

BO'NESS TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2004)

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Appraisal

- 1.1 The main purpose of this Conservation Area Character Appraisal is re-assess the special architectural and historic character of the Bo'ness Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 1.2 National Planning Policy Guideline NPPG "Planning and the Historic Environment" states that Conservation Area Character Appraisals should be prepared when reconsidering existing Conservation Area designations or formulating enhancement schemes. The NPPG also specifies that Article 4 Direction Orders will not be confirmed unless a Character Appraisal is in place.
- 1.3 Designation of a Conservation Area demonstrates a commitment to positive action for the safeguarding and enhancement of its character and appearance. By appraising each particular area it becomes easier to assess development proposals in these terms.
- 1.4 The Appraisal can be used in conjunction with existing statutory planning policies, detailed guidance and site specific development briefs to assist in the ongoing management of the Conservation Area.
- 1.5 Finally, the Appraisal may assist in any application for partnership funding for the enhancement of the Conservation Area e.g. through the Townscape Heritage Initiative or Historic Scotland's Town Scheme and in establishing the status of Bo'ness Town Centre Conservation Area as "outstanding".

Content

- 1.6 The Appraisal will identify the location of Bo'ness and provide a summary of the origins and growth of the settlement. It will then give details of the establishment of the Town Centre Conservation Area to the present day. Following on this the architectural and historic character will be analysed, in terms of its physical setting and then in more detailed form through its component parts which are termed "Character Areas".

2 LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

- 2.1 Bo'ness is located on the southern shores of the River Forth estuary, midway between Edinburgh/ Leith, 14 miles away, and Stirling, (where the river crossing is relatively narrow). The heritage jewel of Culross, which like Bo'ness grew on the strength of coal mining and port activities, lies across the river in the county of Fife. Immediate neighbours along the foreshore are, 5 miles to the west, the town of Grangemouth with its giant petrochemical plant and, 4 miles to the east, Blackness, now a small hamlet with a historic castle at its promontory (A-listed).
- 2.2 Prior to the local government reorganisation of 1975 Bo'ness was part of West Lothian and its postal address continues to indicate this. It then became part of Central Regional Council, based at Stirling, with Falkirk District Council the local authority. The large town of Falkirk lies inland to the south west at a distance of about 8 miles. Although Bo'ness has, like Falkirk, a history of growth based on heavy industry it does demonstrate a more obvious east coast architectural character developed in part from sea links with continental Europe. In contrast much of Falkirk and nineteenth century Grangemouth have a Victorian character, akin to that of Glasgow and the west of Scotland. Notwithstanding this some of the later tenement blocks in Bo'ness Town Centre reveal a style linking more to that evident in Falkirk and Grangemouth.

3 ORIGINS AND GROWTH

Roman and 16th Century Associations

- 3.1 The connection of the location with Roman times is best evidenced by the Antonine Wall (142 A.D.) which links Old Kilpatrick on the Clyde with the River Forth to the east of Bo'ness passing through the upper part of the modern town. Various parts of the former wall are scheduled monuments including forts, camps and ramparts. Significantly the two great estates with their origins in the sixteenth century are located on the line of the wall at either end of the town i.e. Kinneil and Carriden. Both these estates contain other important archaeological remains, some early Christian, as well as more recent ruins and the main focuses of Kinneil House (1540) and Carriden House (1602), both B-Listed. This grading does not appear to fairly represent the supreme importance of these sites to the history of Scotland.

- 3.2 The intervening period between Roman times and the sixteenth century show virtually no village settlements in the immediate area of Bo'ness, the important exception being the royal town of Linlithgow, some 3 miles to the south, whose river port was Blackness. Nevertheless the locations of the Roman fortifications were well considered and it was only sensible that the great estates with their large houses with their associated mini-settlements would locate themselves similarly.

