Elgin High Street Conservation Area

Part 2: Conservation Area Management Plan

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February 2012

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0 Executive summary

The Elgin High Street Conservation Area Management Plan is the second of a suite of four related documents which are linked to a number of strategic economic initiatives which are being developed for Elgin. The documents mesh with three of the platforms set out in the June 2011 'Elgin City for the Future' report, specifically 'High Street First', 'The Visitor Economy' and 'Arts, Culture and Heritage'. The preparation of a management plan is timely having regard to the measures for the enhancement of the city centre already underway through the Elgin BID initiative.

The first of the documents, the conservation area appraisal, set out what was considered to be significant about the outstanding townscape qualities of the city centre of Elgin, while at the same time identifying problems and risks from which it is presently suffering. The conservation area management plan identifies the need to preserve the best features of what has survived and sets down conservation standards for their repair and enhancement. Measures are also set out for encouraging sensitive development within the conservation area and for ensuring that the closes fulfil their potential within the overall context of the townscape. Suggestions are made for the enhancement of the public realm.

It is intended that this document should be of value in giving guidance to: property owners and facilities managers over the ongoing care of their properties and how they may be altered; to their agents over applications to be lodged when change is proposed; to contractors and tradesmen in providing guidance on the conservation standards to be met; to developers when considering to invest in the new projects within the boundary of the conservation area; and to planning and conservation officers within the Council in dispensing advice and dealing with planning applications, and applications relating to listed building consent and conservation area consent.

Recommendations are made for creating greater conservation awareness within the conservation area, and for the Council taking upon itself a role for the preparation of masterplans for the critical street blocks to encourage development and the regeneration of the city centre in a controlled way, rather than being purely reactive to planning applications when they are submitted. The recommendations set out in this document will require to be embedded within the wider planning system to be effective, and cannot be considered in isolation if the overriding aims of making Elgin a vibrant and living city once again – as it had been in the past – are to be achieved.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the document

1.1.1 This document is the second of a suite of four documents focused on the Elgin High Street Outstanding Conservation Area. The documents have been commissioned by a consortium of bodies, which include the City of Elgin BID Company, the Elgin Fund and Historic Scotland, led by the Moray Council. The four documents are listed as follows:

Part 1 Conservation Area Appraisal

Part 2 Conservation Area Management Plan

Part 3 Action Plan

Part 4 Heritage Trail Interpretive Plan

1.1.2 The document should be read in conjunction with Part 1 of the suite of documents, the Conservation Area Appraisal. Its primary purpose is to provide guidance to owners of historic buildings within the conservation area, their agents and the contractors they may engage on the repair and maintenance of the fabric of traditional buildings. It provides also advice to statutory undertakers and to the Council on the interpretation of the guidance in preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.

1.1.3 The guidance set out in Sections 3 and 4 has been prepared to promote conservation standards that might be expected to meet the requirements of Historic Scotland, tailored to the specific needs of Elgin if the city centre area is successful in attracting a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). Wherever possible, guidance is cross-referenced to Historic Scotland's own advisory publications. These publications are largely intended for a lay audience and are available free of charge.

1.2 Project team

1.2.1 In the preparation of this document the lead consultant has been supported by:

Jill Harden	Implications of development on the archaeology of the burgh
Gemma Wild	Public realm improvements

1.3 Area Character Appraisal

1.3.1 The conservation area character appraisal was completed in November 2011 after carrying out historical research into the history of the city and conducting site audit work and surveys. The recommendations set out therein have been endorsed by the working group and broad agreement on the principal findings was endorsed at a public meeting held at the end of November 2011. The Council will continue to engage with local stakeholders over the regeneration of the town centre.

1.3.2 The conclusions reached in the character appraisal were based upon an audit of each property within the conservation area.

1.3.3 The character appraisal reinforced the view that the conservation area is highly worthy of its 'Outstanding' designation. Elgin has had a fascinating history if somewhat turbulent at times, of which a substantial amount survives from each of the major periods of development. The centre of Elgin has elements of a historic environment with a strong sense of identity and distinctiveness, and these qualities find expression in the high quality of the historic buildings of the city and of the principal public spaces.

1.3.4 While, in part, this is represented by the large numbers of buildings within the conservation areas which are listed, the survey team identified that, with the passage of time (the lists were last reviewed in the early 1980s), late Victorian and Edwardian buildings may not as yet be adequately represented on the statutory list. Accordingly recommendations have been made for the list survey to be brought up to date.

1.3.5 Not unlike other royal burghs which have their origins in medieval charters, Elgin's historic townscape follows a recognisable pattern of building on the extended burgage plots, and this has very largely survived to this day. Commenced in the late 1970s, the relief road has produced mixed blessings: on the one hand, it preserves the centre of the city as an attractive pedestrian space, providing ample car parking close to the main centres of retail activity. On the other, it has been a destructive force in slicing through the ends of the old closes, but more especially in cutting off the city centre from the most important historical sites in the castle and cathedral, and from the recreational lung of the attractive, and popular, Cooper Park.

Drawing by RW Billings of a house with piazzas (1680) at 101 High Street, next to The Tower (1634). It was demolished in the late nineteenth century

1.3.6 The fabric of the city reflects the burgh's growing status as an important regional retail centre from when the city's prosperous merchants erected their fine houses, built on piazzas, in the closing years of the seventeenth century, a tradition which has continued right up to the present time. With the expansion of the city in the late nineteenth century came a new confidence which saw the creation of many distinguished street frontages. The city streets boast an

unusually high number of cast iron shopfronts, fashionable at the time. A sign of the times, new shopfronts would be inserted into older structures, often at considerable expense to the trader. The city is not short of good buildings and shopfronts from the interwar years.

Elaborate carved stonework above the former entrance to the Grand Hotel, South Street (1898)

1.3.7 The character appraisal draws attention to the unusually rich legacy of finely carved architectural detail throughout the city centre. While this reflects a long tradition of the skills of the masons of the Laigh of Moray, for which the area was particularly noted throughout history, it is also a reflection of the availability from local quarries of some of the best sandstone to be found in mainland Scotland. Unfortunately, some of the quarries opened up in the late nineteenth century produced inferior material which, although easy to carve, has been highly prone to decay.

1.3.8 Conclusions from the audit work were that, although there has been a considerable degree of change to the historic fabric of the buildings of the conservation area, the levels of authenticity are higher than in some urban conservation areas. Some changes have been detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area, while standards for carrying out repairs to decaying fabric were often found to be poor, or to have accelerated the levels of damage. In a small number of cases fabric was considered to be in a dangerous condition, placing the building at risk. Buildings which are in poor condition, or which have not been maintained, have a negative effect on property values. Some level of skills training on maintaining and repairing historic buildings would appear beneficial.

1.3.9 The conservation management plan addresses these, and other, issues in providing guidance on managing change throughout the conservation area, with the overriding objective of preserving and enhancing its character and appearance.

1.4 Context: problems and opportunities

1.4.1 The following problem areas have been identified from the conservation area appraisal. While they are matters that have an impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, they should be seen also as representing opportunities for enhancement, and for bringing life back into the centre of the city. Good management of the conservation area has the potential to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of those who live and work in the city, and for those who may visit it for its many facilities, or as tourists.

1.4.2 The conservation area management plan should not be seen in isolation of other initiatives that have been embarked upon, through which elements of the programme may be delivered. The critical factor is that all the stakeholders involved have recognised that Elgin's unique historic environment is a valuable asset, and that it is not necessarily a burden.

Building at Risk: 186-188 High Street

1.4.3 Elgin is not alone in suffering from a number of Buildings at Risk. They are listed in 5.7 of the conservation area appraisal document. Some have been vacant for a while and are awaiting investment for continuing uses, or compatible new uses. Some are in poor condition and are not being maintained, to the extent that they appear as eyesores within the street scene having a marked negative impact on the conservation area. Few are in such a dilapidated state that they could not be saved and put to beneficial use.

1.4.4 The problems of Buildings at Risk cannot be seen in isolation of levels of redundant space within the upper floors of buildings, for which data exists already. In this respect Elgin fares better in this respect than other comparable mainland towns, but the levels of vacancy are worrying. The problem is largely confined to buildings on the High Street frontages, particularly in the central zone of the conservation area. Bringing upper floors back into use has immediate benefits for the city centre, particularly in making the centre a livelier place out of hours, but it cannot be seen in isolation of factors such as the provision of off-street car parking for residents.

1.4.5 Although, in general, levels of habitation and occupancy of premises in the closes are reasonable, there are some closes in which none of the dwellings or premises are presently occupied, with windows and doors boarded up. Elgin's closes are undoubtedly one of its major assets. Developments undertaken in the 1960s and the 1980s demonstrate that it is possible to create high quality residential or office environments within them - they have contributed to the regeneration of the city centre in ways that have proved to be sustainable in the longer term, while enriching its amenity.

1.4.6 Modern commercial developments carried out in the 1960s and 1970s have been, without exception, damaging to Elgin's historic townscape. In each case historic buildings of some distinction and real townscape value were demolished to make way for them, adding to the pain of their loss. Their negative impact on the conservation area is not confined to bland facades appearing on the principal street, but poor, over-scaled flat-roofed extensions have been erected to the rear, neutralising the spaces around them. Some of the closes have been damaged by these developments. Dead spaces have resulted which are devoid of interest from blind walls erected to the rear of the High Street frontages.

1.4.7 One of the greatest challenges, recognised as a major issue in the City for the Future programme, is the severance of the conservation area from the key historic and recreational assets to the north of the relief road, which establishes the boundary of the conservation area along its length. The conservation area would benefit enormously from reconnecting the links with the principal historic environment assets to which the city centre had been attached, like an umbilical cord, in the past. Without these links being restored, the success of planned initiatives - including a heritage trail - could be blunted.

1.4.8 Studies of activity and movement in the conservation area suggest that the heart of the city centre, where the pedestrianised area occurs, is dead at night. Activity to either side of this area on the High Street is slightly more animated. This compares unfavourably with other town centres, and in Elgin the lack of visual interest at night is not helped by a corresponding lack of creative illumination for shopfronts and buildings, and of the public realm.

1.4.9 There are few gap sites within the streetscape of the major thoroughfares. One was identified on South Street where buildings have been demolished in recent years and replaced by a car park. Behind the main street frontages a number of undeveloped sites were observed within the closes, and there are opportunities for improving the northern edge of the conservation area at the relief road. Some of these opportunities may stand a better chance of being realised with the City for the Future programme, but this should not be seen as a reason for not embarking upon improvements.

1.4.10 As noted above, while there have been problems arising from the loss of historic fabric throughout the conservation area there are still relatively high levels of authenticity which merit being preserved and enhanced. The rate of change has been less than in some conservation areas and, to a certain extent, this might be attributed to the relatively high numbers of commercial properties falling within the area of study.

1.4.11 The quality of the public realm is, at best, patchy. It is of a high standard in the pedestrianised area at the heart of the city where the materials chosen have proved durable. Improvements to the public

realm were being undertaken at Batchen Street at the time of the audit work, and there have been sporadic improvements elsewhere, for instance, surrounding the Little Cross at the east end of the High Street. A few of the closes have seen improvements to the public realm, but in some of the unimproved closes the standards of finish are poor.

1.4.12 Other areas where improvements might be considered are in street furniture, which some of the 'heritage' signs appearing cluttered, and in the poor positioning of road signs which can have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

2 Policy framework for the conservation area

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The guidance set down in this section of the conservation area management plan has taken into account the following statutory instruments and sources of guidance.

2.2 Primary legislation

2.2.1 The principal legislation relating to the conservation area and the listed buildings falling within it is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

2.2.2 Legislation relating to Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the boundaries of the conservation area is the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

2.2.3 Where references are made in Section 6 of this document to permitted development the relevant legislation is the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992.

2.2.4 The Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2011 ties up some anomalies and procedural matters in the above legislation.

2.3 Scottish Planning Policy

2.3.1 Scottish Planning Policy (February 2010) sets out the Scottish Government's policy on nationally important land use planning matters.

2.3.2 Clauses 110-124 of the document set out policy in relation to the historic environment with sections on Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Archaeology and non-designated assets.

2.4 National planning policy guidance

2.4.1 Relevant documents are listed in the following table:

PAN 2/2011	Planning and Archaeology
PAN 52	Planning in Small Towns
PAN 59	Improving Town Centres
PAN 65	Planning and Open Space

PAN 68	Design Statements
PAN 71	Conservation Area Management
Policy Paper	Designing Places
Circular 10/2009	Planning Enforcement

2.5 Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) December 2011

2.5.1 The consolidated SHEP published by Historic Scotland sets out policy in respect of the historic environment, in which it supersedes the Memorandum of Guidance (1998). It sets out Scottish Government policy on Scheduled Monument Consent, Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent.

2.5.2 Policy in relation to setting the criteria for determining whether a building is of 'Special Architectural or Historic Interest' for the purpose of listing is set out in Annex 2 of the SHEP.

2.5.3 Powers to local authorities regarding varying the boundaries of conservation areas already designated are set out in Clause 2.41.

2.6 Managing Change in the Historic Environment

2.6.1 In December 2010 Historic Scotland announced the publication of a series of leaflets giving non-statutory guidance on individual topics under the title of 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment'. These leaflets replaced the previous guidance published in 1998 as *Memorandum of Guidance on listed buildings and conservation areas.* Guidance set out in these leaflets corresponds with the policy set out in the SHEP referred to above. Where appropriate, references to the leaflets are given throughout this document.

2.7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

2.7.1 The only Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) within the conservation area is the Little Cross standing prominently at the east end of the High Street at what had been the road junction leading to the Chanonry and the cathedral. By their designation SAMs are deemed to be of national importance and are granted the highest level of protection under the 1997 Act.

