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| Agenda Item | 6 |
| Report No | WRSL/009/23 |

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh

Date: 12 June 2023

Report Title: Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan – Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure & Environment

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report summarises the public response to the consultation for the proposed Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) & Management Plan (CAMP) (including boundary amendments) for Strathpeffer.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i) **Note** the public comments and agree the Council response; and
- ii) **Recommend** that the Economy and Infrastructure Committee formally approve and adopt the Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, including the amended Conservation Area boundary on 17 August 2023.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – None. The recommendations set out in the report for improvements and regeneration of public spaces managed by, or the responsibility of, the Council will be considered as and when the appropriate circumstances arise and within existing budgets.
- 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 Strathpeffer Conservation Area. There are no other legal implications.

- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** – The CAA and CAMP was written under the guidance of a wide stakeholder group including representatives of many local groups and organisations. The report highlights buildings at risk, underused and vacant buildings, inappropriate or negative development and public realm works 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.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – The report outlines interventions that can be implemented within traditional buildings to adapt to climate change, in alignment with NPF4.
- 3.5 **Risk** – 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 which 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, referred to as Conservation Area Character Appraisals (CAA) and Conservation Area Management Plans (CAMP).
- 4.3 The Strathpeffer Conservation Area was designated by the former Ross and Cromarty County Council 1972 and has not been subject to subsequent amendments.
- 4.4 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was drafted by the Historic Environment Team, supported by officers from across the Planning Service. 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 document. Both have been instrumental in developing the final draft as presented at this Committee.

- 4.5 Local Members, at their Ward Business Meeting (WBM) 3 October 2022, supported the proposal that the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be the subject of a six-week public consultation.

5 Consultation Process

- 5.1 The public consultation was launched via The Council's consultation portal on 9 January 2023. This was widely publicised with a public notice placed in the Ross-Shire Journal, press releases via The Council's Corporate Communications Team, promoted social media posts and notification, by letter, to all properties (totalling 199) within the existing and proposed Conservation Area boundary. Other agencies, including Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Scottish Civic Trust, as part of a stakeholder group, were also invited to comment. The draft documents were available as paper copies in the Strathpeffer Community Centre; County Buildings, Dingwall; and Dingwall Library.
- 5.2 The stakeholder group, consisting of representatives from the Council (including Local Members), the Community Council, the Strathpeffer Pavilion Development Trust and Members of the North Planning Applications Committee, were all notified of the consultation via email, invited to share the consultation within their own contacts, and asked to comment.
- 5.3 A public drop-in event was held at the Strathpeffer Pavilion to allow interested parties and residents to hear more about the appraisal and management plan, and to discuss any concerns or issues with officers. The event, held on 25 January 2023, was attended by 36 individuals, representing a good cross-section of the local community, including residents and business owners.
- 5.4 A wide range of matters were covered including adding new information to the reports; clarifying how the Conservation Area may affect residents in relation to building alterations; erection of outbuildings including sheds/greenhouses; window replacement; energy efficiency/insulation/micro renewables; and boundary alterations. Overall, the event resulted in extensive verbal feedback. In general, the high level of attendance and engagement with residents during the drop-in event meant that many concerns and issues could be dealt with and resolved in person. In total, 23 responses were received through the Council's consultation portal and via email. The main issues raised are discussed in more detail in Sections 6 and 7 below.
- 5.5 Feedback on the draft document, including from the Community Council and Historic Environment Scotland, has been overwhelmingly positive. The management plan was welcomed, particularly the sections on maintenance, recommendations for vacant buildings and changes to the boundary. Positive feedback was received on the document's additional protection and preservation measures. Attendees expressed encouragement that the document had been created, acknowledging that this is the first appraisal and management plan for Strathpeffer's Conservation Area.

6 Main Issue: Conservation Area Boundary Amendments

The planning authority has a statutory duty to assess conservation areas to ensure they accurately represent what is of architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The public consultation resulted in broad consensus that the proposed boundary amendments were appropriate and proportionate, with a minority stating the conservation area should be made larger, or smaller.

The appraisal process has concluded that the boundary does require to be revised. The areas to be incorporated comprise notable buildings contemporary with the development of historic Strathpeffer, that reflect the town's varied architectural character and style. The areas to be removed, although having value in their own right, do not contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area and do not satisfy the statutory test of being of 'special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

These areas are discussed briefly below and in more detail in Section 5 of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

6.1 Additions

6.2 A1: the Eaglestone

There was full support for the inclusion of the Eaglestone, acknowledging the important historic and architectural contribution the Pictish stone brings to the town.

6.3 A2: Old Police House/Viewfield

Support for the inclusion of this area has been received from Historic Environment Scotland, the Community Council and other respondents. The owner of the Old Police House initially had reservations due to concerns that changes to this building could be retrospectively enforced. Once informed this was not the case the owner stated that they would be content for the building to be included in its current condition.

6.4 A3: Garden Brae

There was strong support from individual respondents, Historic Environment Scotland and the Community Council for the inclusion of A3, comprising seven prominent Victorian/Edwardian villas. There is agreement with the recommended extension that the buildings are integral to Strathpeffer's architectural and historic heritage. The owner of Glen Oran has raised concerns regarding the proposed inclusion of this building. It is, however, a fine late Victorian villa that, along with the other buildings on Garden Brae, contributes positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area. None of the other property owners raised any objections to the inclusion of Garden Brae.

6.5 Areas A4, 5 & 6

These three minor boundary alterations bring in small areas of garden ground to create a definable edge to the Conservation Area that aligns with modern boundaries and current mapping. No objections or concerns have been raised.

6.6 **Peffery House**

The draft appraisal proposed to remove Peffery House (built c.1990) from the conservation area. There was however concern within the local community regarding its exclusion and the loss of control on what may be permitted in the future, as well as acknowledging the important role that this building plays in respect of the setting of the Listed railway station and wider context. Although it is recognised that the building has little historic merit, it is accepted that the building is well designed, adopts a complimentary palette of materials and does contribute positively to the wider setting of this part of the conservation area. It is therefore proposed to extend the boundary to include the building and its curtilage.

6.7 **Other Areas Proposed**

Additional areas that could be incorporated into the Conservation Area were also put forward, including Nutwood House and Steading. However, in these cases buildings were either already adequately protected (i.e., as listed buildings) or the buildings were not of sufficient architectural/historic quality and as such no additional extensions are proposed.

6.8 **Exclusions**

6.9 **E1: Ardival Terrace**

Ardival Terrace comprises a small area of Council housing dating from the 1930/40s to 1960s. Opposing views have been received, with both expression of support for the exclusion and support to retain the houses. It is acknowledged that Ardival Terrace is a good example of social housing with the first phase of building (c.1930/40) being of especially high quality. However, they do not contribute to the area's special architectural or historic interest for which the Conservation Area is designated.

6.10 **E2: Nicolson Court & Redwood**

It is proposed to exclude Nicolson Court, built in 1999 and Redwood, a modern house. Some felt that, given their prominent position on the periphery of the Conservation Area, reinstating permitted development rights could result in an adverse impact on the wider area, and should either building be redeveloped in the future, the planning authority would have less control over any replacement. The majority, however, agreed with the removal of both buildings. On balance, it is still proposed to remove this area; it is considered unlikely that any alterations to the Nicolson Court would result in significant adverse impacts to the character of the Conservation Area and Redwood is partly concealed and so has less of a direct influence on the wider area and context.

7 **Main Issue: Energy Efficiency/Climate Resilience**

Improving energy efficiency measures within the Conservation Area, and what interventions would be supported, was a popular discussion point, especially in light of the energy and cost of living crisis. There was general acceptance that the measures outlined in the report successfully struck a balance between supporting energy efficiency measures and preserving the character of the Conservation Area. However, some respondents felt the language used could have been more positive. In light of feedback, the draft report has been revised to positively highlight the options and opportunities available to improve the energy efficiency of buildings within the Conservation Area, for example, how and when to successfully incorporate air source heat pumps, double or secondary glazing, solar panels and improved insulation.

8 Other Issues

8.1 Cromartie Building

Support was received for the measures outlined in the report in particular ensuring that, over time, a single window design and colour is reintroduced back into the building to reinstate its unified appearance.

8.2 Sheiling Building

Opposing views about the building's potential future have been expressed by a number of respondents. Some state support for listing the building and the restoration and repurposing of it whilst others favour demolition. It is clear that the building urgently requires a new and viable use, and the management plan supports options to implement alternative uses; demolition is considered a last resort option, only to be considered when all other avenues have been explored.

8.3 MacKay's Hotel & Spa Lodge Buildings

Many respondents referenced the current condition and vacancy of both buildings. The majority of respondents conveyed support for the repurposing of the buildings into high-quality residential units. Since the report was drafted, MacKay's Spa Lodge Hotel has reopened, providing self-catering accommodation. The draft report has been amended to reflect this change.

8.4 Rosslyn Lodge

Following a fire in December 2022 that caused major damage, many responses expressed concern for both the future of the building and the site. There was a strong majority view supporting a high-quality restoration. The report will be updated to reflect the impact of the recent fire, outlining the Council's support to reinstate the building. The property will also be proposed for the Buildings at Risk Register.

8.5 Former Pump Room

Representation has been made that the former Pump Room should be reinstated as an information point for interpretation, education and community engagement and a central visitor point; this suggestion has been included in the draft report. The building is in the ownership of the Pavilion Development Trust who are considering the future use of the building.

8.6 Inappropriate materials and alterations

Concern was raised that a number of buildings have uPVC windows and other inappropriate materials and that these properties should be required to revert to timber windows more suited to the character of the buildings and Conservation Area. Concerns were also raised regarding some property owners who have not sought permission and carried out unauthorised and inappropriate works. The Management Plan acknowledges that there are a small number of inappropriate and insensitive alterations in Strathpeffer, including uPVC windows and conservatories, but that the majority of these were installed legally before changes to the General Permitted Development Order in 2012, at which point planning authorities were given more control over development in conservation areas. Since this time, a consistent approach has been applied to reinstate traditional detailing and materials and the management plan will ensure that this will continue.

8.7 **Spa Gardens**

Multiple respondents have outlined concern about the condition of the Spa Gardens, namely that they are not maintained, they are overgrown and that the existing group of volunteers require additional support to manage the area. The management plan outlines support for Strathpeffer Pavilion Development Trust's grant application to Historic Environment Scotland, and the Council is supportive of proposals which aim to enhance the gardens whilst preserving or enhancing their significant contribution to the wider Conservation Area.

8.8 **Trees**

The Conservation Area contains a large number of specimen trees (including a significant collection of monkey puzzle trees) which make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the area. In recognition of this and in response to feedback, a key/landmark tree survey will be carried out, in partnership with the community, and the resulting map will be included in the final document.

8.9 **Public Realm**

Support for the prominence given to the public realm and its management was expressed. Feedback on the restricted availability of car parking in the Conservation Area has been received as well as the importance of active travel measures to remove reliance upon vehicles. A number of responses have been received relating to the poor condition of the public realm, foot paths, hedges and road network within the Conservation Area, which are acknowledged in the Management Plan and that these issues should be addressed when opportunities arise.

9 **Next Steps**

- 9.1 Subject to Member comment and agreement, the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be presented to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 17 August 2023 for final adoption.
- 9.2 Further non-material revisions not yet incorporated, formatting changes and illustrations may be made to the Appraisal and Management Plan in preparation for final publication and public release.
- 9.3 Subject to Members of the Economy & Infrastructure Committee agreeing to adopt the reports in August, Scottish Ministers and Historic Environment Scotland will be notified of the boundary changes and an advert placed in the Edinburgh Gazette, as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

9.4 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

Date: 17 May 2023

Author: Sarah James-Gaukroger, Conservation Area Project Officer

Background Papers: Appendix 1: Summary of detailed representations and proposed response
Appendix 2: Revised Conservation Area Boundary Map
Appendix 3: Post-consultation *Draft* Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan

Appendix 1 Public Comments - additional

The majority of comments received were concerned with a single issue and these have been outlined in the main report. 23 respondents submitted comments that covered multiple points and/or concerns and these are detailed below, alongside the proposed Council response. The names of individual respondents have been omitted due to GDPR and those submitted by organisations have been retained.

Do you have any comments on the Introduction? (pages 3 - 7)

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 5 | I support the designation of parts of Strathpeffer as a conservation area. | Noted. |
| 6 | The introduction is well presented and clearly states the consequences of achieving conservation status, along with the purposes, benefits and some background historical information. | Noted. |
| 7 | <p>I have long believed that Planning needs to be more rigorous in maintaining conservation area the statement (last sentence on page 7) that 'Tourism is the main economic driver for the town' further supports a myth. Strathpeffer has inherited a number of features from a bygone age:</p> <p>* Hotels. These do NOT offer economic benefit to the community, being economic islands that import all that they need to keep guest spend within their walls. They do not offer local employment, not do they spend locally.</p> <p>*Pavilion. As is obvious this quite out scale to the needs of the Strathpeffer Community. It's income comes from concerts and weddings from a wide catchment area. The Pavilion is not a cash generator for the community; all income is required for its own maintenance. Tourists do not use the Pavilion.</p> | <p>We do not agree; tourism is one of the main economic drivers and accompanying local trade. There is a high number of accommodation providers within Strathpeffer; these businesses would not be viable if there were insufficient demand from visitor numbers.</p> <p>Staff will be located within Strathpeffer's catchment area in order to deliver employment.</p> <p>This is not the case; the Pavilion is a key element of Strathpeffer, as outlined in the report and is well regarded by many. The venue does indeed benefit from a wide catchment area, attracting existing and new visitors to the town.</p> |

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| | <p>*Gardens. These Victorian Gardens are hardly used and are a cost without any matching income flow. Tourists do not use the gardens.</p> <p>The economic drivers are local businesses grouped around the Square and the Station. The Deli and the Gift Shop will benefit from visitors to the area but the backbone is local trade, not tourists.</p> | <p>We do not agree; the public consultation has outlined strong support and high regard for the gardens, which are publicly and freely available to all. The report acknowledges that additional work is required to ensure the gardens are maintained to a high standard and the Council is supportive of the community's work in this regard.</p> <p>No response required.</p> |
| HES | <p>Thank you consulting us on the draft conservation area appraisal and management plan for the Strathpeffer Conservation Area. We welcome the draft appraisal and management plan, alongside useful links to the Council's own maintenance guide and Supplementary Planning Guidance on historic windows and doors, as well as our guidance.</p> <p>Audience for the document We welcome the ambitions set out for your Council to promote the conservation of Strathpeffer's historic environment. We suggest it might also be helpful to include more information and clarity on how property owners might contribute to that conservation by improving or maintaining their own buildings. For example, the general management themes could provide more specific information to owners and potential developers of what type of applications are likely to be acceptable, the type of consents required for different sorts of work, outline the consent process and also provide information on any grants.</p> | <p>Noted.</p> <p>Due to space constraints, there isn't space to detail specific advice, however the report contains a link to the Council's Building Maintenance Guide on page 48. The booklet contains expert advice and tips on how to repair and maintain heritage buildings.</p> <p>Regretfully we are unaware of any grant funding opportunities but should HES be able to signpost the Council to where owners of heritage buildings could receive grant aid to maintain their buildings, we would be pleased to include further details.</p> |

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| HES | <p>General Observations</p> <p>We suggest the reading order could be reviewed and some of the text edited to avoid repetition. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p20, the text should focus on the landscape setting rather than building / use, as this is discussed on p25 • p22, <i>Section 4.1.8</i> might sit better in the Management Plan • p35, <i>Section 4.3.4 Architectural Detail</i>, the bullet point ‘Mature gardens, trees and planting’ is not relevant here • p37, We recommend adding ‘render’ to the list of typical materials • p47, We suggest moving the sentence: ‘<i>Given the number of hotels and buildings catering to visitors it is inevitable that significant areas will be allocated to parking space. In some areas this has had the unfortunate consequence of dominating the hotel buildings, their garden ground and the immediate streetscape, as shown in Fig. 67.</i>’ To the discussion on loss of private green space, boundaries etc. in <i>Section 7.1</i> of the Management Plan. • p47, We suggest moving the sentence: ‘<i>Areas that have significant potential and scope for enhancement include Strathpeffer Hotel, Spa Lodge Hotel and MacKay’s Hotel.</i>’ to Enhancements in the Management Plan. • p50, <i>7.1.8 Loss of Traditional Boundaries</i>, we suggest moving this after <i>Section 7.1.5</i> • p51, <i>7.1.10 Loss of Private Green Space</i>, we suggest moving this after the section on loss of boundaries. | <p>Noted, however the areas discussed are all publicly accessible so do not agree with this proposal.</p> <p>The Old Station contains an area of publicly available ground; the text will be amended to clarify that this is the area of focus.</p> <p>We do not agree; this is a template THC has developed and we wish to retain information about gap sites in this section</p> <p>Noted – the post-consultation report will be amended to include this suggestion.</p> <p>Noted – the post-consultation report will be amended to include this suggestion.</p> <p>Noted – the post-consultation report will be amended to include this suggestion.</p> <p>Noted – the post-consultation report will be amended to include this suggestion.</p> <p>Noted; the post consultation report will be amended to include this suggestion.</p> <p>Noted; the post consultation report will be amended to include this suggestion.</p> |
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Do you have any comments on the Location & Landscape and the Historical Development sections?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | p. 9 There is evidence of pre-Iron Age activity in Strathpeffer, mainly from finds. This shows the Strath was important from at least the Neolithic onwards. Strathpeffer also has a very interesting wartime use (described in the ARCH Remembering the Strathpeffer Area project, available from the Library on the ARCH website www.archhighland.org.uk . During WWI it was taken over by the United States Navy for a hospital, with many buildings, including the Pavilion, Highland Hotel, Ben Wyvis Hotel, Mackenzie Nicolson Hospital used. Pictures survive. In WWII similarly a number of buildings were requisitioned, this time by the UK military for training. | Noted; the post consultation report will be amended to include this suggestion. |
| 5 | 2.3 The distinctive dark stone used for many buildings in Strathpeffer is Moine psammite. This is present further west, from Achilty quarry in Contin westward. It is difficult to dress, which is why the softer Devonian sandstones are used for quoins. | Noted. |
| 6 | As a local resident I found this interesting and well presented. | Noted. |

Do you have any comments on the Spatial Analysis section? (pages 15 - 23)

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 4 | Page 18 Rhodendron ponticum, should have lower case p. I thought there might have been mention of the monkey puzzle Araucaria araucana trees | Noted; the post consultation report will be amended to correct this typo. In response to feedback, the Council will be undertaking a tree survey to map all landmark trees within the Conservation Area and this will be included in the final report. |

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| ARCH | <p>p. 20 Old Station. Could add that this is the terminus of a footpath / cycle way to Dingwall along the old railway line, which will allow safe access for cyclists and walkers. Much of this work has been completed by a local community group.</p> <p>p. 20 Kinnetas Graveyard. Could add that the gravemarkers have recently been recorded, with information available from Highland Family History Society. There was originally a parish of Kinettas (later merged with Fodderty), and there may have been a parish church at this site, though nothing remains. https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG7897</p> <p>p. 23 The Old Station hosts a number of small business - should be The Old Station hosts several small businesses</p> | <p>Noted; The Old Station at Strathpeffer is a start/end point of The Peffery Way to Dingwall with side routes to Knockfarrel, Fodderty and Knockbain. It is intended that this will be an all-abilities path although not yet complete. The route is a proposed core path, yet to be confirmed by Scottish Ministers.</p> <p>Noted; this section will be amended to include this suggestion.</p> <p>Noted; the post consultation report will be amended to correct this typo.</p> |
| 6 | Well presented | Noted. |

Do you have any comments on the Buildings & Townscape section? (pages 23 - 32)

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | <p>p. 26 4.2.2. Notable Buildings and Heritage Designations. In this paragraph (or elsewhere in the document, perhaps the last paragraph of 4.2.11 on p. 31) it would be good to note the work ARCH has done in Strathpeffer, where memories and information about most of the buildings in the Conservation Area were recorded. This can be found on the ARCH website www.archhighland.org.uk in the Remembering the Strathpeffer Area folder of the Library. Despite being submitted to the HER years ago, much of this information still remains to be uploaded to the HER, and provides a very useful snapshot. From this work, we would also highlight additional buildings</p> | <p>Noted; the report includes reference to ARCH in the further information section, and the post consultation version will reference to the website as a source of information. The information will be added to the HER in due course.</p> |

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| | <p>The Shieling should definitely be included here. It is so very unusual, and has a rich history. Although now not part of the Square, it was an extension really, housing a lending library and within memory, a shop. You do mention it in 4.2.13, but only in the context of it being a building at risk. We would like to see more strongly worded suggestion that the Shieling be saved – though public opinion on its suitability for a bar remains mixed. Other possible uses can be identified.</p> <p>Kildonan / Strathview. Originally one large property, now in two buildings. Unusual architecture. Kildonan was the Temperance Hotel. In WWI used as a convalescent home for soldiers. Why isn't the Red House or Timaru mentioned here?</p> | <p>We do not agree; regretfully the building's current condition does not merit inclusion in this section however if the building is restored, it may be included in future reviews of the report.</p> <p>The building is also mentioned in 7.2.3, stating that securing a new use for the unit should be considered a priority.</p> <p>Kildonan is included in the appendix, and is highlighted in Map 5 as a listed building. The criteria for identifying Landmark Buildings did not deem Kildonan for inclusion, although it is of course a Listed Building and is of architectural and historical merit.</p> <p>The Red House is included in 4.2.2 and is indicated in Map 5 as a Landmark Building. The criteria for identifying Landmark Buildings did not deem Timaru for inclusion, although it is of course, a Listed Building and is of architectural and historical merit.</p> |
| 6 | Again interesting and well presented | Noted. |
| 7 | The general appearance and upkeep of the shops in the Square needs addressing: maintenance, signing and car parking. Car parking is an issue in its own right; there is insufficient. | The Square has benefitted from recent improvements, e.g., the installation of the bandstand, wayfinding and the restoration of the fountain. Planning approval has been given for improvements to the retail units and the Council is supportive of these improvements. Car parking is limited within the Conservation Area and active/green travel is encouraged whenever possible, to remove dependency upon car use. |
| HES | <p>4.2.11 Key Unlisted Buildings</p> <p>This section is interesting but could be streamlined to reduce the text relating to a pure description of the buildings – instead focussing on their key characteristics and contribution to the conservation area. It might be beneficial to use a summary here and shift the detailed</p> | We do not agree; the text flows as an interesting descriptor. |

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| | <p>descriptions to an appendix to help the flow of the document.</p> <p>It would also be helpful to set out their status in the planning process, for example a presumption for retention and how changes to them should be managed – referring to the relevant policy in Section 9.</p> <p>A link to the Council’s HER could be provided to enable owners / developers to initiate research on their own buildings and our guidance might also help Researching Historic Buildings Historic Environment Scotland.</p> | <p>Regretfully due to limited resources, we do not have capacity to include planning detail however interested parties are able to trace this via the Council’s planning application portal.</p> <p>A link to the HER is included in the further information section, and the narrative will be expanded to advise interested parties how the HER may be used.</p> |
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Do you have any comments on the Architectural Form section?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | Dunichen - with its unusual cast iron fittings imported from Glasgow for the dormer and other features. It is pictured in Fig. 42, but not highlighted as cast iron. This could be linked in your bulleted list pp. 34-5. | Noted; the post consultation report will be amended. |
| 5 | It is difficult to envisage modern tarmac being replaced by more traditional materials. What were these? Stone setts, or Caithness flags? | We anticipate that the original materials would indeed have been granite setts or Caithness flags but we are not aware of evidence to confirm this. |
| 6 | Although some residents may be upset by photographs of historical bad planning and building practice , I think it highlights the importance of achieving and implementing conservation status. | This is helpful; thank you for this feedback. |
| 11 | <p>a) Boundary Treatments</p> <p>I refer here to Sections 4.3.6 and 7.1.8 (reproduced below), and specifically the photograph of the ‘inappropriate timber fencing’ to the rear of Holly Lodge depicted in Figure 73.</p> <p><i>4.3.6 Boundary Walls</i></p> | |

There are a variety of boundary treatments present within the Conservation Area. The original boundary walls—low coped stone walls, cast iron railings and hedging — are a major component of the Conservation Area’s character and contribute positively to the sense of place, as depicted in Fig. 53. More modern boundaries, such as timber fencing, are also present and their successful integration depends heavily on design. Short picket-style fencing, for example, tends to integrate well, whilst in the majority of cases horizontal timber boarding or high vertical timber fencing tends to appear incongruous to the overall aesthetic and detracts from the area’s character and appearance. Elsewhere, blockwork boundary walls have been erected which do not add positively to the character of the Conservation Area, as per fig. 54. Post and wire fences, especially when combined with planting, generally have a neutral impact.

7.1.8 Loss of Traditional Boundaries

Boundary walls are a significant component of Strathpeffer’s character. Where traditional boundaries have been replaced these can have a significantly detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This is most acutely apparent where timber panel and/or horizontal or vertical board fencing has been used, as per Fig. 73. Likewise, modern materials such as chain-link fences and concrete block walls—often finished with harl and lacking the width or finish of traditional stone walls detract from the Fig. 72 Ardival Court Fig. 73 inappropriate timber fencing 51 character of the area. Such options are poor substitutes for traditional boundary treatments such as hedging, stone walls and cast-iron railings. The Council will not support the loss of traditional boundary treatments and will encourage the replacement of inappropriate boundary treatments with traditional finishes. New boundaries will be of a form and finish appropriate to the Conservation Area.