The Port of Bo'ness

- 3.3 The name of the town, Borrowstounness in full, is said to derive from its location at a "ness" or promontory into the River Forth where it became the seaport for the hamlet of Borrowstoun situated on the road south to Linlithgow.
- 3.4 The formation of the port at Bo'ness in the sixteenth century had much to do with substantial patronage from the noble Hamilton family who resided in and developed Kinneil House. Growing local industries such as coal mining, ironfounding and pottery making also required a sea port and its growth was further enhanced by specific water related activities, for example, shipbuilding and whale fishing.
- 3.5 The port of Bo'ness had its golden age during the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries when it was the second port of Scotland behind Leith. In 1668 Bo'ness was declared a "burgh" and in 1707 the Customs House transferred from Blackness, the port of Linlithgow. At its height Bo'ness port had 20-30 large sailing ships (70-170 tons) registered in its name. The harbour piers date from 1773.
- 3.6 The importance of the port of Bo'ness began to decline following the completion of the Forth and Clyde canal in 1790 with its exit into the River Forth at the then minor port of Grangemouth to the west. It had been intended to continue a link to Bo'ness but this was never completed and the subsequent growth of Grangemouth was at the expense of neighbouring Bo'ness. However the port of Bo'ness continued to play an important role sufficient to justify a substantial dock, opening off the rebuilt harbour as late as 1881.

The Town of Bo'ness

- 3.7 The settlement of Bo'ness grew out from the harbour to straddle the coast road (named South Street within the town) and extended ribbon-like along it, absorbing the adjacent villages, Corbiehall to the west and Grangepans and Bridgeness to the east. The status of the settlement at Kinneil also diminished as Bo'ness expanded.

- 3.8 The relative decline of the port of Bo'ness had little impact on the growth of the town at first because of the strength of the other indigenous industries. One of these, the Kinneil Iron Company sought better connections with the ironstone mining in Lanarkshire and in 1851 the first train ran from Airdrie/ Coatbridge to Kinneil via Slamannan, extending to Bo'ness Harbour a little later with an associated passenger service.
- 3.9 During the second half of the nineteenth century the town expanded substantially to the south rising up above the "old town" and port on the "raised beach". Development consisted mainly of areas of handsome sandstone villas and terraces punctuated on the skyline by high-steeped churches (all B-Listed) and supremely, as the century turned, by a new Town Hall (George Washington Browne, also B-Listed, 1901-04) which replaced the 1780 building on North Street. The area still retains a genteel atmosphere and part of it is designated a Conservation Area (Bo'ness/ Grange).
- 3.10 From the end of the nineteenth century the main industrial base for the town began to decline and this continued, ultimately leading to the closure of the main coal mine, the railway line connection (both passenger and freight by 1965) and the port leaving the legacy and stigma of "Black Bo'ness" by the 1970s. Symbolic of the decline was the necessity to demolish, in 1960, the Clock Tower, the most prominent landmark in the town centre and the last remaining element of the Old Town Hall (1780). This building had been in danger of imminent collapse due to subsidence caused, ironically, by underground mining.

4 BO'NESS TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Conservation Areas in Bo'ness

- 4.1 Within and immediately adjoining Bo'ness there are three conservation areas :
- (i) Bo'ness Town Centre: The subject of this appraisal the conservation area was first designated in 1975 and further extended in 1989.
 - (ii) Bo'ness/ Muirhouses: This model village, built in the 1860's by Admiral Sir James Hope of Carriden House for the workers on the estate, was designated in 1975.
 - (iii) Bo'ness/ Grange : This area is characterised by Victorian sandstone villas overlooking the town centre and the River Forth and was designated in 1984

4.2 All of these Conservation Areas are subject to an Article 4 Direction

Bo'ness Town Centre Conservation Area: 1975 Designation

4.3 By the 1970s, it was becoming clear that what special architectural and historic character there was in Bo'ness Town Centre at this time was eroding due to neglect and decay resulting from the continuing economic and social decline. Whereas in the preceding decades the response to the run down state of a town's urban fabric would have been clearance and redevelopment the built heritage was now being recognised as a valuable cultural asset to be protected.

4.4 It was against this background that in 1971 the Scottish Development Department's Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Division listed 4 buildings at the heart of the town (all now graded Category B). These were:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ▪ Old Western Pier Tavern | 1711 |
| ▪ Tolbooth, South Street | 1750 |
| ▪ Warehouse, Scotland's Close | 1772 |
| ▪ 72-74 North Street | 1786 /early 19 th C |

These individual buildings were considered the most important of the tight knit group of buildings hugging the triangular medieval street core (North Street / South Street) with its attached alleyways eg Scotland's Close. They were listed, as much for their historical as for their architectural qualities, together with Kinneil House and Cottages, a mile away in its rural estate. The Carriden group were not recognised until 1980.