2.8 Listed buildings

2.8.1 There are presently 111 listed buildings within the conservation area. Of these 7 are listed Category A; 40 are Category B and 64 are Category C(S). All listed buildings within the highest two categories, A and B, are identified in the character appraisal and are shown in Appendix 13.3 of that document with a selection of other buildings of merit.

2.8.2 Although this may appear to represent a healthy number, as stated in Section 8.7 of the character appraisal, it is considered that while there are numerous listed buildings falling within the conservation area from various ages - which is symptomatic of its high status - several buildings dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had not been recognised adequately in the lists. It has also been identified that, for similar reasons, some of the buildings may be in the

wrong categories. It is recommended that discussions should be opened up with Historic Scotland over addressing this issue.

2.9 Non-statutory designations

2.9.1 Non-statutory designations include historic designed landscapes and battlefields, and there are none occurring within the conservation area.

2.10 Moray Local Plan 2008

2.10.1 Policies affecting archaeology, listed buildings, conservation areas and unlisted buildings within conservation areas are covered under the Environment & Resources section of the Moray Local Plan 2008, under the subheading Built Environment.

2.10.2 **Policy BE1** relates to scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs) and archaeology. Policy is defined in respect of national and local designations. Justification for the policy is given for the protection of archaeological sites and SAMs against development which may affect them, and recognition is given of the educational and tourism value of archaeological resources. Further guidance in relation to the archaeological resource and its potential which has been identified within the conservation area is given in 5.4 of this document.

2.10.3 **Policy BE2** relates to listed buildings. The aim of the policy is to protect listed buildings from inappropriate development proposals. It is recognised that listed buildings are an important part of Moray's heritage and should be safeguarded for future generations. Specific advice is given on the demolition of listed buildings which can only be considered as a last resort, and conditions under which demolition might be considered appropriate are set out in the policy.

2.10.4 **Policy BE3**, of particular relevance to this document, covers Conservation Areas, and stipulates that all development within a conservation area should preserve or enhance the established traditional character and appearance of the area. There is a presumption against the demolition of unlisted buildings falling within the boundaries of a conservation area if they are considered to make a positive contribution to it, and consent to demolish can only be considered if the proposals for the redevelopment of the site are deemed to be acceptable. Boundary walls, fences and ground surfaces are defined as having the potential to contribute to the amenity of the conservation area, and to the setting of an individual building.

2.10.5 Policy BE3 also sets out specific policies in respect of the following:

- Shop fronts and security devices
- Satellite dishes and other fittings
- Advertisements
- Article 4 Directions

Detailed guidance on these matters is included in Sections 3 and 4 of this document, and takes into account the advice set out in Policy BE3 and latest guidance which has been incorporated within Historic Scotland's 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment' leaflets. A note on Article 4 Directions is included in 6.1.

3 Managing the historic environment: guiding principles

3.1 Conservation principles and philosophy

3.1.1 Conservation philosophy recognises that the preservation of historic fabric within a conservation area will be of paramount importance, but it should not be considered in isolation of the potential for sensitive change. The adaptation of a historic building, if carried out with sensitivity, may secure its future in the long term and allow it to contribute to the wider aims of regenerating the city centre.

3.1.2 The focus in this section of the conservation area management plan is on conservation actions where the fabric is of historic or architectural importance, and where it makes a contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area or, in those cases where it has been disguised, it has greater potential to do so. It should be noted that the guidance in this section is not provided exclusively for listed buildings, and covers all properties constructed prior to 1948 when the Town and Country Planning Acts were first introduced.

3.1.3 The principles of conservation philosophy and associated definitions listed in British Standard 7913:98 *Guide to the Principles of the Conservation of Historic Buildings* have been widely adopted throughout the UK. In recent years conservation philosophy has been shaped increasingly by the principles embodied in international conservation charters and, in particular, the Australian ICOMOS Burra Charter. In Scotland these principles are enshrined within the Stirling Charter prepared by Historic Scotland in 2000.

3.1.4 It is recognised that there should be a presumption always in favour of retaining historic fabric. Historic buildings and the spaces surrounding them tell us about a place, its history, and the people involved in shaping them. Future generations should have the opportunity to decide for themselves on the values *they* may place on preserving authenticity and historical accuracy. With so much historic fabric having been lost already, destroyed, or inadvertently covered over, this has a particular significance for Elgin.

3.1.5 As a general rule repair, and alterations, should be the minimum necessary to preserve historic fabric. Quoting the maxim of the Burra Charter a cautious approach should be adopted to *'do as much as necessary to care for the place, but otherwise change it as little as possible'.* Where intervention of any kind is required, wherever possible the work should be reversible in conservation terms.

3.1.6 Commensurate with the above, for the more complex sites and buildings where a high level of intervention might be anticipated (for instance, in seeking new, compatible uses for a redundant building) it would be essential to ensure that changes are guided by an understanding of the history of the site and the structures upon it, and what makes them important. For these sites there would be merit in preparing a conservation plan setting out in an ordered way what is significant about it, and conservation policies which should be prepared with the specific purpose of guiding the solutions for the repair and adaptation of the site so that its significance, or the character and appearance of the conservation area, is preserved or enhanced. For the more sensitive sites the preparation of a heritage impact assessment will be encouraged. For less complex sites, there would still be merit in carrying out such historical research as is necessary to understand how the site and any structures upon it may

have changed over time, for which a conservation statement (an abbreviated conservation plan) could be better suited for the presentation of the information.

3.1.7 Where intervention is necessary to preserve the site or building, either by way of internal alterations, partial demolition, or by the addition of new work, it is important it should be carried out in a contemporary manner that does not distort history. The solution should not challenge the authenticity and integrity of the original building, or its neighbours within the wider setting of streets and open spaces. Pastiche of former architectural styles is not encouraged as this is likely to devalue levels of authenticity within the conservation area, which is greater than many comparable historic burghs.

3.1.8 In rare cases where the reconstruction of lost features may be appropriate - for instance, in restoring the architectural integrity of a façade which may have been altered - the work should be based on known pictorial or documentary archival sources. It should never be conjectural.

3.1.9 Wherever possible repairs to historic fabric should be carried out in like materials. If the source is no longer available, extreme care should be exercised over the suitability of replacement material in terms of its long term performance. Similarly, it would be preferable to replicate obsolete patterns of architectural features rather than discard them altogether when carrying out repairs to material that may have failed through age and decay.

3.1.10 Repairs and alterations to historic buildings should observe recommendations for good conservation practice set down in advisory publications prepared by Historic Scotland, for instance through Technical Advice Notes and Guidance to Practitioners. Throughout this document reference is made to relevant leaflets from the INFORM series published by Historic Scotland, providing advice to property owners on the repair of traditional buildings.

3.1.11 Important as national standards are, it is of particular importance that local variations and traditions are understood prior to embarking upon repairs or alterations. Sound conservation practice should be based always on knowledge and understanding of the particular site or building and of the specialist skills needed to conserve them.

3.1.12 The fabric of historic buildings can be damaged too readily by applying modern construction practice where an alternative and more sympathetic approach may be called for, and which may be more effective for the care of the building in the longer term. Particular damage can arise from the ill-considered application of current building standards regulations to historic buildings within conservation areas. In this respect Historic Scotland's Guide for Practitioners *Conversion of Traditional Buildings: Application of the Scottish Building Standards* (2007) sets down valuable principles which should be followed by the applicant's agent, and by the Council also when processing applications.

3.1.13 The boundaries of the conservation area coincide with the high likelihood of archaeological deposits in the medieval burgh of Elgin on both sides of the High Street, although richer deposits are likely to be found beyond the immediate boundaries of the conservation area as they are presently drawn in the areas of the castle and its environs (including the Dominican friary), the Cathedral and chanonry to the north east and the Maison Dieu and leper hospital to the south east.

Requirements for addressing this archaeological resource when considering development of any kind are given in 5.4.

3.1.14 Principles of conservation philosophy for the preservation of the fabric of scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs) vary from those set down for historic buildings which are in use. Guidance is set out in Historic Scotland's *The Conservation of Architectural Ancient Monuments in Scotland* (2001).

3.2 Managing change: overriding principles

3.2.1 Notes in this section relate primarily, but not exclusively, to properties erected before 1948. Guidance in relation to changes having a potential impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area which will apply to all buildings and proposed development appears in Sections 5 and 6.

3.2.2 Change of any kind within the conservation area should be guided by the overriding principles of *preserving* its character and appearance and *enhancing* it by following recognised standards of conservation practice, or through the encouragement of high standards of design and construction in new development.

3.3 Variables by property age and typology

3.3.1 In the absence of being able to define the age of a property through pictorial, cartographic, or other archival evidence, construction and architectural detail can often provide firm clues and evidence of phasing in more complex structures that may have been added to, or altered, during the course of their history. It should be borne in mind always that properties may be disguising earlier structures and, occasionally, structures may harbour more than a single period of physical change in their evolution.

3.3.2 The conservation area is relatively unusual in having a rich resource of buildings that can be readily identified from the early seventeenth century right through to the present time. Phases of development from each stage of the city's development give the buildings their own special characteristics, contributing to a townscape of great variety and interest. It would be wrong, however, to state that buildings of the interwar years of the last century are of a lesser importance than those of earlier periods, as buildings of all ages have the potential to contribute to the variety of the townscape and to the richness of detail. The contribution of later buildings can, occasionally, be overlooked, especially when they may not be listed.

3.3.3 Earlier buildings may be distinguished by roofs with a steeper pitch than would be the norm. On Elgin's High Street the three merchants' houses of the late seventeenth century are readily identified from having steep crowstepped gables with distinctive skewputts projecting out from the wallheads with a curved profile, carved with the initials of the proprietors and carrying dates and monograms inscribed upon them. Gables would be marked by chimneyheads with heavy splayed copes and plain roll mouldings. Rooms within the attic space of these buildings occasionally have 'cat-slide' dormers of a simple pattern, and there are good examples of distinctive heavy stone slates having survived. Gable widths and floor spans would be governed by standard joist lengths and sizes. Several of the earliest properties have retained their fine carved pedimented dormers which became a source of inspiration to architects practising in the nineteenth century.

3.3.4 Early eighteenth century structures would preserve a similar gable width and roof pitch, but roofs would be finished in local slate, or in some cases West Highland blue slate brought by sea, laid mainly of small face size and laid in diminishing courses. Gradually roof pitches would reduce, and gable wallheads would have plain skews which in a higher pitched roof would be prone to slipping off the wallheads. By the late eighteenth century window glass would consist of slightly larger panes of thinner glass, with less heavily astragals.

3.3.5 More sophisticated buildings of the eighteenth century might introduce a 'double pile' plan of two rooms in depth, resulting in broader gables and roofs with shallower pitches. By the early nineteenth century most street frontages were of ashlar masonry, and harled surfaces were no longer common. Towards the end of the nineteenth century larger floor spans for hotels, shops and tenements on the upper floors became possible with the introduction of rolled steel joists spanning wider openings, while architectural styles had moved away from the classical forms and detailing common up to around 1870 offering greater variety in the streetscape. By this time roofs were rarely other than blue slate, laid with a standard face size and regularly coursed, changes which resulted from the mechanisation of the industry and from the ease of transportation of building materials due to the railways. Other quarries were opened up for building stone, and while the lighter blonde sandstones add to variety within the townscape they have not always proved to be durable.

Late nineteenth century cast iron shopfront on the High Street, with retention of original features and with exemplary signage

3.3.6 The greatest physical changes to the High Street came with the evolution of retailing - forever at the heart of Elgin's prosperity in the past, as now - throughout the course of the nineteenth century. In the second half of the nineteenth century more sophisticated shop windows were appearing, taking advantage of the new techniques for manufacturing and transporting large panes of plate glass. It was not uncommon to see large shop windows being introduced into existing masonry walls at ground floor and, increasingly, new shopfronts were inserted in cast iron. More often than not properties would be taken down and rebuilt with an increased number of storeys at the commercial heart of the town, changing the appearance of the principal streets which had been, hitherto, characterised by a number of gable-ended domestic properties at the termination of the old burgage plots, of which only a few have survived to this day in the street pattern.

3.3.7 The second half of the twentieth century was especially brutal to Elgin, and the redevelopment of several prominent sites threatened its character. A number of key buildings were demolished and sites redeveloped with new buildings that were less than distinguished. Where sites were redeveloped, building frontages, together with large extensions to the rear were always flat-roofed, setting a discordant note in a roofscape of predominantly pitched roofs and blue slate.

This modern bank building at the west end of the High Street replaced a distinguished Victorian frontage – while the design is not unreasonable for its age, it disturbs the townscape of the city's principal street and of the close behind it from not following the established urban grain, set back behind the line of the street and with the entrance raised on a deck.

3.3.8 The loss of original fabric and features of buildings has accelerated over the last decades, and in this Elgin is not unusual. Cast iron rainwater goods have been replaced in cheaper, lightweight materials which no longer required skilled labour to fix, and decaying masonry has been patched up in dense cement mortar or render, accelerating rates of decay. New shopfronts were inserted, destroying evidence of earlier shopfronts, blind boxes and fascias. Traditional windows and doors which may have survived for 150 years and more have been replaced with modern alternatives. There has been a consequential erosion of the skills base for the repair of traditional buildings in Elgin, and across Moray as a whole.

3.3.9 There would be considerable merit in establishing a local centre for conservation advice and for dispensing leaflets to property owners within the conservation area, such as might be funded by a CARS scheme, or a similar programme. The following guidance notes assume that these leaflets can be made available locally to help with a programme of raising conservation awareness.

