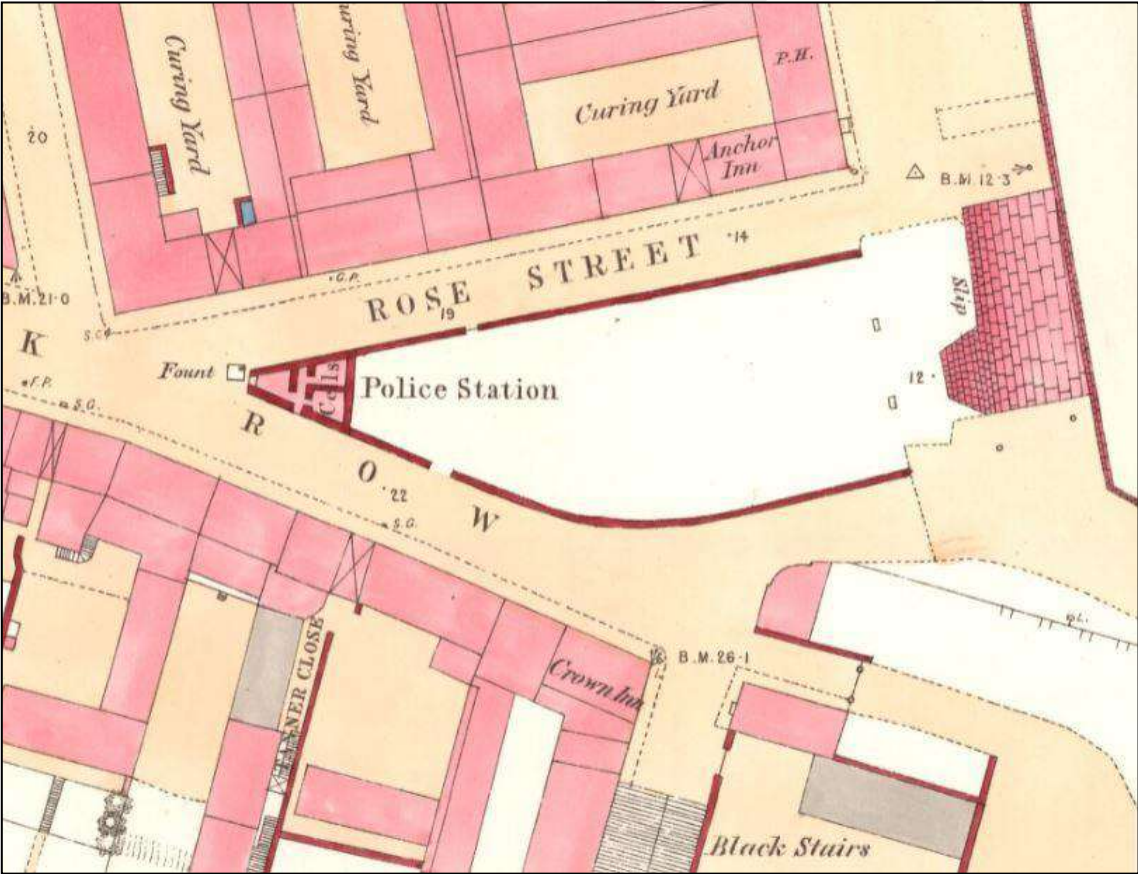


Figure 4: 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. OS Town Plan 1873 (surveyed 1872) © NLS



*Extent of the proposed site:* refer map.

*Background:* The site occupies a triangular piece of land created where Telford’s grid iron plan for the industrial quarter meets the organic form of Bank Row which skirts the line of the former river bank. Telford consciously changed his original design for Bank Row to set out lots on ‘segments of a circle’ to maximise their number and size.

This area of Lower Pulteneytown dates to the very start of development at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the site is close to several original buildings from the planned industrial town (refer CAA Map 6.2 and fig 1). The site was not part of the Draft Feu Charter by the British Society 1813 (SRO/GD9/337/1), but was set aside as a boat building yard as seen on the Admiralty Chart (fig 3). A little later the site was enclosed by boundary walls and a slipway constructed to the water’s edge (fig 4). The new town had a police force by 1844 and presumably around this time a small police building with two cells was constructed on the corner of the plot (figs 4 & 5). This building survived until at least the Second World War and can be glimpsed in historic images of the bomb damage which occurred at the site and adjacent Bank Row buildings in 1940 (fig 6). The south side of the site’s boundary wall appears to have been demolished by the blast and later rebuilt, however earlier stone walls survive on substantial sections, the coursing and stone block sizes evidencing different periods of construction and rebuild. The Wick Society holds the original external door to the police station in its collection. Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century a low single storey industrial building occupied the site before this was removed to facilitate construction of the Beatrice Offshore facilities in Lower Pulteneytown.