4.5 The Bo'ness Town Centre Conservation Area was designated by the new Falkirk District Council in November 1975. It took in the central core area in which most of the listed buildings were located and extended north to include the unlisted harbour and dock with the boundary rationalised to ensure that the full curtilages of the buildings would also be included.

1989 Extension

4.6 The designation of the Bo'ness Town Centre Conservation Area in 1975 coincided with other central and local government initiatives to rehabilitate and redevelop run down urban areas. An example of this was the creation of the Scottish Development Agency (SDA), the national enterprise agency of its time. The new strategic authorities also had a special role in the regeneration of former industrial areas (Central Regional Council, based in Stirling, in the case of Bo'ness).

4.7 Physical enhancement initiatives followed, notably the establishment of a localised Housing Action Area. This resulted in:

- rehabilitation of listed / unlisted buildings
- facelifts and environmental improvements
- encouraging housing and commerce into Bo'ness town centre

Larger land use projects were also carried out at this time ie:

- the Relief Road along the northern edge of the town centre
- a new Bus Station
- the Tourist Railway and Station Complex for the Scottish Railway Preservation Society (SRPS)
- foreshore rehabilitation

4.8 These initiatives were supported by the more robust planning controls available through the establishment of the Conservation Area and the associated Article 4 Direction. Additional buildings were also listed in association with the rehabilitation and facelift improvements peaking in 1979/80 when twenty buildings were listed. Almost all the listed buildings in Bo'ness Town Centre date from this time. As part of the SRPS Tourist and Station Complex a historic Train Shed was relocated to the site from Haymarket, Edinburgh and this became the Town's first Category A Listed Building.

4.9 In spite of the relative success of the regeneration initiatives which took place in the period 1975 – 85, namely building refurbishment and new building infill together with traffic management, transport and tourism improvements, the continuing run down of a number of the town's commercial and industrial operations led onto more vacant and derelict properties. A particular problem was, and still is, the costs of ground consolidation for new infill to replace buildings which had collapsed due to underground mining (e.g. the Old Town Hall Clock Tower).

4.10 It was in this context that a decision was taken to extend and refine the boundaries to the Bo'ness Town Centre Conservation Area. The adjustments were as follows:

Extending East: This included the new SRPS station complex (and its A-listed Train Shed) with the large development areas adjacent, available for further expansion. It was considered that the inclusion of this area would allow greater planning control and ensure that a more sensitive design would result.

Extending West: This would take in the Providence Brae area, the start of Corbiehall village together with the historic graveyards at the foot of Church Wynd.

The northern boundary was appropriately drawn back to the railway line with the southern edge now excluding any part of the new residential development at Bomar Avenue.

5 SETTING AND SPATIAL CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 5.1 Some elements of Bo'ness Town Centre Conservation Area's physical and visual context have been identified in Sections 2 & 3 in relation to its Location and Growth. For example it has already been noted that the "old town" area of Bo'ness is located on the main coastal road adjacent to the former harbour and dock around a triangulated street arrangement (North Street / South Street).
- 5.2 The town centre area, whilst located on the southern foreshore of the River Forth, and clearly resulting from its physical connection with the estuary through the operation of the port, does not present any identifiable urban front to the water, being well set back behind a wide strip of open ground which includes the disused harbour and dock. The extended railway line creates a further barrier restricting both access and views from and into the main centre. Furthermore the triangulated area is characterised by internally oriented street frontages.
- 5.3 The area is generally flat but behind South Street the land rises steeply to the Victorian suburb, identified in para 3.9, whose skyline, is punctuated by the Town Hall and the occasional church and is visible from the sea and shoreline but restricted to slot views up Providence Brae and School Brae from the Town Centre.
- 5.4 The western approach to the area has a distinctly rural and coastal feel, being set below the expansive modern town and concealed from it to the south. The powerful outline of the Town Hall emerges high over the Town Centre to the south prior to being concealed again on entering Corbiehall about 0.5 km west of the Conservation Area. The image at this point has a seaside quality, albeit somewhat run down.
- 5.5 The eastern approach to the area is through Grangepans which was redeveloped in the 1960's, creating rather brutal modernist blocks and then in the 1980's refurbished with storey reduction to ensure a more human scale environment. The Conservation Area then appears on the northern side of the road in the form of walled vacant land (intended for SRPS development) opposite the well-known Ballantines Iron Foundry, a bleak collection of large shed forms, "Black Bo'ness" writ large. With limited exception most of the sites adjoining the approaches leading up to the of core heritage area are vacant and/or derelict, Tesco's notwithstanding (see CHARACTER AREA 5/ para.6.23ff).