3.4 Property maintenance

3.4.1 The conservation area appraisal identified recurring problems with keeping the fabric of structures in good repair from planned, regular maintenance. Good conservation practice cannot be seen in isolation of undertaking targeted maintenance, whether replacing slipped or missing slates, repairing damaged leadwork in hidden gutters, or in removing debris and vegetation growth from high level gutters and repairing cracked downpipes.

3.4.2 Failure to carry out regular maintenance can place a property at considerable risk and place a financial burden upon property owners if unattended problems lead to damage of the internal fabric from wet rot, or more devastatingly, from dry rot.

Problems with vegetation growth in the conservation area

3.4.3 Efforts made on behalf of the business community in tacking high level maintenance are to be strongly applauded, and there are clear opportunities to build upon the current initiatives and tackle the problem with a wider audience. Through funding secured from a CARS scheme, for instance, it might be possible to draw in expertise from organisations such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in Scotland (SPABiS), or the Scottish Lime Centre Trust, both of which have expertise of working with communities in this field.

4 Local distinctiveness: architectural features and materials

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following guidance is based on the findings of the comprehensive street audit undertaken for the conservation area character appraisal. The audit took into account: the significance of surviving elements of historic fabric; levels of authenticity; where change had occurred; negative features; and any recurring problems.

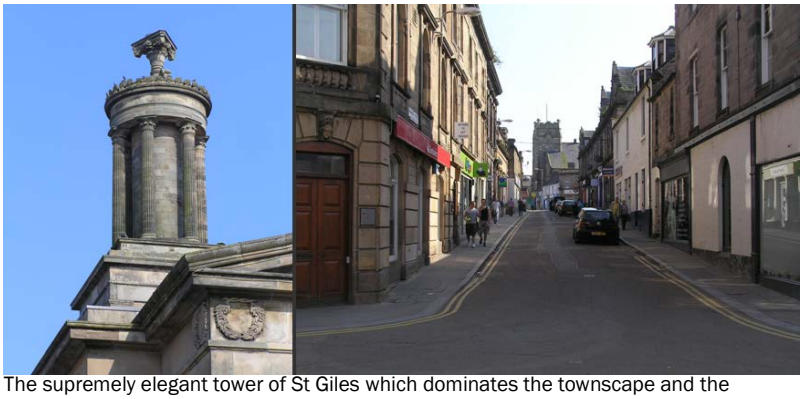
4.1.2 Clauses setting out guidance on repair and enhancement in the clauses that follow are summarised at the beginning of each category in lighter bold type. Outline guidance is followed by narrative on the extent to which the subject makes a contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. At the end of each section reference is made to INFORM and Short Guides where they exist on the particular subject or category. These informative leaflets are available free of charge and are published by Historic Scotland for property owners, and for those having a responsibility for the upkeep of historic buildings. Where relevant, guidance set out in relevant leaflets in the 'Managing Change' series is also referred to.

4.2 Towers and spires

Vertical elements within the Elgin High Street Conservation Area are important landmarks; by their very nature because of height and exposure, towers and spires will be demanding elements to maintain and keep free of defect. Regular maintenance inspections will be encouraged, followed up by programmes of repair to reduce risk in the longer term.

4.2.1 Towers and spires are among the most important elements in the historic townscape making a contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Dominating the conservation area is the supremely elegant staged tower of St Giles Church, crowned by its Choragic Monument, seen on the skyline from a distance from outside the conservation area. It frames all of the key

views on the High Street. It has benefited from a substantial repair programme.



The supremely elegant tower of St Giles which dominates the townscape and the truncated tower of the former UP church on Moss Street, closing off the vista on Commerce Street

4.2.2 As it occurs on one of the highest points within the conservation area, the tower of the former church on Moss Street also dominates the skyline and is more prominent than the steeple of St Giles when viewed to the south of the conservation area. It frames the view south from Commerce Street. The tower is in a very poor state, and as a consequence of advanced masonry decay the parapet has already been reduced in height and rebuilt. The lower parts are continuing to decay - see also 4.20.

4.2.3 Less visible within the townscape because of the surrounding trees and from being set back from the High Street, the elegant tower of the Elgin Museum is important for framing the view behind the Little Cross at the east end of the High Street.

4.3 Chimneyheads and chimney cans

The loss of a single chimneyhead can be damaging to the appearance of the building, and to the wider conservation area. There will be a presumption against the demolition of chimneyheads. Where these elements of the roofscape require to be taken down, but only if their condition merits it due to decay or structural instability, sound material should be retained and incorporated in any rebuilding, which should match the appearance of the original feature in all respects. Encouragement will be given to restoring missing chimneyheads.

Where chimneyheads have been rendered in modern cement renders, consideration should be given to restoring earlier known historic finishes. Where they exist thackstanes should always be retained. Cement pointing should be raked out and repointing carried out in hydraulic lime to an appropriate specification.

Where a chimneyhead is found to be beyond repair, it should be replaced as an accurate replica in both style and colour; where redundant, cans should be fitted with unobtrusive ventilating caps, or raised slate pieces.

Traditional patterned chimney cans should always be preserved where sound and replaced with matching cans where damaged, or lost.

Whenever the opportunity presents itself, chimneycans to buildings of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century should have cans removed, on grounds of authenticity.

4.3.1 Chimneyheads and chimney cans are important elements of the historic townscape, if often unseen or noticed from ground level. Finishing off gables, they punctuate the skyline and provide a sense of rhythm that reflects the feus of the individual properties. They add to variety within the townscape, especially where taller structures rise above properties of a more domestic scale.

4.3.2 These qualities are particularly noticeable in the closes running at right angles to the High Street. Historically it was the norm for properties on the principal street of a burgh with a medieval layout to be taller and of a different scale to those on backlands. Often there would be a descending scale as less important properties were located at the outer edges of the rig, or burgage plot.

4.3.3 The loss of chimneyheads, particularly at gables which have been slated over, can result in a disturbing loss of symmetry affecting the rhythm of the street or skyline. A gable which is not capped by a chimneyhead will tend to look unfinished. Chimneyheads are among the most vulnerable parts of any historic building due to exposure to the combined effects of a harsh climate and flue gases. Throughout Elgin these elements are particularly at risk because of the poor weathering qualities of some of the building stones. Many decayed chimneyheads have been coated with modern dense cement rendered finishes, or will have been heavily over-pointed in cement mortar which serves only to accelerate the rate of decay. At the time of the audit work there was evidence of some chimneyheads which were almost in a dangerous state and this presents a risk in the short and longer term.

Good ranges of chimney cans of varying patterns

Distinctive patterns of chimneys: stone columnar chimneys of the Elgin Museum and chimneyheads, probably early eighteenth century, in Braco's Close

4.3.4 The earliest chimneyheads are dated to the late seventeenth century, and traditionally they would have been plain, of harled stonework, with roll mouldings to the copes but without chimney cans (all examples from this date have been retrofitted with cans). Chimneyheads with projecting moulded stone copes became the norm by the late eighteenth century, and by the early nineteenth century some chimneyheads still have 'thackstanes', a projecting stone from the base of the chimneyhead to protect a thatched roof finish, even though by this time slated roofs would have been the norm.

4.3.5 Chimneyheads in the nineteenth century would be built of ashlar stone or rubble, depending on the status of the building, in preference to being harled. Occasionally they will be built to special profiles, as in the seventeenth century chimney stacks built on the diagonal at Thunderton House, or the impressively tall chimneys with the broad coping at the Elgin Museum. In the period from the end of the nineteenth century through to the twentieth century the design of chimneyheads became bolder in profile, often with distinctive heavy moulded copes in which Elgin has a number of very good examples. Brick chimneyheads appear in the backlands, but they are relatively rare due to the ready availability of sandstone. In one known, example brick and stone have been combined.

4.3.6 Elgin has chimney cans of varying patterns, heights and styles from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which make a positive contribution to the townscape. Most are plain round beaded cans or hexagonal, mainly of yellow clay although red clay examples are to be seen in the roofscape. In a significant number of cases some, or all, chimney cans have been removed.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Domestic chimneys and flues
MANAGING CHANGE: Roofs

4.4 Roof ridging, piended roof coverings, ventilators and lanterns

Blue slate roofs with stone and yellow clay ridge tiles

Stone ridging should always be preserved and fully bedded in mortar and there should not be open joints between ridge pieces. Where sections have failed matching salvaged sections should be used, or damaged sections replaced with new stone of durable quality.

Lead ridging should be preserved wherever possible, and repaired; where beyond repair it should be replaced in lead and not zinc. Where lead has been replaced with modern alternatives encouragement will be given to reinstating the original finish.

Other traditional finishes, such as yellow clay ridge tiles, red clay cresting tiles or zinc sheet, should always be preserved with any defective lengths renewed in matching material. Ridge and hip tiles should be kept fully bedded and pointed up. Encouragement will be

given to replacing modern zinc, or unsightly modern blue clay or concrete ridge and hip tiles, which are not original to the roof, with lead.

Lanterns and traditional metal roof ventilators where they have survived always add interest to the roofscape and should be preserved or restored.

4.4.1 The earliest stone roofs were always finished with stone ridging, a tradition which continued in Elgin well into the nineteenth century. Where stone ridges occur they are always an attractive feature of the roof and every effort should be made to preserve them.

4.4.2 From the early nineteenth century there was also a tradition of finishing slate roofs with lead ridging dressed over a timber roll, which is found commonly on piended roofs to dormers.

4.4.3 Roofs of lesser buildings were occasionally given yellow clay ridge tiles, but only from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Zinc ridges with galvanised iron over-straps appeared over the same period, and lead that had perished was often substituted with zinc when repairs were carried out in the twentieth century.

4.4.4 Red clay cresting tiles with a distinctive profile are to be found in the conservation area and are known to date to the late nineteenth century.

4.4.5 Blue or black clay, or concrete, ridge tiles appear occasionally on roofs. They are not a traditional element, being likely to date from the middle of the twentieth century. Commonly where this material has been used the material may suffer prematurely from frost damage. Where clay tiles are used as hip tiles, roofs (and especially dormer roofs), can appear heavy and look clumsy.

4.4.6 Examples of lanterns and ventilators to roofs have survived and add interest to the roofscape. Good examples of lanterns can be seen above the roof ridge at the Elgin Club on Commerce Street.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Roof leadwork
MANAGING CHANGE: Roofs

4.5 Gables: skews, skewputts and crowsteps

There will be a presumption to retain all examples of skews, skewputts and crowstepped gables, including where these features appear in wallhead dormers. Where there are ongoing problems with water penetration at skews, remedial work should be undertaken to ensure that appropriate damp proof membranes are installed and that the stones are held securely on the wallheads. The haunching to skews over the roofing slates should be sound and pointed up regularly. Only as a last resort should the feature ever be covered in lead.

Where skews have been removed and are known to have existed previously encouragement will be given to reinstating them.

4.5.1 Crowstepped gables are important features within the townscape, most closely associated with the earliest buildings in the conservation area. The detail is sometimes found in revivalist buildings of the mid- to late-nineteenth century. They should always be preserved and kept well pointed up to prevent water penetration.

Carved skewputts to crowstepped gables: the carved head is from the 1720s and the other examples are dated 1694

4.5.2 More commonly found for buildings of all ages are plain stone skews with plain blocked skewputts, very occasionally with dates carved into the face. As the nineteenth century progressed skews would become increasingly three-dimensional, reflected in steeply angled or triangular shaped skewputts in the more elaborate examples of the high status buildings. A further development emerged with a growing preference for 'tympan' gables with complex profiles built off the wallheads of the street elevations around the end of the nineteenth century.

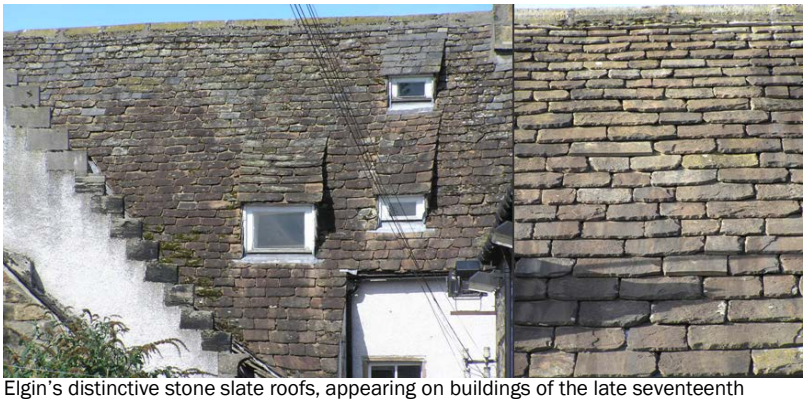
Gable with plain skews and a skewputt carrying the date 1828 (Braco's Close)

4.5.3 The use of projecting bargeboards has been largely shunned throughout the conservation area. One of the few places where they do occur is at the large detached villa at St Michaels at the west end of South Street.

4.5.4 Skews may sometimes be the cause of water penetration if not well maintained, and in a few instances they have been removed, damaging the appearance of the building. Sometimes they will be subject to slippage as the mortar joints and beds fail due to exposure.

4.6 Pitched roof finishes: stone slate

Heavy stone roofing slates must always be preserved and repaired using salvaged slate or with matching new stone slate that matches the texture and appearance of the roof. Where roofs have been replaced with blue roofing slate encouragement will be given to restoring the original stone slate finish.



