



# Letham Conservation Area Management Plan

Guidance on the Responsibilities of Property  
Owners, Occupiers and Agents

February 2011



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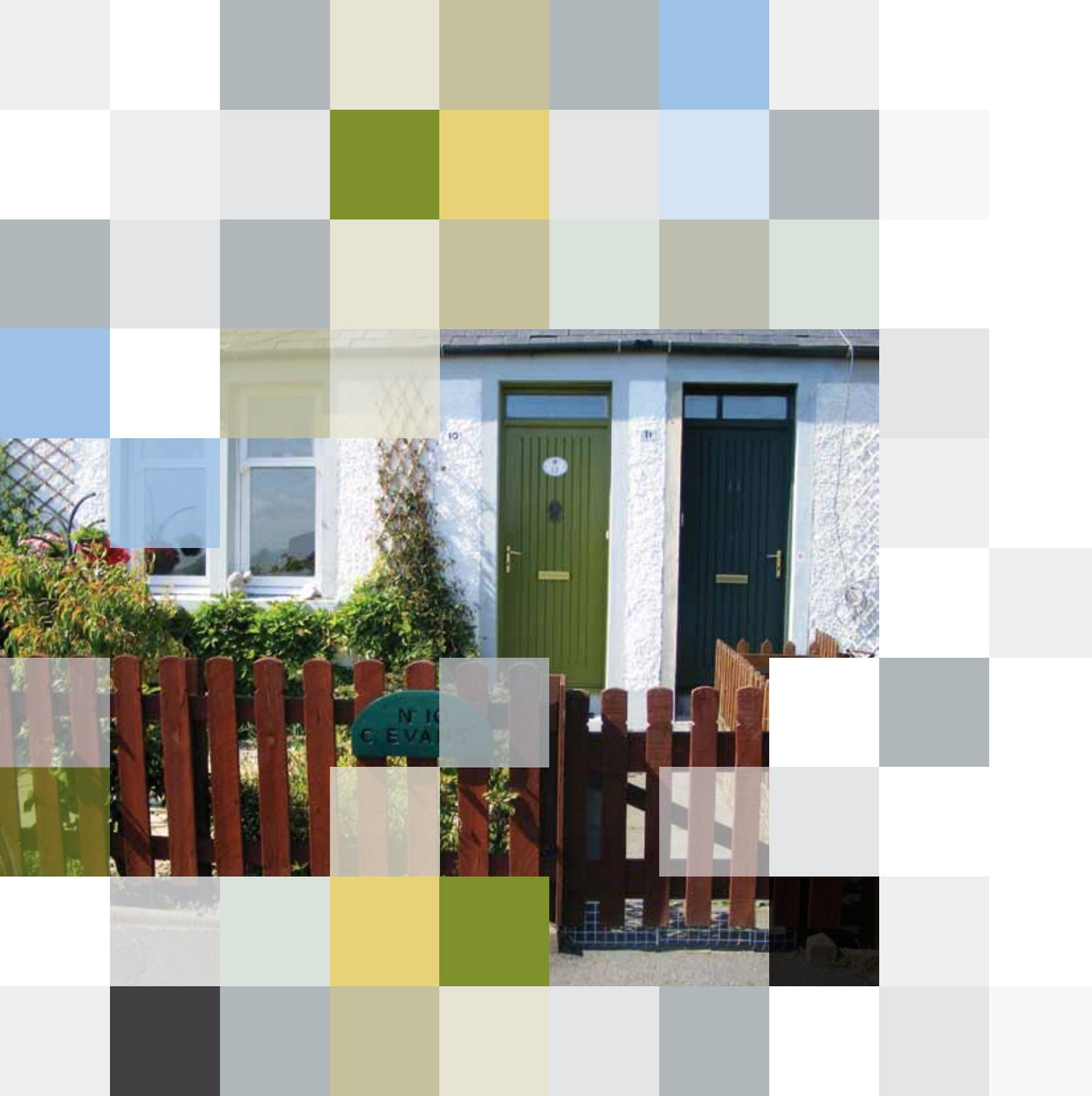
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What is a conservation area?