- 5.6 Following the loss of the Old Town Hall Clock Tower no landmark building is apparent to create a visual focus from outside the area. The Town Hall, lying outwith the area does to some extent provide this. Within the central core area a number of lesser townscape features do draw attention e.g. the high warehouses on North Street / Waggon Road, no. 74 North Street as well as buildings formed specially to reinforce the picturesque nature of the street pattern.

6 CHARACTER AREA APPRAISAL

Character Areas (See MAP 1)

- 6.1 Para.4.6ff has acknowledged that the 1989 extension eastwards was largely to aid the design quality of development on the areas of vacant land associated with and adjacent to the SRPS railway complex with its A-listed Train Shed. Clearly, therefore the detail of appraisal for this portion of the Conservation Area and for other areas around the perimeter will be much less than for the core heritage area which contains the largest number of Listed Buildings and will take up the bulk of the text.

- 6.2 For the purposes of appraisal the Conservation Area is subdivided into Character Areas as follows, commencing with the core area and adjoining areas and concluding with the Eastern Extension and the former Harbour/ Foreshore area ie :

- 1 CENTRAL TRIANGLE / NORTH STREET/ SOUTH STREET/
WAGGON ROAD/ SCOTLAND'S CLOSE
- 2 EAST PIER STREET/ BUS STATION/ REGISTER STREET/ UNION
STREET/ CAR PARKS/ OPEN SPACE (south of railway)
- 3 WESTWARD EXTENSION to CORBIEHALL
- 4 PROVIDENCE BRAE/ SCHOOL BRAE
- 5 COMMISSIONER STREET to DOCK STREET
- 6 DOCK STREET EASTWARDS/ SRPS SITE
- 7 HARBOUR/ FORESHORE (north of railway)

Appraisal Criteria

- 6.3 The Character Areas will be appraised on the basis of the following criteria based on the English Heritage guidance note " Conservation Area Appraisals" :
- Spatial Structure/ General Urban Design Considerations
 - Listed Buildings and Important Unlisted Buildings
 - Materials/ Textures/ Colours/ Local Details
 - Public/ Green

<i>CHARACTER AREA 1:</i>	<i>CENTRAL TRIANGLE/ NORTH STREET/ SOUTH STREET/ WAGGON ROAD/ SCOTLAND'S CLOSE</i>
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Main Heritage Asset

- 6.4 Although this core Character Area includes only one A-Listed building, the same as for the eastern extension, it is clearly evident that the main "Heritage Asset" is located here. This comprises the main western building frontages and corners which are made up almost entirely of buildings listed for their architectural and historic merits. Further important listed buildings are spread in a more piecemeal pattern across this triangular area.

Distribution of Listed Buildings

- 6.5 The Listed Buildings which form North Street and South Street at the western end of the "triangle" are mainly graded Category C/S with significant B-LISTINGS at appropriate terminations and punctuation points ie
- the 5-storey warehouse marking the south western corner (early nineteenth century)
 - the new library complex linking the restored Old Western Pier Tavern (1711) and adjacent 4-storey warehouse on Scotland's Close (1772)
 - the 3-storey Tolbooth at 13 South Street (1750)

The C/S-listed frontage "infills" are generally 2 to 3 storeys in height.