Elgin's distinctive stone slate roofs, appearing on buildings of the late seventeenth century

4.6.1 Historic roofs with stone slates are a rare and significant component of the townscape of the late seventeenth century buildings where they have survived. They should be preserved and, where slates have to be replaced they must match the finish and texture of the existing roof. Stone slates where trimmed in size should always be hand dressed and should never be cut with circular saws leaving a harsh edge to the slate.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Repairing Scottish slate roofs
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Ventilation in traditional houses
MANAGING CHANGE: Roofs

4.7 Pitched roof finishes: blue slate

Blue slate roofs: the upper images show random face widths laid in diminishing courses; the lower images show regular machine dressed slates; ridges vary from lead, to stone and a decorative red clay ridge (bottom right)

All slate roofs should be preserved and repaired. Where roofs are beyond reasonable repair they should be re-roofed in salvaged material supplemented by closely matching material, or in new slates that match the colour, texture, coursing and thickness and overall

appearance of the existing roof. There will be a strong presumption against re-roofing in Spanish or purple Welsh slates where these are a poor match for the predominantly blue colour of the existing roofscape.

Particular care should be exercised over sourcing slates for roofs of West Highland slate due to the scarcity of the resource.

When re-roofing there will be a presumption against introducing modern construction practice such as roof ventilators which destroy the appearance of traditional roofs. Penetration of roofs with ventilation terminals should be kept to a minimum and, if unavoidable, they should be located on the reverse slopes of the roof.

4.7.1 Pitched roofs are among the most important elements of the townscape. From the early nineteenth century roofs were normally clad in distinctive West Highland slate, generally small in size and laid in diminishing courses. The texture, colour and scale of the few roofs of West Highland slate that have survived are an attractive feature of the conservation area and can provide a useful indication of the age of the property. With the opening of the Caledonian Canal in 1822 the availability of slates from the quarries at Easdale and Ballachulish would have increased.

4.7.2 After the arrival of the railway, in the late nineteenth century machine dressed slates, often of a constant face size, were substituted for the smaller slates from the West Highland quarries. In the main the source of these slates appears to be Welsh, with a distinctive blue variegated colour rather than the purple associated more commonly with the quarries of North Wales. These slates were supplied to suit the Scottish market, and were normally heavier and more coarsely textured than the standard thin Welsh purple, or blue, slate. Machine dressed slates are recognisable by having a regular face size and coursing, but some variations occur where slates have varying face widths, producing an attractive roof.

4.7.3 In the main, buildings erected after the middle of the twentieth century have slate roofs, which contribute to the harmonious appearance of the conservation area. Some new buildings have been erected where either Spanish or smooth purple Welsh slates have been specified, and occasionally older roofs may have been reslated in these materials. The texture and shiny black colour of Spanish slates and the use of thin, non-matching Welsh slates, or ones which are too purple in colour, appear as intrusive elements in the traditional roofscape.

4.7.4 There are a few examples of highly decorative slate roofs using scalloped slates to good effect.

4.7.5 A few of the older roofs in the conservation area were observed to be in a poor state, with the customary problems of nail sickness and other common problems apparent such as the degradation of individual slates. Sometimes roofs that have failed have been replaced in unsuitable modern materials (see 4.8 below).

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Repairing Scottish slate roofs
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Ventilation in traditional houses
MANAGING CHANGE: Roofs

4.8 Pitched roof finishes: modern materials

Concrete interlocking tile roofs appearing as alien finishes within a roofscape of predominantly blue slates

There will be a presumption against modern roof finishes appearing in the conservation area as a substitute for slate. Where roofs have been re-roofed in modern materials, such as asbestos cement tile, concrete interlocking tiles or mineral felt tiles, encouragement will be given to replacing them with natural slate.

4.8.1 Elgin has suffered less than other historic burghs from the replacement of failed slated roofs with modern substitute materials such as asbestos cement slates or their modern alternatives. Of regular face size, and appearing too thin, they are a poor substitute for slate. The colour washes out over a number of years in use and later examples are held in position with exposed clips which affects adversely the appearance of the roof.

4.8.2 Likewise there are examples of roofs which have been clad in plain concrete tiles or interlocking tiles, and examples of these materials occur in structures at the end of courts in storage buildings where they may be less prominent. There are few examples of roofs which have been stripped and renewed in mineral felt tiles: at best the finish has a limited life of 15 years or so and can only be regarded as temporary.

4.8.3 There are large buildings erected in the period between the 1920s and 1950s to be found in the closes with pitched roofs clad in asbestos cement or corrugated iron roofing. In general, they have a marked negative impact on the conservation area.

4.9 Rooflights

There will be a presumption in favour of retaining all traditional cast iron rooflights in 'non-living' spaces of attics which should be repaired and preserved in their original positions.

Where new rooflights are introduced, they should be as few as are necessary, kept unobtrusive as possible, be of vertical proportions and should not be over-sized. Care should be taken over the selection of 'conservation rooflights' as some types are no more than standard rooflights with a subdivision of the glass panes, and can be considerably more intrusive than others. Conservation rooflights where the panes of glass are subdivided are deemed preferable to units with single panes, unless small in size. Where they occur in symmetrical elevations consideration should be given to ensuring that the positions of rooflights are balanced within the overall composition of the façade.

Wherever possible rooflights should be confined to the reverse slopes of roofs, and should be kept as low as possible in relation to the roof ridge.

Traditional cast iron skylight (left) and modern conservation rooflight (right): although the top frame member is heavy the unit does not sit too high above the slates, and the middle astragal is slender, but there are less intrusive conservation rooflights than this on the market

4.9.1 Large numbers of traditional cast iron rooflights have survived throughout the conservation area. Modern rooflights can be intrusive where older rooflights are replaced or where roofspaces have been converted for habitation, especially if they are oversized, or of square or horizontal proportions with large single sheets of unbroken glass when viewed from street level. Also, the frames tend to sit considerably higher above the roof finish than traditional cast iron skylights. Rooflights sold as 'conservation rooflights' are not always well suited for use in conservation areas and great care should be taken over their selection.

MANAGING CHANGE: Roofs

4.10 Dormer windows and box dormers

Examples of traditional dormers

There will be a presumption in favour of retaining all traditional dormers as found, and repairs should be carried out always in like materials. Considerable care must be taken to ensure the preservation of Elgin's fine carved stone dormers and to restore missing architectural detail where it has been lost.

Proposals to reface timber used in dormers with modern materials such as uPVC will not be permitted, and the replacement of original dormer windows with modern replacements will be discouraged. Encouragement will be given to restoring earlier finishes and the profiles of dormers where changed in the past.

Infilling between dormers, or the formation of attic accommodation by the introduction of flat-roofed box dormers, will not be permitted. Opportunities should be pursued to remove unsightly box dormers.

4.10.1 Most historic burghs have a rich legacy of dormer windows, but the sheer quality and variety of those found in Elgin surpass most, giving considerable rhythm and character to the roofscape of the conservation area. The tradition began with the carved stone pedimented dormers of the buildings of the seventeenth century, and was picked up again from the mid-nineteenth century with some examples of extremely fine stone carving. Carved pedimented dormers were one of the features that had been so much admired in the past that so many of them were saved when the venerable old buildings of the burgh were taken down, and were re-used by positioning them in replacement buildings, gardens and on walls around the conservation area. Some of the earliest buildings have retained the traditional pattern of cat-slide dormers where introduced high up on the roof slopes, with single stone slabs for the dormer haffits.

4.10.2 Towards the end of the nineteenth century the design of dormers became more diverse – while some are plain pedimented, others have semicircular heads or are gables blocked out to complement a gothic façade. There are also some fine, vertically proportioned dormers built off the wallheads with distinctive carved detail. It is not uncommon to find that carved stone detail, for instance in finials, has been damaged through decay, with many features lost, and not replaced.

The modern Mansard roof has diminished what had been a fine range of late nineteenth century buildings on Batchen Street (left); modern box dormers are interspersed with traditional dormers in one of the closes (right)

4.10.3 Timber dormers appearing on the buildings of the High Street are equally diverse, with a number of them pedimented with distinctive console brackets, and some with semicircular heads. Most of them have retained the original slate finish. Of the plainer types of dormer there are equally good examples to be found, for instance of angled dormers, or plain dormers with piended, or hipped roofs with lead coverings to the hips and ridges.

4.10.4 Behind the principal street facades, or along the closes, it is not uncommon to encounter flat-roofed box dormers having been built out to gain additional headroom for the upper habitable spaces, or to introduce bathrooms at roof level. Although the vertical surfaces are normally clad in slate, without exception they disturb the lines of a traditional roof and have a negative impact on the conservation area.

MANAGING CHANGE: Roofs
MANAGING CHANGE: Extensions

4.11 Decorative finials

All decorative finials adorning the roofscape, whether of turned wood, lead, carved stone or decorative cast iron, should be retained and conserved in position wherever possible, and should not be removed.

Encouragement will be given to ensuring that decorative finials which have been lost, and for which there is historic photographic evidence, are restored to the original patterns.

Carved stone and iron finials

4.11.1 Finials are decorative architectural features. The plainest examples may be painted, turned wood; other examples of wooden finials may be clad in lead. Rarer are the red clay finials found on roofs from the turn of the twentieth century, but there are numerous examples of cast iron finials, mainly to the dormers of lesser roofs.

4.11.2 Elgin has inherited a rich tradition which grew up in the late nineteenth century of punctuating the skyline with decorative finials of varying types. Despite some loss of fabric and detail, these features continue to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.11.3 As noted elsewhere, one of Elgin's crowning glories is its carved architectural detail, which finds expression here in a remarkable collection of finials to gablets on street frontages and stone dormers. The array of detail and its variety is astonishing – carved thistles, fleurs-de-lys, floral sprays, roses, obelisks, urns, orbs, and ball finials are all to be seen at high level. Through decay and neglect many of them have been lost, and in some cases this spoils the symmetry of an elevation.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Finials and terminals
MANAGING CHANGE: Roofs

4.12 Low-pitched, or flat roofs

Lead lined roofs, where they have survived, should be preserved and repaired as appropriate. Where beyond repair the roof should be relined in new lead laid to current advisory standards, and this may require the roof decking to be relaid to achieve recommended falls and steps between lengths of lead sheeting. Leadwork should always be undertaken by specialist contractors. There will be a presumption

against replacing lead roofs with modern materials or proprietary flat roof systems.

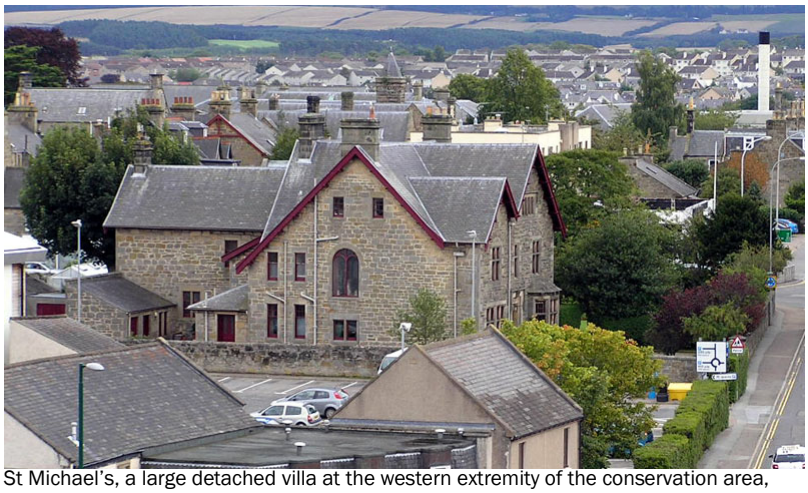
Lead lined gutters, often invisible within the conservation are, should always be maintained to avoid placing buildings at risk. Where linings have failed, the gutters should always be replaced in lead laid in accordance with current advisory standards which may require the wooden decking to be lifted and relaid to suit sheet lengths, step heights, and falls to outlets. Where risks of ice build-up may occur, electric trace heating may be considered.

4.12.1 Early flat roofs occurring throughout the conservation area would have been finished in lead – the large expenses of flat roofs of modern developments of the 1960s and 1970s fall outwith the scope of this document. There are relatively few flat roofs appearing in the conservation area, and they are mostly found between pitched roofs in the form of wide valley gutters, or behind stone parapets. Lead lined roofs have the potential to last for many years if laid correctly and maintained.

4.12.2 Lead parapet and valley gutters are important elements in preventing water from entering the interiors of buildings. Where they are not maintained, considerable damage can result, leading to severe outbreaks of timber infestation and fungal attack.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Roofing leadwork
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Bituminous sheet flat roofs: their repair and maintenance
MANAGING CHANGE: Roofs

4.13 Bargeboards and eaves boards



St Michael's, a large detached villa at the western extremity of the conservation area, with overhanging eaves and bargeboards

Painted bargeboards and eaves boards where they are original should be preserved always and maintained. There will be a presumption against renewal in modern maintenance free materials such as uPVC.

There will also be a presumption against the fitting of flush eaves boards at wallheads where none existed previously.

4.13.1 Painted bargeboards and projecting eaves boards are absent among the earlier structures in the conservation area, and only began to appear in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They are features normally associated with domestic buildings, of which there are relatively few examples occurring in the conservation area.

4.14 Rainwater disposal

Original rainwater goods of cast iron, even where plain, should always be preserved and maintained in good condition. There will be a presumption against replacement with modern rainwater goods of uPVC, GRP, or aluminium, and where systems have been replaced in this way encouragement will be given to restoring earlier cast iron patterns.

Given the significance of surviving decorative cast iron rainwater systems, repairs should be undertaken and salvaged sections of the original patterns should always be reused when systems have to be dismantled. Encouragement will be given over the sourcing of replacement sections which may require to be cast as an exact match of original patterns.

4.14.1 The earliest buildings within the conservation area would have had no rainwater goods originally, and would have been reliant on the large stone slates overhanging the projecting wallhead tabling found on buildings of this age. The later introduction of cast iron rainwater goods to these structures recognises the improvements that were made to street drainage in the early nineteenth century.