*Archaeological potential:* Industrial archaeological potential from previous use and buildings on site.

*References:* Admiralty Charts of Scotland: *The Port and Vicinity of Wick* (surveyed 1839; additions 1857); Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Surveyed 1872: Town Plan & 25 inch series; OS 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Surveyed 1905.

Note the thumbnail images below are for reference purposes only.





<b>The Wick Society: The Johnston Photographic Collection</b> Note additional relevant images may be available		
		
<a href="#">JN21142B011</a> Rose Street bomb damage	<a href="#">JN21139B011</a> Bank Row bomb damage	<a href="#">JN21141B011</a> Bank Row-bomb damage / police station
		
<a href="#">JN21143B011</a> Bank Row bomb damage / boundary wall		



Figure 5: looking east to Bank Row in the 1930s, with the triangular block on Saltoun Street on the left and the former police station building at the end of the boat yard site in the distance. © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection ref JN20335B004



Figure 6: bomb damage in 1940 with the boat yard site in the foreground showing damage to the boundary walls, and looking at the end of Bank Row (right; now demolished) and the buildings at the foot of the Black Stairs. © The Wick Society - The Johnston Photographic Collection ref JN21143B011

*Ownership:* It is understood this plot is owned by the Wick Harbour Authority

*Current use:* After removal of temporary construction accommodation, the site is vacant excepting the stone boundary walls.

*LDP:* Mixed use.

*Sites currently (or potentially) at risk, vacant or underused:*

The building plots to the south on Bank Row still show the impact of the bomb damage and subsequent demolition of the street fronting buildings. There is a gap in the street frontage running from the foot of the Black Stairs to 19 Bank Row opposite Williamson Street. Surviving walls have been consolidated and a small traditional building at the rear of one of the lots was restored in 2008, having laid derelict for many years, as part of a Memorial Garden to those killed in the Wick bombings (CAA, section 4.2.2). The adjoining lot to the west is owned by The Wick Society and the modern building on this site was under redevelopment as a storage facility during 2019.

*Reference in other documents:* The Wick Charrette (2013) had suggested the site be used for ‘good quality office space at the harbour’ and could be a viable proposition as part of the growing offshore renewables industry.

*Sites currently (or potentially) at risk, vacant or underused:*

Formal and potential Buildings at Risk in the vicinity include (refer CAMP Appendix 4 for further detail and images):

- 28 & 29 Breadalbane Terrace;
- 17 & 18 Breadalbane Crescent;
- Former Dounreay Club.

*Negative buildings and structures:*

Buildings at risk and gap sites can have a negative impact on the built environment. In addition CAA Map 6.3 (and fig 2) indicate other buildings and structures where their design, condition or vacancy is having a negative impact and which offer opportunity for enhancement or redevelopment. In the vicinity of the boat yard this includes:

- Building at the foot of the Black Stairs on the east side (inappropriate repairs and alterations to original building);
- Wick Youth Club building (a large modern ‘shed’ structure) at the top of the Black Stairs;
- Former fish shop and sheds on high ground above Memorial Garden (current for sale);
- Rear elevation / section of former Dounreay Club.

Boundary and wall treatments also detract including a modern dry dash rendered wall to the adjoining Wick Museum storage site and the white painted masonry of the tall consolidated walls of the roofless building to the east.

## DESIGN NOTES:

*Significant visible structures (other than buildings):* surviving Caithness stone walls.

*Important characteristics:* other than the small and plain former police building, the site has been largely used in a temporary way with low (single storey) structures or open space. As such it has little defining character in itself and any new structures will have to take the character of the surrounding built environment into account and be subservient to that.

*Views:* the site has an open view to the harbour and marina to the east on the Harbour Quay frontage. The north elevation faces onto the buildings on Rose Street and any building on this street line would impact on the light and amenity of those existing buildings. To the south and south-west, the site addresses the gap frontages on Bank Row and the industrial uses set back at the foot of the Black Stairs. The nature of the frontage on Bank Row means that there are open views to the rear of buildings at higher level on Breadalbane Crescent (fig 10).