- 6.6 Immediately across Scotland's Close is the ruinous garage store known as Dymock's Building, not acknowledged when the Conservation Area was designated in 1975 but A-Listed in 1998. This building contains Bo'ness's oldest house (1611) with two intact panelled rooms. It is soon to be restored by the National Trust for residential use. It will not have the landmark value of the warehouses nor, for that matter, of the former Old Town Hall Tower, a landmark lost from the adjoining site (see para.5.6) however it has the character of a historic "gem" at the head of the linear grouping of listed buildings, a mixture of pre-1800 and nineteenth century. A rustic medieval appearance dominates with rubble stone walling, sometimes with ashlar dressings, and pantiles (some red/mainly grey). This bears out the observation made earlier about the east coast nature of Bo'ness's architectural character.
- 6.7 The listed frontage of varying buildings on South Street continues the protected heritage along the bottom edge of the triangle. These buildings are also 2-3 storeys in height and post 1800, leading up to the important Tolbooth (1750), and including at no.11 a delightful Arts and Crafts infill by Matthew Steele, the well known local architect, many of whose buildings in the Bo'ness area are listed. As part of the town centre building refurbishment programme c.1980 the frontage to no. 11 included the complete rebuilding of the lower facade to achieve Steele's unexecuted original design.
- 6.8 The dominant land use arrangement within the central area is housing above shops/pubs/café etc. One curiosity about the listed frontages on Waggon Road and South Street is that they have very limited associated outdoor private space and are visible from both sides
- 6.9 Of the remaining listed buildings within the area, three create special landmarks as individual buildings. These are:
- the Hippodrome (1907) : also by Steele and set within the Hope Street frontage but most prominent due to its Art-Deco style and white rendered finish which contrasts with the buff/ black sandstone in adjacent buildings. It is presently vacant and in a continuous spiral of decline. The Scottish Historic Buildings Trust have purchased it and now have an interested end user. External funding is considered essential to achieve restoration and conversion. B-listed.
 - Clydesdale Bank (1900) : This Classical 2-storey building has an important presence , being set back and on the Market Street/ North Street corner and in contrasting red sandstone. C-listed .
 - 72-74 North Street (1786/ early nineteenth century): This 4-storey building was one of the earliest listed and has a similar vernacular style to the Waggon Road group and gives frontage to a small square off North Street. B-listed.

6.10 The remaining three listed buildings are located at separate distances at the east end of South Street (all C-Listed). These are:

- Nos. 56-60 : a wide 3-storey sandstone building in Classical style by James Thomson (1900) - shopfront with flats over .
- no.68 : 2+ storeys/ the most Classically designed of the older buildings (1760)
- Gardeners' Arms Public House (late 1800s) /a 2-storey Classical design which terminates the core area to the east (now renamed "The Jaggy Thistle").

Other Elements of Townscape

6.11 Street Space Character: The form of the street spaces within and associated with the central triangle is dictated by the building enclosure and vice versa i.e.

- The gusset building at 37-43 North Street is a particularly good example of this, curved in plan to give frontage and shape to North Street and Scotland's Close.
- The entry to North Street from the south-west and the eastern end of South Street is also narrowed creating a special urban character.
- East Partings where North Street and South Street divide at the east end of the area is defined by a unlisted twentieth century building (Matthew Steele 1911).

There are also well defined off-street public spaces on North Street ie to the front of the Clydesdale Bank and 72-74 North Street.

The remaining part of the appraisal of this core heritage area will use the street pattern as a base for assessing the non-listed buildings and the negative aspects of the gap sites etc.

6.12 Scotland's Close: No. 37 is a 2-storey building with irreplaceable historic architectural character essential to the enhancement of the street. Its roof is presently a shallow monopitch and it is used as an electrical warehouse.

6.13 Central Tenemental Frontages : These unlisted 3-storey buff sandstone blocks (mainly stonecleaned) are continuous on the central section of South Street feeding into Market Street and Hope Street where they continue as the listed buildings at 37-43/42-46 North Street. A similar block bleeds through to North Street at nos.84-86. They are generally well designed and proportioned using picturesque "candle-snuffer" turrets to turn corners.

Some shopfront replacements, notably on the west side of Hope Street and originally part of the neighbouring bank development, are of a particularly poor quality. Adjoining this, the tenement corner at 15-17 South Street is vacant and semi- derelict.

NB Hope Street and Market Street do not appear on maps until the early twentieth century. It would appear that significant redevelopment took place in the period 1910-25 to create the new tenements. The Royal Bank building is dated 1923, the Hippodrome, also in Hope Street, 1911.