4.14.2 Buildings from the early nineteenth century onwards were normally fitted up with ordinary half-round cast iron rhones and round downpipes. Towards the end of the nineteenth century more elaborate patterns appeared on the principal buildings, of which some have survived. Decorative cast iron rainwater goods were used extensively up to the 1930s. Not all of them are in good condition and some damaged sections have been lost and replaced. Square downpipes with decorative holderbatts, hoppers and ogee rhones supported on wall brackets, supplied by a number of different foundries, are to be seen on the buildings of the principal streets.

Decorative cast iron rainwater goods

4.14.3 There have been problems in maintaining decorative rainwater goods. While many of the systems are capable of continuing in use, difficulties in obtaining replacement parts have led to temporary repairs having to be carried out.

4.14.4 For the lesser properties in the conservation area there has been a gradual erosion of original cast iron rainwater systems, and where improvements have been made it is common to find plastic

alternatives having been used. Although maintenance free, plastic rainwater goods have a flimsy appearance and can become brittle and prone to damage from ladders. They have none of the lasting qualities of well-maintained cast iron systems.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: The maintenance of cast iron rainwater goods
MANAGING CHANGE: External fixtures

4.15 Soil and vent pipework

Wherever it is possible to do so surface soil and vent pipework should be re-routed internally; where terminals have to be incorporated they should be located on the reverse roof slopes away from principal elevations. No new systems in any material defacing historic buildings will be permitted within the conservation area.

4.15.1 Cast iron soil and vent pipework appearing on the face of buildings will be likely to date to the late nineteenth century onwards and reflect the introduction of sanitary regulations. More often than not, in older properties they reflect changes that have been made. Later systems may be of modern materials, such as uPVC. They are, without exception, disfiguring in appearance, especially where they occur on a principal elevation, or where seen along the length of a close.

Unsightly soil and vent pipe systems to the rear of buildings on the forelands of the closes

4.16 Lime harling and early Portland cement renders

Traditional lime harls or early Portland cement renders are rare within the conservation area, and should be repaired, keeping as much original material as possible. Mortar for repairs should be based on analysis of the original mortar to establish the likely constituents and type and size of aggregate. Where replacement of harling is found to be unavoidable the mortar mix should match the material being replaced in colour, texture, strength of lime or cement and size of aggregate.

There will be a presumption against replacing traditional renders and harling with modern dense cement renders, and where such a finish has been applied in the recent past encouragement will be given for its removal and returning the wall to an earlier known state.

When removing old harling or rendered finishes there is always the possibility that features of archaeological interest will be uncovered, which should be recorded and, where appropriate, left exposed.

4.16.1 There is a scarcity of original lime harled surfaces and none known that have been discovered that may be dated from the first half of the

nineteenth century. Examples from late in the century can still be seen, sometimes as a finish to brick walls as a cheaper option to building in stone, or surviving as isolated fragments. No limewashed finishes were observed in the conservation area, although they would have been common at one stage. Evidence was found of the existence of limewash to masonry, and of the remains of coloured limewash having been applied to the wall surfaces of the earliest buildings.

4.16.2 Where the greatest chance of finding survivals of lime harled surfaces occurs is within the closes, and here the finishes are often less like a traditional harl than a thin coat of lime applied over rubble masonry to give the appearance of a flush surface. Often this would be done as sneck harling, in which the faces of the largest stones would be seen exposed. Over time the surface would wash off, revealing the underlying rubble work.

4.16.3 Painted wet dash harls on the restored seventeenth century merchants' houses, and visible in the houses in Braco's Close are close to the original finishes but are likely to be cement-rich coloured with masonry paint rather than traditional lime harls finished with limewash.

4.16.4 It is possible that some areas of rendering identified as being original may in fact be of early Portland cement (a material which could have been in use from the late nineteenth century) and not lime. Identification of the type of rendered finish will be essential in establishing appropriate repair strategies.

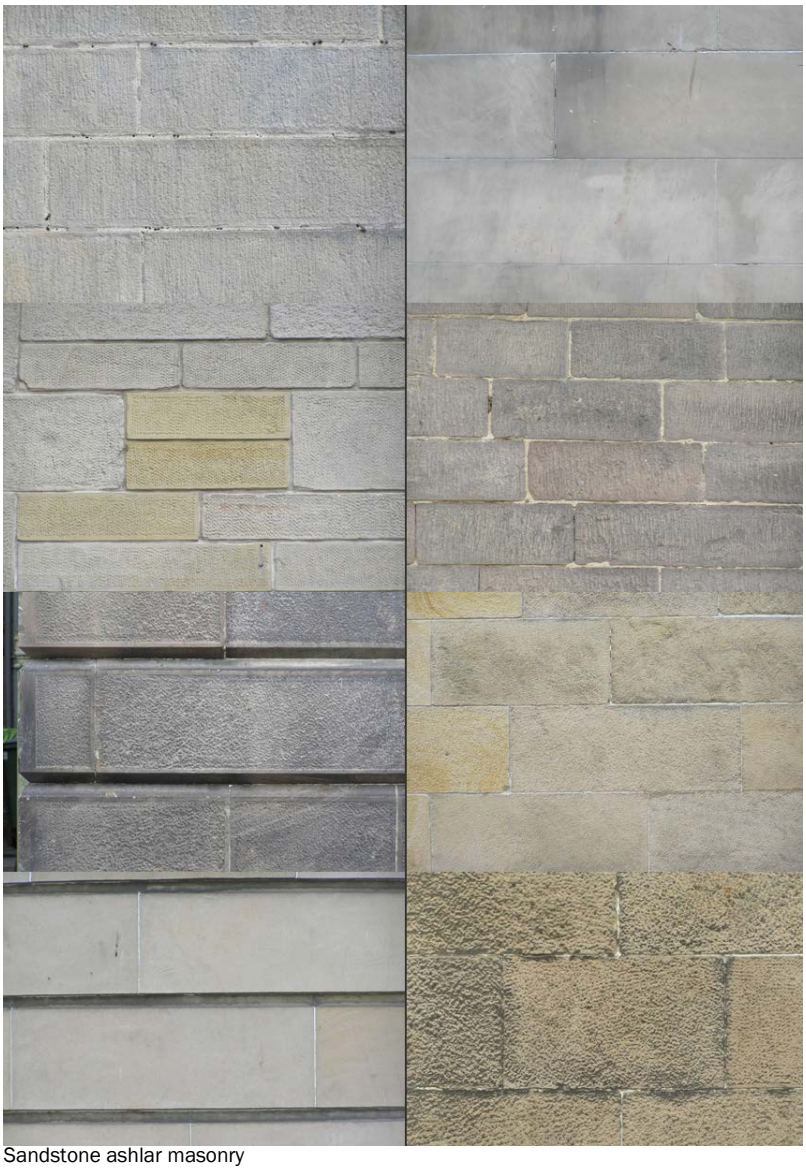
4.16.5 Traditional harled finishes have suffered considerably from being removed and replaced with modern cement renders, sometimes finished as a dry-dash more commonly associated with modern buildings. Finishes of this type not only appear incongruous, but have the potential to cause damage to the underlying masonry or brickwork from not allowing the walls to breathe and evaporate moisture.

4.16.6 There are also examples of modern unpainted wet dash cement harled walls in the conservation area for which there is no historical precedent. They appear incongruous from being uniform in appearance, and dull in colour.

An early Portland cement smooth render, left, and possibly an early lime harl, right

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: The use of lime and cement in traditional buildings
MANAGING CHANGE: External walls

4.17 Ashlar stone walling



Sandstone ashlar masonry

Ashlar masonry walls should always be preserved, and there will be a presumption against ashlar work being painted. Repointing should be carried out only in lime putty mortar and only when necessary, applied skilfully and without widening joints in the finished work. Where individual stones may have decayed, repairs should be indented in small sections but in some cases the re-facing of a badly decayed surface may be merited. Considerable care should be taken over selecting suitable replacement stone where repairs are required, which should have regard to factors such as the porosity of the host stone, its colour and durability. Patch repairs, repointing in cement mortar or in any other material should never be undertaken. The use of proprietary repair mortars will be discouraged.

Wherever possible, paint layers should be removed to reveal the original wall finish.

Cleaning of sandstone will generally be discouraged. Also to be discouraged will be the application of proprietary weatherproof sealants or silicone which can accelerate the processes of decay and lead to unexpected problems with the historic fabric. The presumption

against these treatments will apply equally to all forms of masonry walling, and to brick.

4.17.1 Ashlar stone walling from all ages would be reserved for the city's principal buildings, and often would be restricted to the street elevation. As a measure of the skill of Elgin's masons virtually every possible form of ashlar masonry has been attempted. There are good examples to be found of smooth (or polished) ashlar, hammer-dressed, vermiculated, rock-faced, random tooled, vertically and angled droved, puncheoned with margins, and rusticated ashlar with both channelled and vee-jointed examples.

4.17.2 The colour of the stone used for ashlar work varies considerably across the whole of the conservation area. It varies from blonde sandstone used for the later buildings (and, often, quite soft), and from yellow through to orange coloured sandstone which may be iron-rich and browner, or even pink-coloured stone. Some of the stone is noticeably grey in tone.

4.17.3 In some cases ashlar masonry has been painted over, often at ground floor only where shopfronts occur.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: The use of lime and cement in traditional buildings
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Repointing ashlar masonry
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Indent repairs to ashlar sandstone masonry
MANAGING CHANGE: External Walls

4.18 Rubble masonry

Rubble stone walling should be preserved as close as possible to its original state, and there will be a presumption against coating it with harled or dry-dashed finishes. Original lime mortars should always be preserved where sound and in general dense cement pointing should be removed, unless the act of removing it is likely to cause unacceptable damage to the underlying masonry. Replacement lime mortars should be based on an analysis of the original mortars in terms of the type of lime, its hydraulicity, and the type of aggregate which should be matched carefully in the finished work.

Considerable care should be taken when repointing to ensure that the style of the original pointing is replicated in the finished work. There will be a presumption to retain all sound original mortar.

4.18.1 Rubble masonry is the most common wall treatment throughout the conservation area, a reflection of the wide variety of quarries which were in operation in the vicinity of the city. None of the stone appears to have been imported by any distance – there is, for instance, no granite or whinstone to be seen.

4.18.2 Earlier walling would have been harled originally. Where the harling has worn off uncoursed random rubble has been revealed. Coursed masonry with a large number of small snecks in the interstices between stones may suggest masonry of the late eighteenth century, for which the walls had been prepared for harling. By the nineteenth century, lime harls appear to have been dispensed with and rubble walls were built with more regular coursing and with the absence of snecks; in some cases they were built to receive a thin coat of harling, or alternatively they were sneck harled leaving the surfaces of the larger stones exposed. A further development was in building coursed

rubble walls with a wide joint in lime mortar but lined out to give the impression of coursed masonry.

Varieties of Rubble stone walling

4.18.3 There is strong evidence to suggest that, prior to the mid-nineteenth century, in the growing absence of applied harled finishes to walls built of rubble were given coats of limewash to improve their appearance.

4.18.4 It is not unusual to encounter frontages on the principal streets where the less important buildings were to be found constructed of regular coursed rubble, or of square coursed snecked rubble.

4.18.5 Very few examples were seen where the original lime pointing has survived, and in the majority of cases rubble walls have been repointed in dull grey dense cement mortar, changing the appearance of the wall.

Rubble stonework with evidence of lime harling, or sneck harling

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: The use of lime and cement in traditional buildings
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Repointing rubble stonework
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Masonry decay: dealing with the erosion of sandstone
MANAGING CHANGE: External walls

4.19 Carved stone: architectural detail and sculpture

The quality of the carved architectural detail of all ages to be discovered on the buildings of Elgin is exceptional, and makes a strong contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. While in the past durable sandstone, readily available throughout the district had been used and has lasted well, towards the end of the nineteenth century softer sandstones were often used which masons found easier to carve, but these stones have been prone to extensive decay with the consequential loss of carved detail. As much of this resource occurs at high level, it is highly vulnerable to decay, and constant monitoring is encouraged to ensure that it remains in good condition. In some cases it may be possible, and indeed appropriate, to restore lost detail for reasons of maintaining the architectural integrity of a composition – for instance, in the replacement of missing finials. However, if the loss of carved detail is extreme it may have to be accepted that it cannot be restored. Fine carved detail should be repaired and consolidated only by skilled craftsmen and conservators. In general there will be a presumption against repairing damaged carved architectural detail and sculpture with plastic repairs, or by the use of proprietary mortars.

Sculpture and carved architectural detail (1)

Sculpture and carved architectural detail (2)

Sculpture may be found on freestanding monuments, such as the Muckle Cross and the Little Cross, or on buildings in the form of carved heads or on pedimented dormers of buildings of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries respectively. Repairs should be undertaken only by accredited conservators in accordance with a written report. Repairs to preserved armorial panels, carved lintols and other features of archaeological interest should, likewise, be undertaken only by an accredited conservator.

Date-stones should always be preserved in situ and should not be covered over.

4.19.1 The calibre of the carved architectural detail in the sandstone buildings of Elgin's principal streets is of a remarkably high standard, reflecting a long tradition of masons' skills fostered in the Laigh of Moray over many generations. By the end of the nineteenth century carvings of the heads of animals and of foliage are inspired, and appear frequently, adorning a number of buildings throughout the conservation area. These skills are translated into carved inscriptions and date-stones on buildings, of which there are many fine examples of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are to be seen.

4.19.2 While remnants of late medieval sculpture may be found in the crosses on the street, among the earliest armorial panels to have survived and to have been reused is that dated 1576 on the site of the former townhouse of the Cummings of Lochtervandich, now the ex-servicemen's club known as St Giles at the east end of the High Street. Excellent examples of seventeenth century armorial panels which are still found *in situ* are at The Tower (1634), and the three

merchants' houses with the piazzas erected between 1688 and 1694. The sophistication of these carved dormer heads contrasts with the relative crudeness of the column capitals, which are similar to one another.