*Connectivity:* the site occupies an important point at the foot of the Black Stairs, and where both Rose Street and Bank Row meet Harbour Quay. Historically a lane also linked this area to Upper Pulteneytown to the west of the Memorial Garden (fig 4).

There is an opportunity to design create open space as part on an enhanced streetscape and utilising the Black Stairs, Memorial Garden and potentially allowing for a small ‘outdoor museum’ or exhibition space for the Wick Society (close to its existing offer at the nearby Wick Heritage Centre).



Figure 7: view of the former boat yard site from higher ground behind the Wick Heritage Museum in 2019.



Figure 8: the Memorial Garden opposite the former boat yard site; on the left 3-storey walls of a former building have been consolidated and painted white, paint finish is failing.



Figure 9: the foot of the Black Stairs, note previous inappropriate alterations to the traditional building on the left (horizontal windows, painted masonry, concrete tile roof); enhancement works as part of previous investment has reintroduced traditional street finishes.



Figure 10: view with the stone boundary wall of the former Boat Yard in the foreground, and the rear of properties on the higher ground on Breadalbane Crescent beyond. Note the prominence and impact that the rear of the properties on Breadalbane Crescent have on the site.



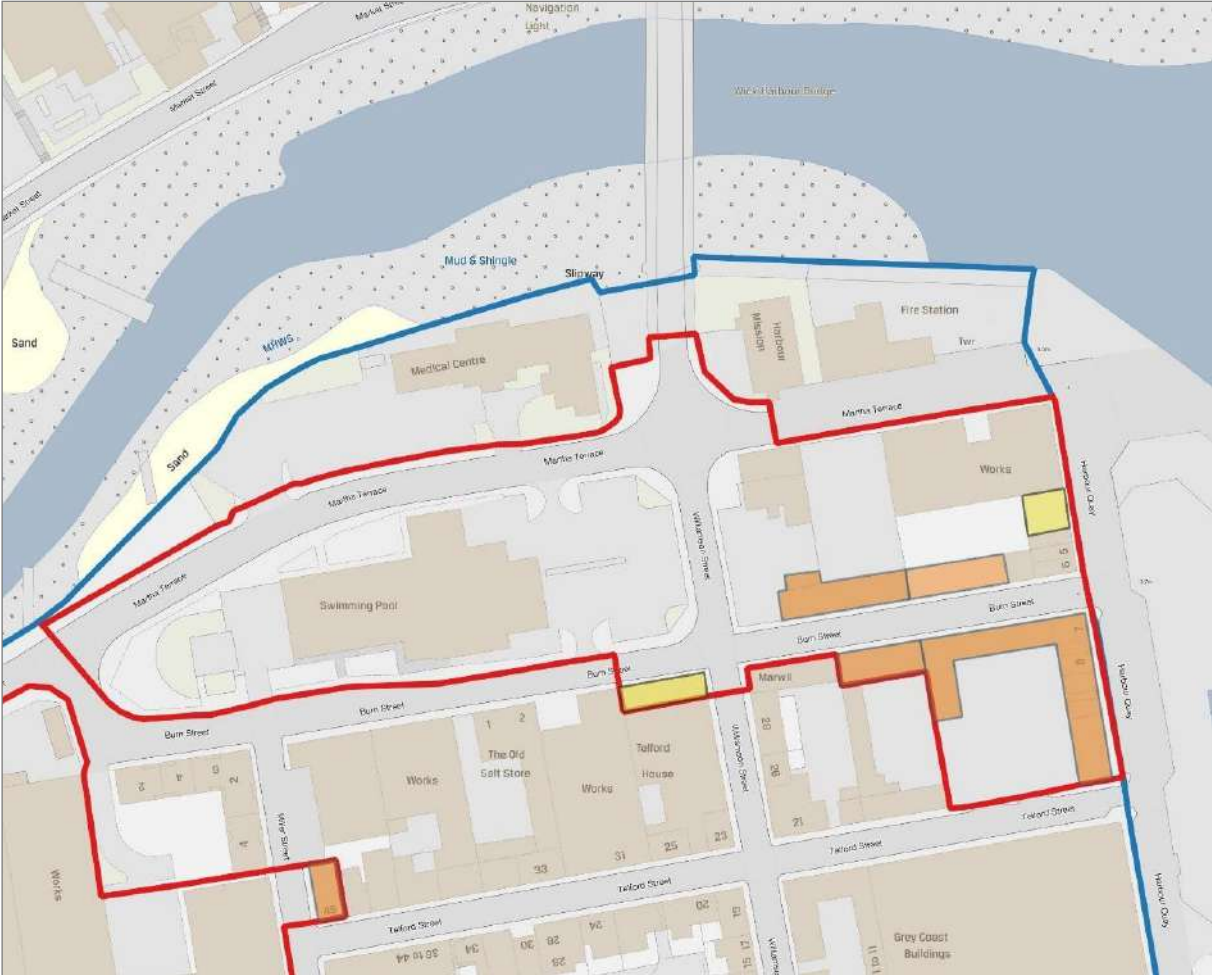
Figure 11: general view of the site in 2019 before the Beatrice construction site cabins were removed.