As the owner of Holly Lodge, I take great exception to this photograph appearing in the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as an example of poor practice, and the inference that 'vertical board fencing' in this location is a modern development with no historic authenticity. I politely ask for this photograph to be removed from the draft Plan on the grounds that 'vertical board fencing' has existed here for at least the last 64 years and is very likely to have been the original boundary treatment.

The photographs below are from the James Valentine Photographic Collection, courtesy of the University of St Andrews Libraries and Museum, ID:JV-D-4811 (<https://collections.st-andrews.ac.uk/item/holly-lodge-strathpeffer-spa/93995> and <https://collections.st-andrews.ac.uk/item/holly-lodge-strathpeffer-spa/93997>). The images were registered in December 1959. These photographs demonstrate that, by 1959, 'vertical board fencing' erected to a height of 5-6ft (estimated relative to the height of the clothesline in the first photograph) extended along the entire boundary to the rear of both Holly Lodge and Holly Cottage. To understand why this was the chosen boundary method requires familiarity with the topography of Strathpeffer (which may have eluded the author of the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan). Strathpeffer is built on a hillside. Back in the late nineteenth century the preparation of level building plots necessitated the construction of revetments. One such revetment is located to the rear of Holly Lodge. At maximum elevation, the road surface is some 5ft above the curtilage and Ground Floor of the property. To construct a wall of sufficient height to provide privacy and prevent passers-by looking down into the rear rooms (kitchen, etc.) of Holly Lodge, would require an

Noted; the post consultation draft will be amended to show the inconsistency of boundary treatments which exist in the wider environ, to demonstrate the inconsistency and impact that this has upon the streetscape. However, please note the previous comment, outlining support for such examples of photography.

(Photographs were removed from the comments section due to size restrictions.)

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| | <p>edifice 10-11ft high on the internal face, with additional buttressing for maintaining structural integrity. The alternative would be to plant a hedge, however the width between pavement and top of the revetment is less than 12 inches over much of boundary length, so that any hedge would significantly encroach on the pavement area long before reaching maturity – not to mention the risk from root damage to the revetment wall. Then, as now, ‘vertical board fencing’ offered the best practical solution.</p> <p>It is odd there is no mention of revetment walls in the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal Plan, despite these being a common feature within the Conservation Area and the wider village?</p> <p>As this example demonstrates, it is very easy for planners to conjure up a Victorian-esque fantasy based on a made-up aesthetic. Unfortunately, all this does is create a parody of Victorian architecture, one which neither preserves the integrity of our cultural inheritance or serves the public or those responsible for maintaining it. For all the extravagance of Victorian architecture, form always followed function. The evolution of vernacular architecture was a response to local environmental conditions, and Victorian architects and builders worked with the same sensitivity and symbiosis. Before planners offer advice on what they would like to see, they must first look and understand the practical opportunities and constraints that dictated local design solutions; not pursue a bland, generic ‘Dickens’s World’ ideal of what they think Strathpeffer should be.</p> | <p>The report mentions boundary walls, as per 4.3.6, and details examples.</p> |
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Do you have any comments on the background of the boundary assessment section?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ARCH | We agree with proposals - all seem sensible. However, Ardival Terrace (E1) while not in keeping with the Victorian atmosphere, is unusual with the Upper Terrace being early social housing dating to the 1930s (visible on aerial photographs). The Lower Terrace was late 1950s. As such it provides between the wars history of Strathpeffer. | Noted. We agree that the buildings are good examples of interwar and post war social housing. However, these buildings are not of architectural or historic merit for retention with the Conservation Area and in this context have been scored as negative. |
| 6 | The new conservation boundary seems sensible | Noted. |
| 7 | As a generality I feel that reducing the boundary means that when the opportunity to redevelop anything in an area for which exclusion is proposed does come, the risk is that something else out of keeping is built. What we are trying to do is to maintain the integrity of our Victorian village. | The CA & CAMP outlines that any new proposals must respect, relate and respond to the Conservation Area and must be of high-quality design and materials. This includes sites which are adjacent, or affect views into and out of the Conservation Area. We agree. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | We support the proposed changes to the boundary of the area. They seem sensible to us. | Noted. |
| HES | We welcome the review of boundaries to incorporate areas which contribute to the character of the conservation area – namely areas A1 The Eagle Stone, A2 Old Police House/Viewfield and A3 Garden House Brae. We agree with the proposed revisions to the conservation area that include the minor amendments to rationalise and clarify the boundary and remove areas which do not contribute to the special interest of the conservation area. Strathpeffer Nutwood Steading is noted as a positive building on the map (and is C-listed) and yet is outside the boundary. We recommend considering its inclusion in the boundary despite it being an estate cottage (being more | Noted. |

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| | <p>associated with the surrounding landscape). If these buildings remain outside the boundary the building to the east – Nutwood House or Lodge – should be categorised also.</p> <p>Lower Park Farmhouse (east of the Garden House): the buildings on this site appear in historic maps, including the 1876 Ordnance Survey map, largely in their present form and may be worthy of consideration. The open space to the east and south of the Garden House may also be worth considering.</p> | <p>These buildings and areas of land were considered for inclusion; however the resulting boundary would not create a coherent and manageable Conservation Area.</p> |
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Exclusion of E1 - Do you agree with the exclusion of section E1

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 12 | <p>With reference to the above would like to make the following comments.</p> <p>In the former draft consultation of the conservation area of Strathpeffer, certain areas were excluded. Unfortunately, in the final decision, these areas were included, obviously in order to make a nice, regular outline – for no other reason, as these areas were initially excluded because they had no historic or meritorious objects to include.</p> <p>This particular comment, for example, is with reference to the area labelled E1. This consists of an upper row of terraced council houses, built around the 1930s, a pair of semi-detached houses, possibly built in the 1960s and one 1980s bungalow: a lower row of terraced council</p> | <p>No response required.</p> <p>No response required.</p> |

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| | <p>houses built around 1960 and 2 detached houses, probably built around the 1960s/70s.</p> <p>It is commonsense that anything of historic interest should be included but that nothing else is, as this would mean that any considerations and funding of preservation could be concentrated where it matters, which would save time, money and effort.</p> | Noted. |
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Addition of A1 - Do you agree with the addition of section A1

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | Good to include path - but why not the path to the west as well. Visitors walking in the Strath sometimes use this way to get there (can't tell from the scale of the map whether this is included or not). | We can confirm that the path is included – see map detail on page 41. |

Addition of A2 - Do you agree with the addition of section A2

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| ARCH | Agree with discussion in draft | Noted. |
| 9 | <p>Dear Highland Council,</p> <p>My name is xxx and I am the current owner of the Old Police House in Strathpeffer, which you plan to include in the extended Conservation Area.</p> <p>Me and my family have lived here since 1999, when we bought the house in the understanding that it was not included in the Conservation Area at the time.</p> | |

We love our house as well as the village of Strathpeffer. My main concern with including our house in the new extended boundary, is that I fear we may be retrospectively criticised for the alterations we have done to our house. Namely, we replaced the old single brick wall constructed flat roofed kitchen (built back in the 60's I believe) with a larger, more modern flat roofed extension.

This extension was approved and built to planning regulations at the time and, although it is a modern extension, we did include a pitched roof feature sympathetic to the house. The extension has UPVC windows, which were also approved in our planning application. Also, our flat roofed kitchen is pretty much invisible to the public, when viewed from the old railway line.

We have also replaced most of the original house's windows with double glazed UPVC windows, however, these are almost indistinguishable from the original windows.

I would prefer it if our property were not included in the Conservation Area, however, I do not intend to make any further changes to our property which would contravene the spirit of the expansion of the area.

I am telling you these facts, as I do not wish to find images of our house in your next report, as examples of things you feel are abhorrent to the spirit of the Conservation Area. I am sure that the owners of the properties which were used as 'bad' examples would be mortified to see them in your report. As would I.

Provided my house, in its current state, is acceptable and does not need to change, then I am happy for it to be included in the new boundary.

We can confirm that this house is proposed for inclusion in its current state.

Addition of A3 - Do you agree with the addition of section A3

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | <p>Definitely. These have a rich history associated with the Strath. Historical details described in ARCH Remembering the Strathpeffer Area document. Craigellachie is an example of a property where the family moved into a small cottage behind during the season (there are other examples in the Strath)</p> | <p>Noted.</p> |
| 8 | <p>I live at Glenoran on Garden House Brae. Our house has been incorrectly described as a villa as it was originally a four room downstairs and four room upstairs cottage. It is not a grand house like the others in the street. It has also had many changes to it over the years which has taken it away from its original form. There are plenty better examples of simple houses like ours in Scotland which makes it a poor choice for the conservation area.</p> <p>We love our house and can be trusted to make the best choices for it that we can afford. Quite frankly the damage to its historic integrity has already been done by previous owners. I am very worried that the extra red tape and cost involved will make the upkeep of our building impossible for us. One of the reasons we were happy to by such an old house was that it was NOT in the conservation area.</p> <p>The outlook from Garden House Brae on to the school is hardly in keeping with a listed house. I would argue that The Mount and Parkhill should be removed from the conservation area to make the boundry flow better within the village heart.</p> <p>As the owner of Glenoran, I object to its inclusion in the conservation area and the strange shaped boundry change along Garden House Brae.</p> | <p>We have noted your comments as part of the public consultation process. 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. Glen Oran was assessed at the time of the report, not upon the original proportions when the house was built. The term villa is a generic one, to describe a well-proportioned house.</p> <p>The proposed inclusion of the seven properties on Garden Brae was identified, as the buildings and area are of an age, character and quality that are deemed of special architectural and historical merit, and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Strathpeffer Conservation Area. It is noted that during the public consultation drop-in event, strong support was received by the majority of attendees for the inclusion of all houses and grounds.</p> <p>Objections from other proposed properties were not received during the public consultation process.</p> <p>Historic Environment Scotland and Strathpeffer Community Council have supported the proposed inclusion of this area.</p> |

Any Other Areas text – Please tell us what you think.

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | Nutwood House and Steading are also important to the history of Strathpeffer, being the factor's house. If the Eagle Stone is included, it is not difficult to stretch to include these buildings. | These buildings were considered for inclusion; however the resulting boundary would not create a coherent and manageable Conservation Area. |
| 14 | <p>Hello. I would like to comment on the above. I would like to say that I do not believe any of the areas containing buildings labelled “negative” or “neutral,” should be included in the conservation area. This would mean that funding, time and works could be concentrated on the areas that do matter.</p> <p>One example of removing those areas, would be the removal of the necessity of any of those negative and neutral buildings – and therefore of no historic interest – having to have planning permission in order to change/renew their windows (as they currently do have to). This is a waste of time and money for both homeowner and council: very frustrating for the former who might well live in a 1960s house and very frustrating for the planning officials, as it would pointlessly entail their time and therefore the council’s (public’s) money, which could be better used to help maintain historically interesting and important buildings.</p> | <p>Noted; the buildings contained within areas E1 and E2 were scored as neutral or negative and the results helped to inform the recommendations for the removal of these areas.</p> <p>As above, a number of later buildings of lesser architectural interest have been removed from the Conservation Area and this will reinstate permitted development rights for these property owners. The majority of conservation areas include some modern development and the Planning Authority are experienced in dealing with such applications quickly and efficiently when they arise.</p> |
| 1 | I have read with interest your draft document; Strathpeffer Draft CA & CAMP for Consultation Document, I understand that this appraisal is to identify | Officer response via letter: |

and assess the special architectural and historic interest of Strathpeffer along with those key elements that contribute to its character and appearance and that informal submission is invited from the public. I wish to make the following observations...

Whilst I understand that the focus of this report is confined to the conservation area as previously defined and now the subject of slight alteration, I would argue that perhaps consideration might be given to actually widening the area under consideration.

There are buildings outwith the current and proposed area which are surely worthy of architectural merit coupled with a need for present and future protection or conservation. To this end I would direct your attention to the attached UHI Scottish History degree module Building Scotland (UV308464) assignment 'An Architectural Walk – Strathpeffer', submitted by myself in 2010.

This assignment had fixed parameters and a restrictive word count which necessitated hard choices in selecting properties to be included or excluded. In the final submission I chose to include...

The Round House and 4 Kinellan, Kinellan Farm, Elsick House, Church of Scotland, Kinnettass House, Kinnettass Steading (Spa Coach Company Buildings), Highfield House, Mackenzie House, Kinnettass Cottages, Kinnettass Graveyard, Francis Ville, Ord House, Strathbran, Woodlands, Craigoyston, Salisbury House, Heatherlie, White Lodge, White Cottage, Fife Lodge, Highland Hotel, Victoria House, Hamilton House, Rosslyn Lodge, St

Thank you for your letter of 16 January 2023 in connection with the above: I have noted your comments as part of the public consultation process. I sincerely appreciate the time which you have taken to put forward your comments and also for sending the accompanying Architectural Walk - Strathpeffer.

I note that you have highlighted a number of properties in Strathpeffer which you have stated were omitted from the report. I feel that it would be beneficial to reassure you that the following properties you had coloured red are included; namely Kinnettass House, Highfield House, Mackenzie House, Ord House, Craigoyston, Salisbury House, Heatherlie, White Lodge, White Cottage, Fife Lodge, Hamilton House, Rosslyn Lodge and Craigvar. These are all within either the existing or proposed Conservation Area. Regrettably the report does not have space to list all properties individually, however Appendix 1 does name all listed buildings within the study area. I hope that this is of interest and again, thank you for taking the time to respond.

Annes Church, Pump Room, Maya Shop/Red Poppy, Spa Cottage/The Cottage, Spa Pavilion, **Craigvar**, The Square/Cromartie Buildings.

Those omitted from your report but featured in my own work are in **red**.

I would draw your attention firstly to The Round House and 4 Kinellan, properties designed by the ecological architect Douglas Murray, both are striking modern additions to the locality and likely interest to future generations.

Kinellan Farm dates to c.1750 and provides an obvious juxtaposition to the Ultra-Modern of The Round House.

Elsick House whilst not only being of singular architectural styling is also the former home of Dr Morrison so prominent a person in Strathpeffer's history.

Kinettas House sits solidly in the landscape as the original farm house and retains many original internal features such as the fire place mentioned.

Highfield House displays many features associated with the Victorian architecture of the village; namely wooden fretwork and wrought iron decoration, together with door mouldings and chimney cans.

Mackenzie House as the Nicolson Mackenzie Memorial Hospital designed by Joass is worth of note for many of its incarnations; as a spa hospital and tangible act of

philanthropy, its WW1 & WW2 military occupation and NHS Rheumatology Service use.

Ord House is not only a substantial property built in 1863, but also has built evidence of the scourge of Tuberculosis.

Craigroyston is a boon for architecture enthusiasts as whilst no doubt baronial in appearance and comprising many elements, it nevertheless questions our sense of perspective.

Salisbury House deserve attention if only for the beautiful squinched quoins to its front elevation.

Heatherlie/The Studio is more generally referred to as the 'gingerbread house' for its very unique offering to the village vista.

White Lodge in such a prominent position provides a direct contrast to the gingerbread house, and is akin to Kinettas House.

White Cottage and the Maya Shop/Red Poppy building would have shared their architecture if the latter had not undergone such refurbishment as is evidenced by the accompanying photograph.

Fife Lodge has retained its architectural splendour, again evidenced by the photographs from my own collection.

Hamilton House from the exterior retain much of its 1840's roofline and visual appeal.

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| | <p>Rosslyn Lodge so recently damaged by fire still depicts some aspects of its original glory.</p> <p>Finally, Craigvar is a good example of the 'Aberdeen Bond' construction style coupled with red sandstone window casements and quoins much like those at Hamilton House.</p> <p>I hope that you will find these comments together with the attachment of some interest. I continue to engage with both local history and wider Scottish history research having gained a BA (Hons) Scottish History (1st) 2019 UHI.</p> <p>I regret I am unable to attend the event on 25th January 2023 at the Strathpeffer Pavilion as advertised.</p> | |
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Statement of Significance text - Please tell us what you think.

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 7 | I endorse the need to evaluate buildings in their setting. The building of Strath View above the natural line of the village is an example. | Noted. |
| HES | The bullet-pointed summary could be made more specific to the unique character of Strathpeffer. The overall eclectic Victorian character should be mentioned, along with distinctive timberwork, other decorative features and varied rooflines. The conservation area's open grain and generous plots should also be mentioned. | Noted; the post consultation report will be amended to include this information. |

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| | <p>On pp47-47 we suggest changing the titles of these sections to The Significance of Spaces and The Significance of Buildings. The spaces section could be adapted to first discuss the Inventory Designed Landscape and other key open spaces of merit. Likewise, the buildings section could be adapted to discuss listed buildings (identifying a few by name and category), buildings of merit and those which contribute due to their group value (again, referring to key examples of individual buildings and groups – such as those at Garden House Brae). The discussion on buildings and areas which are particularly sensitive to change might sit better in a new subsection section on Setting – in Section 7.</p> <p>The last bullet point on p47 might sit better in the general assessment of significance on p46.</p> | <p>We agree with the suggestion relating to the change of titles and the post-consultation report will be amended accordingly.</p> <p>The Spa Gardens are discussed in section 4.1.15 and we wish to retain the corporate template which THC has developed.</p> <p>As before, we wish to retain the corporate template which THC has developed.</p> <p>We feel that this bullet point sits best within the Significance of Buildings section, as it relates to rooflines and detailing of buildings, not a general descriptor.</p> |
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Do you have any comments on the wider challenges?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | Page 51 Fig 74 is Ardival farm and surrounding buildings not Strath View | This is not the case; the image is of Strath View, Ardival East and Ardival Farm are located to the east of Strathview Development: |

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| HES | <p><i>7.1.7 New Development</i> – include that views should also be carefully considered.</p> <p><i>7.2 Specific Challenges.</i> We commend the focus on the issue of redundant buildings and wonder if more focussed advice for owners could be provided such as your Council’s policies for change of use, alongside our Managing Change Guidance. Likewise, to encourage sensitive conversions, improvements and repairs, information on potential grants for owners could be provided.</p> | <p>Noted; the post consultation report will be amended to reflect this suggestion.</p> <p>Noted; the post consultation report will be amended to reflect this change.</p> <p>Regretfully grant opportunities are not available.</p> |
| HES | <p>We recommend including a section on climate change in this section to correlate with the Planning Policies in Section 9.</p> | <p>Noted; the post consultation report will be amended to reflect this suggestion.</p> |

Do you agree with the recommendations for Cromartie Buildings?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 4 | It would be very pleasing to see all the windows the same colour and made from wood. | Noted. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | The Community Council agrees with the findings of the review with regard to this building. The different choice of windows by different owners and the different colours of external paintwork do the building no favours. However, addressing this situation which has been allowed to develop over many years will not be easy. To suggest that the owners should change their windows from recently installed PVC back to timer sash and case seems naïve. The Council should consider what financial support might be available to the owners by way of grants to allow them to return the windows to at least a consistent style and colour. Ideally the material of construction should also be returned to timber. More will be said on window replacement later. | Noted. The Council acknowledges that the changes have taken place of many years and agree that reversing the inappropriate change will be challenging, and it will take time and resources for the recommendations outlined in the report to be implemented. The report considers that – over time – the inconsistent approach to the fenestration should be harmonised around a historically appropriate glazing pattern in line with Council guidance on windows and doors in listed buildings and conservation areas. Regretfully grant opportunities are not available at this time. |

Do you have any comments on the section on the Red Poppy building?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 4 | Apparently, a Chinese takeaway is to open in this building. I hope signage will be appropriate and that it will not lead to a littering problem. | Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. |
| ARCH | The Red Poppy building (called by a number of other names in other documents) is discussed in the ARCH Remembering the Strathpeffer Area documents (no. 14). Memories show it was several shops, and there have been fires and restoration. Given all this development, | Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. |

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| | there is little original fabric to save, but future development should be in keeping with the Strath. | |
| 5 | It would be good to see this operate again as a restaurant. Some modification of the building could achieve a more sympathetic appearance. | Agreed. Agreed. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | Finding a new tenant for this building is essential. It is in good condition and should not be allowed to fall into poor condition. | Agreed. |

Do you have any comments on the section on the Shieling building?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | It is very sad to see the building getting increasingly dilapidated. I remember it as a shop. I don't like the idea of it being a bar. | No response required. |
| ARCH | This is one of the gems of the Strath and so neglected! It has a rich history (see ARCH's Remembering the Strathpeffer Area no.11) It deserves to be listed. Restoration/redevelopment must be done sympathetically. A proposed reuse as a bar is only one of a number of options and not the best one. However, structural issues must be addressed soon. Is the fact it is now on the BARR likely to help with this? | The Council acknowledges that property owners are responsible for repairs and maintenance to their buildings; timeous interventions are more cost effective than more serious structural issues. As outlined in 4.2.13 of the report, the Sheiling was added to the BARR in 2014 and updated in 2018. Individuals can propose a building for listing: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/propose-a-building-for-listing/ |
| 7 | THis needs Coucil intervention; it's an eyesore. | No response required. |

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| 10 | Unless this building is put to some use and renovated, it is a good candidate for demolition. | The report outlines that the restoration and reuse of this building should be a priority. In line with national and local policy there is a strong presumption in favour of reuse of heritage buildings over demolition. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | This building has been in a dreadful condition for many, many years. It has been suggested that proposals to renovate it and bring it back into service have been stymied by the requirements from the planning department over issues such as the levels of parking required exceeding the space available. The Council should contact the owners and establish their intentions for the building. If there are no appropriate plans which could be implemented in reasonable timescales, then the Council should consider what might be possible using legislation covering vacant and derelict buildings. The Community Council (CC) and recently formed Strathpeffer Community Development trust would be willing to participate in discussions with the Council over a role they may play in taking on ownership. | The Council is aware that the building is currently marketed by the owner, who is responsible for the maintenance. |

Do you have any comments on the section on MacKay's Hotel & Spa Lodge buildings?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | I believe this was occupied up til Covid - so statement unoccupied for a number of years is a bit misleading. | We do not agree; a number of years is an adequate description for a period of three years or more. |
| 6 | Given its central location it is important that any future development / change to the building should be sympathetic to the surrounding Victorian architecture | Agree. Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. |

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| 7 | The best thing for the village is not another hotel but quality flats that will attract more resident spend in the village. | Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. |
| 10 | This group of buildings is an excellent opportunity for creating residential units. Future use is uncertain. | Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | We are becoming increasingly concerned about the condition of the two buildings that make up MacKay's Hotel. They have been lying vacant for some time now and are increasingly looking run down. Their position in the village is central and it is important to us that the hotel is brought back into proper use as a hotel. We have heard terms such as "hostel" being used when tradesmen are being spoken to on the premises. This brings with it the prospect of a low quality establishment which is not what is required of the village. We would expect the Highland Council to require the owners of the building to bring the hotel back to a good quality condition and to have it operate as a proper hotel not a hostel. | Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. |

Do you have any comments on the section on Rosslyn Lodge building?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 4 | As you will see from the attached photo there has been a major fire at this property. I hope that it will be repaired to a high standard, using traditional materials. | Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. |

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| ARCH | It was a very large guest house in its heyday, with 14 bedrooms and 5 parlours (Manual of Strathpeffer Spa, 18th edition). Since the draft was published, there has been the fire of course. This paragraph therefore needs to be rewritten in the light of whether it will be possible to save the fabric, and if not, redevelopment must be sympathetic. As it is in the conservation area, it should not be rezoned for flats (as there is other new housing outwith the conservation area). | The post consultation report will be amended to reflect the regrettable damage caused by the fire. Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. |
| 5 | 7.2.5 Rosslyn Lodge has now suffered a major fire. Action is needed urgently to weatherproof the building. | No response required. |
| 6 | Following the recent fire this building appears to have been reduced to a shell . It would be ideal if it's Victorian appearance could be restored. | Agreed. |
| 7 | Burnt down since the report was written. An excellent opportunity to see what can be done to rebuild in character. | The post consultation report will be amended to reflect the regrettable damage caused by the fire. |
| 10 | Unfortunately this building has suffered extensive damage from a fire. Re-development is unlikely. Demolition may be necessary. | The post consultation report will be amended to reflect the regrettable damage caused by the fire. Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. |
| 13 | Rosslyn Lodge which was destroyed by fire recently after the interior had long been destroyed by troupes of visiting hotel staff who had no stake in its future. | No response required. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | Since the publication of the review document, this building has suffered significant damage as result of a serious fire. This building is now very much a burned-out shell. Finding a new owner to take on the property will depend very much on what conditions are placed on the refurbishment | Any proposals will be assessed in accordance with statutory planning guidance and legislation. All options will be considered although the strong preference will be to reinstate the main characteristics of the original building. |

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| | <p>of the building by the planning team. Placing very onerous conditions which require the building to be refurbished to its original design are likely to result in the shell sitting as it is for many years. This would not be an acceptable outcome for the community.</p> <p>We would urge the planning teams to consider reasonable compromise when considering proposals. Refurbishing the property to its former self will be extremely expensive and unlikely to happen. Ideally, a partial refurbishment retaining some aspects of the original design combined with sympathetically designed additions/alterations would be acceptable. However, if the shell is not repairable at reasonable cost, then a new build development with a sympathetic design that takes into consideration the conservation area, should be considered.</p> | |
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Do you have any comments for the section on the Spa Coach Company Building?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | yes, very important that any renovations be sympathetically carried out. As the draft says, there is great potential in the future. At the very least we need a standing building survey of this building, as it is one of the earliest in the Strath. | No response required. |
| 7 | The coach company is an eyesore and should be incentivised to move out of Stratpeffer, with redevelopment of the steading for good quality accommodation. | No response required. |