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

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

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

# 2. Background

## 2.1 Why did Letham become a conservation area?

The former mineworkers housing at Letham has two constituent parts, Letham Cottages (1913) and Letham Terraces (1923). They are separated by the restored mine site that served the giant Carron Works, to which it was linked by rail.

Purpose built "model" worker estates of this era are considered rare in Scotland, and especially in the local context. This is the main reason why Letham Conservation Area was first designated in 1978.

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

An appraisal of Letham Conservation Area was approved in March 2010 which confirmed its special architectural and historic importance. Historic Scotland has been invited to consider listing the building groups within the conservation area.

Letham Cottages are single storeyed, with neat repeating dormers prominent along the southern frontage, which faces open countryside. They enclose an open communal green to their rear. Letham Terraces provide a striking two storey frontage facing onto the adjoining countryside. The chimneys in particular provide a prominent feature in the surrounding flat landscape. The appraisal also identified as important:

- Uniform elevational patterns, governed by symmetry and vertical proportion.
- Building elements of wet dash rendered external walls, natural slate, white painted sash and case windows and lined timber doors, and black painted cast iron rainwater goods.
- Well proportioned and neat front garden set-backs, enclosed with masonry plinths, gates and railings (low fences along Terraces frontage).
- Low timber fence enclosures defining private gardens from the communal green (Cottages) or shared areas along open countryside (Terraces).

# 3. Policy Context

## 3.1 Falkirk Council Development Plan

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

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

(1) it will prepare character appraisals of individual conservation areas and, on the basis of these, will review existing boundaries, permitted uses, prepare detailed design guidance as appropriate, and draw up enhancement schemes as resources permit;

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

(3) demolition of buildings within conservation areas will not be permitted unless they make no material contribution to the character and appearance to the area. Where demolition is proposed, the considerations set out in Section 4.26 of the Historic Scotland Memorandum of Guidance should be adhered to; and

(4) replacement windows, doors, roofs, rainwater goods, boundary treatments and other features on unlisted buildings in conservation areas should preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area in terms of appearance, adhering to the use of traditional materials, profiles, patterns, detailing and construction techniques.

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

- Townscape design (EQ3)
- Landscape design (EQ4)
- Design and community safety (EQ5)
- Design and energy use (EQ6)
- Area enhancement priorities (EQ7)
- Adverts (EQ10)
- Shop fronts (EQ11)
- Re-use of buildings (EQ15)

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

- Design statements.
- House extension and alterations.
- Trees and development.
- Housing layout and design.
- Shop fronts.