6.14 North Street (east of Dymock's Building) : This section of street possesses three listed buildings (Anchor Bar/ Clydesdale Bank/nos. 72-74) and a listed telephone kiosk (1935) , the 3-storey tenement units referred to and some modestly handsome 2-storey, late Classical buildings framing the bus station space. However these positive qualities are off-set by the following negative features:

- Nos. 50-52 is a handsome 3-storey /3-bay buff sandstone building with a shop front at ground floor, probably dating from the nineteenth century, as it has shutters on all windows. It is presently vacant and in serious need of repair and refurbishment. It is not listed though physically attached to the listed Anchor Bar tenement block continuing the street frontage. This building could become a true heritage asset if suitably refurbished.
- the adjacent gap site (no. 54 – Local Plan Opportunity S3)
- the poor quality hard landscaping to the “squares” on the south side
- the brick clad, over bland modern facades at Woolworths / Job Centre. (NB There is a precedent for the use of facing brick in the area i.e. at no.67 on the corner of Market Square. However in this case the material is successfully subsumed within an overall Classical design)
- the gap site which exposes the poor side elevation to the Woolworth building. It is presently used as an access to the building to the rear.

6.15 Twentieth Century Street Blocks: these Council owned buildings on the corner of Commissioner Street are by Matthew Steele (1932). They have been restored but are not regarded as one of the architect's more important works. The same blandness is evident on the gusset building opposite, already referred to.

6.16 South Street (east of Hope Street): para. 6.9 identify the 3 listed buildings set at equal intervals along the south side of this portion of street. The unlisted buildings on this frontage have considerable elegance and charm and interesting ornament. Dalriada House, the former Bo'ness Baptist Church, is set back from the frontage creating a pleasant semi-public space off the otherwise narrow street space. The listed Gardeners' Arms Public House is semi-detached from a similarly scaled but differently elevated 2-storey building creating an attractive grouping.

On the north side of the street the tenement frontages (para. 6.13) provide robust and handsome edges. The one and two storey stone buildings before the gusset also display a weathered charm.

The visual defects on this stretch of street are:

- no.34 at the foot of School Brae is an undistinguished single storey shop unit which might justify replacement
- the poor quality Woolworth's shop front and adjacent gap
- the extensive gap site at the south eastern end and the side gable to the Gardners' Arms/ Jaggy Thistle public house.

CHARACTER AREA 2:	EAST PIER STREET/ BUS STATION/ REGISTER STREET/ UNION STREET/ CAR PARKS/ OPEN SPACE south of railway
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6.17 The area has been subject to considerable redevelopment over the last half century or so. The new bypass road with its car park alongside forms the northern edge to the area with the extended railway line behind.

6.18 Although there is a piecemeal quality to the town edge at this point significant portions consist of listed buildings. To the east and creating the 2-storey sandstone gusset at the junction of Union Street and Register Street is the former Custom House (B-listed by William Simpson of Stirling) built to accompany the new dock in 1881. At the western end there is the rear of the listed North Street/ Waggon Road properties, set behind a substantial landscaped open space, culminating at the northern end in the handsome Library restoration project (refer CHARACTER AREA 1). Immediately to the east and

detached is the unlisted former Stationmaster's cottage. However, as noted in para. 5.2 a number of factors limit the visual impact of these important buildings on the river foreshore frontage, notably the introverted nature of the central area, the distance from the waterfront and the barrier elements between.

- 6.19 East Pier Street has been redeveloped with modern infill buildings which respect a consistent scale and give definition to the bus station square. This space has never recovered from the loss of the Old Town Hall Clock Tower and requires restructuring to include an appropriate new landmark building.

<p><i>CHARACTER AREA 3: WESTWARD EXTENSION to CORBIEHALL</i></p>
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- 6.20 The new roundabout marks entry into this area from the west and the different parts all hinge on to it. To the north-east the landscaped open space extends from Area 2 around the front of the B-listed warehouse (early nineteenth Century) to give its attractive end gable an appropriate setting. The Tourist Information Kiosk and its car park sit within this same space. A more central location should be found for the TIC with the car park remaining but better moulded into the landscaped area.
- 6.21 The former Station Hotel (Matthew Steele/ 1920s) sits opposite the car park on Seaview Place. Unfortunately it has lost its original horizontally banded Art Deco windows which gave it special character despite contrasting in architectural style with its neighbours. Adjacent to this is the handsome but run down and disused former Burgh Buildings, built as the Clydesdale Hotel, close to the corner with Church Wynd. The remaining buildings on Corbiehall (including the former Star cinema, originally the parish church) and Church Wynd have a traditional charm and provide attractive street containment. However there is a drab quality about this group and facelift improvements would seem appropriate. The Area's importance is much enhanced by the presence of the historic graveyards on Church Wynd as it climbs behind Corbiehall. These date back to the 1600s. B-Listed.