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| 10 | This site is an eyesore in a prominent part of the Conservation Area. Large quantities of scrap metal and many abandoned vehicles are present. Some negotiation with the Spa Coach Company is required to persuade them to improve things as well as conservation of the building. | No response required. |
| 13 | I am disappointed that the Bus Garage is given more mountains to climb by the Council. Can you not celebrate that Strathpeffer still has an independent bus hirer giving year round employment - rather than suggesting they should renovate with the most costly 'high quality materials' ? If those old buildings matter so much, why not give them a new building and land outside the conservation area and take over the existing garage site? Who goes round there anyway? | The Council is supportive of the existing business and supportive of the business remaining in Strathpeffer. The Council would also be supportive of sympathetic and appropriate renovations to the existing building to improve the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | The Community Council recognizes that this building houses a business which employs people. It also recognizes that the building is one of the older buildings in the village. It would however, be helpful if support could be found to encourage the owners to improve the overall aesthetics of the site. | The Council is supportive of the existing business and for the owner to conduct sympathetic renovations. Regretfully at this time there are no funding opportunities available. |

Do you have any comments for the section on the former petrol station?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 4 | This is a key position and is unsightly. I hope that it can be softened with planting | Noted. |

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| ARCH | yes, agree with statement of conditions for future redevelopment | Noted. |
| 5 | 7.2.7 lets the village down - it is often untidy. More specific guidance as to what would be a suitable building is needed, given that the materials used for construction in Victorian times may no longer be available. 'Similar' is different from 'the same'. | The report outlines this guidance: "Proposals should respect, relate and respond to the Conservation Area and be set back from the road edge to maintain the existing road line. Any new building should be one or one-and-a-half storey in height and of high-quality materials and design." Any proposals for the redevelopment of this site will be assessed in line with planning guidance and legislation. |
| 7 | An eyesore. | No response required. |
| 10 | This site is also an eyesore prominently situated by the A834. Excellent candidate for re-development and removal of scrap vehicles. | Noted. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | This site is one that should be considered for redevelopment and the owners should be encouraged to consider such a proposal. | Noted. |
| HES | we suggest adding that the areas of hardstanding should be re-greened. | Noted. |

Opportunities for Enhancement

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| HES | 8.1.2 – we recommend embedding a link to our INFORM guides, Managing Change guides on boundaries, doors etc. as well as the Council's own maintenance of traditional buildings guide. | Noted, a link will be embedded into the post consultation report. The Additional Information Section includes a link to HES' various guidance notes. |

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| | <p>8.1.3 – provide a link to our Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Extensions. The last paragraph on unauthorised works could be underpinned with a clear section and guidance on works to buildings in the conservation area and summary of the consents process. This could be done as a flow chart or other infographic. This could also helpfully include written examples and photos of positive examples of alterations / extensions, ideally within the conservation area.</p> <p>8.1.4 – we suggest changing the end of the final sentence to: should reflect, relate and respond positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It might be helpful to embed a link to our Managing Change Guidance on Extensions, and include further written examples of extensions. Photos of positive examples of new development, ideally within the conservation area, could be used.</p> <p>8.1.5 – Provide a link to the Council’s Shopfront Design Guide and our Managing Change guide of shopfronts and signs.</p> | <p>Due to space limitations, it is regrettably not possible to include so much detail, as proposals are assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Noted; the post consultation report will be amended with this suggested revision.</p> <p>The Additional Information Section includes a link to HES’ various guides.</p> <p>The Additional Information Section includes a link to both guides.</p> |
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Do you agree with the measures recommended for green space, trees and the green network, together with the public realm?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 6 | Agree and emphasise the need to engage a replanting programme | Noted. |
| 10 | There is an urgent need to carry out a tree condition survey and produce a tree planting plan. Tree cover is being reduced constantly with no thought given to replacements. | In response to feedback, the Council, working in partnership with the local community, is undertaking a survey of the Conservation Area’s landmark trees, which will be included in the post-consultation report. |

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| <p>13</p> | <p>Moving on, the flora element is dismissed in the document as a 'lottery application' and whilst the gardens of houses are mentioned, the idea to grow a new generation of trees is given short shrift and no financial or practical encouragement.</p> <p>Highland Council has an appalling record of forcing unfortunate residents to retain aging and dying old trees at great cost to the residents - and not the Council. The Council has used its powers mercilessly - in conservation areas and with blanket Tree Preservation Orders to bully local people who want to maintain a safe and attractive place to live. This policy stifles development - and like blanket property listing causes a blight, inaction and dereliction - just like in Inverness (Old Hostel) and risks fires. Trees can not be preserved indefinitely, but need to have successional plantings to ensure replacements. This needs encouragement rather than usual 'big brother' approach.</p> <p>The writer of the document seems unaware of the importance of Strathpeffer. It is the single most important location in the Highland Council area for monkey puzzle trees. The importance arises from the presence of a number of mature araucaria araucana of different characteristics and age. Mature male and female tree are needed in relatively close proximity for pollination. Monkey puzzles at Craigellachie, behind Ulva and behind the shops, at MacKays, up the hill by the Golf Course (formerly MacDonalds) and especially the two mature specimens at Rosslyn Lodge form a community of trees which mean that seeds will be fertilised in female trees - by wind blown pollen from different males over a long period of the year. This topic needs attention. A new tree planted near the station was removed some years ago. There are other Monkey puzzles outwith the conservation</p> | <p>We do not agree; the biodiversity of the area is referenced in section 4.1.7, Spatial Analysis and in section 8.1.6 of the Management Plan. Furthermore, the Highland Nature – Biodiversity Action Plan is referenced in Additional Information. Regretfully there are no grant opportunities, however, The Council has worked in partnership with the local community and the donor of seedling Araucaria araucana trees to encourage successional planting within the Conservation Area.</p> <p>Strathpeffer Conservation Area does not have any Tree Preservation Orders. Trees are managed through the Tree Work Application process that requires the Council to be given 6 weeks' notice for any tree works. It will not be required to retain trees that are shown to be dead, dying or dangerous. Building owners are directly responsible for trees within their property's curtilage.</p> |
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area towards Castle Leod and at Jamestown / Korean War Memorial.

The Highland Council could ensure new planting in their public realm or additional monkey puzzle trees for local gardens could be provided. These trees take upwards of 30 years to bear seeds, so action is needed now.

You are missing a trick here - develop the monkey puzzle angle of Strathpeffer and everyone benefits. The Stornoway Trust has recently shown what can be done with new plantings of Monkey Puzzles at the Castle Grounds.

Not mentioned in your report is the benefit these trees bring to red squirrels - an iconic species much loved by locals and visitors. The monkey puzzle seeds are numerous and an important and nutritious food source for these attractive rodents.

I have as you may know submitted my comments and wanted ask how relevant you might consider it would be to produce more detail on the importance of the Strathpeffer Conservation Area from an Araucaria Araucana / Monkey Puzzle Tree perspective, or if indeed some work has been done on this subject.

The Scottish authority on Monkey Puzzle Trees is [Martin Gardner | Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh \(rbge.org.uk\)](http://www.rbge.org.uk)

His work has included the production of young trees from Chilean stock and considering the importance of the current community of monkey puzzle trees in Scotland from a conservation and regeneration standpoint.

Other communities of trees in private gardens in Highland are important, however Strathpeffer is unique in that the topography, density and proximity of male and

As before, The Council has worked in partnership with the local community and the donor of seedling Araucaria araucana trees to encourage successional planting within the Conservation Area.

As a result of this feedback, the post-consultation report will be amended to include this information.

As before, the Council is working in partnership with the local community and will be undertaking a landmark tree survey, which will include reference to pertinent examples of this species. Regrettably a specific study of this genus is outwith the scope of the report.

female trees is ideal for regeneration and indeed study. The pair at Rosslyn Lodge must be possible champion trees. Seeds from the female tree are very numerous and invariably successfully polenated.

Losses of monkey puzzle trees in Inverness - such as behind the Fluke and the death of the Ness-side specimen at the Glenmoriston Hotel are further compromising the group in the vicinity of Old Edinburgh Road, and the predominance of male trees in Inverness further dilutes the community's value in regeneration terms. Single pairs of trees - for example at Green Drive, and isolated single trees, for example at Edderton - have much less value.

Please let me know if I can be of any help. I feel that someone needs to look after the long-term interest of Monkey Puzzle trees in Strathpeffer and their importance on a Scottish scale. Highland Council must be encouraged to support new planting in the public realm and provide new trees.. This is to ensure we still have a significant community of monkey puzzle trees for the next generation.

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| <p>15</p> | <p>I have read the documents concerning the Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and the accompanying management plan. I live in the village in a property designated to be included within the new conservation area proposal (New York Villa, Garden House Brae).</p> <p>I want to highlight the very poor quality of a number of roads – particularly the A834 entering the village from the Contin direction (the stretch opposite the playing fields and primary school) and the A834 leaving the village to Dingwall (opposite the Red House). In addition, the stretch of road in and around access to The Highland Hotel.</p> <p>These roads have many horrible potholes that make driving uncomfortable and a hazard. They are also characterised by little or no road markings - another potential hazard.</p> <p>The state of these roads undermines much of the case made for the conservation area, with visitors likely first experience to be weaving in and out of holes on the road and risking damage to their cars.</p> <p>I would also highlight the poor state of the green metal railings on the right side of the A834 as you enter the village past the Church of Scotland and before the Episcopal Church. A vehicle crash has bent these back significantly and still no repairs have been completed.....its a real eyesore and not a good image of the village. Finally, I would also like to highlight the poor maintenance of the trees about the village. The report highlights them as a fine feature, but as far as I can see</p> | <p>Noted. If the affected road is a trunk road, the issue should be reported to Bear Scotland: https://www.bears Scot.com/report-a-defect/ The Council has agreed to invest c£20m in the road infrastructure, across the Highlands in 2023/24, acknowledging that the region’s roads are in poor condition. Members of the public can report issues directly to the Roads Authority (and anonymously if they wish) on the website at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/96/road faults</p> <p>As above, members of the public can submit any road condition concerns via Bear Scotland or the Council’s websites.</p> <p>Noted; this has been reported to the owners of the railings to address this issue.</p> |
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| | <p>there has been no maintenance or management of this stock. I am referring particularly (though not exclusively) to the mature trees lining the main road through the village. Indeed, my neighbour's tree was in such a terrible state that it was blown down onto the A834 about 2yrs ago (despite it's obvious state reported to the council on more than one occasion).</p> <p>If there is an expectation on the community and residents to maintain standards for the aesthetics of the village then the same has to be said about the infrastructure responsibilities of the Council. One cannot go ahead with the involvement of the other.</p> | |
| 7 | 7.1.11 Public Realm. Strathpeffer hosts a Victorian Village which is a Highland gem and it needs investment from the wider community; this is more than a village problem. | No response required. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | The lack of investment in the roads throughout the Highlands in recent years is resulting in road conditions that are becoming dangerous. A recent attempt at filling potholes throughout the village has left a patchwork of raised bumps and hollows which will have a very short lifespan. Investment in the condition of the roads should be revisited by the Council with a view to recognizing the importance of having a solid, robust, roads infrastructure upon which the community can rely. Travelling on the roads in the Highlands will become such an issue that it will be a deterrent to tourists and will impact adversely on businesses and people commuting to work. The impact of not acting now will be significant. | Noted. If the affected road is a trunk road, the issue should be reported to Bear Scotland: https://www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/ The Council has agreed to invest c£20m in the road infrastructure, across the Highlands in 2023/24, acknowledging that the region's roads are in poor condition. Members of the public can report issues directly to the Roads Authority (and anonymously if they wish) on the website at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/96/road_faults |

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| Strathpeffer Community Council | <p>The Victorians in their day had the foresight to plant many different exotic species of tree throughout the village. It is a very attractive feature in the village. Many of these trees are now reaching an age of around 150 years. Owners of houses with such trees are now increasingly having to face the issue of having to fell them on safety grounds. Many people will not have a clear picture on the actual condition of their trees. The Council should carry out a suitable survey of the trees within the area. This survey should include an assessment of the condition of the tree and the potential for it to cause serious damage. If a tree is found to be in poor condition, support should be given to owners to help them fell the tree safely and plant a suitable replacement. The findings of the survey should be made available to all owners.</p> | <p>As before, in response to feedback, the Council, working in partnership with the local community, is undertaking a survey of the Conservation Area's landmark trees, which will be included in the post-consultation report. It is the tree owner's responsibility to ensure that the tree is maintained in a safe condition and to take any remedial actions as necessary, including replacement planting.</p> <p>Re-planting is expected if permission for felling is granted within the Conservation Area. Individual property owners are responsible for trees within their property's curtilage. More information can be found via: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1225/countryside_farming_and_wildlife/63/trees_woodland_and_forestry</p> |
| HES | <p>8.2.7 Strathpeffer Spa Gardens This is quite a long section and we recommend condensing it to assist the audience. Further information could be provided by embedding an external link to further information, should the reader wish to learn more on this project. The final sentence in this section would sit better in the planning policies (Section 9.4).</p> | <p>Given the importance of Strathpeffer Spa Gardens, this important site merits this narrative. Detailed information relating to the garden's future plans is not available elsewhere, including the Strathpeffer Pavilion Development Trust's website.</p> <p>As this sentence relates to the future management of the gardens, we feel it is relevant to this section.</p> |

Do you agree with the recommendations for Improved Access, Interpretation, Education and Community Engagement?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | <p>8.2.3 should be expanded and strengthened. There has already been substantial work on the Strath available for interpretation, education and community engagement, and these should be made more readily available. There are two trails current: the early attempt at an App which</p> | <p>Noted; the report references 'heritage groups'. To aid clarification, the post-consultation version will be updated to include information on ARCH and The Highland Museum of Childhood.</p> |

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| | <p>was problematic, and an out-of-print paper trail created by ARCH. However, we have lost the focus of the Pump Room, which provided a Tourist Access point used by visitors and locals alike, provided the trails - and had a small display there. The Highland Museum of Childhood tells the story of the railway and a childhood connection - and the pump room provided the story of Strathpeffer Spa. We feel VERY strongly that the displays should be reinstated by the Strathpeffer Pavilion Development Trust who removed them without consultation. These are a valuable heritage asset in themselves, a product of their time. The proposed reuse of this building for a bar is totally inappropriate (the Pavilion already has a bar), and this building should be seen as integral to interpretation, education and community engagement - as well as providing a central visitor point. Clearly the council cannot force the SPDT to do this, but the wording in this section should encourage them to do so. The Pump Room deserves its own section here after 8.2.6 The Square. With more community focus, it might also be possible to resurrect Victorian Day, an annual day which focussed on Strathpeffer's past. This ought to be a priority for SPDT.</p> | <p>Any proposals to alter a building within the Conservation Area will be assessed in accordance with planning guidance and legislation.</p> <p>The final report will include reference to the suggestion use of the Pump Room, as it is a good central location for interpretation regarding the history of the village.</p> |
| 7 | Yes to footpaths but not just internally; they need to link to the wider footpath | Noted; in response to feedback, the post-consultation draft will be amended to include reference to core paths. |

Do you agree with the recommendations for The Square?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | This is simply a statement of what has happened before. A sentence should be added to the effect that future development and redevelopment of shop frontages should be sympathetic to existing facades. [A previous development was not in any way, but fortunately the cafe has redone this]. | Agreed; the post-consultation draft will be amended to include recommendations for the retail units. |
| 5 | There is no bike parking in the Square. | We understand that funding opportunities are available for cycle parking initiatives, such as Community - Cycling Friendly - Our Programmes - Cycling Scotland . The Council would be supportive of appropriately designed and sited bike parking in or around The Square. |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | The condition of most of the buildings in the Square is considered to be poor. Over the years, alterations have left the buildings looking sad and not in keeping with the Conservation area. Planning permission is in place to allow the façade of the buildings to be reharled, the windows which were removed in previous years replaced and the signage and existing windows replaced with appropriate signs and windows more in keeping with the area. All that is missing is the funding to make this happen. The Council should consider this work a priority for the allocation of funds from future rounds of Community Regeneration Fund or similar grant schemes. | Noted; the Council publishes RCGF application timelines and processes on its website. The Council is supportive of improvements to the retail units. |

Do you agree with the recommendations for Strathpeffer Spa Gardens?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 3 | <p>The Gardens are worth maintaining, but they are excessively overgrown. Indeed the number and size of trees in the village is excessive creating problems with branches falling off, growing into the old underground drains and leaves clogging surface drains. Beech hedges have been allowed to grow to excessive heights and thicknesses. Many trees Victorians planted for decoration should have been removed way before they reaches the sizes they have and this applies particularly to cypress type trees around the hotels especially The Highland. Some trees are exotic but many more aren't; they have not seeded naturally and the intent was not to create an overgrown,damp, dark garden to sit next the Pavilion. It needs to be managed not maintained. The costs will be high and volunteers cannot manage to keep on top of the work requires without stronger and more empathetic support. It's fine to say preserve and keep it lovely, but it's far from lovely now and more pragmatic forward thinking concepts should be considered. The village doesn't need to be preserved in aspic for the history and beauty to shine still.</p> | <p>As outlined in the Management Plan, The Council will support proposals that seek to enhance the Spa Gardens, whilst preserving or enhancing their significant contribution to the wider Conservation Area.</p> <p>There is a presumption against the felling of trees that contribute positively to the historic character of the area and have a reasonable life expectancy unless they are likely to cause major structural damage.</p> <p>Individual property owners are responsible for trees, hedges etc, which grow within their gardens.</p> <p>We agree and are not proposing that Strathpeffer is to be preserved in aspic; the report outlines diverse ways in which it can be enhanced and protected for future generations of residents and visitors to enjoy.</p> |
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Do you have any comments on the planning policies?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| 3 | <p>It is excessive to insist on completely traditional materials and replace like with like, when modern materials are better for the environment, provide safer, more carbon efficient living and can look as good as the originals - if not better, and will last much longer, reducing the need for further cost and tired appearances. This can be</p> | <p>We disagree; modern materials are not better for the environment and do not provide more carbon efficient living. The manufacture of uPVC/plastics is considerably more resource-heavy than sustainably sourced timber; uPVC has a significantly shorter lifespan (15-20 years, compared to 100+ years for timber) and unlike timber cannot be easily recycled and most end up in landfill. Furthermore, timber-framed</p> |

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| | <p>managed successfully with cooperation and understanding.</p> <p>It defies understanding that we continue to insist on single glazed windows when timber frames sash and case double glazed windows can be made. Victorians would think we are mad to continue to burn fossil fuels to heat these beautiful buildings when we could save the buildings and the planet if we were allowed to reduce heat loss. It's out of synch with Scottish Gov climate change pledges.</p> | <p>windows have been shown to have better thermal performance than plastic.</p> <p>This is not the case, and has not been the case for many years. Double glazed sash and case windows, or double glazed units retrofitted into existing frames are permitted within the Conservation Area; in unlisted buildings. Such examples can be installed without planning permission provided the window design, material and opening method is identical. More information can be found via the Council's Historic Windows & Doors Guide.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Planning policies also need to take into account Scottish government's energy use policies, eventually achieving EPC B. There is also need to take into account that materials used for construction in Victorian times may not be available nowadays, or may be impracticably expensive other than for small repairs. Modern all-black solar PV panels, set flush with slates, are not overly offensive even on front elevations, unless they spoil decorative slating. The Victorians were very practical - they would have fitted them had they been available.</p> | <p>As outlined in the management plan, the Council will support the use of micro-renewables where these do not adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area. PV panels are likely to be supported where they can be accommodated discretely, are located on a rear roof slope, are located on an outbuilding, or where ground-mounted.</p> |
| 11 | <p>b) Sustainable Development</p> <p>Building preservation cannot be achieved solely by legislating <i>against</i> development. To survive buildings must be allowed to adapt to social and technological change, otherwise they risk being left behind, without a purpose in the modern world. If a use cannot be found for a building, its preservation becomes unsustainable. Unfortunately, the application of tighter and tighter regulations will only serve to restrict options for use, and the willingness (and ability) of owners to invest in them. Preservation must be positively enabled, not negatively imposed.</p> | <p>We agree; buildings within the Conservation Area have been adapted over time and the Council support the sensitive and appropriate change to heritage buildings and areas, including change of use where a building can no longer be used for its intended purpose. Change must, however, be appropriate and accord with the Council's statutory duty to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.</p> |

This is no truer than in the current 'cost of living' crisis. There is a large and increasing divergence between the cost of running a new build property, with all the benefits of modern insulation and passive heating systems, and that of a traditional Victorian property 'protected' by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. For example, the property I own and live in is B listed. I do not have the option of insulating walls as this would destroy cornicing and other internal features of merit. The restrictions placed on insulation, in combination with high ceilings and poor air tightness, would make the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump completely impracticable. Should I wish to subsidise my electricity bill and reduce my carbon footprint by installing a micro-renewable system, I would again be discriminated against since the fitting of PV panels to the roof would not be allowed (under the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan) because the south facing roof forms part of the principal façade of the property. At worst, the current approach risks creating an inventory of obsolete properties that are so functionally anachronistic that they will not be fit for use by 2025. Put simply, if a building becomes uneconomic to heat, it becomes unviable to occupy. There is an obvious balance here, but I am really disappointed by the lack of vision in the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan in terms of welcoming green technologies which reduce carbon emissions and have the potential to cut household heating bills. Indeed, the approach taken by the draft *Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan* seems at odds with Highland Council's own Carbon CLEVER policy of supporting a low carbon Highland by 2025, which states:
"By 2025, the Highlands will be a region where its residents and visitors can move around easily by low

There are several options available for insulating listed buildings that do not require the removal of original internal features and detailing. Historic Environment Scotland have a number of publications that can advise further, and the Council support such methods to provide improved insulation.

The report outlines positive interventions:

The Council will support the use of micro-renewables where these do not adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area; i) PV panels – are unlikely to be supported on a principal roof slope or a secondary roof slope that occupies a prominent position within the Conservation Area. PV panels are likely to be supported where located on a rear roof slope that is not readily visible from the public realm, where located on an outbuilding, where ground-mounted.

ii) Air source heat pumps – are unlikely to be supported on a front, principal elevation or on a prominent side elevation. ASHPs are likely to be supported where located on the rear elevation of the building or on a side elevation where they can be successfully screened.

iii) External insulation is never acceptable within the Conservation Area due to its poor finish and poor detailing, and impact it has on the traditional finish and architectural detailing of the building.

carbon and sustainable forms of transport. The region is well connected both in terms of transport links and through digital connectivity. **Buildings across the region will have been energy renovated, and new buildings are energy efficient. The growing majority of buildings in rural areas will be heated by renewable sources. Electricity will be generated from a range of renewable sources, and excess energy can be transmitted to surrounding regions through smart grids, or stored efficiently. Land and resources across the Highlands are utilised for optimal economic, social, and environmental gains. Communities across the region are engaged, are highly active, more healthy and empowered."**

(https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1210/environment/321/climate_change/2)

Rather than *enabling* the appropriate use of insulation and low carbon technologies, Section 9.2 of the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan reads more like a Carthusian rule book. Given the magnitude of the climate crisis, and the pressing need for our society to implement solutions, I would suggest the Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan includes a standalone section on Insulation, Low Carbon Technologies, and Micro-renewable Systems, which is more aligned to Highland Council's Carbon CLEVER policy. This section should reiterate, with positivity and encouragement, the vital role such developments will play in our future, while setting out – with greater clarity and purpose – the circumstances in which they are likely to be permitted (**instead of not-permitted**) within the Conservation Area. It must be understood that any policy preventing a defined minority of Highland's homeowners benefiting from innovative and cost-saving technologies is inequitable and socially regressive. The Strathpeffer

iv) Biomass boilers will be supported where the infrastructure can be accommodated without detrimentally impacted the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

We agree that a standalone guidance on energy improvements in heritage buildings would be beneficial and this is currently being produced by the Council to guide property owners that wish to improve the energy efficiency of their building without compromising the building's ability to 'breathe' and to function as is required in relation to the movement of moisture, and retaining the historic character and appearance of the building.