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



## 4. Conservation Area Management In Practice

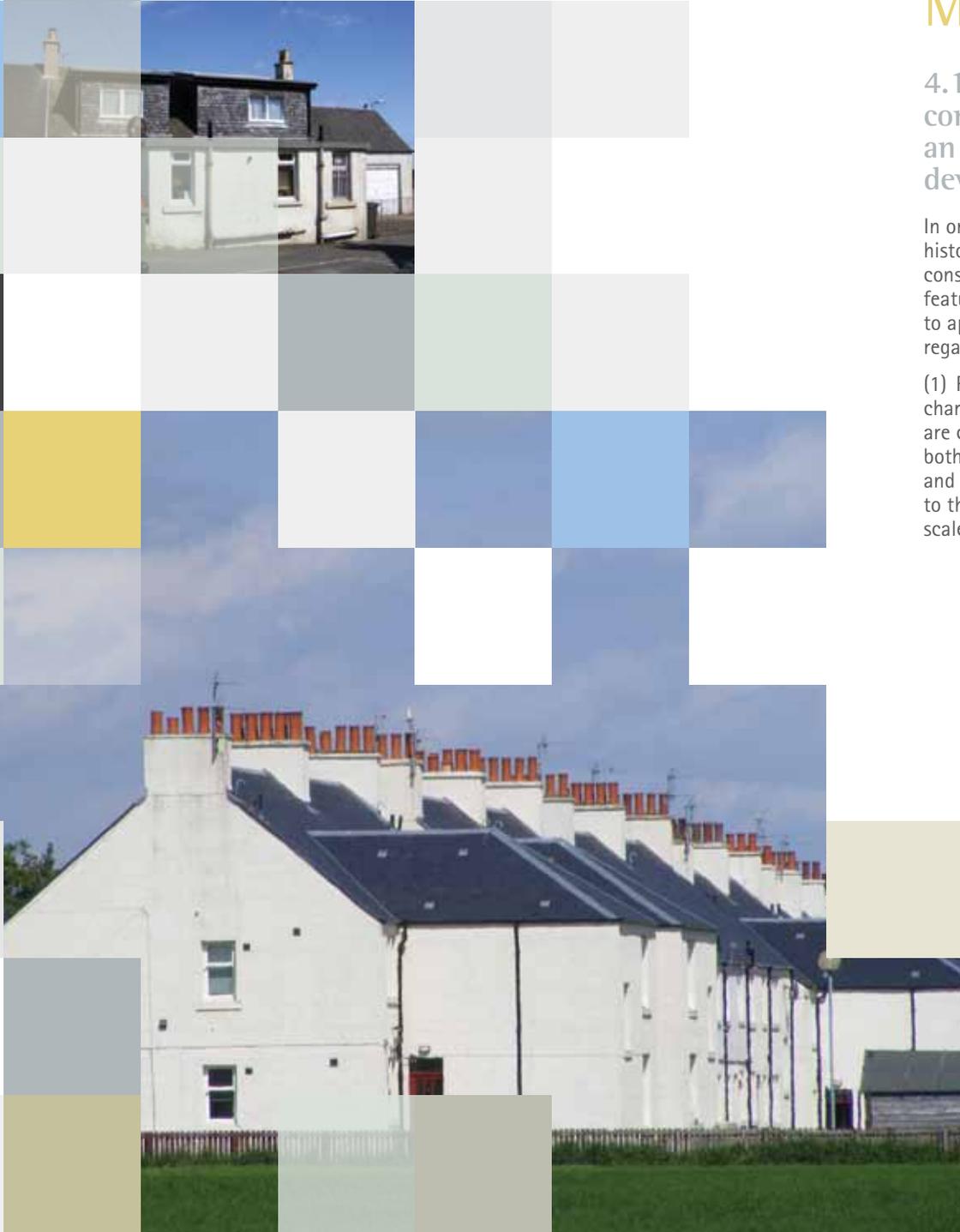
### 4.1 What will be considered in determining an application for development?

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

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

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

Any planning application will need to be supported by a conservation Design Statement (as set out in the Council's approved Supplementary Planning Guidance "Design Statements"). Housing development in or adjoining the conservation area proposed in the Council's Local Plan (proposal H.LET02), will be promoted through separate Supplementary Planning Guidance, which will ensure that any application adheres to the principles of this conservation area management plan in terms of site selection, building layout, form and scale.



# 5. Advice On Procedures

## 5.1 What will need planning permission ?

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

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

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

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

**Windows:**  
white.

**Doors:**  
matching colours in "Cottages" or "Terraces".

**Rainwater goods and railings:**  
black.

**Rear Fences:**  
avoiding vivid and rich tones.

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

## 5.2 What do I need to provide ?

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

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

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

## 5.3 Failure to obtain planning permission

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

## 6. Enhancement Opportunities

### 6.1 General

Improvement works to enhance the conservation area or address the erosion of character are possible to complement the legislative controls. The following opportunities are apparent to restore the uniform frontages identified as important in the character appraisal :

- Re-introduction or replacement of sash-and-case windows, standard doors, chimney and roof features.
- Re-introduction of original plinth/railing along southern frontage gardens (Letham Cottages).

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

- Improvement of fencing/hedging to rear and footpath links within communal green (Letham Cottages).
- Interpretative panels on the history of the conservation area.
- "Letham Conservation Area" gateway signage at entry points.
- Central park area landscaping improvements.

### 6.2 Maintenance

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

## 7. Contacts And Sources Of Further Guidance

### 7.1 For advice on preparing your planning application:

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

Planning application advice: Tel 01324 504950

dc@falkirk.gov.uk

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

Falkirk Council  
Development Services

Conservation design advice: Tel 01324 504715

planenv@falkirk.gov.uk

### 7.3 For general background information on conservation:

Scottish Government

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

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

Historic Scotland

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

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

Historic Scotland Conservation Bureau

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

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

Appendix:  
Map of conservation area