4.19.3 Mention has been made of the richness of the armorial panels, carved dormer heads and inscribed lintols which have been reused freely across the conservation area. This is by no means a recent phenomenon, and buildings of the late nineteenth century in the closes can sometimes reveal surprises where an old lintol has been reused. These features carry valuable information about Elgin's seventeenth century past, and of the families who lived in fine townhouses before they were destroyed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A significant number of these well preserved features carry inscriptions and insignia relating to the merchant guildry.

4.19.4 Elgin's dynasties of architects were responsible for encouraging fine patronage of carved architectural detail on their buildings. A&W Reid's buildings often exhibit detail carved with great precision, while Thomas Mackenzie's buildings, and those of his son, Alexander Marshall Mackenzie, are notable for the sculptural forms of carved animal heads which adorn pediments and other features. They were often inspired by the idiosyncratic details which were found on the old manses of the Chanonry before they were demolished in the nineteenth century, which they reproduced in their own work. Archibald Simpson's work at St Giles is outstanding for the quality of the carved work in the lofty Choragic Monument, as much as for the refined classical Greek key motif, a pattern which finds expression in later commercial buildings of the nineteenth century.

4.19.5 Other buildings may be decorated with a scalloped shell to a pediment, or with distinctive plate mouldings giving life to a plain string course. Later buildings inspired by the illustrations of Robert Billings, or with Gothic Revival detail, may have bosses carved with real inspiration on string courses, or as finials capping pedimented dormers. A lintol above a corner door at the former Grand Hotel on South Street is festooned with remarkable surface decoration, the work of an inspired stone carver with extraordinarily well developed skills.

MANAGING CHANGE: External walls

4.20 Masonry decay

Arresting stone decay, a problem which is especially prevalent at high level where the masonry is at its most exposed, poses one of the greatest challenges facing the conservation area if its character and appearance are to be preserved. As noted above, it became the case that, with the rapid expansion of Elgin and of its suburbs towards the end of the nineteenth century, softer sandstone came to be used.

Considerable care will require to be exercised over determining suitable repair strategies, which may extend to stone indenting, re-facing the worst affected areas with matching (but more durable) stone. In some cases a sacrificial weak ashlared lime-based render may be considered appropriate. Each case will be considered on its merits, and there may be no standard solutions, but if applications for external funding are successful the Council will seek to provide guidance on the most appropriate repair technologies after having commissioned research and specialist reports.

Subject to the foregoing, extensive work by way of plastic repairs, or from using cement rich mortars likely to aggravate the risk to the underlying fabric in the longer term, will be discouraged. Work in repairing or replacing decayed stonework should be carried out only by skilled masons.

It is recommended that the Council should work with Historic Scotland's Cathedral Workshop in establishing appropriate repair strategies for this widespread problem.

Stone decay (1)

4.20.1 The use of soft sandstone, quarried from the second half of the nineteenth century, has damaged the facades, decorative architectural detail, and the features at high level such as parapets and chimneyheads, to numerous buildings throughout the conservation area. In a few of the worst affected buildings masonry has had to be taken down and rebuilt. Some architectural features have been taken down and have not been replaced. Occasionally, architectural details such as hood mouldings will have been cloured off the face of a wall, and not replaced, leaving a scar. In general, but with some exceptions, the standard to which repairs have been carried out throughout the conservation area has fallen short of recommended conservation practice, and suggests a shortage of skills.

4.20.2 There are no standard answers to the repair of soft sandstone, and each case will need to be considered on its merits. Sandstone will require to match the colour of the original stone carefully, and although of greater durability than the host stone, it should not be so durable as to accelerate the decay of the walling or feature being repaired. Indenting or re-facing stonework is highly skilled work, and in some cases it may be appropriate to consider the application of a lime ashlared render, or a render on an expanded metal lath depending on the soundness of the substrate. Where extensive repairs are needed the application of a limewash finish may need to be considered to maintain architectural integrity where this is considered important.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: The use of lime and cement in traditional buildings
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Masonry decay: dealing with the erosion of sandstone

Stone decay (2)

4.21 Brickwork

The contribution made by brickwork to the townscape may be relatively small, but should not be overlooked. Surviving panels should be preserved and repaired with traditional non-cement based mortars to match the original work. Where individual bricks require to be replaced, or areas of damaged brickwork taken down and rebuilt, second hand bricks to match colour, texture, and face size, should be used. Where they are unavailable, matching new handmade bricks should be substituted. Modern machine wire-cut bricks should never be used as they are different in appearance, with face dimensions that are much smaller than handmade Victorian bricks.

Walls of common brick in the conservation area

4.21.1 Bricks have never played a major part in Elgin's historic townscape, largely because stone was readily available as a building material without incurring high transportation costs. There were local brick and tile works to the north of Elgin at Lochside and, further afield, at Craigellachie.

4.21.2 Common uses were for lightweight structures added to existing buildings such as porches or bathroom extensions, pend walls leading to closes, and occasionally for rear walls of buildings which were not intended to be prominent when erected. Occasionally chimneys are

built of brick, or have been rebuilt in brick where stonework may have failed. In all known cases, common red clay bricks have been selected.

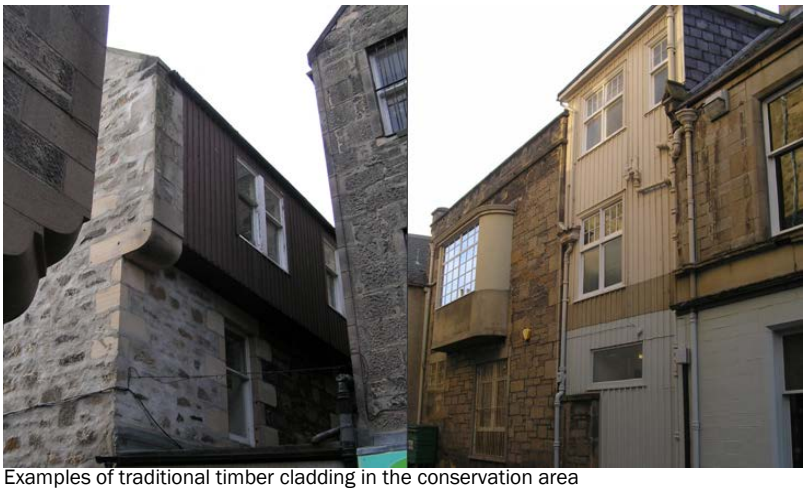
A hybrid brick and stone chimneyhead in which the soft stone has weathered worse than the brick – the stone chimneyhead in the background is in an advanced state of decay while the chimneyhead beside it has been taken down and rebuilt unattractively with a dense cement render finish

4.21.3 There are other buildings of brick which have rendered coatings. Brick has also been used for modern structures, but it becomes an alien element in the townscape when used as infill panels in a steel structural frame for the large twentieth century sheds in the closes for warehousing, and for the former cinema on South Street.

4.21.4 Brick, as many clay-based products, is susceptible to decay from frost where exposed to persistently damp conditions. While this problem is evident in chimneyheads, walling at lower levels may not be immune from the problems caused by persistent building defects.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Repairing brickwork
MANAGING CHANGE: External walls

4.22 Timber cladding



Examples of traditional timber cladding in the conservation area

Traditional timber clad walls of vertical boards are not common features within the conservation area, but where they exist they should be repaired in like materials and the painted finish preserved. Replacement in alternative modern materials, such as PVC, will not be acceptable.

4.22.1 Timber cladding is rarely used throughout the conservation area, and where it has survived it takes the traditional form of painted vertical boards with rounded cover battens. In one of the known examples it has been used in the form of a 'jettied' storey, with the lightweight cladding projecting over the masonry below to provide additional floor space within the property.

4.23 Structural movement

Structural movement arising from poor foundations is not considered to be a major problem throughout the conservation area. Where structural cracking has occurred in external walls and is considered to be progressive, the advice of a structural engineer experience in the repair of historic buildings is recommended. Repairs should never be visually intrusive.

4.23.1 Buildings throughout the conservation area seem to have been built on sound foundations, and few problems were observed with structural movement. Where minor problems were observed the route of cracking followed the weak spots in the external walls, focused on lintols, cills and window spandrels, or along flue lines in gables. Occasionally some outward movement could be observed at the heads of walls suggesting problems with rafter thrust from trussed roofs.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Foundations and wall footings
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Structural cracks

4.24 Use of colour

The application of colour has a greater potential to enhance the appearance of the conservation area than it does at the present. Consideration should be given to following historical precedent where this can be established from studying historic photographs, or the evidence of paint layers on the surface of the building. In particular consideration should always be given to reverting to darker colours for window joinery where this enhances the appearance of the building.

Where painting schemes that have been introduced are disruptive to the overall appearance of a unified architectural design within the streetscape, consideration should be given always to removing the paint and restoring the original wall surface.

Evidence of historic limewash finishes in the closes

4.24.1 At present the use of colour is restrained and does not, in general, make a strong contribution to the townscape. Colour applied to rendered or harled surfaces is normally neutral, either in white, grey or

cream. Colour has been introduced to window or door surrounds to some buildings in the closes, which can add to the character and appearance of these routes though the city.

4.24.2 Shopfronts can appear more brightly coloured, but even here it is not uncommon to find the structural elements of the shopfront painted white, black or cream. Vivid colours can have a disturbing effect on the townscape, and the impact can be even greater if the associated signage is over-sized, or too brightly coloured.

4.24.3 Occasionally a unified design as part of a street frontage can be disturbed by the walls above a shop frontage having been painted out.

The use of bright, or strident, colours in shopfronts can have a jarring effect within the overall streetscape

A unifying architectural scheme disrupted by painting the wall above one of the shopfronts

4.24.4 Entries to the closes off the High Street can occasionally give an insight to older colour schemes which are now mostly obscured by later decoration. Painted dado panels would not have been uncommon at one time, and it is possible to see that there had been more colour applied to buildings in the past where paint layers have peeled off. Within the closes to the rear of the late seventeenth century merchants' houses on the High Street can be seen remnants of colours applied to masonry which suggests that the historically the buildings of the city may have been more colourful than they are at present. These fragments of decorative schemes suggest traditional limewash, pigmented with ox blood.

4.24.5 Where traditional lime harls or smooth ashlared renders are applied, there will be no presumption against the use of strong natural coloured or pigmented limewashes, such as may have been found in the past, provided they are based soundly on historic examples.

MANAGING CHANGE: External walls

4.25 Architectural ceramics

Encaustic tiled floors to door lobbies, late nineteenth century, left, and 1930s, right

The few examples of architectural ceramics in the conservation area should be preserved. Encouragement will be given to ensuring that the repairs are carried out only by specialist conservators. Only matching tiles or mosaics should be used to maintain the integrity of the design of each panel.

4.25.1 There are relatively few examples of architectural ceramics surviving in the conservation area, appearing mainly as encaustic tiled floors at entrance lobbies. A pair of shopfronts of the 1930s has survived in their original state on Batchen Street, complete with decorative panels externally and an encaustic tiled floor lobby leading into a butcher's shop.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Ceramic tiled flooring

4.26 Wall openings: proportion and rhythm

Looking west from St Giles Church

The rhythm of wall openings at first and upper floors of properties should be preserved. There will be a presumption against enlarging

them to create picture windows, or changing their proportions. There will also be a presumption against the removal of intermediate structural mullions, whether of stone or timber, when seeking to modernise window openings.

Decorative wall treatments surrounding windows and doors should always be preserved and repaired where damaged or decayed.

4.26.1 In common with many historic burghs, while alterations were taking place throughout many stages in the evolution of the city centre to respond to the pressures of retailing at street level, the pattern of window openings remained substantially unaltered at the upper storeys, giving a strong sense of authenticity to the historic townscape. They create an unbroken rhythm at the upper storeys and punctuate the wall planes, characteristics which can be appreciated in the long vistas from the ends of the High Street, and along its length.

East end of the High Street, looking west

4.26.2 Openings on the upper storeys are sensitive to change, and their contribution to the townscape relies on maintaining a vertical emphasis from the use of short stone lintols.

4.26.3 Although changes have occurred from modernisation, sufficient numbers of the traditional shopfronts of the nineteenth century have survived in Elgin to contribute positively to the rhythm of the openings of the principal street frontages. This is particularly true of the shopfronts at the west end of the High Street, and also on Batchen Street and Commerce Street.

4.26.4 Window openings are embellished in a number of ways. While the majority have plain raised window margins, sometimes painted depending on the treatment of the wall surfaces, occasionally margins and mullions will be chamfered for greater elegance. Moulded architraves, pediments and hood mouldings may also appear around and above window openings. Many of the architectural features have, unfortunately, been affected by stone decay (see 4.20), but the quality of the carved detail is generally of a very high order.

MANAGING CHANGE: External walls

4.27 Traditional windows

There will be a presumption against the further loss of traditional windows throughout the conservation area. Individual sashes or window frames should be repaired always in preference to replacement. Where timber windows are beyond repair, replacements should match the original work exactly in terms of materials, mouldings, astragal sections and patterns, and decorative finish. Standard stock mouldings will not be acceptable. There will be a presumption against clear varnishing or staining in modern woodstains and windows should normally be painted, unless evidence of past historic finishes suggests otherwise. Consideration should be given always to reinstating original patterns of windows where they have been lost in the interests of preserving the authenticity of the conservation area. Where windows had been multi-paned originally, consideration should be given to reinstating known astragal patterns where it is important to restore the architectural integrity of the façade.