*CHARACTER AREA 4: PROVIDENCE BRAE/
SCHOOL BRAE*

6.22 This narrow strip of land is characterised by its sudden steep rise from the Town Centre up narrow streets to Stewart Avenue. At the top of the rise sits the B-listed St Mary's Church (1796) with its blackened neighbour, an unlisted building now used as an upholsterer, ecclesiastic in appearance but marked as "liberal club" on the town map of 1897. Opposite and outwith the Conservation Area is the splendid Town Hall building referred to previously (paras. 3.8, 5.3/4). The remaining part of this hillside area is comprised of individual building structures of varying ages set amongst vacant sites requiring infill development but constrained by the steep slope and narrowness of access.

*CHARACTER AREA 5: COMMISSIONER STREET
to DOCK STREET
south of railway*

6.23 This area is defined by Union Street along the northern edge separating it from the dock (Area 7) and Commissioner Street and Dock Street to the west and east respectively and continues to straddle Main Street in the south. It includes very little historic building of any character, the notable exception being the former Foundry Offices in Union Street (Matthew Steele/1911), a true Arts and Crafts gem, belying its modest C/S listing and now refurbished, partly as a tea-room. A vacant gap site lies adjacent which merits a quality design, even although a non-descript industrial shed lies immediately to the west. The only other buildings in this area worth retaining are the modest sandstone tenements which politely hug the corners on Main Street and enhance the main road entrance to the town centre at that point.

6.24 The area is a clear example of boundary rationalisation to improve control over design in the larger vacant sites adjacent to the Town Centre. There is some evidence of some design control in relation to both the Tesco (originally William Low) and the now redundant Kwiksave developments of the early 1990s, especially the high masonry wall along the north side of Main Street. Unfortunately, in the main, the resulting designs are rather ordinary and contrived.

6.25

**CHARACTER AREA 6: DOCK STREET EASTWARDS/
SRPS SITE**

- 6.25 Para 4.8 summarised the reasons for including this area in the extended Conservation Area. The primary heritage element within the area is the SRPS tourist railway complex i.e. the A-listed Haymarket Carriage Shed, the station building relocated from Wormit on Tay, and a traditional engine shed, signal box and water tower. The complex as it stands does create the authentic period character intended. However no opportunity has been taken to connect it to the foreshore. Links with the Town Centre could also be reinforced.
- 6.26 Unfortunately the intended expansion to create a full “heritage township” has not been realised as yet and the negative result has been the perpetuation of the vacant sites adjacent, in an increasing state of dereliction. The small industry complex on Links Road was for good reasons excluded from the extended Conservation Area but it continues to intrude visually into the SRPS area.
- 6.27 The sandstone building fronting Links Road provides appropriate street enclosure if appearing a little severe in its “black” condition.

**CHARACTER AREA 7: HARBOUR/ FORESHORE
*north of railway***

- 6.28 Additions to the 1773 harbour piers and other improvements took place in 1787, 1842 and 1881 when the new dock was opened. During the 1970's the southern extension of the harbour was filled in, consolidated and landscaped and in 1996 the piers and foreshore to the east were substantially rebuilt.
- 6.29 The restoration and enhancement of this C/S heritage asset is very welcome and the works have been carried out with some sympathy towards the original maritime character. However its future is clearly bound in with any larger foreshore initiative which would encourage its use and better linkage with the town and the railway complex.