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| | <p>Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan must be sensitive to this if it is to win the support of homeowners and bill payers so effected.</p> <p>c) Secondary and Double Glazing There is no policy statement in the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan regarding fitment of wood-framed secondary or double glazing. This is a notable omission, especially as homeowners seek to draught-proof and insulate their properties in the current 'cost of living' crisis. It would be helpful to have clear statements on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumstances where permission is <i>likely</i> to be granted for single-glazing to be replaced by double-glazing, e.g. all windows, all windows but with exception of those on the principal façade, all windows but with exception of those visible from a road/public area, no windows, separate policy for Landmark building, C listed buildings, B listed buildings, etc. • Circumstance where secondary glazing is/isn't considered permitted development, or where fitment of secondary glazing would be supported as an acceptable alternative to replacing single-glazing with double-glazing, etc. | <p>We do not agree: due to the report's limited space restrictions, the Additional Information section directs interested parties to the Council's Historic Windows & Doors Guide. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Planning Guidance which details options for retrofitting double glazing into single glazed frames, secondary glazing etc., along with what, if any permissions are required for such works. We will make sure that reference to the Guidance is clearly signposted within the document.</p> |
| Strathpeffer Community Council | <p>The Community Council supports the overall desire to conserve the beauty and heritage of the village. However, that desire has to be considered alongside the many issues facing families today. The cost-of-living crisis means that many families are struggling to heat their homes. Improving the thermal efficiency of their homes is increasingly becoming a priority not just due to the cost of fuel but also the impact on our planet due to climate change. While the CC recognizes the need for</p> | <p>We acknowledge that replacing windows is a costly expenditure; the report encourages property owners to undertake regular, routine maintenance and references the newly published maintenance guide. Maintaining/ repairing traditional windows is much cheaper than replacement units (of any material) and can result in windows which are more thermally effective than uPVC replacements. As outlined previously, traditional timber windows will last 100+years and are more carbon efficient.</p> |

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| | <p>the replacement of windows to be done in a consistent manner using material that are sympathetic to the conservation area, there should be an acceptance by the planning teams that sash and case windows are not as efficient as other styles of windows. Manufacturing sash and case windows is also much more expensive than other modern styles. Priority should be placed on overall appearance and the materials and colours used. Providing the windows look the same from the outside and are of similar colour and utilize the same materials, then they should be deemed acceptable. The method of opening of the windows is of secondary importance and to insist on sash and case replacements is no longer practical or sensible.</p> | <p>The report's Additional Information section directs interested parties to the Council's Historic Windows & Doors Guide.</p> <p>The method of window opening is an important part of the character of the window and building, as inappropriate closure mechanisms affect the overall appearance of the fenestrations and the wider Conservation Area. Once traditional features are lost in the Conservation Area, it takes many years for them to be re-instated, as per the various changes made to the fenestrations to Cromartie Buildings.</p> |
| HES | <p>We suggest that pre-application engagement is promoted.</p> <p>9.2 – This paragraph could be reviewed to clarify the Council's position on external insulation, as it may be acceptable for buildings which do not contribute positively.</p> <p>9.3 – We recommend you embed a link to our Guidance on Conservation Areas which includes information on demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas.</p> | <p>Agreed; The Council welcome and encourage pre-application discussions and this will be reiterated in the post-consultation report.</p> <p>Due to the small number of buildings upon which external insulation may be acceptable, and the impact upon the wider conservation area, we wish to retain this guidance.</p> <p>Noted; the final draft report has been amended to include this link.</p> |

Do you agree with the recommendations for the monitoring and review of the Conservation Area?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| HES | We suggest a timescale for this review is included. | This is a corporate statement which The Highland Council has developed. |
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Do you have any other comments you would like to add?

| Respondent No. | Comment | Council Response |
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| ARCH | <p>As mentioned earlier, the ARCH Project Remembering the Strathpeffer Area 2. Strathpeffer provides a sites and features listing of most of the buildings in the Conservation area. This should be signposted: www.archhighland.org.uk Library. It also includes photographs of most of the buildings. These should be in the HER but most are not yet - but the HER also should be highlighted for non-listed buildings as it provides more details and hopefully at some point the extra photos and ARCH information.</p> <p>The ARCH project highlighted key sources including: Manual of Strathpeffer Spa (which gives details of individual properties).</p> <p>The Ross-Shire Journal also listed all visitors to the spa during the season.</p> <p>There are some old photographs taken around 1900 in private collection, providing a visual record of the Spa at this time. This perhaps could go into the section 11.</p> | <p>Noted; as per our previous comment, the additional information and section 8.2.3 will be updated to include reference to ARCH.</p> |
| 5 | <p>The plan needs to consider the economics of maintaining Strathpeffer. In general, Victorian buildings can be cold and draughty places. If homeowners are prevented from taking steps to reduce the running costs of their properties for the sake of the conservation area, they need to benefit financially from the conservation status as compensation. This is difficult, so a flexible approach to improvements is needed, especially sash windows. If the place is to be run as a museum, there needs to be an admission charge!</p> | <p>The conservation area designation does not seek to prevent owners from taking steps to reduce the running costs of their buildings. The Council fully supports and is happy to advise on methods (including the installation of micro-renewables) that would be acceptable in the context of a conservation area, and that would not result in damage/harm to the fabric of the building (resulting in secondary issues such as increased damp) whilst preserving the building's character and appearance.</p> |

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| | | <p>In terms of the financial benefits of living in a conservation area, properties in conservation areas tend to sell at a premium and appreciate in value faster.</p> <p>As before, maintaining/ repairing traditional windows can be much cheaper than replacements and can result in windows which are more thermally effective than uPVC replacements. Traditional timber windows will last 100+ years and are more carbon efficient. See also the Council's Historic Windows & Doors Guide.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Car parking. The space between the Pavilion and the Upper Pump Room was envisaged as a pedestrian space but pressure from various sources saw this become a temporary car park and then fall into permanent use. It is hopelessly inadequate and as part of preserving the village further car parking must be found.</p> | <p>There are limited opportunities for car parking and we would encourage less dependency upon cars, instead whenever possible favouring active travel and public transport.</p> |
| 13 | <p>I wonder who currently has ownership of this document and what is likely to happen next? My overall impression is of a document which has been prepared using time and skill, but which does not in any way address the current or future needs of the community of Strathpeffer. The document's content is based on a perceived need to make the place look pretty for a type of visitor who no longer visits, to retain churches for which there are no congregations, to disadvantage unfortunate and inconvenient residents who want the benefits of modern life like double glazing or conservatories and to give only passing mentions of important features of the place and the needs of its current inhabitants.</p> <p>You can not have failed to notice the total dereliction of hotels, of a type for whom there are no longer guests. Although some of this is mentioned, your document does not expound on this - and suggests everything old must be retained for no good purpose. Bus loads of tourists are not coming back - people do not holiday like that in the</p> | <p>The document is owned by The Highland Council. Feedback received during the public consultation has been assessed and where appropriate, will be included in the post-consultation version. This report will be presented to Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh Councillors for consideration at their June meeting. If Members approve the report, it will then be presented to ECI Committee in August for formal approval and adoption.</p> <p>The document is supportive of change of use for any building that no longer functions as intended (including churches and hotels). Double glazing is supported in conservation areas, as are conservatories where appropriately sited and designed.</p> |

numbers they did. These buildings have not served local community needs for years and years.

There is little change in the draft document's style since the Conservation Area was first designated 50 years ago. Why are you proposing we keep all this old tatty derelict or useless trash with old bits of plastic and wood additions from the 1950's?

Can you really justify forcing people to remove perfectly serviceable and energy efficient double glazed windows and make them shiver behind draughty casements just because a tourist of the 1980's might have looked there once?

The writer seems obsessed with roofline and chimney pots. To be honest, I think a reality check is needed here. The current purpose of Strathpeffer is to house a year-round population and provide them with houses and services, and not to turn them into some dying museum full of zombies - you'll be saying they should all wear dress like Harry Lauder next.

In conclusion, I think that the report drafted is far too much based on a museum idea of all Strathpeffer rather than as a home to villagers. The village needs the freedom to renew itself and not be blighted for decades by empty hotels with attractive chimney pots and ill-considered designations.

People who do live within the Strathpeffer conservation ghetto do not need an enforcement police to make sure they reverse changes made since the 1970's, or 'advice' on how to maintain their buildings. They need an even break, facilities, no harassment by Highland Council or extra financial costs for living there. They need jobs - maybe servicing self-catering or driving buses for Spa Coaches. I really think there is a need for Highland Council to wake up and smell the coffee and not plunge Strathpeffer into another 50 year dark age.

The Council is supportive of redevelopment/repurposing of buildings within the Conservation Area, as outlined in Section 7. There is no indication that modern additions to heritage buildings should be retained; where such exist well designed replacements would be supported. The Council are not forcing property owners to remove windows or doors.

We agree that empty hotels are an issue that needs to be addressed and the Council are supportive of options to repurpose such buildings where they have become unviable.

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. The document contains suggestions of revisions to boundary changes, which if approved, will remove buildings which are not of historical or architectural merit. Those which are retained or recommended for inclusion are of merit, in accordance with said Planning Act.

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| | <p>Please let me know how I can ensure the widest possible readership of my views by Council Officers and Elected Members.</p> | <p>All comments received during the public consultation are contained in a report to the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh Committee, which is available via the Council's website.</p> |
| 16 | <p>I do not agree with the said Area Notification.</p> <p>As far as I can see it this is all about control and in the world we are living in as I see it there's enough of this already going on, and I urge local house and land owners to do the same.</p> | <p>No response required.</p> |
| 17 | <p>Maybe conservation if they put the money into the park to keep it tidy and maintained. Or how about resurface the road in the village properly, highland council joke Control control</p> | <p>The park is outwith the Conservation Area boundary, and was therefore not considered during the assessment. The main trunk road within Strathpeffer is maintained by Bear Scotland and The Highland Council has agreed to invest £20m in the region's road infrastructure, in recognition of the current road conditions.</p> |
| 19 | <p>It's a grand idea to continue to have a Conservation Area in Strathpeffer and preserve it's character for the future.</p> <p>However - when Highland Council granted planning permission for modern, holiday cabins in the grounds/gardens, full of trees, of the Ben Wyvis Hotel - which is inside the Conservation Area - a mockery was made of the whole situation.</p> <p>The population of the village need to be reassured that Conservation means just that and no external modern additions will be allowed to the historic buildings and open, green spaces within the Conservation Area.</p> | <p>The application went through due process and was assessed under policy available at the time.</p> <p>Any proposals to alter a building within the Conservation Area will be assessed in accordance with planning guidance and legislation.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Response received via email and also delivered by hand at public engagement event 25/1/23: In 2010 the Council were allowed to build 10/12 houses in the centre of Conservation area in the village. The houses</p> | <p>Officer response via letter:</p> |

were built in a year. Despite being told that there was an original Victorian culvert under the site which meandered (to slow water down), the building went ahead without the concerns about the Victorian culvert being properly addressed. The water used to drop from the meandering culvert into a big pool before entering our garden and it trickled through the garden into the culvert which runs under the Station buildings.

The planned houses were built over the culvert. We suggested that they could replan and avoid the Culvert. But Yvonne Simpson, project manager, said it was too late to change the drawings! So work carried on, the culvert was smashed down and now water goes straight down at great speed and is very noisy.

What does a Conservation Area mean if this can be done, and what does consultation mean if the knowledge and view of residents are so blatantly disregarded?

New work in the village of Strathpeffer should concern itself not with what happens above ground, but below it as well. It should consider the “knock on” effect of changes.

Thank you for attending the public drop in event and for the letter which you hand delivered on Wednesday 30 January at Strathpeffer Pavilion. I have noted the letter’s contents, as part of the public consultation process.

In your correspondence, you have queried how resident’s views are taken into account in the context of a conservation area, when assessing planning applications. As background, Strathpeffer’s Conservation Area was designated in 1972 and under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, the Planning Authority has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. As such, development proposals that may affect a conservation area are considered more carefully, and in more detail than proposals located elsewhere.

I feel it would be helpful to outline how planning decisions are taken, which is copied from The Scottish Government’s website: <https://www.mygov.scot/planning-permission/what-happens-next>

“Planning decisions

Once you've applied for planning permission, the planning authority will decide whether to grant planning permission.

How long will it take?

In most cases, planning applications are decided within 2 months.

For unusually large or complex applications the time limit is 4 months. For these types of applications, Planning Authorities should offer to enter into a [processing agreement](#) with developers which provides certainty and a project managed approach to decision making.

If the decision takes longer, you can appeal.

How will they decide?

Decisions are based on local development plans and will look at:

- the number, size, layout, siting and external appearance of buildings*
- the infrastructure available – like roads and water supply*
- any landscaping needs*
- what you want to use the development for*
- how your development would affect the surrounding area – e.g., if it would create lots more traffic.*

In all cases the council must make decisions in line with the development plan unless 'material considerations' justify going against the plan.”

Whilst I am regretfully unable to comment upon the historic nature of the planning application relating to the Ardival Court development, I am able to advise you that the draft Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan outlines the following guidance for new development:

“There are limited opportunities for development and redevelopment within the Conservation Area, especially given the recognition and protection of public and private green space. However, where opportunities do arise for new development, proposals will make use of sympathetic contemporary forms, taking particular account of local context, views, townscape, setting, scale, massing, materials and detail. Design, materials and landscaping must all be of a high quality which reflect, relate and respond to the Conservation Area.”

I trust that this of assistance and again, thank you for attending the public drop-in event.

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| HES | <p>Historic Photographs – we also suggest adding Canmore. Appendix 1 We suggest you amend the title to include Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes and add the Spa Gardens.</p> | <p>Noted; the post-consultation report will be amended to include these suggestions.</p> |
| 19 | <p>You are probably aware of the SSE powerline consultation for Strathpeffer. What's the view of the council on this as either of the preferred routes will have a massive detrimental effect on the landscape of the village setting for Strathpeffer. The scale of the proposed pylons is completely out of scale for the landscape and will severely compromise views into and out of the village.</p> <p>I know it may be argued to be of national importance but little concern for the environment built and natural seems to have been made. The Strath seems to be an important landmark for migratory birds hosting thousands of geese each spring not to mention waders using the cromarty firth. The necessary bird protection measure would make these pylons even more visible.</p> | <p>Officer response, via email:</p> <p>Thank you for getting in touch regarding the SSE powerline consultation. All planning documents and responses from consultees are available for viewing on the public planning portal:</p> <p>https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/143/planning_permission/4</p> |
| 20 | <p>I'm fully aware that this email falls outside the consultation period so I am simply writing this by way comment.</p> <p>Before doing so, I should add that while I no longer live full-time in Strathpeffer, I was brought up and lived there for many years and still retain a foothold in the village. As such, I know it quite well. Which means that I thought the Appraisal and Management Plan was interesting, well written and thoughtful. Unfortunately, I was unable to comment within the timeframe.</p> <p>I recall the Plan referencing the need to have regard to developments outside the immediate conservation area but which might affect it. Relating to this, you may be aware of the plans to place 50-60 metre high high-voltage electricity pylons through the valley (see</p> | <p>Officer response, via email:</p> <p>Thank you for your email, for the feedback upon the draft report, and for outlining the links you continue to enjoy with Strathpeffer.</p> <p>In regard to the SSE powerline consultation which is separate from the Conservation Area consultation, I can advise that all planning documents and responses from consultees (The Historic Environment Team is a consultee) are available for viewing on the public planning portal:</p> <p>https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/143/planning_permission/4</p> |

<https://sites.google.com/view/strathpeffercontinbettercable/home>).

It goes without saying that a development of this sort would in my opinion materially adversely impact the whole area, as the views from within and around the conservation would be marred by unsightly pylons. Surely something can be done to preserve this beautiful landscape, or does having a conservation area count for so little?

I have noted your comments relating to the Conservation Area Appraisal and if you wish to contribute to the separate powerline consultation, please feel free to contribute via the planning portal link above.

Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Measadh agus plana stiùiridh sgìre glèidhteachais Srath Pheofhair

May 2023

Post-consultation Draft







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DRAFT

1.0 INTRODUCTION | 1.0 RO-RÀDH

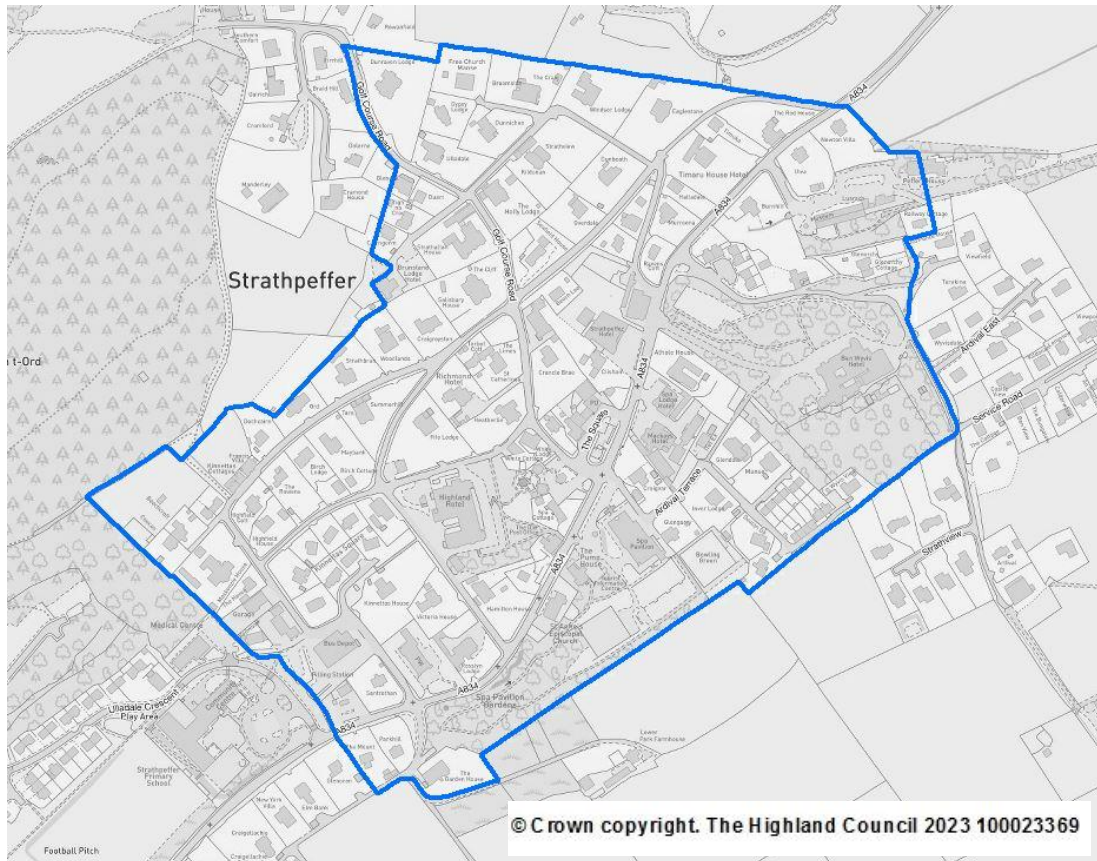
1.1 CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

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.

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.

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. The Council is drafting conservation area development guidance, which will be published on the Council’s website in the near future. Through partnership working with Inverness City Heritage Trust, the Council has created a traditional building maintenance guide to help inform property owners, which is available via www.highland.gov.uk/maintenanceguide.



Map 1: Strathpeffer Conservation Area at original designation, 1972

1.2 WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

1.2.1 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.

The Planning Authority has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. As such, development proposals that may affect a conservation area are considered more carefully, and in more detail than proposals located elsewhere. The appraisal provides a firm basis on which applications for development within and in the vicinity of the Conservation Area can be assessed.

Highland currently has 30 Conservation Areas varying in character from city and town centres, rural villages and a battlefield.

1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THIS APPRAISAL

The purpose of this appraisal is to identify and assess the special architectural and historic interest of Strathpeffer, 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 have a duty to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. The appraisal provides a basis upon which programmes, e.g., funding proposals, can be developed by, and in association with, the Council to protect and enhance the Conservation Area.

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

The purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal is to define and evaluate the character and appearance of the study area; identify its important characteristics and ensure that there is a full understanding of what is worthy of preservation. The area's special features and changing needs have been assessed through a process which included researching its historical development, a detailed townscape analysis was carried out and a character assessment has been prepared. It also identified opportunities and priorities for enhancement.

The appraisal provides an opportunity to reassess current boundaries, to make certain that they accurately reflect what is of special interest and ensure that they are logically drawn.

This document also provides a framework for the controlled and positive management of change in the proposed Conservation Area and forms a basis upon which planning decisions in the area are made. It identifies opportunities and priorities for enhancement and sets out the policy framework for the determination of development proposals. This appraisal should however be regarded as supplementary to the policies set out in Highland Wide Local Development Plan.

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

1.4 WHAT DOES CONSERVATION AREA STATUS MEAN?

In a conservation area, it is both the buildings and the spaces between them that are of architectural or historic interest. Planning control is therefore directed at maintaining the integrity of the entire area and enhancing its special character. Conservation area status does not mean that new development is unacceptable, but care must be taken to ensure that the new development will not harm the character or appearance of the area.

Historically, Article 4 Directions have been used as a further way of ensuring that a conservation area maintains its character and appearance. The effect of a Direction is to control minor works which, over time, could erode the character and appearance of a conservation area. In February 2012 however, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011 came in to force, which in effect removed all householder Permitted Development Rights within conservation areas.

Conservation area designation now automatically brings the following works under planning control:

- Demolition of buildings;
- Development involving house extensions, roof alterations, windows, stone cleaning or painting of the exterior, satellite dishes, provision of hard surfaces, the erection or alteration of gates, fences and walls and;
- Additional control over ancillary buildings (such as sheds/garages) and raised decking/platforms.

Where a development would, in the opinion of the planning authority, affect the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, the application for planning permission will be advertised in the local press providing an opportunity for public comment. Views expressed are taken into account by the planning authority when making a decision on the application.

Trees, in recognition of their contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area, are also subject to additional controls. It is a requirement that six weeks' notice is given to the Council for any works (including lopping or felling) to any tree within the Conservation Area. Exemptions apply, as explained under Section 74 of Planning Circulation 1 2011 Tree Preservation Orders.

Local residents and property owners also have a major role to play in protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by ensuring that properties are regularly maintained and original features retained.

1.5 METHOD

The appraisal has been undertaken by The Highland Council with historical and background information researched and collated from both primary and secondary sources including maps and photographs. Site surveys and visits were undertaken during 2021/22 in order to establish the special qualities of the Conservation Area, resulting in a character assessment that considers buildings, trees and landscaping, historic townscape, street pattern and urban grain, spatial relationships, setting, views, activity and movement, and positive, neutral and negative factors. The methodology used is well developed across Scottish local authorities and the Scottish Civic Trust, and is in line with guidance published by Historic Environment Scotland.

1.6 BACKGROUND

Strathpeffer was designated as a Conservation Area in 1972 and has not been subject to subsequent amendments.

The discovery of sulphurous wells and springs in the 19th century set in motion the rapid development of the existing agricultural settlement to exploit the healing properties of the waters and to cater for the demand of Victorian health tourism. Over the next century Strathpeffer grew to include numerous hotels and guest houses, pump rooms and spas, villas and commercial and recreational facilities, including pleasure gardens. Today, the wells and springs have fallen out of use but, by virtue of its superlative built heritage and abundant green spaces, Strathpeffer remains a popular place to live and destination for visitors who come to admire its rich Victorian heritage.

Strathpeffer Conservation Area encompasses the Victorian Spa Town, including the Spa Pavilion Gardens. It was designated as a Conservation Area in 1972 as outlined in Map 1. There are no Article 4 directions in force, and prior to this assessment no Conservation Area Appraisal or Management Plan had been produced.

Strathpeffer Conservation Area incorporates over 200 buildings, of which 26 are Listed Buildings, one Scheduled Monument and one Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape.

Strathpeffer has a population of around 1,110 (2011 census data), and is home to a number of small businesses, ranging from a bicycle shop and a coach company, to the hospitality industries. Tourism is, however, the principal economic driver for the town and a number of dedicated facilities exist to cater for this demand.

2.0 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE | 2.0 SUIDHEACHADH AGUS CRUTH-TÌE

2.1 LOCATION

Strathpeffer Conservation Area forms part of the town of Strathpeffer in the county of Ross and Cromarty, in The Highland Council's local authority area. Strathpeffer is five miles west of Dingwall by road and just over 21 miles north-west of the nearest city at Inverness.

2.2 TOPOGRAPHY



Fig. 1 View across Strathpeffer towards Knockfarrel

Strathpeffer is situated within a complex and undulating topographic landscape. To the south of the A834, which bisects the town, the ground drops before rising again towards Cnoc Mor, the Cat's Back and the Iron Age hill fort at Knockfarrel, as per fig. 1. To the north of the A834 the ground rises some 40 metres to the north and west boundary of the Conservation Area and onwards towards An t-Ord and Creag Ulladail.

The undulating and at times steep hills and climbs within the Conservation Area contribute significantly to its character and offer a wide range of views and vistas from where to appreciate the town and the hills beyond. The topographic form of the wider landscape is also a key element. Views from the Conservation Area towards Knockfarrel, for example, are key to the setting and appreciation of the town.

2.3 GEOLOGY

Knockfarrel is of Cnoc Fyrish conglomerate, which was deposited during the Mid Devonian Epoch some 400 million years ago. Around Strathpeffer, Lower Old Red Sandstone and Middle Old Red Sandstone beds are present, and it therefore seems likely that the characteristic stone that makes up many of Strathpeffer's buildings would have been quarried locally. Strathpeffer is built around four sulphur and one chalybeate (mineral) springs, on what was once a glacial plain.

3.1 EARLY HISTORY

The wider area around Strathpeffer has a rich prehistoric past which has been demonstrated by pre-Iron Age finds, most notably evidenced by the Iron Age vitrified hill fort at Knockfarrel which is visible from various locations within the town. Elsewhere, to the north, well preserved prehistoric settlement and burial remains are known at the Heights of Fodderty and Strath Sgitheach beyond, with a crannog—the largest recorded in Ross-shire—located in Loch Kinellan to the west. This shows that the Strath was important from at least the Neolithic period onwards.

Pictish activity is represented with the early Pictish symbol stone Clach an Tiompain, or the Eagle Stone.

The area's Norse heritage survives in its placenames, for example Dingwall (from Old Norse 'Thing-vollr' meaning place of the court of justice) and Ulladale.

3.2 STRATHPEFFER IN THE 18TH CENTURY

Strathpeffer post-dates Roy's military survey of the Highlands (1747-55) which depicts a small settlement (Achlille) where Strathpeffer now stands. See map 2.