Figure 12: view of the site on approach from the east, the site is highly visible in the important Harbour Quay vista.

### DEVELOPMENT SITE 3

### URBAN BLOCK: BURN STREET / MARTHA TERRACE / HARBOUR QUAY



Map of possible Development Site 3 (outlined in red) indicating Buildings at Risk on Register in orange, and not on Register in yellow. Current Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area boundary outlined in blue. © THC/Crown

This appendix can be read in conjunction with the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA)* and the *Wick Pulteneytown Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) Appendix 4: Buildings at Risk*.

Please note all images and maps with copyright indicated are for illustration purposes only and must not be shared or copied.



Figure 1: Building Date Analysis Map: current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with probable construction dates from map evidence. Orange by 1857; red 1858-1872; blue 1873-1905; grey after 1905. © THC /Crown, refer CAA Map 6.2 for full conservation area.



Figure 2: Listed & Positive Buildings Map: current Ordnance Survey map overlaid with listed buildings and positive, neutral and negative buildings. Red Category A, Orange Category B, Green Category C, Purple positive, Beige neutral and grey negative buildings. © THC /Crown, refer CAA Map 6.3 for full conservation area.



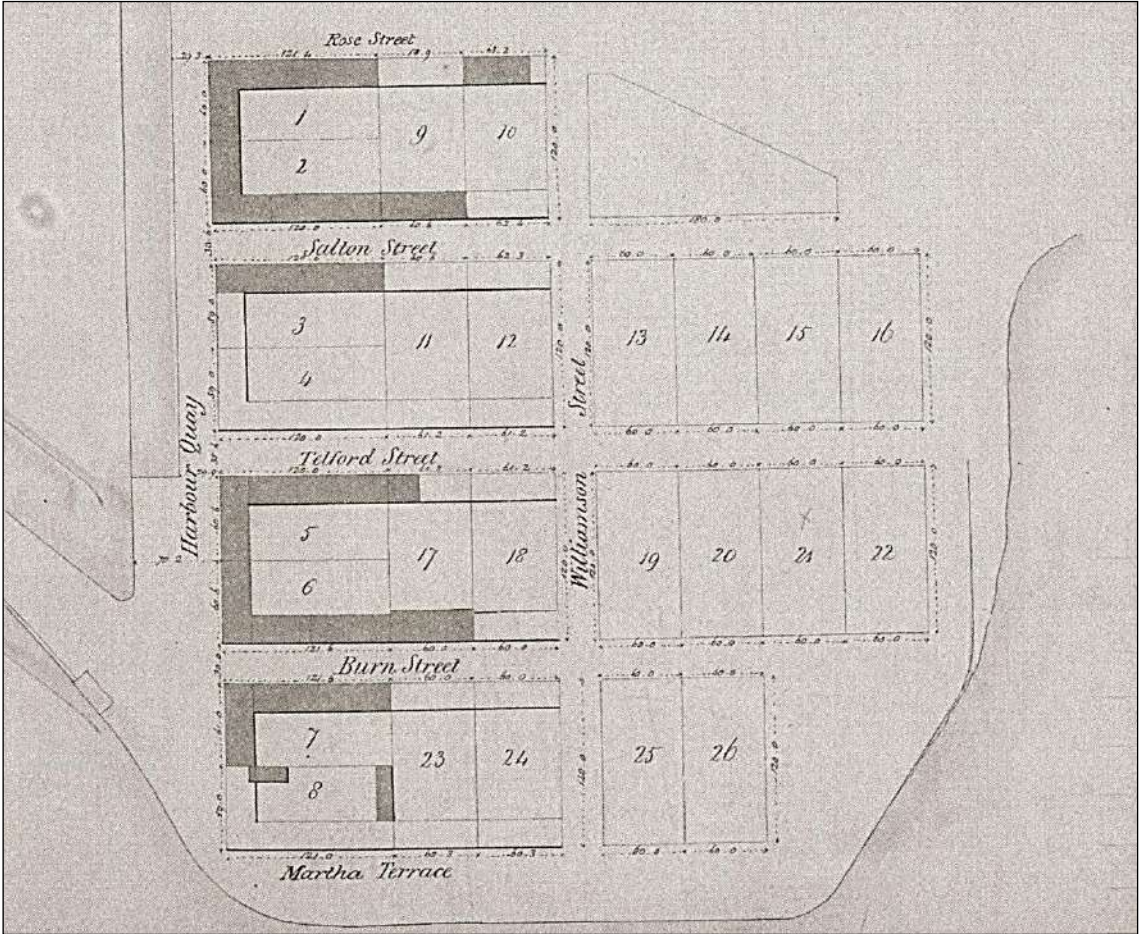


Figure 3: an extract from Draught Feu Charter by the British Society 1813 (SRO/GD9/337) illustrating the lots for sale, 26 in all at this time; the shading indicates where buildings have been constructed. Note the water line, at this point very close to the lots. ©SRO/GD9/337/1

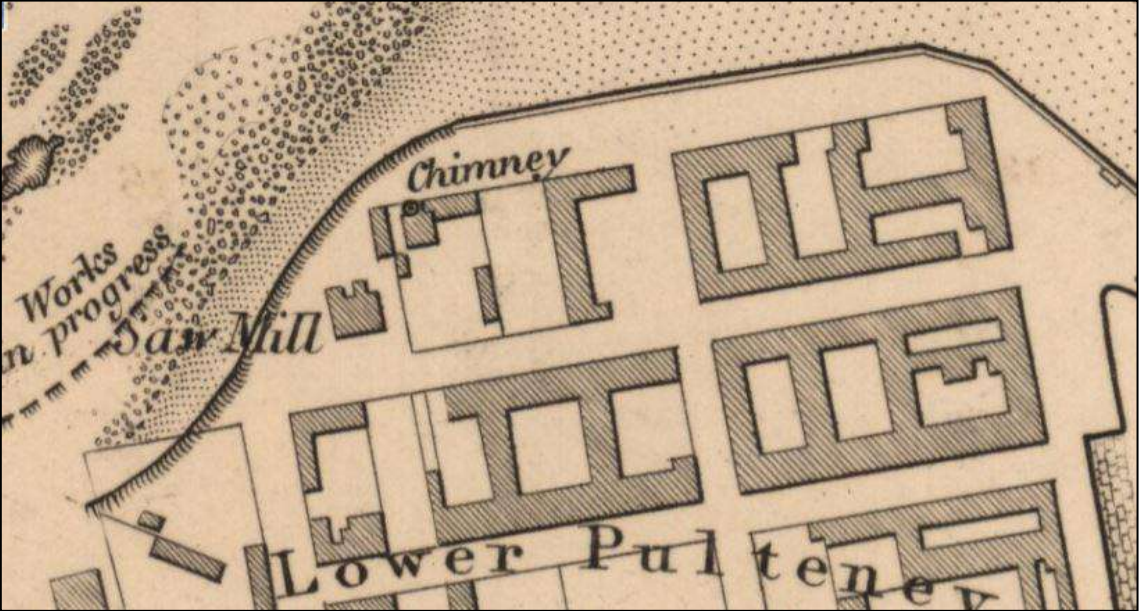


Figure 4: The Admiralty Charts of Scotland: The Port and Vicinity of Wick (surveyed 1839; additions 1857) ©NLS