Traditional windows in the conservation area

Traditional sash and case windows need not be dispensed with because of problems with draught-proofing - there are proprietary systems available which will achieve improved performance, and without loss of appearance. There will be a presumption against the replacement of traditional sash and case window glass with double glazed units where the existing window assemblies are sound. Where windows are beyond repair, and there is no loss of historic glass, replacement units should result in no obvious change of external appearance, for which the fitting of narrow width double glazed units may be considered appropriate. It should always be borne in mind that double glazed units may have only a limited life before the hermetic seal breaks down and the units require to be replaced. Secondary glazing systems will be looked upon favourably provided they are not unduly visible from the exterior of the building or interfere with the astragal patterns. There will be a presumption against the introduction of trickle ventilators to window sashes.

All historic ironmongery should be preserved and reused in any replacement windows.

Metal windows which are characteristic of buildings of the interwar years and which make a positive contribution to the character and

appearance of the conservation area should be preserved in their original state, unless established to be beyond economic repair, in which case they should be replicated as closely as possible.

4.27.1 Together with the treatment of the surrounds, windows have much to inform us about the history of the building and architectural styles. The earliest surviving windows in the conservation area are likely to date from the early nineteenth century by which time the production of sash and case windows with elegant narrow astragals was well within the capabilities of local house carpenters and joiners. There were limitations on pane sizes producing the universal multi-paned sashes of which there are now, perhaps surprisingly, relatively few examples in the conservation area, but more perhaps than in other comparable conservation areas.

Distinctive windows from the 1930s

4.27.2 With plate glass becoming readily available from the middle of the nineteenth century window panes became larger. In some cases window sashes would have been replaced so that single panes of glass could be introduced to each sash. Sashes with plain glass and without astragals are by far and above the most common pattern of sash and case window to be found in the conservation area. In some of the lesser properties of the minor streets and closes 2-paned sashes, subdivided vertically, have survived. Towards the end of the century horns might be introduced to the upper sashes of windows, although the use of horns in windows replicating patterns before this date would be incorrect. From the 1890s onwards, with the rising influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement, there are good examples to be found of windows with unequal sashes, with the smaller upper sashes being multipaned.

4.27.3 The rate of loss of traditional sash and case windows and replacement with modern windows has accelerated in recent years, to the point that the authenticity of the character and appearance of the conservation area has been impaired. It is not a particularly new phenomenon, and is likely to have begun several decades ago. Since then there has been an onslaught of different types of window – aluminium, timber replacements with modern profiles and, more recently, uPVC. While in some cases there has been no endeavour to replicate the pattern of the windows being replaced, where window patterns have been replicated the result bears little more than a notional likeness. In some cases replacement windows have been positively damaging – for instance, where a symmetrical façade has been subject to change over one half of the elevation, but where the sash line fails to line through with the subtlety of the original work. There are also examples where both sets of original windows have been renewed, with neither matching the other exactly.

4.27.4 More often the damage caused is incremental, from factors such as oversized astragals, modern glazing beads, a lack of depth in the appearance of the window, differentiations in how windows open (top-hung as opposed to sliding sash, etc), the addition of trickle

ventilators, and the impact of modern glass. Sash boxes of traditional sash and case windows in an urban environment would always be disguised behind the stone rybats of the window surround, revealing only the slim profile of the sash itself; in many replacement units the subtlety of this arrangement has been destroyed, changing the appearance of the fenestration pattern.

The impact of non-matching window patterns within tenements or semi-detached dwellings

4.27.5 An unusual oriel bay window of 1930s design with its original Crittall metal windows can be found on Academy Street, and makes a positive

contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, adding to its diversity.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Maintaining sash and case windows
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Timber window shutters
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Improving energy efficiency in traditional buildings
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Energy efficiency in traditional homes
HISTORIC SCOTLAND SHORT GUIDE: Sash and case windows: a short guide for homeowners
MANAGING CHANGE: Windows

4.28 Historic glass


Distorted reflections from historic glass

Examples of historic glass should always be preserved, even if imperfect, and despite having minor defects or cracks. Where repair works are undertaken historic glass should be protected against damage. Where panes have to be removed, for instance, when carrying out repairs to window frames, care should be taken over its removal for which the use of a putty lamp would be strongly advised. Curved glass should never be replaced with straight panes of glass, and consideration should be given to replacing broken historic glass with reproduction cylinder glass. Glazing should always be bedded and pointed up in traditional linseed oil putty, which should be painted and not left undecorated, or stained.

4.28.1 Elgin has excellent examples of historic glass surviving in windows, characterised by distortions in the reflections of the glass and the evidence of how the glass has been manufactured. This is particularly noticeable in cylinder glass. There are significant examples surviving of curved glass. While none of the examples are likely to date from before the early nineteenth century, historic glass is vulnerable and is damaged easily.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Maintaining traditional plain glass and glazing
MANAGING CHANGE: Windows

4.29 Decorative glass and glass protection

There are few surviving panels of decorative glass to stairwells in domestic and commercial properties and where they occur the glass should be preserved. Etched glass panels may be found at inner glazed doors at entrance lobbies. Repairs to stained or coloured glass should be undertaken only by skilled conservators.

Zinc or lead painted diamond-paned panels to the lancet windows of churches, or former church buildings, should be preserved and repaired by specialists. There will be a presumption against their removal and replacement with panels of modern glass.
The fine architectural stained glass panels to the windows of St Giles Church should be preserved, and should be repaired and protected against the risk of damage.

Where protection of decorative glass is required, there will be a presumption against the use of clear polycarbonate sheeting throughout the conservation area. Specialist advice should always be sought on appropriate methods of protection, taking into account the preservation of the architectural appearance of the building and its contribution to the streetscape, and matters such as fixings into masonry, ventilation, and the creation of a microclimate within the cavity.

Stained glass windows in the conservation area

4.29.1 St Giles Church has fine architectural glass appropriate to the high status of the building, of which some of the glass panels have been damaged in the past. Other church buildings, whether in use as places of worship or not, have retained window panels of diamond-shaped glass set in frames of either lead or zinc. Some of these windows have been renewed with modern window assemblies, and where this has happened, without exception the appearance of the building has been damaged.

4.29.2 Examples of stained glass panels to domestic properties can be seen throughout the conservation area. There also examples of etched glass panels to the inner glazed doors of entrance lobbies. A fine window of stained glass panels had once adorned the stairwell to the Grand Hotel on the Academy Street elevation, now badly damaged, appears capable of being restored and it should be protected against further damage.

4.29.3 The application of protective sheeting, unless carefully handled, detracts from the way in which window openings are read within the wall planes, especially where window tracery has been disguised. Polycarbonate sheeting is prone to yellowing over time.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Domestic decorative glass

4.30 Traditional doors and fanlights

Original doors serving residential properties have been lost in the conservation area leading to an erosion of its character and appearance. Where original doors survive they should be preserved and repaired. There will be a presumption against the replacement of doors with modern hardwood off-the-shelf patterns or uPVC doorsets. Historic ironmongery, including knobs, letter boxes and brass numerals should always be retained, and overhauled as required in preference to replacement with modern ironmongery.

Encouragement will be given to restoring the patterns of lost traditional doors wherever possible. Unless it can be established to the contrary, doors and their replacements should always be painted or varnished. Original decorative finishes should be matched in any replacement work and there will be a presumption against finishing with modern woodstains, or clear varnishing. Door fanlights and any associated historic glass should always be preserved.

Panelled doors in the conservation area – a rich and varied resource

4.30.1 Elgin has a remarkably good collection of traditional doors serving various kinds of properties of differing ages, many of which have survived despite the rash of modern substitute doors which have affected, in the main, only domestic properties.

4.30.2 Doors are of many styles. Examples seen in the conservation area consist of flush panelled, panelled with raised bolection mouldings, double margin, beaded panelled and fielded panelled doors. Simpler doors are usually vertically lined. Many doors were observed with traditional fanlights. A few doors of the late nineteenth century serving commercial premises were observed with highly decorative design motifs.

4.30.3 Church doors are normally more elaborate, having decorative iron hinges. One of the churches, still in use as a place of worship, has distinctive panelled doors with iron studs.

4.30.4 As noted above, where doors have been renewed with modern off-the-shelf replacements, or with doorsets in aluminium of uPVC tailored to the sizes of the openings, the result is never satisfactory. These elements appear jarring within the conservation area. The visual damage can be all the greater where doorsets have been renewed in semi-detached properties where pairs of doors are no longer a match for one another.

4.30.5 Traditional ironmongery, letterboxes, door knockers, brass and painted letter numerals, and early nineteenth century boot-scrapers, where

they have survived, add to the interest in the street scene and should always be preserved.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: External timber doors
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Energy Efficiency in Traditional Homes
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Improving energy efficiency in traditional buildings
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Domestic decorative glass

4.31 Porches and porch canopies

Original porches, or porch canopies, are rare features within the conservation area and there will be a presumption against their removal, or altering them. Repairs should be carried out in matching material and surfaces should only be decorated where they were so treated previously.

There will be a presumption against the erection of new porches, or conservatories in modern materials such as uPVC or aluminium where they appear on any elevation visible to a street or from within one of the closes.

4.31.1 There are few examples of porches within the conservation area. To a certain extent this may reflect the fact that many of the properties in the conservation area are built up to the rear of the pavement line, or are found within the closes where the available space may be confined.

4.31.2 There is a good example of a simple brick porch added to the front of a dwelling house set back from the lane between Thunderton Place and Batchen Street. A pair of villas dated 1905 on North College Street has interesting blocked stone canopies above the entrance doors.

4.32 Traditional shopfronts

There are several examples of fine cast iron shopfronts surviving within the conservation area, a remarkably high proportion for the size of this small city. Together with the stone frontages that have survived unmolested, this represents a significant resource which continues to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area despite the many changes that have occurred. The appearance of shops provides an insight into the wellbeing of the town, given current retail pressures and the impact on small businesses. There will be a presumption to retain all traditional shopfronts and their fittings, and encouragement will be given to restoring lost features and recovering the authentic appearance of shopfronts as they appeared on historic photographs. Original doors, glazed panels, fanlights and ironmongery should be preserved wherever they have survived.

Particular emphasis will be given to the impact of decorative schemes in improving the townscape. Encouragement will be given to establishing past decorative schemes by undertaking historic paint layer investigation as appropriate in order to inform the choice of colours and how they should be applied to the architectural elements of the shopfront, many of which are currently painted in bland colours, or conversely, colours for which there is no historical precedent and which appear too bright. There will be a presumption against painting stonework surrounding a shopfront where there had been no painted

finish previously, and encouragement will be given to the removal of paint from masonry where it has been applied in the past.

Shop windows rendered 'blind' through the application of opaque film with shop advertising will not be permitted in the conservation area.

There will be a presumption against the use of security roller shutters, or external protective grilles. Where they have been fitted encouragement will be given to their removal, and returning the shopfront to an earlier known state. Removable, or fold away grilles, would be preferred where external security is considered to be an issue, but they should always be fitted within the openings of the shop windows and should never project beyond the line of the wall.

Consideration should be given to developing a design guide on shopfronts to assist the business community.

A small selection of Elgin's many traditional shopfronts from different eras

4.32.1 Cast iron shopfronts were introduced to Elgin in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Until then most shopfronts had plain masonry piers as can be seen in the some of the shop units at the west end of the High Street, although some early stone shopfronts were more elaborate. In the shopfronts of the early nineteenth century arches were incorporated within the façade to give access for horse-drawn vehicles to the close, and they would be located to one side or at the centre of a frontage extending over two or more of the original burgage plot widths. As stone shopfronts became more sophisticated the stone pillars were reduced in order to maximise the amount of glass, made possible with advances in plate glass manufacturing and transportation. Cast iron shopfronts were probably supplied from the Newmill iron foundry, and are often difficult to distinguish from stone in having chamfered pillars and lintols. They are often combined with plain iron lintols which can be distinguished by the fact that they are always painted.

4.32.2 Many traditional examples have been lost with programmes of modernisation over the past forty years or so. Despite this, the rate of survival is surprisingly high, even though it may be difficult always to identify the original fabric. In a few cases the original glazed doors have survived.

4.32.3 There are good examples of shopfronts surviving from the mid-twentieth century. An applied Art Deco façade of black granite, with stained glass windows to the upper storey, has been applied to the façade of a building on South Street, and an excellent example of a bronze shopfront with a black granite fascia and surround has survived largely without change at the Burton store on the High Street. A pair of varnished timber shopfronts has survived on Batchen Street complete with tiled decoration, stained glass panels, and with the original shop signage.

4.32.4 Negative factors relate primarily to the degree to which an original shopfront has been submerged beneath insensitive and oversized signage, or where decorative schemes for shopfronts fail to bring out the features of the façade in ways which had been done in the past. Elgin had splendid shop frontages from examining historic photographs in which the architectural detail had been carefully defined in traditional decorative schemes.

4.32.5 Roller shutters have been particularly damaging to the minority of shop frontages to which they have been fitted and have a marked negative impact on the wider conservation area.

4.32.6 Several shopfronts have retained original doors and ironmongery.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND SHORT GUIDE: Traditional shopfronts: a short guide for shop owners

4.33 Shop signage and illumination

Encouragement will be given to shop owners to improve their shopfronts, based on knowledge of how they may have appeared in the past, having particular regard to the manner in which advertising was restricted to certain areas, and how fascias were used to display the name of the business and the wares being sold.

There will be a presumption against shop fascias which are larger than the area intended historically for lettering, and those which appear oversized in relation to the street elevation. Further, there will be a presumption against internally illuminated shop fascias and projecting box signs, subject to detailed guidance. Overhead illumination of signs should be proportionate to their size and impact on the street elevation, and should be discreet and not result in light pollution. There will be a presumption against highly reflective shop fascias, and of advertising panels applied to masonry piers or shop surrounds. Hanging projecting signs should be aligned in height with the structural shop fascia.