During the latter half of the 18th century the area, which was little more than a small collection of farmsteads (including Ardvall, Park Farm and Kinettas) and cottages centred upon the cemetery, came under the ownership of Cromartie Estate.

The discovery of the sulphurous mineral springs in the 1770s were to plant the early seeds that would, 40 years later, lead to the formation of Strathpeffer as a spa town. In 1772 the value of the "Castle Leod waters", as the springs were then known, was recounted to the Royal Society in London. In 1777 the factor of Cromartie Estate suggested to the Board of Commissioners for the Forfeited Estates the value in building a house nearby to attract visitors, although no action was taken for over 40 years.



Map 2: Roy's Military Survey 1755

3.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF STRATHPEFFER: BUILDING IN THE 19TH CENTURY

At the beginning of the 19th century the sulphurous springs began to reach the attention of wider society. In 1819 the first wooden pump room was built over one of the wells. The work was supervised by Dr Morrison who moved to Strathpeffer from Aberdeenshire after being cured of chronic rheumatism by the sulphurous waters (Fortescue-Fox, 1896). Thereafter, the reputation of the spa grew. Dr Morrison recommended a six week stay with a morning and afternoon intake of three to four tumblerfuls of spa water. This was to be supplemented by gentle exercise.

The Cromartie Estate saw an opportunity to capitalise on the popularity of the waters and in 1850 embarked upon the construction of a Poor House, a stone house over the Upper Well, wooden bridges over the burn and gravelled walks through the nearby plantations.

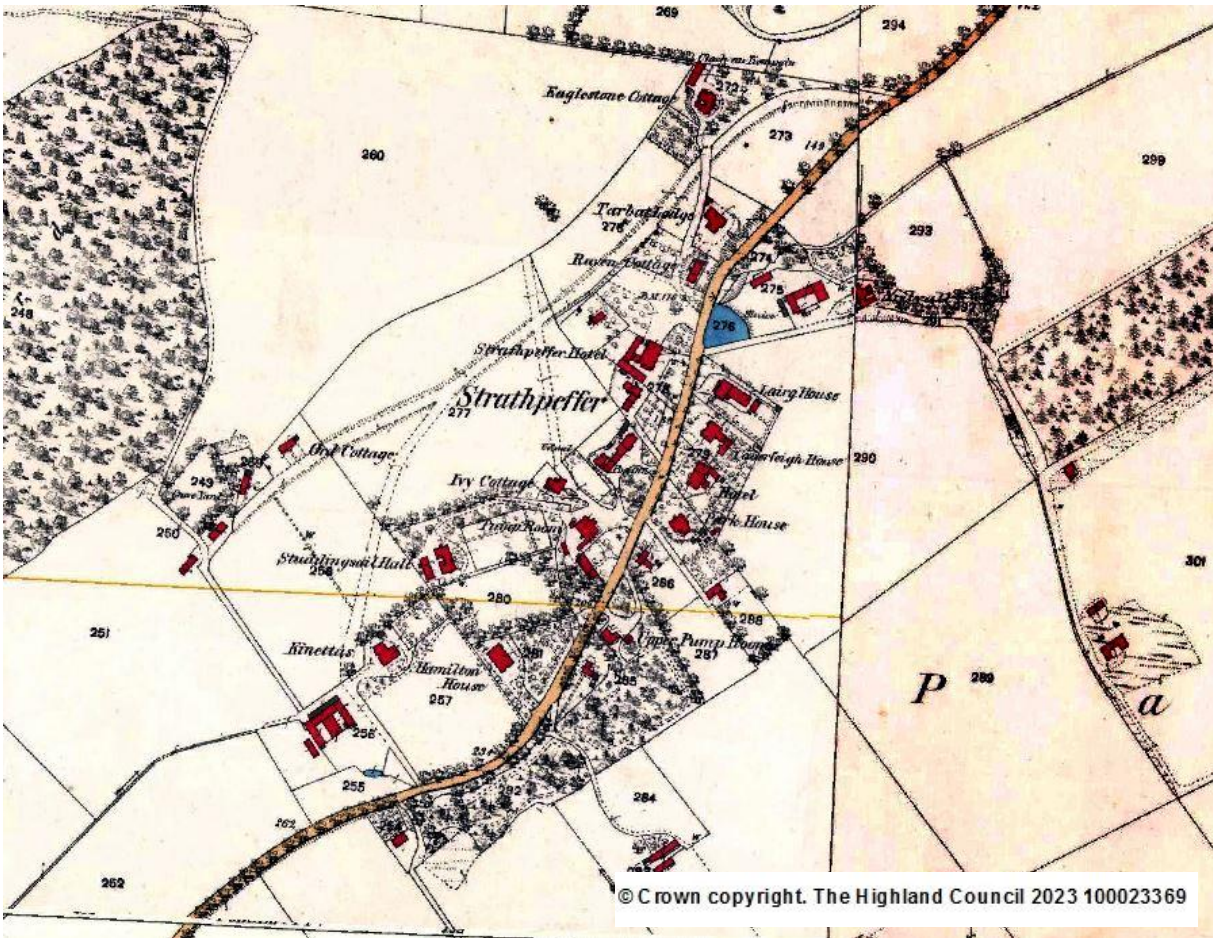


Fig. 2 Strathpeffer Pump Room; Valentine's Postcard c1890s, courtesy of Am Baile

It was not until the 1860's, however, that the spa was to truly act as the catalyst for the development of Strathpeffer. In 1861 the 3rd Duke of Sutherland provided capital to replace the original wooden pump room with a new pump room and build a bath house, a well-keeper's house, shops, post office and postmaster's house, as depicted in Fig. 2. Strathpeffer's popularity was further enhanced as accessibility improved with the opening of the Dingwall-Strome Ferry railway line in 1869.

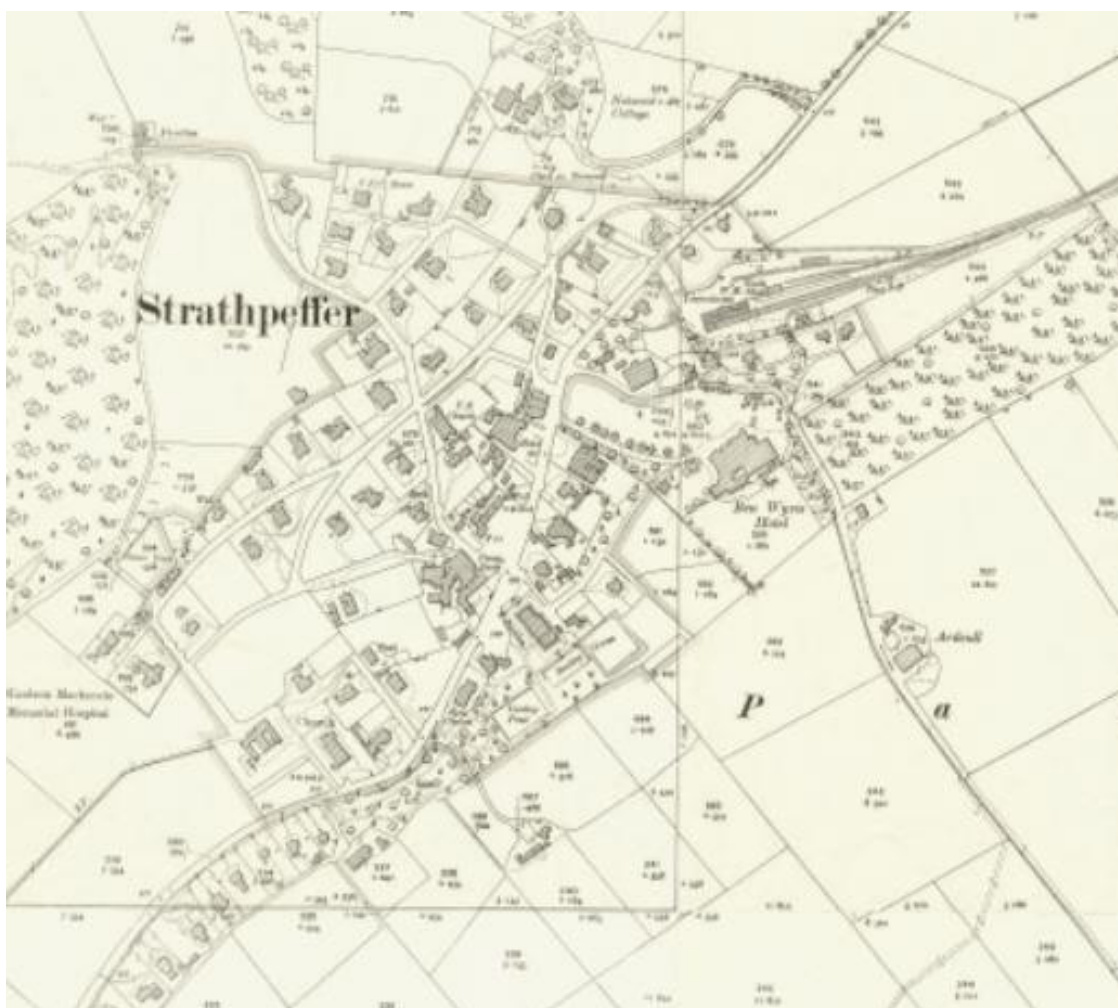
Ever since Dr Morrison had publicised the healing powers of the waters at the beginning of the 19th century, the importance of gentle exercise as complimentary therapy was considered an integral part of the town's offering. To this end, the establishment of the Spa Gardens pleasure grounds ran parallel to the development of the Strathpeffer's buildings.

From 1864 extensive planting and woodland improvement took place, including hedging, avenues and the creation of footpaths, walks and pleasure drives. By 1876 Strathpeffer boasted five large hotels, along with a number of large Victorian villas; see Map 3. The last two decades of the 19th century saw continued expansion and growth of activities and facilities. The Dingwall-Strathpeffer branch line opened in 1885 which opened up more opportunities for the transportation of passengers and goods. In the same year, new ladies' baths were built and new wells discovered and exploited. Strathpeffer Spa Pavilion, designed by William Joass in 1879-81 became the social focus of the spa with a tearoom, billiard and games room and concert hall. Furthermore, tennis and croquet were catered for behind the pavilion and a curling pond installed in 1890.



Map 3: 1st Edition 25" Ordnance Survey map c.1876

3.4 20TH CENTURY



Map 4: 2nd Edition 25" OS map c.1905, Courtesy of National Library of Scotland

Up until the outbreak of the First World War, Strathpeffer continued to develop – as depicted in Map 4. In 1908 a more commercial approach was taken to the Spa with rights to the well acquired by Spa Syndicate Limited. This resulted in the enclosure of the gardens and an entrance fee was imposed. In 1909 the 1870s pump room was replaced with the Upper Pump Room, which remains to this day.

During the First World War, the United States Navy requisitioned many buildings in Strathpeffer, including the Pavilion, Highland Hotel, Ben Wyvis Hotel, Mackenzie Nicolson Hospital.

During the Second World War, a similar number of buildings were requisitioned by the British Army for training. In October 1940 a goods storage siding was built at the station, however the station closed to passengers in February 1946 and latterly to goods trains in August 1951. Fig. 3 shows Strathpeffer's development at this time.

In 1949 the Spa Gardens were sold to the owner of the Ben Wyvis hotel. Several buildings, including the Spa manager's house, were demolished and in 1970 the

management of the gardens was abandoned due to costs. In 1950 the pump room, built in 1876 and located at the heart of the town was demolished.

The spa, now largely defunct, saw Strathpeffer continue to develop slowly throughout the 1960's with small scale infill development within the core town, and slow expansion outwith the traditional town boundary. The most significant level of modern development within the historic core took place between the late 1960's and early 1990's at south-west end of town centered upon Kinnettas House and the former Nicolson Mackenzie Memorial Hospital. In the 1990's and 2000's the town expanded to the north towards the golf course at Ulladale and to the south-east around Ardival (Strathview and Ardival East). Whilst the development over the last two decades of a housing estate and primary school, centered around Kinellan Farm and a former (now demolished) Spa Hotel, to the south-west has enlarged the town, the historic core remains a distinct and clearly defined entity.

Recent development within the historic core has been limited to the occasional house within the garden ground of a larger property and notably, the development of four flats and four bungalows at Ardival Court, which represents the most significant development in the centre of Strathpeffer in a number of decades.



Fig. 3 RAF Aerial Photograph, 1947

4.0 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE | 4.0 CARACTAR AGUS COLTAS

4.1 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

4.1.1 Views

As a consequence of the varied topography, Strathpeffer contains many long views into, through, across and beyond the area.

The topography and street layout also result in multiple restricted and secluded views that are integral to the overall character and sense of place of the Conservation Area. When in amongst the Victorian villas on the higher ground to the west of the town, views back across Strathpeffer give tantalising glimpses of villas and hotels, towers and finials, spires and slate roofs in between banks of lush planting, trees and hedging. Views over the town and to the hills on the opposite side of the Strath are also key. It is, however, the restricted glimpses of hills, buildings and trees as one travels through the town that add significantly to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4.1.2 Gateways

There are two principal gateways into Strathpeffer and these follow the established road network. These gateways are outlined on Map 6.



Fig. 4 View into Strathpeffer from north-east

From the north-east, along the A834, Newton Villa on the left and the striking Red House on the right create an entrance and an edge to Strathpeffer, as per Fig. 4.



Fig. 5 View into Strathpeffer from south-west

From the south-west, along the A834, the gateway is defined by the Church of Scotland on the left, and the southern boundary of the Spa Pavilion Gardens on the right. However, this ignores a row of Victorian and Edwardian housing located further to the west on a steep rise on the south side of the A834, as shown in Fig.

5. It is here that the character of the Conservation Area becomes apparent and this will be considered in more detail overleaf.

4.1.3 Street Pattern

The original street pattern remains intact. It is dominated by the principal spine of the A834, the main historic route between Dingwall and Contin. The A834 gives access to many of Strathpeffer's commercial, leisure and ecclesiastical buildings, as well as The Square, the area's main commercial hub.

To the west of the A834 the street pattern developed through the formalisation and in some cases expansion, of a number of rough tracks and roadways which connected the pre-Spa farmsteads and their related buildings. Branching at right angles from the A834 and dividing The Square is Strathpeffer's secondary street 'Golf Course Road'. The road, which cuts up the hill, is the principal artery through Strathpeffer to the west of the A834, winding to the north and west before terminating at Strathpeffer Spa Golf Club's club house. Golf Course Road gives access to commercial facilities at The Square, as well as a number of hotels and Free Church. Four roads lead from Golf Course Road at right angles to broadly follow the prevailing contours of the hill, off which are many of the Victorian villas and further hotels and guesthouses constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The growth of Strathpeffer as it ascends up the hill has produced a very distinctive pattern of terracing and layering of buildings. Viewpoints within the Conservation Area are shown in Map 6.

To the east of the A834 the street pattern was established in the late 19th century. The opening of the railway and Strathpeffer Station on 3 June 1885 required new access, as did the Ben Wyvis Hotel. The hotel re-aligned a track which previously served the adjacent farm and necessitated a further access point to Ardvall, subsequently used as access for modern housing at Strathview and Ardival East.

Both the Ben Wyvis Hotel and the station dictated the street pattern to the east of Strathpeffer, both during the 1900s and its growth in the present day.

Strathpeffer's street pattern gives the impression of organic growth and informality, with little apparent thought given to planning or formal layout. The street pattern has, however, been heavily influenced by the formalisation of an existing network of tracks which once served the original farming communities of the Strath, and by the steep sloping hills on either side of the A834.

4.1.4 Plot Pattern

The study area contains a range of plot patterns, the size of which has partly been influenced by the age and function of the building. The surviving pre-Spa buildings, such as Kinnettass Cottages, are generally terraced or semi-detached buildings of modest size with correspondingly modest sized plots.

With the Victorian expansion, large, detached villas set within large plots became the norm. Whilst plot sizes are large, they tend to be irregular, being determined by both road layout and topography. It is notable that many of these villas have retained their

original plot. A number of villas have been subdivided to form flats or semi-detached houses and the plots divided accordingly, although within the Conservation Area this is difficult to perceive. Only a small number of plots have had been subdivided to facilitate new housing development and where this has occurred it is conspicuous.

Later residential development, principally from the 1950-60s (i.e., Ardival Terrace and Kinnetas Square) adopted characteristically smaller plots. Ardival Court, a relatively recent development of four bungalows and four flats, completed in 2012 demonstrates the difficulties in developing infill opportunities in Strathpeffer that differ from the established plot size and form; it is uncharacteristic in terms of plot pattern and size, jarring with the grain and rhythm of the adjacent Victorian-era plots.

Non-residential buildings introduce a varied pattern in terms of scale and proportion. The hotels and leisure facilities, like the residential plots, are generally located within generous, irregular plots commensurate with the size of the building. The commercial buildings in The Square, by contrast, form a line of terraced shop units given uniformity through a shared design, materiality and finish.

4.1.5 Public Spaces

Strathpeffer Spa Gardens

The main recreational green space is Strathpeffer Spa Gardens, as of 2003 included in the national Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. The Spa Gardens, originally a Victorian pleasure garden, were laid out as part of the 19th century health resort and illustrate a contemporary acknowledgement of the important curative role of landscape and gentle recreation. They are an important aspect of the historical development of the town as a premier health resort and are also a visually prominent and important feature that makes a significant contribution to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area – see Fig. 6.



Fig. 6 Strathpeffer Spa Gardens



Fig. 7 Tennis Courts at Spa Gardens

The gardens, which cover some five acres of ground, were originally equipped with bowling greens, croquet lawns, tennis courts (see Fig. 7) and a curling pond as well as winding woodland paths. The woodland paths remain, as do the bowling greens although the curling pond has now been replaced by tennis courts. The space remains a popular – and now accessible to all – green feature of the town. The gardens provide an elegant setting for the Listed Buildings of St

Anne’s Church, the Upper Pump Room and Spa Pavilion, as well as acting as an important gateway feature when entering the Conservation Area from Contin. The gardens set the tone for Strathpeffer’s abundant leafy credentials and the green tree-lined edge from the gateway to St Anne’s Church enhances the approach to the centre of the town.



Fig. 8 *Rhododendron ponticum*, Spa Gardens

The gardens, however, have suffered in recent years through a lack of proactive management. This is especially apparent at the western woodland end which has become overgrown with the network of paths requiring maintenance. At the eastern end, although the more formal elements continue to be maintained, much of the structural planting has been lost or is now less well defined, with invasive species, such as *Rhododendron ponticum* starting to dominate many of the beds, as shown in Fig.

8. Over the last five years it has also been required to fell a number of large prominent trees, which have left gaps in the garden’s planting rhythm.

The ownership of Strathpeffer Spa Gardens was transferred from The Highland Council to Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Trust in 2020 under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The Trust intends to restore the gardens and a funding application to Historic Environment Scotland’s Heritage and Place Programme is currently under development.

The Square

Strathpeffer's principal commercial space is The Square – see Fig. 9. The Square is divided by Golf Course Road with the historic core located to the north with a more recent addition (created on the site of the former pump room, and latterly the grounds of the Highland Hotel) to the south-west. Historically, The Square was an area of landscaped ground to the front of the shops and former pump room in which people could gather and meet. Postcards dating to the early 1900s show an open area and a people – or pedestrian – friendly environment.



Fig. 9 Retail units, The Square

Today, The Square is still notable for its space although it is now also a focus for car parking. The Square is predominantly hard landscaping in brick, stone and tarmac, which is interspersed with areas of planting. Complimentary to the design of The Pavilion's bandstand, is a newly installed gazebo and outdoor seating, both of which make welcome and positive additions to The Square.



Fig. 10 Pond and fountain

To the south-west are two hexagonal shop units, a matching public convenience and a recently restored pond with a working fountain, as depicted in Fig. 10. The Highland Hotel rising to the rear makes an impressive backdrop to this space. The shop units, which were added in the 1980s are constructed of timber framed glazed windows and hipped slate roofs topped with a lead-coated dome, are an interesting addition to The Square and they have bedded in well with the overall aesthetic of the Conservation Area.

The Old Station

Commercial space is also available at the Old Station building which is set in a secluded area away from the main centre and facilities of the town. The Old Station houses a selection of shops, cafés and a small museum and was renovated in the 1980s to a high standard. Linkages to the station buildings are well signposted from the Square.



Fig. 11 The Old Station

The former railway sidings are located to the south of the Old Station. The platform is accessed by a small wooden bridge and a number of picnic tables are set out for public use. The Old Station buildings and surrounding mature trees and shrubs make this a pleasant, sheltered and atmospheric spot, as shown in Fig. 11. The Old Station is the start/end point of The Peffery Way to Dingwall, with side routes to Knockfarrel, Fodderty and Knockbain. It is intended that this will be an all-abilities path, which follows the old railway line. Although not yet complete, the route is a proposed core path, yet to be confirmed by Scottish Ministers (as of March 2023).

Kinnettas Graveyard

Kinnettas graveyard, accessed via a track between 2 and 3 Kinnettas Cottages, is located to the rear of 3 and 4 Kinnettas Cottages and Francis Villa. The track leads out of the study area to provide walking access to An t-Ord. The graveyard, bounded by a drystone wall, has a mix of gravestones and grave markers which



Fig. 12 Kinnettas Graveyard

collectively represent a long period of use. Whilst it has gone out of common use, the graveyard does still see the occasional burial in existing family plots. The graveyard is the only burial ground in Strathpeffer and it adds a layer of interest beyond the dominant Victorian heritage; see Fig. 12. The grave markers have recently been recorded, with information available from [Highland Family History Society](#). There was originally a parish of Kinnettas (later merged with Fodderty), and there may have been a parish church at this site, although no record is known of this church before the Reformation period, nor when parish was united to Fodderty, which is presumably when it was abandoned, but ruins were said to have existed towards end of C18th.

The Eagle Stone



Fig. 13 The Eagle Stone

Clach an Tiompain (or the Eagle Stone) provided another attraction for Victorian visitors to the town – and adds another dimension to the town’s wider interest – in much the same way as it does today; see Fig. 13. The second edition Ordnance Survey map shows a path, accessed from a narrow road to the north of the Red House, winding through the field to link up with the main access to Nutwood Cottage; the Eagle Stone would have provided an interesting stop en route. Given the Victorian appetite for antiquities it is inconceivable that the stone would not have been on the itineraries of many of its visitors.

Today, the access point leading to the footpath remains as it was in the 19th century, although the path now runs hard up against the boundary wall to the south. Nonetheless, it still provides access to an attractive, albeit short, walk with an interesting goal – as shown in Fig. 14. The Eagle Stone is currently located outwith the Conservation Area boundary but following the boundary review (see Section 5) it is considered logical that it should be included in recognition of the importance of the stone and its relationship to Strathpeffer.



Fig. 14 The Eagle Stone in setting

4.1.6 Trees and Soft Landscaping

Trees play an important role in the Conservation Area and contribute immeasurably to its sense of place. Strathpeffer boasts a wide variety of native and exotic trees, as depicted in figs. 15 and 16, and Map 5, which details noteworthy trees within the proposed Conservation Area boundary.

Whilst all trees within the Conservation Area are given additional protection and add value to the area, a number are of particular importance, either due to species, prominence or age. Examples include Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), beech (*Fagus*), oak (*Quercus*) and notably, monkey puzzle (*Araucaria araucana*) as shown in fig. 17. The monkey puzzle trees have flourished in number, due to Strathpeffer’s unique and varied topography which aids their pollination, due to the density and proximity of male and female trees. A resulting benefit from the number of monkey puzzle trees and their seeds, is that a population of red squirrels is to be found in the area, as the seeds are an important and nutritious food source.



Fig. 15 Prunus blossom, Golf Course Road



Fig. 16 Wellingtonia trees, Spa Gardens



Fig. 17 Monkey puzzle tree

INSERT MAP 5 OF NOTABLE TREES

4.1.7 Garden Ground

The study area is exceptionally green and leafy, and the range and extent of mature planting makes a significant contribution to the Conservation Area's special sense of place and supports a wide range of biodiversity. The large plot sizes result in generous swathes of private and semi-private open space, housing extensive and mature gardens resplendent with sweeping lawns, mature shrubs and plants and a wide variety of deciduous and evergreen natives and exotics, a number of which are fine specimen trees; see Figs 18 and 19. Many of the plots are bounded by a mixture of hedging, shrubs and trees, some with low coped stone walls and/or iron railings.



Fig. 18 Garden setting, Crancil Brae



Fig. 19 Garden and boundary at Strathbran

4.1.8 Gap Sites

There is one gap site within the Conservation Area, at land sited at 55m south east of Redwood, adjoining the former steading building which is in use by the Spa Coach

Company. A proposal for this site would need to be high-quality design and materials, which relate, respond and respect the Conservation Area. The building would also need to be one or one-and-a-half storeys.

Additionally, the former steadings and the adjoining former petrol station on the south-western gateway to the Conservation Area on the A834 provide opportunities for enhancement. These are discussed further in sections 7.2.6 and 7.2.7.

4.1.9 Activities and Uses

Strathpeffer has a small number of shops and comparative to its size, a large number of hotels and guesthouses. These are supplemented by a variety of cafes and restaurants. Since its restoration, The Spa Pavilion has become an important part of Strathpeffer, hosting a variety of events. Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Trust hope to upgrade and run the Upper Pump Room in a similar manner to the Pavilion, so that it will become home to a business or other venture yet to be identified.