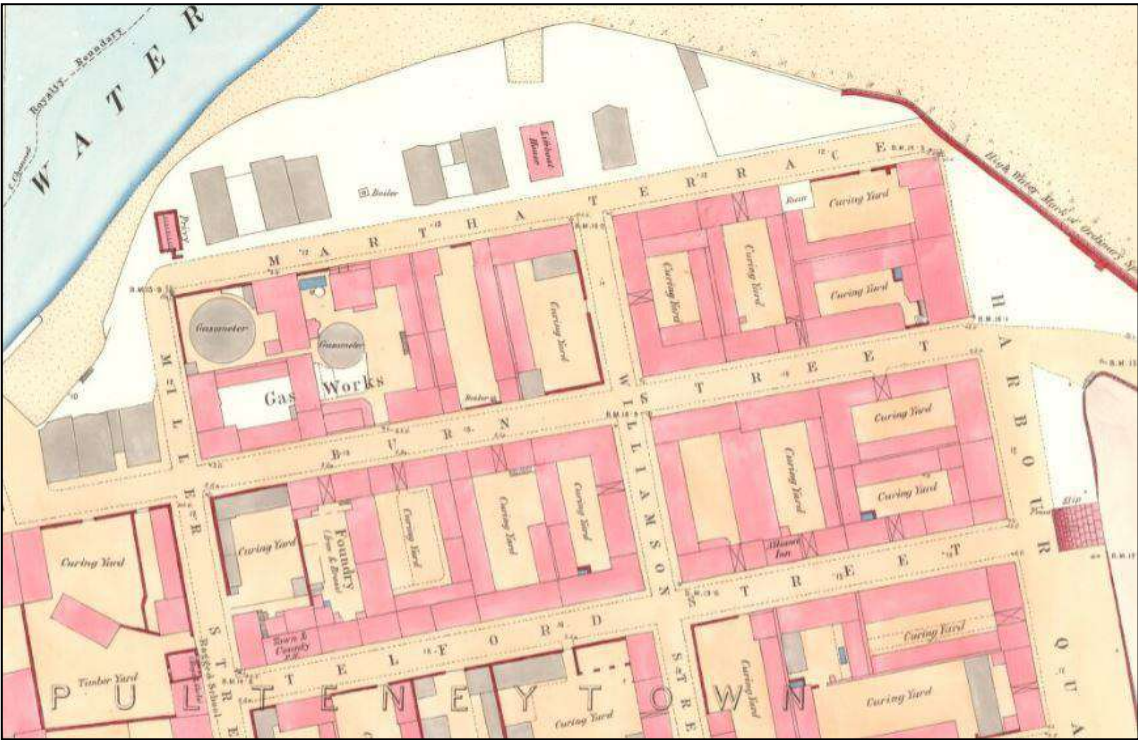


Figure 5: 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. OS Town Plan 1873 (surveyed 1872) © NLS

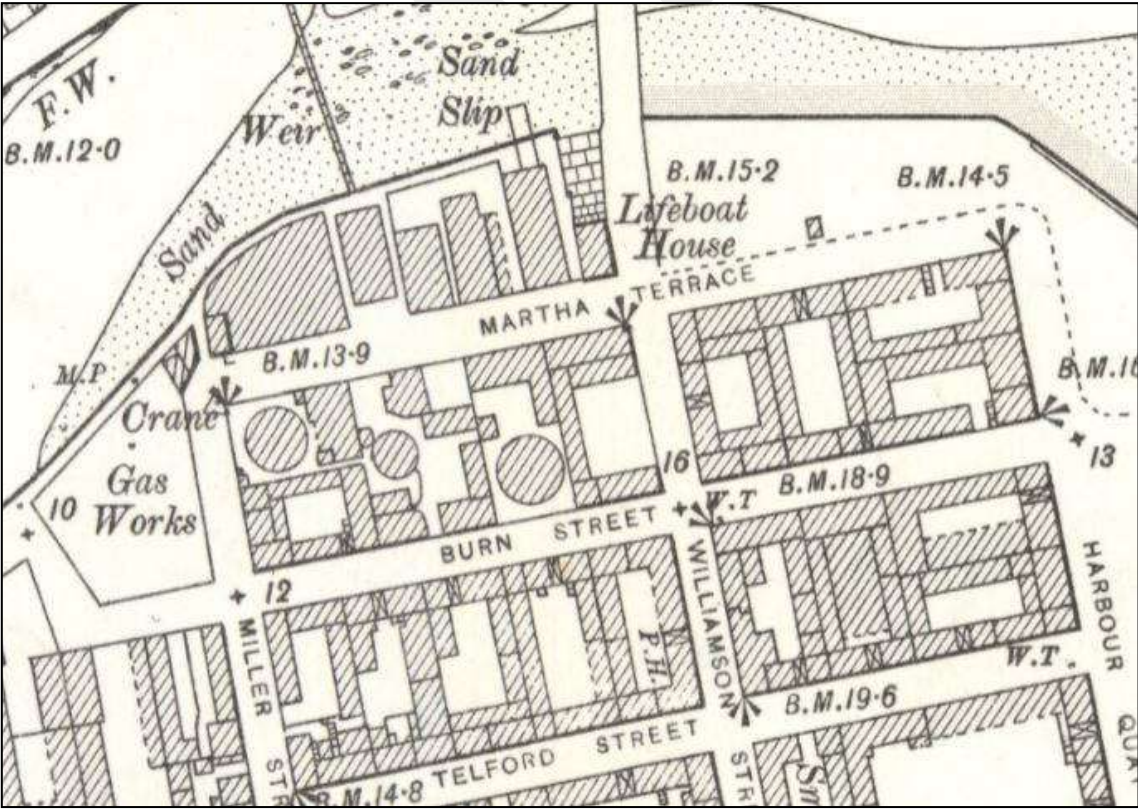


Figure 6: 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. OS 25inch map 1906 (surveyed 1905) © NLS

*Extent of the proposed site:* refer map.