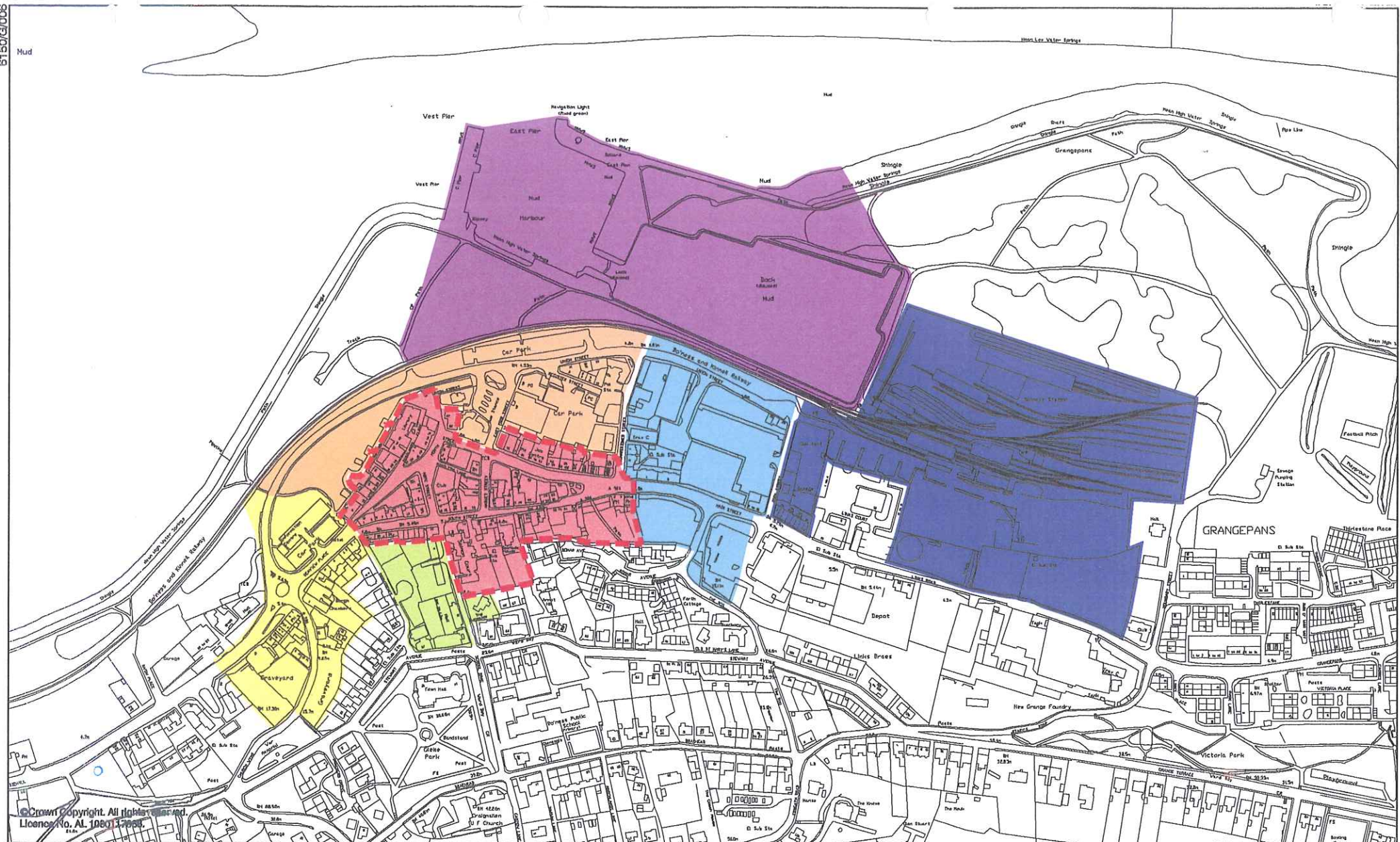
7 CONCLUSION/ BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

7.1 Paras.1.4 and 1.5 indicated differing benefits and further initiatives which might follow on from this Conservation Area Character Appraisal. The specific conclusions that can be drawn from the appraisal with regards to boundary and status are suggested as follows:

- (i) that the Bo'ness Town Centre Conservation Area fully justifies the status of "outstanding".
- (ii) that some extension of the present designated areas could be considered i.e. further west at Corbiehall and onto the "raised beach" above the town centre to include the area west of the Grange Conservation Area. The area between the upper and lower areas might also be considered for Conservation Area status. These areas require detailed appraisal.

8 UPDATE 2004

8.1 The above proposal to extend the Conservation Area further west at Corbiehall was eventually approved by the Falkirk Council in May 2004.



- Core Heritage Area**
North Street/ South Street Triangle/
Waggon Road/ Scotland's Close
- Westward extension towards Corbiehall**
- Providence Brae/ School Brae**
- Commissioner Street to Dock Street**
- Harbour/ Foreshore**
- Dock Street eastwards**



Map1

Bo'ness Townscape Heritage Character Areas

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