The Old Station hosts a number of small businesses, as well as the Museum of Childhood.

There are a number of churches within the town, two of which remain in ecclesiastical use. Strathpeffer Free Church has recently been sold, (July 2022) having been taken out of religious use. Strathpeffer currently has three redundant shopping units; two units at Cromartie Buildings (see Fig. 20) and The Shieling. The Shieling has planning permission for an extension and change of use to form a public bar; although work has not progressed, the building remains advertised for lease. The two units at Cromartie Buildings are not currently marketed and their commercial occupation would be beneficial.



Fig. 20 Cromartie Buildings

4.2 BUILDINGS AND TOWNSCAPE

4.2.1 Building Types

There are several different types of building in Strathpeffer, each with their own distinct form. Building types can be established through both period and function.

Early 19th Century (Georgian) Vernacular



Fig. 21 Kinettas Cottages

A small number of traditional dwellings pre-dating Strathpeffer's heyday survive within the town. These are principally related to former farmsteads and estate cottages. They tend to be small, and are often semi-detached or short runs of terraced housing and are mainly clustered close to the cemetery, as shown in Fig. 21.

Victorian Villas and Commercial Hotels

The form, fabric and detailing of Strathpeffer's Victorian heritage survives in superlative condition and exhibits a high degree of authenticity. The town is principally characterised by its Victorian architecture. Victorian buildings tend to be ornate, flamboyant and express the technological advances of the age. The period revived, adapted and amalgamated a variety of architectural styles and in Strathpeffer Gothic, Classical and Tudor influences are readily apparent – see examples in Figs. 22 and 23.



Fig. 22 Woodlands



Fig. 23 Old Free Church Manse

Ecclesiastical Buildings

There are a variety of church buildings in Strathpeffer, built for different church denominations. All churches survive, although only St Anne's Episcopal Church (Fig. 24) and the Church of Scotland (Fig. 25) remain in active use. Strathpeffer Free Church has recently been sold (July 2022). One former church (now Glendale) underwent a radical set of alterations, including demolition of its spire and the majority of its nave, in the mid-20th century for residential conversion.



Fig. 24 St. Anne's Episcopal Church



Fig. 25 Church of Scotland

Public Buildings

Spa Pavilion and Upper Pump Room

The two most important and prominent surviving Victorian public buildings are the Spa Pavilion (Fig. 26) and the adjacent Upper Pump Room (Fig. 27). Both buildings are important legacies of Strathpeffer's past. Both have been restored to a high standard.



Fig. 26 Spa Pavilion



Fig. 27 Upper Pump Room

The Old Station

Although no longer functioning as such, the Old Station is a fine example of its type. The glazed canopy with ornate fret work and cast-iron columns are features of particular note, as per Fig. 28. It was renovated in the late 1970s to a high standard and now houses a variety of shops and cafes.



Fig. 28 The Old Station

Shops and Commercial Buildings



Fig. 29 Victorian shops, The Square

The white-washed early Victorian shops present a unified façade which dominates The Square, as shown in Fig. 29. Architecturally distinct from other areas of Strathpeffer, these shops form an important focus for the town. Opposite are two further shopping units, which despite their relatively recent date, positively contribute to the Conservation Area by virtue of their shape and complimentary materials. Occupying an adjacent site to the Victorian shops is the former Sheiling Building, which was built to a

Swiss chalet design. Cromartie Buildings provide an additional three shop units, although two of these are not occupied. Liking Chinese Takeaway and Restaurant is located on a prominent site, opposite the Pavilion on the main A834.

Modern Buildings



Fig. 30 Cromarty House

Whilst few in number, there are a variety of styles of modern building within the Conservation Area, ranging from 1960s bungalows to modern semi-detached housing, as depicted in Fig. 30. How successful modern development integrates within the Conservation Area ranges from excellent to poor and demonstrates the importance of understanding and respecting, reflecting and responding to the established grain, rhythm, materials and design of Strathpeffer.

4.2.2 Notable Buildings and Heritage Designations

Landmark buildings, as per the example in Fig. 31, are buildings or structures that, due to their size, prominence or location, act as a key focal point within a conservation area and make a particularly important contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Landmark buildings and views to and from them can be particularly sensitive to change. These buildings are highlighted in Map 5.



Fig. 31 Red House

Many of the buildings along the A834 are set back from the road's edge, within mature gardens and partially screened by trees. The key landmark buildings along the A834 are Red House, Cromartie Buildings, The Spa Pavilion, St Anne's Church and the Church of Scotland. To the west of A834, and along Golf Course Road, key landmark buildings include The Highland Hotel, prominently sat on a rise dominating The Square, White Lodge (for its conspicuous bulk and mass) and the former Free Church, the spire of which can be seen from multiple locations across the Conservation Area – see Fig 32.



Fig. 32 Former Free Church

Away from A834 to the east and north, there are few landmark buildings.

Listed Buildings

The Conservation Area contains 26 Listed Buildings: 8 Category C and 18 Category B. Each Listing may cover more than one building or address (refer to Appendix 1 and map 6). The earliest Listing in the Conservation Area occurred in 1971, with 24 Listings in 1983 and one further addition in 1992.

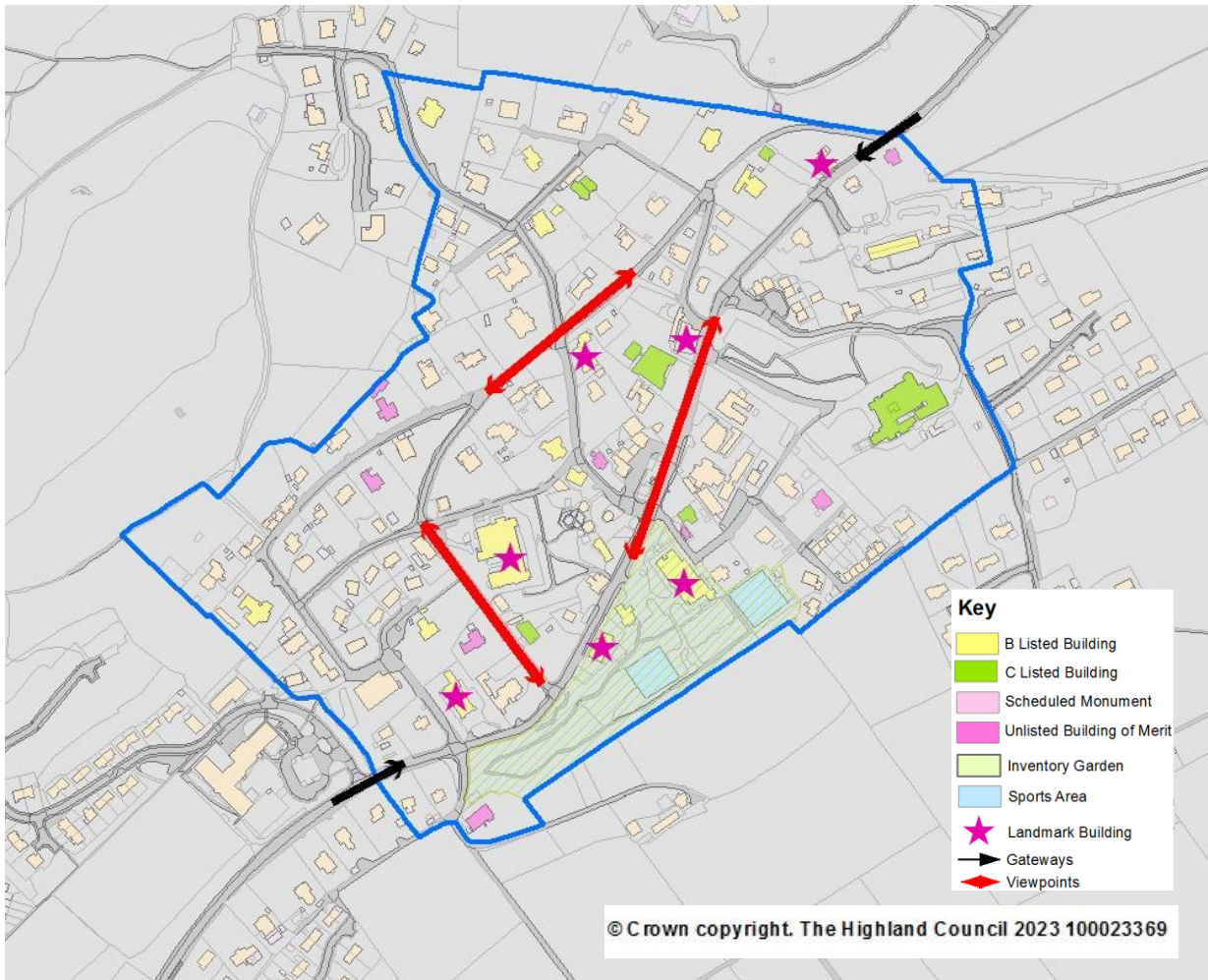
Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled monuments are archaeological sites and features that have been designated as of national importance under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Both the monument and its setting are protected under the Act. In the proposed revision to Strathpeffer's Conservation Area boundary, one scheduled monument (the Eagle Stone) would be included.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes is a growing and evolving record of nationally important gardens and designed landscapes across Scotland. The Inventory is compiled and maintained by Historic Environment Scotland. Strathpeffer Spa Gardens were added to the inventory in 2003 due to their high levels of artistic, historical, horticultural, architectural and scenic interests.

More information on buildings, scheduled monuments, and gardens and designed landscapes can be obtained via [The Highland Council's Historic Environment Record](#) (HER). The HER site contains over 100,000 records detailing the heritage of the Highlands from the earliest human activity to the Cold War. Historic Environment Scotland's [Researching Historic Buildings](#) contains further guidance on how to initiate research.



Map 6: Existing Conservation Area's Key Features

4.2.11 Key Unlisted Buildings

There are a number of buildings which, although not Listed, make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and its townscape. They may be notable due to the survival of fabric and detail, architectural style, use of ornamentation, prominence within the town or history.

Newton Villa

Later 19th century, as per Fig. 33. Asymmetrical 3-bay 1 ½ storey house. Bullfaced rubble with contrasting ashlar margins. The prominence of the left-hand bay is accentuated by the use of slightly wider openings; the ground floor having tripartite windows (bipartite to the right), and the first floor having bipartite windows (and single on the right). The left-hand bay also has a wider and taller gable-ended dormer.



Fig. 33 Newton Villa

For the scale of the building, there is a considerable level of detail. Moulded mullions and arches, ornate decorative bargeboards to the dormers, somewhat oversized hipped-roof porch with finial and decorative timber supports, over-hanging eaves and chamfered corniced stacks all add to the charm and character of the building. Located at the gateway to Strathpeffer when approaching from Dingwall.

Strathbran



Fig. 34 Strathbran

Built c.1882, as shown in Figs. 34 and 35. Two-storey villa with a four-storey square tower. Squared rubble with contrasting pink sandstone ashlar margins. Hipped slate roof with coped end stacks, probably with original cans. There is a mixture of single and bipartite openings (all with original 1x1 timber sash and case windows) and an original double-leaf timber door.

The uniformity of openings on the main building is replicated in the tower, although the top storey has tripartite windows on all four sides. The tower is topped with a hipped slate roof and weather vane.



Fig. 35 Strathbran

To the rear of the building is a contemporary outbuilding (former stables). The grounds are bounded by a low coped stone wall.

Former United Free Church Manse

Later 19th century as per Fig. 36. Allied with the United Free Church (W C Joass) on Golf Course Road to the south; Joass may have also been responsible for the manse.



Fig. 36 Former United Free Church Manse

Two storeys with squared rubble walls with contrasting pink sandstone ashlar margins. Front elevation is of 3-bays with central bay, housing arched doorway, set back and the northern bay with a bay window at both ground and 1st floor height stepped forward. Tripartite windows to ground floor with Venetian windows to 1st, the arch of the central window breaking the wall head which, with the

hipped slate roof, adds interest to the building. The side elevation has single arched window to centre. Coped stacks and decorative cans. Original timber sash and case windows, cast iron rainwater goods etc.

The Cottage, The Square

Small, late 19th century single storey 3-bay cottage located on The Square. Slate roof with decorative ridge tiles. East bay has Venetian-esq tripartite casement windows with multipane glazing to upper windows and stained glass detailing to lower casement. West bay is canted with multipane stained glass windows. Contemporary hexagonal building to rear, formerly detached although is now linked to the main cottage via a flat roofed extension. Modern flat roof porch to front.

Park House Studio, Strathpeffer Pavilion

Charming building in use as a bank until the early 1990s. Timber post and harling. Hipped slate roof with overhanging eaves, central stack, multi-pane windows. Canted bay and adjacent doorway on north-west elevation.

The Garden House

1 1/2 storey villa, harled with ashlar window and door reveals. Decorative bargeboards, slate roof. Single storey 3-bay wing to east. Timber 6x6 sash and case windows throughout. Practically, the principal elevation is the north-facing gable-end which includes the main entrance; the west-facing symmetrical 3-bay elevation, which was presumably once the main elevation, is now secondary.

Victoria House and Maybank

Traditional asymmetrical 3-bay late 19th century Victorian villas. Stone with ashlar margins, slate roof with coped end stacks. and timber sash windows. Decorative bargeboards to gables and dormers.

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.

4.2.12 Negative Buildings/Features

A small number of buildings and features detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Where they exist, many have the potential for significant enhancement. These issues are outlined in Section 7.2 Specific Challenges and definitions for positive, neutral and negative buildings are outlined in Appendix Two.

Issues may include:

- Significant loss of building's historic fabric;
- Significant inappropriate alterations and extensions; which have compromised its character;
- Disrepair or neglect, or the building has been subject to poor quality alterations and extensions that have compromised its character;
- Dereliction and long-term vacancy;
- Insensitive and inappropriate shop signage ;
- Poor interventions to the public realm that lack uniformity and cohesiveness, which do not reflect the traditional character of the built heritage;
- Poorly conceived, designed and sited modern development.

4.2.13 Buildings at Risk

The Sheiling was added to the Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) in 2014 and updated in 2018, noting a deterioration in the condition of the building's fabric. Rosslyn Lodge is proposed for addition to the BARR register (May 2023), following the severe fire damage sustained in December 2022.

4.2.14 Roads, Street Surfaces and Public Realm

No historic surfacing, and with the notable exception of the bandstand adjacent to the Spa Pavilion, no original street furniture survives. The pavement, where it exists, is composed principally of tarmacadam (some of which is in a poor condition) and decorative brickwork. Street furniture (street lighting, bollards, bins etc.) is generally well conceived to compliment the overall aesthetic of the town, although there are areas that could be improved. Signage is generally not excessive; the majority is in keeping with a heritage setting and does not dominate the public realm.

There are few dedicated pedestrian footpaths in the Conservation Area. The footpaths which lead to the Eagle Stone and Kinettas Vennel are narrow but functional and well maintained. The footpath between Windsor Lodge and Strathview is currently challenging and would benefit from signage and maintenance. Strathpeffer contains a number of links to Core Paths, such as those at Ardival, Ord Wood East, Ord Terrace and a link to the proposed Core Path along the Peffrey Way. More information can be found via The Highland Council's [Outdoor Access webpages](#).

4.2.15 Public Art and Lighting

Public art—principally in the form of large-scale, locally made wooden sculptures—have been installed in Strathpeffer Spa Gardens and also in the former station. They contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Area. The streetlighting in the Conservation Area is sympathetic to its heritage context, although the paintwork would benefit from maintenance.

4.3 ARCHITECTURAL FORM

Despite the unique and at times bold architectural style, Strathpeffer exhibits a uniform sense of place established by the broad conformity, contemporaneousness and continuity of architectural style and character, scale, grain and rhythm. The use of trees, shrubs and other vegetation throughout the Conservation Area also aids in its cohesive appearance.

4.3.1 Roofs

There are a range of roof types in Strathpeffer with traditional gable-ended, hipped and mansard all represented. Towers, spires and turrets add further interest, giving the roofscape and varied and undulating height – see examples in Figs. 37 and 38.

The overall impression is the ubiquitous use of natural slate. However, the occasional use of more unusual roof coverings, including terracotta slates, and decorative slate patterns, including fish-scale, adds interest and variety to the roofscape.



Fig. 37 Turret detailing



Fig. 38 Fish-scale and diamond slate tiling detail

4.3.2 Walls

Many of Strathpeffer's buildings are finished in exposed stonework with the masonry demonstrating a range of different colours and finishes, from coursed and uncoursed rubble to ashlar and other decorative finishes. In many cases the finish is ornate, with sandstone and contrasting buff or red sandstone ashlar quoins, margins and other detailing. Examples can be seen in Figs. 39 – 41.

Brick is not readily apparent, although the gable of the rear range of Balmoral Lodge is a notable exception.

Smooth render and wet-dash harl are common finishes in the Conservation Area. Originally renders and harls were lime based and often finished with a lime wash to allow the buildings to breathe — it is unclear how many original lime harls or renders survive. Modern finishes, such as dry-dash (or pebble dash) is not prevalent and will not be supported.



Fig. 39 Blonde and red sandstone detailing



Fig. 40 Smooth render finish



Fig. 41 Ladder pinning detail, lime mortar

4.3.3 Windows and Doors

Most traditional buildings in Strathpeffer utilise timber sliding sash and case windows of a variety of differing glazing patterns; Georgian buildings tend to utilise twelve-pane glazing, whilst Victorian buildings favour two or four-pane glazing. There are, however, also a considerable number of less common windows (including casement windows) and those that utilise less-common forms of glazing, including lying-pane and stained glass. Doors are typically timber and usually frame and panel construction. Examples of original doors and windows are show in Figs. 42 – 47.



Fig. 42 Ornate cast iron dormer window



Fig. 43 Full pane sash windows



Fig. 44 8 over 8-pane sash and case window



Fig. 45 Single leaf, double panel door with sign-written top light

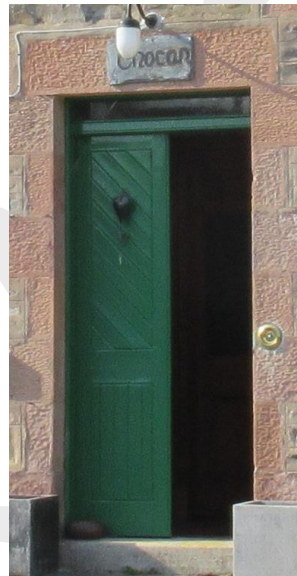


Fig. 46 Double leaf, plank and batten timber door with top light



Fig. 47 Double leaf, half-glazed and moulded panel door with multi-pane top light

4.3.4 Architectural Detail

Strathpeffer's built heritage embodies the very best of Victorian architecture with a confident and enthusiastic use of detail, motifs, features and components. Each building exhibits a unique combination of elements which collectively form a series of highly individual buildings. This is further emphasized by the absence of a prescribed uniform colour palette; each building exhibits a unique colour scheme with a wide range of dark and/or muted traditional paint colours evident throughout the Conservation Area on windows, doors, rainwater goods, fascias and bargeboards.

There are, however, a variety of architectural details that can be found throughout the area which ensure cohesiveness and contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. These include:

- Decorative bargeboards – see Fig 51;

- Decorative ironwork ;
- Cast iron pillars and arcades;
- Decorative chimney cans – see Fig. 48;
- Cast iron railings – see Fig. 49;
- Finials;
- Towers and turrets – see Fig. 50;
- A broad range of traditional paint colours.



Fig. 48 Decorative chimney cans



Fig. 49 Cast iron railings



Fig. 50 Turret and finial detailing



Fig. 51 Decorative bargeboards and finials

4.3.5 Shopfronts

Strathpeffer has a small number of historic shopfronts – see Fig. 52. Most, which although inappropriately altered in some areas, retain many original details and materials and contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Area. Unfortunately, the shopfronts in Cromartie Buildings have been significantly altered and the majority of shopfronts in the Conservation Area have inappropriate signage.



Fig. 52 Retail units, The Square

4.3.6 Boundary Walls

There are a variety of boundary treatments present within the Conservation Area. The original boundary walls—low coped stone walls, cast iron railings and hedging — are a major component of the Conservation Area’s character and contribute positively to the sense of place, as depicted in Fig. 53.



Fig. 53 Mature hedging

More modern boundaries, such as timber fencing, are also present and their successful integration depends heavily on design. Short picket-style fencing, for example, tends to integrate well, whilst in the majority of cases horizontal timber boarding or high vertical timber fencing tends to appear incongruous to the overall aesthetic and detracts from the area’s character and appearance.



Fig. 54 Blockwork walls

Elsewhere, blockwork boundary walls have been erected which do not add positively to the character of the Conservation Area, as per fig. 54.

Post and wire fences, especially when combined with planting, generally have a neutral impact.

4.3.7 Condition

Within Strathpeffer the majority of properties appear well maintained and in good condition. There are a small number of buildings—principally those that have been converted to flats — that exhibit piecemeal maintenance and non-uniform alterations. In other cases, there is a need for general building maintenance, including painting and vegetation clearance from gutters and downpipes, as depicted in Fig. 55.

A number of boundaries would benefit from attention, as do some road surfaces.



Fig. 55 Vegetation growing in chimney pots

4.4 BUILDING MATERIALS

4.4.1 Traditional Materials

In Strathpeffer historic buildings make use of a fairly limited palette of traditional materials. These are principally derived from natural sources and are less resource intensive to produce than modern alternatives. Traditional materials are an essential component of Strathpeffer's special character; in the relatively few cases where they have been eroded the impact is acutely felt.

Traditional materials commonly found in Strathpeffer include:

- Grey sandstone;
- Red and yellow sandstone dressings;
- Render;
- Timber;
- Cast iron;
- Corrugated iron;
- Slate;
- Red and terracotta tile;
- Brick (although rarely used, red brick is apparent in a small number of cases).

4.4.2 Modern Materials

Within Strathpeffer modern materials are most often found on modern development. There are, however, a number of cases where modern—and inappropriate—materials have been used to alter traditional, historic buildings. In Strathpeffer these occurrences are relatively few. Whilst unsympathetic or inappropriate changes may not appear significant when considered individually, inappropriate small-scale incremental change across the Conservation Area can, over time, result in a significantly detrimental impact on the area's character and appearance.

Modern surfacing is also an issue that, in some areas, has a significant impact on the

Strathpeffer's townscape. For example, a number of the larger hotels now have large areas of hard surfacing, mainly tarmac, to the front to accommodate parking. Additionally, there are instances of garden ground/soft landscaping, which has been replaced with large areas of gravel/hard landscaping.

Examples of modern materials include:

- Profiled sheet roofs;
- Concrete tile;
- uPVC;
- Cement;
- Concrete block;
- Aluminium;
- Plastic gutters and downpipes;
- Tarmac and other modern surfacing.

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5.0 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY | 5.0 CRÌOCH NA SGÌRE GLÈIDHTEACHAIS

5.1 BACKGROUND

Strathpeffer was designated as a Conservation Area in 1972 and has not been subject to subsequent amendments. The 1972 Conservation Area boundary predominantly encompassed the extent of Strathpeffer as present at the end of the 19th century. Consequently, it incorporated a number of mid-20th century developments. In some cases, such as the houses in Kinettas Square, later development has integrated successfully with the historic town, but in others it has added little to the special architectural interest of the area.

An important part of the appraisal is to ensure that the Conservation Area boundary accurately and appropriately reflects what is of architectural and historical importance. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 outlines three themes that may assist planning authorities in defining conservation areas and these have been used in the re-assessment:

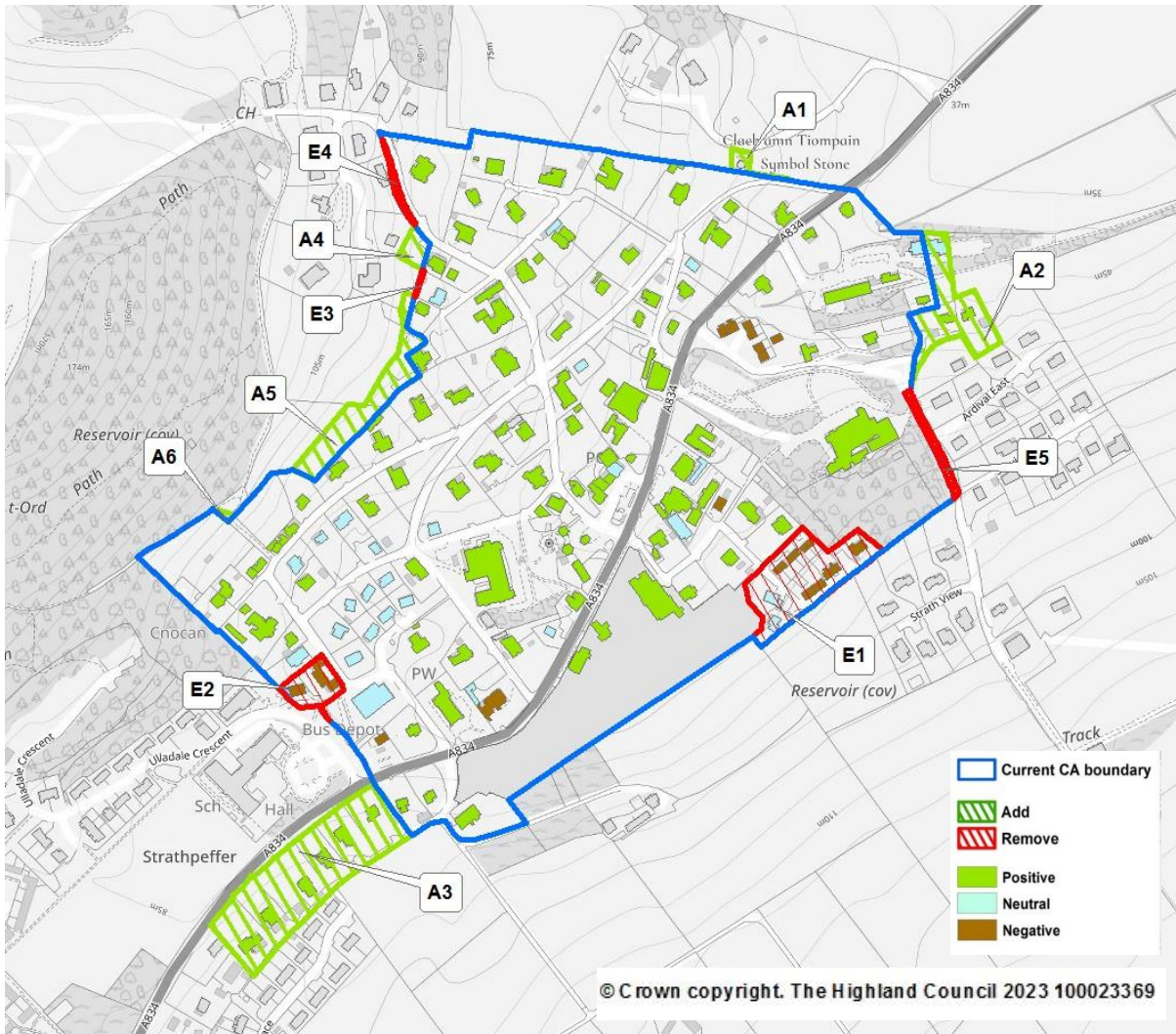
- (a) Historical interest.
- (b) Architectural interest including Character and Appearance.
- (c) Setting and Physical Context.