*Background:* Telford’s plan for the industrial area is recorded in the 1813 Draft Feu Charter and comprised six and a half urban blocks (fig 3). On Martha Terrace the westward block was not fully developed until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century once works were completed to reclaim land to create River Street. The Ordnance Survey 1st and 2nd Editions illustrate that development of this urban block varied slightly from the regularity of the curing yard blocks as part of the block housed a Gas Works (figs 5 & 6). The buildings and structures comprising this block have been removed and the original form of the block significantly altered with construction of the swimming pool at the centre of the block (1993; now redundant). The block has also been extended westward closing off the route of Miller Street; the road was widening at the eastern end in the late 1980s to create a mini-roundabout.

The block to the east (enclosed by Williamson Street and Harbour Quay) followed the Telford plan and Feu Charter regulations in its layout which comprised of four lots: two rectangular lots dividing the Harbour Quay frontage, and two rectangular lots addressing the side streets (figs 3 & 5). Buildings appear to be largely complete by the 1840s (fig 4) with the south-east corner possibly built by 1813 (fig 3). The two blocks south of Burn Street repeated this pattern, all street fronting buildings enclosing curing yards with the exception of a foundry.

The land north of Martha Terrace was not part of the original building lots, and in the 1870s this area, just above the high water mark, was the site of a number of more temporary buildings and the original lifeboat house (1848; now demolished). Shortly after the 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Ordnance Survey (1872), a new bridge was constructed and a route formed from Williamson Street to the north bank of the river at the end of the High Street. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Ordnance Survey (fig 6) shows development on the western plot (currently the medical centre, 1995) but no development on the eastern part (currently the fire station site).

*Archaeological potential:* Industrial archaeological potential from previous use and buildings on site.

*References:* Draught of Feu Charter by the British Society 1813 (SRO/GD9/337); Admiralty Charts of Scotland: *The Port and Vicinity of Wick* (surveyed 1839; additions 1857); Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Surveyed 1872: Town Plan & 25 inch series; OS 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Surveyed 1905.

Note the thumbnail images below are for reference purposes only.

<p><b>The Wick Society: The Johnston Photographic Collection</b>                  Note additional relevant images may be available</p>		
		
<p>JN20276B003                  Martha Terrace frontage</p>	<p>JN20089B001</p>	<p>JN20088B001                  Martha Terrace 1920s</p>
<p><b>Canmore photographs</b>                  Note images available to view on Canmore website, additional relevant images may be available off-line</p>		
		
<p>SC435447</p>	<p>SC435451</p>	<p>SC 1347011</p>

Burn Street, north side, looking west 1974	1974 Burn Street, south side, looking west 1974	Aerial view of part of the area in 2013
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Figure7: Aerial view of part of the area, 2013 (Canmore ref SC 1347011) ©HES

*Ownership:* Mixed; there are a number of uses which occupy larger plots including GMR Henderson Building Contractor, as well as other private owners. The former swimming pool has recently been purchased by Hugh Simpson Contractors.

*Current use:* the urban blocks have a mixture of public and industrial uses (supply and servicing), and a small number of residential properties.

*LDP:* Mixed use

*Sites currently (or potentially) at risk, vacant or underused:*

Formal and potential Buildings at Risk include (refer CAMP Appendix 4 for further detail and images):

- two derelict buildings on the south side of Burn Street and adjoining surviving single storey partial building (fig 8);
- former herring house, curing yard and buildings on the south side of Burn Street, part of block with Harbour Quay and Telford Street north side (fig 9);
- Gap site/partial building (façade only?) on Harbour Quay (fig 11);
- Yard next to GMR Henderson on Martha Terrace (fig 8);
- Single storey flat roofed structure at the south-west corner of Williamson Street / Burn Street next to Caithness Voluntary Group building (fig 12).

*Reference in other documents:* The Wick Charrette (2013) suggested that

*“... opportunities for future infill redevelopment are evident between Martha Terrace and Burn Street, where harbour/ marine related workshops, studios and offices could be well placed in close proximity to the main harbour access.”*

(Wick Charrette, 2013, 32)

At that time, the charrette also noted that several properties on the north side of Telford Street were vacant, and there were outline plans to create a new Visual Arts Centre which could utilise some or all of the former curing yard buildings.

Regarding the swimming pool, the charrette noted it would be surplus to requirements once a new public pool is constructed at the Wick Academy, with potential for the building to be converted for an alternative use (with precedents of infilling the pool cavity to create space such as a dance studio, or office space).

#### *Negative buildings and structures:*

Buildings at risk and gap sites can have a negative impact on the built environment. In addition to those listed above, CAA Map 6.3 (and fig 2) indicate other buildings and structures where design, condition or vacancy is having a negative impact, and which offer opportunity for enhancement or redevelopment. In the area concerned this includes:

- the redundant swimming pool (fig 13; scale of the building, position on plot, lack of street frontage on block, wall materials, standard hard surface finishes);
- Building on the south-east corner of Williamson Street / Martha Terrace and rendered boundary wall treatments (possibly covering original masonry walls; figs 8 & 14);

#### **DESIGN NOTES:**

*Significant visible structures (other than buildings):* a number of Caithness stone walls survive from earlier industrial buildings and have significance both in terms of original fabric (authenticity) and the sustainable use of materials. Examples include high walls enclosing the yard next to GMR Henderson, and on the interior side of the wall enclosing Williamson Street (block and render cover exterior face). Further survey and analysis would be required to determine the extent of original building fabric and elements prior to any development or demolition. The 1872 OS Town Plan is a useful reference for historic detail including significant walls; as are historic images.

There are two ‘gap’ sites which retain partial remains of the earlier buildings on Burn Street (fig 8) and on Harbour Quay.

*Important characteristics:* much erosion has taken place of the street frontages of these blocks, a characteristic which was one of the key principles of Telford’s design. Historic images from the Johnston Collection clearly show the strong urban edge created by the buildings lining Martha Terrace (ref JN20276B003). The urban edge of Lower Pulteneytown which addresses the river and the old town is now ragged and ill-formed due to the loss of historic buildings and the style of development here from the 1980s onwards. Development briefs should set out guidelines for reinforcing the characteristic strong urban frontage to the river. Any new development and adaptations should incorporate remaining features of the historic industrial quarter including high walls defining original lots; surviving industrial buildings or parts thereof.

*Views:* The high walls and deep plot sizes provide little visual connection across the site from Wick Town Centre, the riverside or either street. Characteristic views are framed vistas enclosed by buildings.



Figure 8: (top) Buildings at Risk on the north side of Burn Street looking east to Harbour Quay, 2019; the buildings span three separate lots; two street fronting buildings remain largely intact, the third has been reduced to a single storey. The 2-storey building in the distance is a later infill incorporating an original single storey yard entrance, it appears somewhat small in scale in comparison to the traditional buildings and the modern render finish is out of character.



(Above left): potential gap sites include the yard next to GMR Henderson retaining high stone walls defining the original lot; the rear elevation of the de-roofed building on Burn Street is visible at the rear (image 1974 © HES); (right) remains of original Caithness stone walling on the internal face of the boundary wall on Williamson Street (betw. Burn Street and Martha Terrace).



Figure 9: (top) south side of Burn Street looking east to Harbour Quay, 2019; the eastern lots of former curing yard warehouses were repaired in 2012, but still awaiting a new use; (bottom left: BARR 2013 © HES) an early herring house partly repaired sometime after 2013, also vacant.



Figure 10: Two lots on north side of Telford Street which address Harbour Quay were repaired c.2012 as part of the Beatrice Offshore grant / investment. The buildings are still awaiting a new use. The former herring curing yard was a scrap metal yard in 2008 (top, © Google Maps); the Telford Street fronting buildings appear to have been demolished sometime before the repair work, which consolidated existing buildings (below 2019). No structures remain from the original buildings which divided the two lots. The site offers further potential for street frontage infill which would also obscure the open car parking site from view.





Figure 11: Gap site with surviving façade on Harbour Quay



Figure 12: single storey structure on the SW corner of Burn Street and Williamson Street



Figure 13: former swimming pool now redundant



Figure 14: Club on the SE corner of Martha Terrace and Williamson Street