To inform any required boundary revisions, the buildings within the Conservation Area have been assessed according to their architectural and historic quality and the contribution they make to the townscape. Buildings have been scored as positive, neutral and negative.

The assessment reflects the contribution the building makes at the time of the survey. In many cases buildings that have been assessed as neutral or negative will be capable of enhancement and conversely buildings assessed as positive have the potential to become neutral or negative contributors if not carefully managed positive contributions to the Conservation Area.

5.2 BOUNDARY AMENDMENTS

It is important to avoid ambiguity as to whether features are within or outwith the Conservation Area, that the Conservation Area follows logical and definable boundaries that can be clearly mapped. The proposed amended boundary includes a number of minor amendments to align the boundary with Ordnance Survey mapping, as show in Map 7 and Map 8 outlines the proposed Conservation Area.



Map 7: Positive, neutral and negative buildings

5.2.1 Proposed exclusions from the Conservation Area

The assessment has found that there are two areas included in the 1972 boundary that do not contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area. It is, therefore, recommended that these areas are excluded. These are marked on Map 7 as E1 and E2. The areas marked E3, E4 and E5 are minor amendments to align the boundary to Ordnance Survey Maps.

E1 Ardval Terrace

Ardval Terrace is on the periphery of the Conservation Area and includes 15 buildings built as social housing dating from the 1930/40s to 1960s. Although good quality buildings in their own right, and mostly well maintained, they do not contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area.

E2 Nicolson Court and Redwood

This area consists of modern flats, constructed in 1999 and a modern house. Neither building contributes positively to the special architectural or historic interest of the

Conservation Area.

5.2.2 Proposed additions to the Conservation Area

Three additions to the Conservation Area — A1, A2 and A3 — are proposed, as well as rationalisation of the currently poorly defined Conservation Area boundary in the north-west corner, indicated as A4, A5 and A6 between Dunraven Lodge and Kinettas Graveyard.

A1 The Eagle Stone

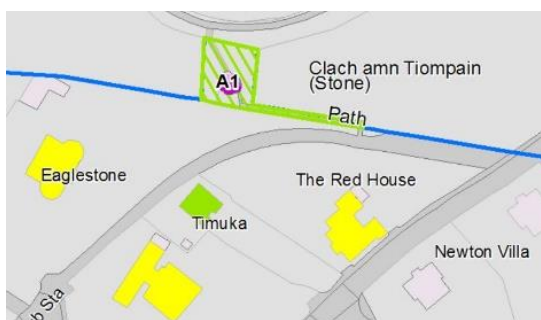


Fig. 56 Detail of A1; The Eagle Stone

A1 comprises a small extension to the north of the Conservation Area to incorporate the Eagle Stone as shown in Fig. 56. The stone would have been a destination for Victorian visitors taking gentle exercise around the town and it is still an important component of modern-day Strathpeffer. The Eagle Stone is a Pictish stone dating to around the seventh century. It is a Scheduled Monument and is of significant historic and architectural interest to the town.

A2 Old Police House/Viewfield and Peffrey House

The 1972 boundary bisected the curtilage ground of Railway Cottage and did not follow a physical boundary readily observable on the ground. The boundary has been amended to encompass the entirety of the curtilage of Railway Cottage and Peffrey House. It has been further extended to include two additional buildings, the Old



Fig. 57 Old Police House (LH building, to rear) and Railway Cottages (RH buildings, foreground)

Police House and Viewfield, the latter of which is notable for its superlative retention of original detailing and fabric – see Fig. 57. Both buildings are contemporary with Strathpeffer's rise as a prime health resort in the late 19th century and share the architectural style and character that defines the adjoining Conservation Area. The buildings and associated garden ground contribute positively to the wider townscape when viewed from the former station and create a backdrop to Railway Cottage and enhance the public realm. The buildings collectively define the eastern periphery of the Victorian town as it becomes more rural in nature, forming a gateway to the Peffrey Way.

It is unclear why these buildings were omitted from the original boundary, and it is both

justifiable and logical to bring both properties into the Conservation Area. Both the Old Police House and Viewfield are considered to be part of the town's special architectural and historic interest.

The 1972 Conservation Area boundary divided land upon which Peffrey House was built in 1997 and the draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan recommended that this area was removed. However, as a result of feedback, the post-consultation draft has been amended to extend the boundary to include the curtilage of Peffrey House. Although the building has been scored as neutral, it is considered that retaining this area, in conjunction with the inclusion of the Old Police House and Viewfield, will give protection for any future development plans, create a coherent and logical boundary and protect views into and across the Conservation Area.

A3 Garden House Brae.

To the south-west of the existing conservation area, A3 consists of seven, fine Victorian villas including Glen Oran, Elm Bank, New York Villa, Craigellachie, Craigellachie Cottage, Ravenscroft and Corrie Vanie. The buildings sit prominently upon a natural bank that rises above the A834 overlooking the town and marking the beginning of the historic settlement. Two adjoining properties (Parkhill and The Mount) are included in the existing Conservation Area and the proposed additions mark the timeline and continuation of Strathpeffer's development up until 1900. Collectively, the buildings share a common architectural language, with a similarity of scale, mass, bulk and a regular grain and rhythm. All are set within generous plots bounded by traditional walls, fencing and hedges. The intervening bank is populated by a number of fine large mature trees that both individually and collectively make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. These seven villas would provide a robust and attractive edge to the Conservation Area that aligns with the late Victorian boundary of the town.

It is not clear why they were not included in the original Conservation Area boundary. These buildings are integral to and contemporary with Strathpeffer's unique architectural and historic heritage, and contextually and materially share the same characteristics of the adjacent Conservation Area. Images of these buildings and setting can be seen via Figs. 58 - 65



Fig. 58 Glen Oran



Fig. 59 Elm Bank



Fig. 60 New York Villa



Fig. 61 Craigellachie



Fig. 62 Craigellachie Cottage

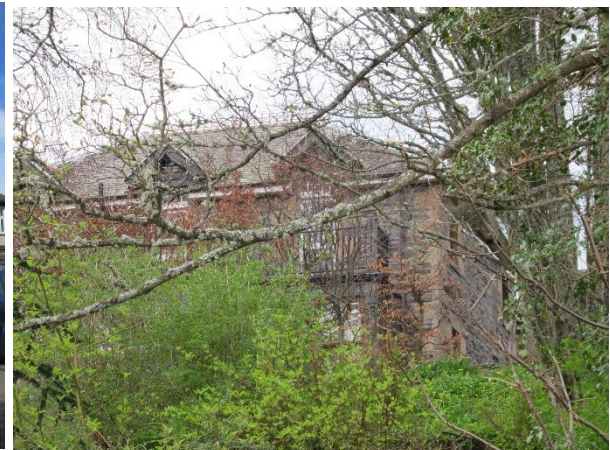


Fig. 63 Ravenscroft



Fig. 64 Corrievanie



Fig. 65 Bank of mature, specimen trees

North West Perimeter of Conservation Area:

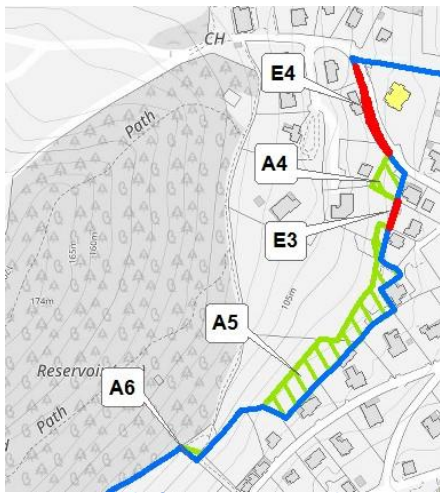
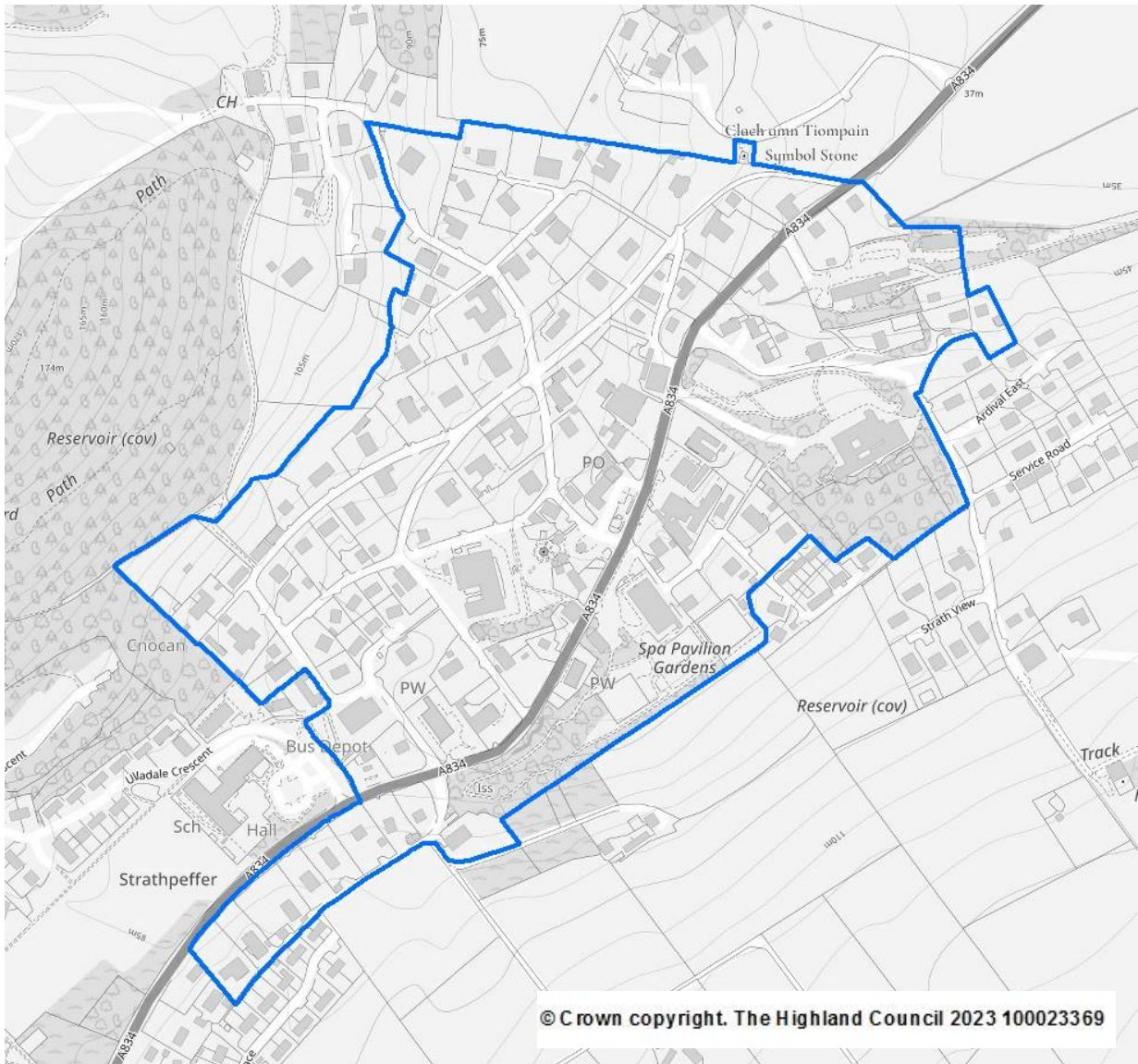


Fig. 66 Detail of Areas A4, A5 and A6

Areas A4, A5 and A6

Areas A4, A5 and A6 are proposed for inclusion, to create a robust, definable and attractive edge to the Conservation Area, to align with modern day Ordnance Survey maps, as shown in Fig. 66. The three areas will offer a positive contribution to the area which bounds the traditional buildings within the Conservation Area.



Map 8: Proposed Conservation Area boundary

6.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN | 6.0 PLANA RIAGHLADH

6.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Management Plan is to address the findings of the Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and further consider its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This Management Plan should be used in conjunction with the Strathpeffer Conservation Area Appraisal and reference is made to relevant sections of the appraisal throughout.

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.

Paragraph 4.172 of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP, 2015) covers policy on conservation areas. Paragraph 4.173 states that the Council will undertake a Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan for Strathpeffer Conservation Area and outlines the issues to be included:

- Identify the appropriate scale, massing and location for new development;
- Identify appropriate types of materials to be used for such development and in the alteration, extension and refurbishment of traditional buildings throughout Strathpeffer Conservation Area;
- Opportunities for planning action;
- Opportunities for development;
- Opportunities for enhancement;
- Conservation strategy and guidance on key aspects;
- Monitoring and review.

This document will inform the Council's 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.

6.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Strathpeffer is a purpose-built spa town that incorporates a mix of both residential and visitor accommodation, with an extensive network of public and private green space.

6.2.1 General Underlying Qualities

The character of the Strathpeffer Conservation Area is derived from a number of unique qualities and elements which make it a distinct and important area.

Broader features that are important to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area include:

- Wider area vistas, views and panoramas experienced within the Conservation Area, looking out, and from outwith looking in;
- The combined effect of streets, spaces, buildings, varied rooflines and their architectural form, scale, rhythm and massing and their interrelationship with topography;
- Generous plot size, plot boundaries, divisions and open grain;
- The repetition of distinctive architectural detail and motifs and the positive cumulative effect of these on the appearance of the wider townscape;
- The quality, diversity, eclectic Victorian character and authenticity of Strathpeffer's historic buildings, distinctive timberwork and a consistent palette of traditional materials and finishes;
- The contribution made by trees and soft landscaping both in their own right and as contributors to the setting of buildings, streets and spaces.

6.2.2 The Significance of Spaces

Open spaces, both private and public, are vital contributing factors to the character of the Conservation Area. Their retention and sensitive management are crucial to maintaining this special character.

Public Spaces

Public spaces and vistas that must be considered as part of any development proposal which might affect them include:

- Strathpeffer Spa Gardens;
- Kinnettas Graveyard;
- The Eagle Stone;
- The Square.

Private Spaces

Private open spaces, including garden ground, make an immeasurable contribution throughout the Conservation Area. It is important to the Conservation Area that, wherever garden ground contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area, that its retention is secured.

6.2.3 The Significance of Buildings

A selection of the more significant buildings is outlined in section 4.2, although the majority of historic buildings in the Conservation Area are notable both individually and as part of a group. Nonetheless, there are buildings and building groups within the Conservation Area that are particularly sensitive to change; any proposal that may affect them or their setting will need to carefully be justified. These buildings and groups include:



Fig. 67 Roofline along Golf Course Road

- The setting and views of The Highland Hotel from The Square and A834;
- The setting of and impact on ecclesiastical buildings, such as the Parish Church, St Anne's Episcopal Church and the Free Church;
- The Square, its setting and views to and from;
- The setting and views of the Strathpeffer Pavilion and Upper Pump Room;
- The intricate rooflines and roofscape, which is punctuated by ornate chimney stacks and cans, spires, turrets and towers, as show in Fig. 67.

7.0 CHALLENGES AND THREATS | 7.0 DÚBHLAIN AGUS BREATAICHEAN

7.1 WIDER CHALLENGES

7.1.1 Lack of Repair and Maintenance

Strathpeffer's buildings and open spaces are generally well maintained and in good condition. However, there are isolated examples of long-standing vegetation growth in guttering and poorly maintained rainwater goods; inappropriate cement render repairs; and a lack of maintenance to windows, doors, chimneys, roofs and ironwork.

The Council, working in partnership with Inverness City Heritage Trust, has produced a [maintenance guide](#) to help property owners.

7.1.2 Loss of Original Architectural Detail and Original Features

Original architectural detail makes a defining contribution to Strathpeffer's character and appearance. It is, therefore, important that detail and its importance is recognised, preserved and enhanced. The incremental removal and loss of traditional features—including windows and doors, roof coverings, metalwork etc.—contributes to the erosion of the special character of the Conservation Area.

Likewise, erosion of Strathpeffer's architectural detail can result from the introduction of new and inappropriate architectural forms and materials. For example, flat roofs, modern conservatories and poorly conceived extensions and the introduction of manmade materials can, in many cases, erode surviving historic architectural and historic detail.

7.1.3 Use of Inappropriate Materials

Materials are an important element of a conservation area, and the use of traditional materials provides a unifying feature across an area. Modern materials tend to have a uniform surface, profile and patina, often weather comparatively poorly and stand out from traditional materials. Common examples include:

- Modern plastic windows. These lack the profile, subtle detailing and variety of character of timber sash and case windows;
- uPVC, aluminium or glass doors lack the patina, colour and detailing of timber panel doors;
- Plastic rainwater goods lack the character, variety of finish and texture of cast iron.

Some of these challenges are apparent in Strathpeffer's dwellings that have been converted to flats. Often, these buildings have been subject to piecemeal alterations using a variety of non-traditional materials to a variety of designs, particularly the alteration of windows. This can result in a loss of uniformity, symmetry and cohesion

and can have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area – see Figs. 68 and 69.

It is important that inappropriate materials are not permitted on both traditional properties and new buildings in the Conservation Area. Since 2012, planning permission has been required to carry out most external alterations to buildings in a conservation area and inappropriate modern materials should not be proposed or permitted moving forward. Further information can be obtained via The Council’s supplementary guidance on specific matters such as [Historic Windows and Doors](#) and also from Historic Environment Scotland’s [Managing Change in Windows](#) for both property owners and professional practitioners.



Fig. 68 Inappropriate replacement door and window



Fig. 69 Inappropriate replacement windows

7.1.4 Inappropriate and unsympathetic alterations and extensions

Strathpeffer is generally well-cared for and incidents of inappropriate development or the introduction of new and unsympathetic forms are comparatively uncommon. There are, however, a number of historic buildings that have been subject to poorly conceived and/or out-of-scale extensions, including extensive flat roof additions, that respect neither scale nor character. Poorly designed and sited conservatory extensions utilising modern materials, although not ubiquitous, are increasingly a cause for concern, as depicted in Fig. 70. Box dormers, whilst present in only a small number of cases, can significantly damage historic roofscapes and are unlikely to be acceptable in many cases.



Fig. 70 Inappropriate conservatory extension

Alterations and extensions must be carefully conceived and must reflect the character and scale of the building and not seek to replicate badly considered extensions and

alterations present elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

7.1.5 Adaptation for Climate Resilience and Energy Efficiency

Adaptation of the Conservation Area's building stock to adapt to a changing climate and improve energy efficiency are important considerations in securing a sustainable future for the Conservation Area. It is, however, important that external adaptations are carefully considered, are sensitive and appropriate to the character, appearance and performance of building and its wider heritage context. In some cases, it will be necessary to find acceptable compromises to ensure a balance between the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and adaptation.

7.1.6 Installation of Micro-renewables

There are examples of solar panels in the Conservation Area and a small number of air source heat pumps. In many cases it will be possible to incorporate at least some micro-renewable technologies without detriment to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, in some cases, where micro-renewables are clearly visible from the public realm, are visible on principle elevations or in important views other options may need to be considered. Information on climate-change mitigation measures which are supported in the Conservation Area can be seen in Section 9.2.

7.1.7 Subdivision of plots

Strathpeffer does not have many obvious gap sites or redevelopment opportunities, and this has resulted in a trend to subdivide existing plots. The importance of plot size and layout results in limited opportunities for further sub-division of plots. Where proposed, rigorous justification and assessment will be required.

7.1.8 Loss of Traditional Boundaries

Boundary walls are a significant component of Strathpeffer's character. Where traditional boundaries have been replaced these can have a significantly detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This is most acutely apparent where timber panel and/or horizontal or vertical board fencing has been used, as per Fig. 71. Likewise, modern materials such as chain-link fences and concrete block walls—often finished with harl and lacking the width or finish of traditional stone walls



Fig. 71 Inappropriate timber fencing

detract from the character of the area. Such options are poor substitutes for traditional boundary treatments such as hedging, stone walls and cast-iron railings. The Council will not support the loss of traditional boundary treatments and will encourage the replacement of inappropriate boundary treatments with traditional finishes. New boundaries will be of a form and finish appropriate to the Conservation

Area.

7.1.9 Loss of Private Green Space

The plot sizes of many of the Conservation Area's properties are generous and the grounds are generally complimented by well-maintained, mature gardens and this contributes significantly to Strathpeffer's character and appearance. It is important that, wherever hard landscaping is required, that it is unobtrusive and integrates successfully alongside soft landscaping, with trees, planting, hedging and lawns continuing to dominate. There are a small number of instances where all soft landscaping has been cleared and replaced with hard landscaping to facilitate off-road parking. In all cases this has had a significantly detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Given the number of hotels and buildings catering to visitors it is inevitable that significant areas will be allocated to parking space. In some areas this has had the unfortunate consequence of dominating the hotel buildings, their garden ground and the immediate streetscape, as shown in Fig. 72.



Fig. 72 Hard landscaping, Strathpeffer Hotel

7.1.10 Service and Telecommunication Equipment

On a smaller scale, but no less significant with regard to incremental erosion of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, are poorly sited services such as satellite dishes, cabling, flues, security equipment and pipework.

7.1.11 New Development

Opportunities for new development within the Conservation Area are very few. The Inner Moray Firth Local Plan has not identified any opportunities for development within the Conservation Area boundary. However, should new development be proposed within the Conservation Area, it must be carefully conceived and designed with the specific qualities of Strathpeffer to the fore. Ardival Court, (see Fig. 73) a development of four flats and four bungalows in 2012, is a prime example of new development that ticks many of the 'traditional' boxes (slate roof, timber windows, 45-degree roof pitch etc.) yet has not integrated with the wider area as successfully as it might.



Fig. 73 Ardival Court

Successful new development within the Conservation Area will need to be of high-quality design and utilise high quality materials. It must also respect the historic grain, massing, rhythm and scale of Strathpeffer and views into and out of the Conservation Area must be carefully considered.

7.1.12 New Development Outwith the Conservation Area



Fig. 74 Strathview development



Fig. 75 Strathview development

New development outwith the Conservation Area which can be seen from inside the Conservation Area, or which affects the extended streetscape of streets in the Conservation Area will be carefully assessed. Given Strathpeffer's location and varied topography, development outwith the Conservation Area has the potential to impact upon its setting and its character and appearance.

This has already occurred at Strathview and Ardival East, two modern developments which are highly visible, especially to the west of the Conservation Area when viewed from higher ground, as per Fig. 74 and 75. Even when viewed from a distance, this development detracts from the traditional and intricate roofscape that characterises Strathpeffer. It is important that the assessment of new development takes into account wider views from within the Conservation Area.

7.1.13 Public Realm

The quality and upkeep of the public realm is of importance to the interests of commercial business and residents and presents an image of the town to visitors. Principal areas of concern include quality of paving; damage to street surfaces by utility companies; maintenance of public and amenity spaces; street furniture; street clutter (excessive traffic management infrastructure; wheelie bins; A-frames etc.) and inappropriate sighted and/or designed advertising and signage. Footpaths throughout the town need to be regularly maintained to ensure ease of access for residents and visitors.

7.2 SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

Some of the wider challenges set out above are highlighted by specific cases where, for

example, a poorly maintained building is blighting its immediate surroundings, or inappropriate interventions have significantly impacted the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, the single biggest threat facing Strathpeffer is one of vacancy and redundant buildings.

Any enhancement schemes should seek to prioritise the cases below and overleaf to reduce their negative impact. However, most are in private ownership and liaison, detailed discussion and support from public bodies may be necessary to encourage change. The [Planning Authority](#) can be contacted for advice on change of use and further information can be obtained from [Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change Guidance](#).

7.2.1 Cromartie Buildings

Cromartie Buildings dates to the late 19th century and is located in a prominent position within Strathpeffer's townscape, as per Fig. 76. The ground floor operates with one separate shop unit and the two former retail units may be in use as residential units. The upper floors have been converted into flats, all with individual owners.



Fig. 76 Cromartie Buildings

Piecemeal alterations, most notably to windows, has resulted in a variety of styles and a range of materials being introduced into the building resulting in an un-unified appearance and lack of coherence. The overall impact is detrimental to the character and appearance of both the building and its immediate environs. Only one flat retains traditional windows. In this case, when planning applications are received to replace existing inappropriate windows, the Council will insist upon a single colour palette for all units and the reinstatement of traditional sash and case windows in line with those that still survive and have been documented by the Council.

7.2.2 The Sheiling



Fig. 77 The Sheiling Building

The Sheiling building (Fig. 77) is characterful and occupies a central and prominent position in the town, adjacent to The Square and The Strathpeffer Hotel. It has been vacant for some time, despite plans to bring it back into use, and its condition is deteriorating. Securing a new use for the unit should be considered a priority.

7.2.3 Mackay's Hotel



Fig. 78 Mackay's Hotel

Mackay's Hotel holds a prominent position on the A834. The building, as shown in fig. 78, has been unoccupied for a number of years and is now starting to suffer from a lack of routine maintenance. It is, however, understood that the property has recently been sold (June 2022) and its long-term future may now be more secure. The Council is supportive of high-quality regeneration.

7.2.4 Rosslyn Lodge

This large late 19th century villa, as shown in Fig. 79, was previously in use as a boarding house (circa 1910) and in latter years was used for staff accommodation. However, the building has regrettably been severely damaged by fire (December 2022). The Council is supportive of a high-quality restoration.



Fig. 79 Rosslyn Lodge

7.2.5 Spa Coach Company Building



Fig. 80 Former steadings

The former steadings of Kinettas Farm are in commercial use by the Spa Coach Company, as depicted in Fig. 80. As one of the oldest buildings in Strathpeffer, the Council would support sympathetic renovations to preserve this building for future generations and to make the area more visually appealing.

7.2.6 Former Petrol Station

Adjacent to the Spa Coach building is the site of the former petrol station, as per Fig. 81, which is understood to be owned by the same company. This is a gateway site to the Conservation Area and has the potential for enhancement or redevelopment, e.g., an active business use, or a residential development. Proposals should respect, relate and respond to the Conservation Area and be set back from the road edge to maintain the existing road line. Any new building should be one or one-and-a-half storey in height and of high-quality materials and design.



Fig. 81 Former petrol station

8.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT | 8.0 COTHROMAN AIRSON NEARTACHADH

8.1 BACKGROUND

Strathpeffer has fewer significant management issues than many conservation areas in Highland. Nonetheless, there are opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area which should be seized wherever practicable. A fundamental principle when considering the management of the Conservation Area is that it should be both proactive and heritage led.

8.1.2 Increased Maintenance

The best means of preserving the character and appearance of any area is through the routine maintenance of buildings, green infrastructure such as trees, open spaces and the public realm. Responsibility for maintenance and repair lies with individual property owners and for most routine works, planning permission is not required. Roofs, chimneys, windows, doors, rainwater goods, stonework, paintwork, wall finishes, entrance steps, gardens and boundary treatments, both front and rear, all need regular attention to prolong their life, secure the future of the building and enhance its setting. Regular, coordinated maintenance inspection and programmes can help reduce costs in the long term. Similar considerations apply to the management and upkeep of private gardens and other private and public open spaces. Historic Environment Scotland's free [INFORM Guide](#) series provides useful information on maintenance issues for various elements of historic buildings. The Council has published a maintenance guide which is available on the Council's [website](#).

8.1.2 Reinstatement of Traditional Features

Where traditional features have been lost, the Council will support their replacement. For example, replace inappropriate modern windows and doors with historically appropriate units; replace modern boundary treatments with appropriate traditional boundaries; reinstatement of traditional detailing and traditional signwriting on shopfronts etc.

8.1.3 Promotion of Sensitive Alterations

The Council encourages the sensitive alteration and extension of Listed Buildings, where this will not harm their special interest, and of unlisted buildings where the proposals preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

Where work appears to be unauthorised, the Council has statutory powers to investigate alleged breaches of planning control (including Listed Building consent) and any attached conditions. Powers under the Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2011 allow for stop notices and temporary stop notices in respect of specific works

and fixed penalty notices for breaches of enforcement notices. The Council may take formal action where a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved by negotiation, and it is in the public interest to do so. For further information on enforcement of planning controls, please see the [Council's website](#).

8.1.4 Promotion of Sympathetic, High Quality New Development

There are limited opportunities for development and redevelopment within the Conservation Area, especially given the recognition and protection of public and private green space. However, where opportunities do arise for new development, proposals will make use of sympathetic contemporary forms, taking particular account of local context, views, townscape, setting, scale, massing, materials and detail. Design, materials and landscaping must all be of a high quality which reflect, relate and respond positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

8.1.5 Advertising and Signage

Cumulatively, a proliferation of advertising boards and signs located in the public realm can result in clutter and detract from the character of the Conservation Area. It can also impact on the setting of Listed Buildings and amenity space. The Conservation Area would benefit from better control of advertising, especially where it is located on major roads and gateways, and of design/size that is inappropriate to the Conservation Area.

Advertising and signage within the Conservation Area will in general, comply with the following principles and will accord with the Council's Shopfront Design Guidance:

- The scale and location of signage should be appropriate to the size and scale of the building and the Conservation Area in general;
- Signage and advertising will make use of traditional materials and be of an appropriate design;
- Timber painted signs utilising a traditional colour palette appropriate to the age of the building are preferred; vinyl and banner signs and/or signs with internal illumination will not be supported;
- A proliferation of temporary signage/A-boards will be avoided. This not only adds to street clutter but creates obstacles for the visually impaired and restricts circulation, which can have a negative impact on the character of the area.

8.1.6 Protection of Green Space, Trees and the Green Network

Green infrastructure is important in terms of townscape and local amenity and can have visual, ecological and biodiversity value. Private and public garden ground and open space—and the plants, trees and built structures that help form them—make an important contribution to local landscape character and form part of the area's cultural heritage. In this case, there is a presumption to retain existing open space, whether public or private, which contributes positively to the historic character of the area. Likewise, features that define and are integral to an area of open space (i.e., trees,

hedging, boundary walls, landscaping features etc.) that contribute positively to the historic character of the area should be retained.



Fig. 82 Traditional Hedge Laying, Old Station car park

When opportunities arise to restore, add or enhance existing greenspaces, trees or green networks, these should be explored. For example, a traditional hedge-laying training programme recently focussed on the Old Station's car park boundary hedge, further adding to the heritage appeal of this area, as shown in Fig. 82.

The quiet, attractive, winding streets which lend themselves perfectly to pedestrian access are a significant attraction of

Strathpeffer. Strathpeffer has a number of small footpaths which would benefit from better maintenance and promotion. The use of gentle exercise links in with the origins of Strathpeffer as a spa resort and promotion of these networks could be used, in partnership with the promotion of the town's heritage, such as Archaeology for Communities in the Highland's (ARCH) [Walk around Strathpeffer](#).

8.1.7 Programme of Tree Renewal

Today, Strathpeffer has an abundance of specimen trees. It is important to recognise that many of these are broadly contemporary with the flourishing of Strathpeffer in the 19th - early 20th century and there is a risk that a significant number will reach maturity and decline at a similar time. There is, however, an opportunity to secure replacement planting in advance of this decline. Opportunities to link in with funding applications made by the local community or other funding sources can be investigated to procure a professional tree condition survey, supplemented with a specimen tree planting plan, which will ensure that the extent and diversity of tree cover exists to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area for the enjoyment of future generations.

8.2 PROGRAMME OF PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

8.2.1 Street furniture

Strathpeffer has a variety of styles and designs of street furniture, which vary in quality. While variety can add to the diversity of character in the Conservation Area, there is a danger of visual clutter in important civic and street spaces where competing styles of furniture such as bins, seating, pedestrian barriers, planters etc. coexist.

Future consideration of street furniture and waste storage should ensure that, as well as being functional and cost-effective, it is complementary to the character of the Conservation Area in design quality and that its location does not perpetuate clutter.

8.2.2 Roads and street surfaces

Some of the hotels adjacent to The Square include large areas of tarmac and hard landscaping to accommodate parking. Originally these areas would have been garden ground, but are now largely bland and featureless, offering little of visual interest. There would be considerable benefit to both the appearance of the hotels and character of the Conservation Area in softening the appearance of the hard landscaping and car park areas by improving the quality and variety of materials and with the addition of soft landscaping and planters, especially where the grounds intersect with the public realm. Areas that have significant potential and scope for enhancement include Strathpeffer Hotel, MacKay's Spa Lodge Hotel and MacKay's Hotel.

8.2.3 Improved Access, Interpretation, Education and Community Engagement

Opportunities exist to improve and upgrade access and path networks within the Conservation Area. It is also important to consider ways in which interpretation and educational benefits of the Conservation Area can be maximised as a learning, teaching and participation resource for all sections of the community. Engagement with the local community is essential in fostering a sense of local ownership and responsibility for the historic environment. The Council will encourage local involvement through liaison with local and community groups, amenity/ heritage groups, such as [Archaeology for Communities in Highland](#) (ARCH) and [The Highland Museum of Childhood](#), and stakeholders with issues affecting the historic environment. There are opportunities to develop collaborative working between Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Trust, accommodation providers, tourism bodies and volunteering groups within the town to promote the cultural and natural heritage of Strathpeffer, and to further enhance resident's and visitor's experience. There are several way-finding finger posts within the town, to signpost visitors to local attractions and these can be further explored. Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Trust could consider repurposing the Upper Pump Room, as the building is in a good central location to host interpretation, education and community engagement and form a central visitor point.

8.2.4 Telecommunications and Utilities

Redevelopment works and repeated excavations by statutory undertakers have resulted in the gradual degradation of existing road and pavement surfaces. The Council will work to ensure that statutory undertakers reinstate ground surfaces in an appropriate manner and will consider the use of Article 4 directions to control such operations should the need arise.

8.2.5 Public Art

New public art is encouraged and the installation of distinctive pieces of street furniture and art-work could reinforce a local sense of place.

8.2.6 The Square

As a prime focus of Strathpeffer, The Square is one of the most important and prominent

public spaces in the town. The Square has benefitted from a recent programme of renewal and enhancement with the installation of a new gazebo, refurbishment of the water fountain, new street furniture including benches, bollards and signage, together with improvements to the retail unit's facades. The Council is supportive of future development of the retail units, which should be sympathetic to the original facades. The Highland Council's [shopfront design guide](#) provides further information.

8.2.7 Strathpeffer Spa Gardens

Ownership of Strathpeffer Spa Gardens was transferred from The Highland Council to Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Trust in 2020. The gardens are included in the national Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland. Both national and local planning policy supports the positive management of Inventory Gardens, and the Council is required to protect and enhance sites included in the Inventory.

Strathpeffer Spa Gardens are undoubtedly a significant asset with historic, architectural and horticultural interest. It is, therefore, unfortunate that over the last few years – including through the Covid-19 period – the gardens have not been maintained at the desired level or standard. It is hoped that under Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Trust's stewardship the gardens can be managed proactively, and it is noted that the Trust are currently applying to Historic Environment Scotland for funding to restore the gardens (May 2023). The plans include repairing the pond and installing a fountain, repairing infrastructure and the installation of a sensory garden, in collaboration with the neighbouring garden at St Anne's Church. Successional planting of trees will ensure continuation of the rich arboreal content. The Trust's regeneration of the gardens is currently supported by a team of volunteers; however, the garden's redevelopment has the aspiration to offer placement opportunities with landscape design students at University of the Highlands and Islands.

The Council will support proposals that seek to enhance the gardens whilst preserving or enhancing their significant contribution to the wider Conservation Area.

9.0 PLANNING POLICIES | 9.0 POILEASIDHEAN DEALBHAI DH

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. The [Planning Authority](#) provides a pre-application service and building owners/occupiers are encouraged to engage with this value-added service, ahead of submitting planning applications.

9.1 NEW DEVELOPMENT

- I. All proposals for new development (including garages and ancillary buildings etc.) will demonstrate the use of high quality (including, where appropriate contemporary) design, materials and finishes and include detail of landscaping and boundary treatments. All proposals will take particular account of local context, views, townscape, setting, scale, massing, materials and detail;
- II. All new development proposals will adhere to the existing street pattern and present strong and coherent frontages where the development faces onto the street;
- III. All new development proposals will be supported by a detailed design statement that clearly demonstrates how the proposal will either preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

9.2 EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

- The Council will support the retention of historic features, fabric and detailing and the sensitive repair and maintenance of all buildings and built features;
- Where traditional finishes and features have been replaced with modern, inappropriate and/or unsympathetic alternatives, the Council will insist upon the reinstatement of traditional finishes and features;
- Where traditional finishes and features are proven to be beyond viable repair, the Council will support their replacement on a like-for-like basis. Non-traditional replacements, alternatives, materials and finishes will not be supported;
- The Council will support the sensitive alteration and extension of Listed Buildings, where there is justification to do so and where this will not harm their special interest, and of unlisted buildings where the proposals preserve and enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area.

- Boundary treatments will respect the historical character of the area. In the majority of cases stone walls, railings and natural hedging (or a combination thereof) will be supported. High timber fences (with vertical or horizontal boards) and metal fences are unlikely to be supported where they front a public road or footpath.

9.3 DEMOLITION

The Council is committed to the sustainable use and management of the historic environment, as outlined in the Highland Historic Environment Strategy. This means meeting the needs of today without compromising the opportunity for future generations to understand, appreciate and benefit from the historic environment. Listed building consent is always required for the demolition of a Listed Building and conservation area consent is required for the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area. Consent is also required for structures and other elements such as gates and enclosures. Partial demolition also requires consent – for more information, please see Historic Environment Scotland [*Managing Change Demolition of Listed Buildings \(2019\)*](#).

9.4 SPACES AND TREES

Greenspaces, both private and public, are vital contributing factors to the character of the Conservation Area. Their retention and sensitive management are crucial to maintaining this special character and for the protection of biodiversity. Green infrastructure is important in terms of local amenity and can have many benefits, including health and wellbeing and a sense of place. There is a presumption to retain existing greenspace, whether public or private, which contributes positively to the character of the area. Likewise, features that define and are integral to greenspace, i.e., trees, hedging, boundary walls and other landscaping features, should be retained, enhanced and protected. In some cases, the introduction of new stone boundaries or hedges may be encouraged to enhance the streetscape and define the original planned town lots.

Trees in conservation areas are protected through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Before carrying out any work on a tree in a conservation area owners must give six weeks' notice to the Planning Authority of any intention to cut, lop, top, uproot, damage or destroy a tree. This is separate to any other permissions or consents that may be required. Planning proposals should protect any trees on the site unless relevant notification procedures to the Planning Authority have been made and completed.

9.5 PUBLIC REALM

- The Council will support appropriate advertising in line with the general principles set out in this document. Inappropriately sited and/or designed advertising will not be supported;
- The Council will support the maintenance and promotion of footpaths, access and interpretation in and around the Conservation Area.

9.6 ADAPTATION FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In order to make buildings more energy efficient and resilient to climate change, for example more extreme weather events, heavier rainfall etc., appropriate changes to buildings will be supported. Traditional buildings were often constructed of materials that are breathable and require a degree of ventilation. The installation of some energy efficiency measures can affect the fabric of a traditional building in terms of airtightness, breathability, ventilation and condensation. This should be considered when identifying the most appropriate solutions. The energy efficiency of the building and performance of any interventions will be affected by the external building fabric condition, therefore buildings should be in good repair prior to any such changes.

Measures which would affect the appearance of any building in the Conservation Area, for example the introduction of external insulating render or changes to windows and doors, will require Planning Permission. Listed Buildings will require Listed Building Consent for both interior and exterior changes. Further advice can be provided by the [Planning Authority](#).

9.6.1 Adaptation of traditional buildings

The impact on the building of changes to the exterior, for example the introduction of external insulating render or changes to windows and doors, must be considered carefully. External insulation can alter the overall character of a traditional building (obscure architectural detailing, original finishes and fabric, alter the profile of window and door openings) and effect its technical performance e.g., how rainwater goods and weathering details perform. It is unlikely that external wall insulation will be supported on most traditional buildings in the Conservation Area for these reasons. However, proposals for external insulation to be applied to modern extensions to historic buildings will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In most cases double glazing is fully supported and encouraged where it will not adversely impact the character of the window. Planning Permission is not required where double glazing is retrofitted into existing historic frames. Likewise, Planning Permission is not required for replacement windows that incorporate double glazing but are otherwise identical in all other respects (including material, opening method, design, profile, detailing, colour and fenestration pattern). More detailed information can be

found in the Council's Historic Windows and Doors in Listed Buildings and Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas Planning Guidance.

Historic Environment Scotland has useful guidance on improving climate resilience and energy efficiency in traditional and Listed Buildings:

[Guide to Energy Retrofit of Traditional Buildings](#)

[Short Guide 1: Fabric Improvement for Energy Efficiency](#)

[Short Guide 11 – Climate Change Adaption for Traditional Buildings](#)

Various Historic Environment Scotland cases studies and technical research papers are also available online.

9.6.2 Adaptation of modern buildings

Buildings constructed after 1948 may be capable of other proportionate energy efficiency measures and these will be considered by the [Planning Authority](#) on a case by case basis.

9.7 INSTALLATION OF MICRO-RENEWABLES

Micro-renewables are small-scale non-commercial systems including solar, wind, thermal (ground/water/air source) and biomass which use zero- or low-carbon energy technologies. The use of renewable energy technology in the historic environment supports the transition to net zero and ensures assets are resilient to current and future impacts of climate change. The historic environment is valued and enhanced where the character of the historic building and Conservation Area can be protected through careful siting and design. The circumstances of each case will require individual assessment.

Points for consideration when installing micro-renewables include:

- Renewables may have a visual impact beyond the building or plot; carefully assess the impact on the neighbouring buildings and Conservation Area setting;
- Always look to minimise any physical intervention on a traditional building and ensure that equipment can be removed at the end of its life without detriment to the original building;
- It is important to consider archaeological resources if ground disturbance is necessary, for example ground-source heat pumps.

Before considering micro-renewables, the energy efficiency of the building should be addressed through building maintenance and repair; equipment upgrades; and any appropriate improvements to the fabric of the building.

The type or combination of renewable systems should be carefully considered to respect the building's historic character and significance. The physical installation may vary from equipment applied to the exterior of the building, such as solar panels and air source heat pumps, to those with less visual impact such as ground source. However other structures, flues and/or outbuildings may be required for equipment and the siting and design of these will also need to be considered in the context of the building and Conservation Area. New or altered access may be necessary for fuel delivery, repair and maintenance of systems and should be considered in the context of the Conservation Area.

The Council will support the use of micro-renewables where these do not adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area. When considering micro-renewables, cognisance should be given to the following points:

- Solar Panels: As with any change to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, there is a balance to be struck between the nature and extent of the change, and ensuring that the character, integrity and quality of the Conservation Area is not adversely impacted. The installation of solar panels will be considered favourably where they are installed on hidden roof slopes (i.e., flat roofs or in valleys), on secondary or rear, non-public-facing elevations, on outbuildings or mounted on the ground. Installation of solar panels on side elevations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In order to preserve the character and appearance of key streets, frontages, views and heritage buildings, there is a general presumption against the installation of solar panels on a principal elevation (i.e., front roof slope, or side roof slope that fronts the public realm). However, cases will be considered on their merits;
- Air-source heat pumps (ASHP) require large external units that do not fit easily into a heritage context. They therefore need to be located as unobtrusively as possible. Unless the building is Listed, ASHPs can be installed on the ground floor of the rear elevation without Planning Permission. ASHPs located on a side elevation will require Permission but are likely to be supportable where appropriate screening is included where necessary;
- The location of new chimneys/flues should be unobtrusive and avoid visual impacts;
- External insulation is never acceptable on traditional buildings within the Conservation Area due to its poor finish and poor detailing, and impact it has on the traditional finish and architectural detailing of the building. It will be considered on a case-by-case basis for buildings constructed after 1948 and on rear extensions of traditional buildings which are not visible from the public realm;

- Biomass boilers will be supported where the infrastructure can be accommodated without detrimentally impacted the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Some types of installation will require Planning Permission and/or Listed Building Consent. Refer to section 6.1 General Permitted Development and contact the Planning Authority for further advice.

9.8 GENERAL

The Council will ensure permitted works have been executed properly and that any unauthorised works are investigated and dealt with appropriately. Regular surveys of the Conservation Area will be undertaken to monitor the conditions of the area, note unauthorised works, and provide evidence for enforcement action.

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10.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW | 10.0 SGRÙDADH AGUS SGRÙDADH

This document will be reviewed periodically by the Council and it will be assessed with reference to current Council policy for the historic environment, local development plans, and government policy and guidance on the historic environment. A review will 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.

The review will be carried out in consultation with the local community.

11.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | 11.0 FIOSRACHADH A BHARRACHD

The following offer further information on the topics covered in this Appraisal and Management Plan:

The Highland Council: www.highland.gov.uk

Planning Service Advice

Highland-wide Local Development Plan

Highland Historic Environment Strategy

Historic Windows and Doors: Planning Guidance for Listed Buildings and Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas

Shopfront Design Guide

Maintenance Guide

Trees Woodlands and Development, Supplementary Guidance

Highland Nature – Biodiversity Action Plan

Highland Historic Environment Record (HER): <https://her.highland.gov.uk/>

Historic Environment Scotland: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/>

Managing Change Guidance Notes

INFORM Guides (individual subjects)

Short Guide series

Technical conservation advice is available via www.engineshed.org

Other Advice

The Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland: <https://buildingsatrisk.org.uk/>

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: www.spab.co.uk

Under One Roof: <https://underoneroof.scot/>

Traditional Buildings Health Check: <https://traditionalbuildingshealthcheck.org/>

Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands (ARCH) walk around Strathpeffer:

<http://www.archhighland.org.uk/userfiles/file%5CRemembering%20the%20Strathpeffer%20Area%5CStrathpeffer%20Trail%20leaflet%20-%20web%20version.pdf>

History

Am Baile: www.ambaile.org.uk

Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands:

<http://www.archhighland.org.uk/remembering-strathpeffer.asp>

Highland Museum of Childhood: <https://highlandmuseumofchildhood.org.uk/>

Canmore: <https://canmore.org.uk/>

APPENDIX 1: DESIGNATED FEATURES: LISTED BUILDINGS AND INVENTORY GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

Ben Wyvis Hotel and Gate Piers (Category C)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG7864>

Craigivar (Category C)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16224>

Dunichen (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16249>

Dunraven Lodge (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16277>

Eaglestone House (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16305>

Free Church of Scotland (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16337>

Hamilton House (Category C)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16358>

Heatherlie (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16372>

Highland Hotel (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16401>

Kildonan (Category C)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16455>

Kinnettas House (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16416>

Holly Lodge (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16410>

Nicolson Mackenzie Memorial Hospital (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG7883>

Spa Cottage (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG6293>

St Anne's Episcopal Church (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG7889>

Strathpeffer Hotel (Category C)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16449>

Strathpeffer Parish Church (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16425>

Strathpeffer Railway Station (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG6292>

Strathpeffer Spa Pavilion (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG7887>

Timaru (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG7886>

Timuka (Category C)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG7865>

The Red House (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16470>

Upper Pump Room (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16431>

White Lodge (Category B)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG16481>

Strathpeffer Spa Gardens (Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes)

Web Link: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Designation/DHG5674>

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APPENDIX TWO: DEFINITION OF POSITIVE, NEUTRAL AND NEGATIVE BUILDINGS:

Positive Buildings

Historic buildings that are assessed as positive exhibit a significant degree of authenticity. The building may have been altered and some of the original features, fabric, materials and detailing may have been lost or replaced. However, in general terms the building survives largely intact and in excellent condition. Positive buildings will make a significant contribution to the wider street and townscape and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The erosion of any one of these factors can have an adverse impact on the building's authenticity and by extension, the character of an area. Modern buildings that demonstrate high quality design and materiality, integrate successfully with immediate and wider streetscape and enhance the character of the Conservation Area may also be assessed as positive.

Neutral Buildings

Historic buildings that are assessed as neutral may, for example, retain the majority of their original form, but authenticity in terms of materials and detailing have been compromised. A neutral building may incorporate one or more inappropriate or insensitive alterations, such as poorly conceived dormer windows or badly designed extensions. Nonetheless, they make an important contribution to the Conservation Area in both an immediate and wider context. Many conservation areas include recent development, much of which will not be of notable architectural or historic merit, but it has nonetheless integrated successfully into a historic settlement. In such cases modern buildings may be classed as neutral if their siting, scale, massing, design and materials continue to preserve the wider townscape.

Negative Buildings

Historic buildings may be assessed as negative where they have been significantly and inappropriately altered with a substantial loss of form, fabric and detailing resulting in an adverse impact on the character of the conservation area. Derelict, ruinous or vacant historic buildings, even where such are otherwise high quality, may also be assessed as negative. Modern buildings that have been poorly designed and/or do not respect, relate and respond to the character, grain or form of the Conservation area, and therefore have an overall adverse impact on the street or townscape may be classed as negative.

A negative scoring will not be taken into consideration as a justification for demolition.