Projecting canopies or awnings must be of a design and of materials appropriate to the character of the shop or street. There will be a presumption against the use of modern awnings with rounded profiles or ends. Lettering applied to awnings should not be dominant within the streetscape.

Consideration should be given to developing a design guide on shopfronts to assist the business community.

4.33.1 Historic photographs of the High Street and of individual shops reveal the subtlety of how traders promoted their wares and took particular care of the design and display of their shopfronts. Lettering would be applied as individual letters in relief, painted on, or would be part of a unified glass panel. Most of the shop signs conformed to an unwritten code that lettering would be confined within the limitations of the stone band over the shop windows, or in the case of the later shopfronts, within the area of the structural fascia panel. The breakdown of this 'code' seems to have begun in the latter half of the twentieth century and may have been prompted by the arrival of the national stores on the High Street. Paradoxically, it is often the case now that the national retailers have standard designs for shop fascias that comply with the requirements of most conservation areas in which their shops appear.

Exemplary shopfronts for restrained shop signage

Shop frontages with overbearing fascias which appear disruptive within the street scene

4.33.2 Nowadays none of the original shop signs have survived on the High Street, and signwriting has become much less practised as an art. Some of the signs on the High Street are of highly reflective plastic and, with few exceptions, are intrusive, often with poorly designed computer-generated letters and images. Many of the signs are overlarge for the shopfront, overwhelming any interesting architectural detail that may have survived. In townscape terms, the effect of continuous arcading of columns and shaped lintols can disappear, or be interrupted. Against this, there are exemplary shopfronts to be found which conform with good practice.

A shopfront marred only by the rusting guides for the security shutters and the modern shop fascia have been introduced below the original ornate one of timber, which is now at risk from not having been maintained

4.33.3 In general, projecting signs have been controlled and do not interfere with the long views to be enjoyed down the High Street.

4.33.4 Poor illumination of signs can be highly detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and there are both good and bad examples to be seen on the principal streets. Internally illuminated fascias and projecting box signs are intrusive, but there are examples of acceptable practice in which opaque letters, which are not over-dominant on the fascia, are backlit. Indirect external illumination can also be acceptable, provided that the number of fittings is kept to a minimum.

4.33.5 In certain instances it has proved possible to retain an earlier shop sign which makes a contribution to the historic streetscape in conjunction with carefully designed signage for a new business operating from the same premises.

4.33.6 There are many examples to be seen in the conservation area of finely detailed timber fascia boards, not all of them in use as current shop signage. Some appear to be at risk from a lack of maintenance.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND SHORT GUIDE: Traditional shopfronts: a short guide for shop owners

4.34 Historic signs and interpretation

There will be a presumption in favour of preserving historic painted signs, street names and close signs, and other features in the townscape representing past commercial activity in the burgh.

Surviving examples of painted house numerals should always be preserved.

Reference should be made to Part 4 of the suite of documents regarding interpretive signage.

Signs within the conservation area

Historic advertising signs, now very faded: the top illustration related to a temperance hotel operating around the turn of the twentieth century

4.34.1 It is often the case that remnants of past retail activity in a historic burgh or city will become embedded in the fabric of buildings and spaces, and will survive changes made in more recent times.

Sometimes they relate to old signs that have not been painted over, advertising which has not been removed, or trade symbols.

4.34.2 In relative terms, Elgin is rich in the survival of cast metal signs to closes, while some enamelled local street signs have survived later changes. There are few cast metal interpretation signs giving visitors information about a site, and they are not always easy to see. Sometimes the information is less than helpful in helping a visitor arrive at an understanding of a historic site.

4.34.3 A number of historic painted signs, now faded, appear at high level on building facades and on rendered panels at projecting gables within the streetscape. They provide important information about past trading activity.

4.34.4 There are a few good examples of painted or stencilled house numerals in the closes.

HISTORIC SCOTLAND SHORT GUIDE: Traditional shopfronts: a short guide for shop owners
MANAGING CHANGE: External fixtures

4.35 Boundary walls

Tall stone boundary wall defining burgage plots, or 'rig' boundaries

Lengths of boundary walls of rubble stonework where collapsed should be preserved and repaired in matching material, or where the profile has been broken. Damaging pointing in dense cement mortar should be raked out and rubble masonry repointed in lime mortar matching historical precedent. There will be a presumption against the demolition of stone boundary walls and rebuilding them in modern materials.

Boundary walls of other materials, for instance mass concrete or stone walls bound with clay or earth mortar and pointed up in lime mortar, should always be preserved and repaired in like materials.

4.35.1 Properties bordering the High Street and the principal retail thoroughfares are generally built to the rear of the pavement line. Where the frontage of the building is set back a boundary wall will assume particular importance, giving welcome relief within the historic

townscape. Boundary walls take on a particular importance where larger properties are set well back from where the street is widened out at the east end of the High Street, where the scale of the buildings is greater than elsewhere.

4.35.2 Boundary walls may assume particular importance in the backlands where defining the old burgage plots within the closes. Evidence was found of rubble stone walls of which the core is bound by an earth of clay mortar, and also of late nineteenth century mass concrete walls defining property boundaries, a technique used rarely in central Moray due to the ready availability of sandstone.

Unusual materials: boundary wall bonded with earth mortar and mass unreinforced concrete wall

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Domestic boundary walls
HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Earth mortar and earth buildings
MANAGING CHANGE: Boundaries

4.36 Decorative architectural metalwork

As many historic burghs on the Scottish mainland, Elgin has suffered the loss of boundary wall railings cut down for the war effort. However, examples of historic cast iron railings can still be discovered in the closes. There will be a presumption to keep all cast iron gates, gate piers and decorative boundary wall treatments, and encouragement will be given to keeping these elements well maintained.

Decorative cast iron railings to buildings on street facades should always be preserved and, where damaged, should only be repaired by skilled tradesmen experienced in repairing cast iron or traditional wrought iron.

Broken or decayed sections of decorative cast iron ventilator grilles to shopfront stall risers should be repaired or replaced in matching material and patterns.

Opportunities should be sought for the removal of unsightly metal escape stairs to the rear of commercial properties wherever they arise.

Opportunities exist for replacing existing gates at the ends of closes with examples made by artist blacksmiths, perhaps as part of a coordinated programme of enhancement, tied in with the public realm.

4.36.1 Elgin has suffered from the loss of decorative cast iron railings cut down for the war effort, but examples have survived in a few of the closes, some of them in a slightly damaged state. There is a good set of decorative railings, gate piers and gates surviving at St Giles, next to Braco's Banking House at the east end of the High Street.

4.36.2 A few buildings on the High Street of the late nineteenth century have cast iron railings fitted to projecting balconies. They appear to be to standard patterns, and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the streetscape. Other decorative metalwork can be found in unexpected places, for instance above close entries. Original gates at the entries to closes have all been removed.

4.36.3 There is a fine bracket in the shape of a bull's head supporting a lantern at 82 High Street.

4.36.4 Less attractive are the metal escape stairs which have been added to the rear of commercial buildings in the city centre.

Decorative architectural ironwork to buildings on the High Street

Cast iron railings within the closes, wrought and cast iron panels at close entries, light bracket and hooped railings to front gardens on South Street

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: Boundary ironwork: a guide to reinstatement

HISTORIC SCOTLAND INFORM GUIDE: The maintenance of iron gates and railings
MANAGING CHANGE: Boundaries
MANAGING CHANGE: External fixtures

4.37 Trees and shrubs

Importance of trees in defining the edge of the conservation area at the east end

There will be a presumption against felling trees within the conservation area with a reasonable life expectancy providing they are not dangerous, or likely to cause major structural damage. Arboricultural works such as lopping or topping should be kept to a minimum, consistent with the health of the tree. Where trees have been lost, replacement trees of a suitable species should be planted.

The northwest boundary of the conservation area has the potential to be softened by tree planting to reinstate the character of the closes which had been lost when the relief road was inserted.

4.37.1 Trees are important elements of the wider landscape setting of the conservation area, and are prominent in key views into the city centre from the east. They are also important in connecting the conservation area visually with the designed landscape of the Cooper Park, of which it had been a part until the relief road was cut through in the late 1970s. There are mature trees along the northeast edge of the conservation area, and at the eastern extremity of the High Street, where they are important elements in framing the views out of the conservation area and towards the cathedral.

4.37.2 Study of historic photographs reveals the extent to which the gardens of the houses in the closes softened the northern fringes of the conservation area, a feature which appears to have been lost in its entirety once the relief road had been inserted.

4.37.3 At the western extremity of the conservation area, the mature trees within the large walled garden of the private house at St Michael's provide welcome relief in the townscape, acting as a transition between the villa developments to the immediate west and the buildings on South Street, where the majority are built up on the back of the pavement line. The finest tree specimen within the entire conservation area sits prominently within the garden to Highfield House adjacent to the road junction.

Trees at the heart of the conservation area provide colour, shade, texture and scale


Mature trees set in the grounds of large villas at the west end of the conservation area

5 Development within the conservation area

5.1 Opportunities for regeneration

5.1.1 It is recognised that the greatest opportunities for regenerating the commercial heart of the city rest with the imaginative plan for expanding the city northwards. Proposals set out in the 'City for the Future' appraisal promise to attract greater inward investment, and to knit the fragmented parts of the city back together. With this also

come risks, unless policies are put in place to encourage the redevelopment and enhancement of the buildings and public realm within the conservation area. Without these policies being in place there is a perceived risk that commercial activity will move away from the streets to the south of the High Street. There are already signs that this has happened from the number of gap sites and redundant buildings that have emerged in recent years on South Street. The City for the Future team had recognised these risks in setting the first of five platforms for the regeneration of Elgin which the term was coined 'High Street First'.

A soulless modern building having a marked negative effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area at a key node point at the corner between Batchen Street and the High Street

5.1.2 Assuming that the plans set out in the 'City for the Future' document are capable of being implemented, greater pressure will be placed on making the physical links between the developments and public open space to the north of the conservation area and the High Street more attractive than they are presently. Within these opportunities lies the potential to reinvigorate the closes on the north side of the High Street, and to clear away the poorer quality modern structures that detract from the close ends and which are at present highly visible from the relief road.

5.1.3 It is recognised in the conservation area appraisal that the closes are potentially one of Elgin's greatest assets – active shop frontages on the High Street are to a certain extent interdependent on levels of activity within the closes. They rely on them for providing attractive environments for business and residential use. The closes are also important for providing permeability through the street blocks from the other parts of the city and from the peripheral car parks. Several areas were identified where these links are failing. Associated problems are inactive frontages to the buildings within the closes, or in some cases even the redundancy of whole lengths of buildings within the closes on the north side of the High Street, of which poor condition does not always appear to be a contributing factor.

5.1.4 Other than by demolishing intrusive modern buildings on the High Street – which in many cases, no matter how much it might be encouraged, may not be a realistic option – there are few opportunities for redevelopment on the High Street, unless expansion into the closes is possible. An objective should be in encouraging owners of commercial premises to ensure that the upper floors of buildings on the High Street are fully utilised to bring life back into the

heart of the city. Although there are relatively few redundant buildings within the street frontages of the High Street, every effort should be made to bring the upper floors back into use.

5.1.5 Greater potential for redevelopment exists within the closes, where a number of gap sites were observed, or modern buildings of little merit which were either redundant, or substantially underused. In some of the closes redevelopment of sites has been tentative. There have been problems in completing developments for which consents have been granted because of the current economic climate. Redundant buildings should be brought back into use and the amenity of the closes improved from enhancing the public realm. A highly desirable objective would be to bring the Newmarket Close back into active use and redevelop the site to the rear, bound in by the properties on the High Street and Batchen Street.

Inactive, or under-used closes

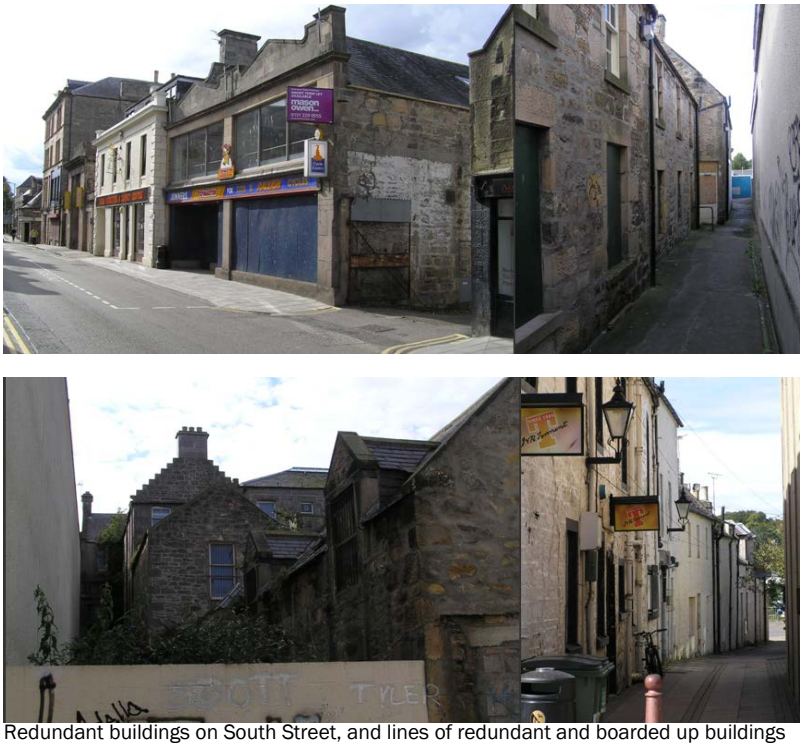
5.1.6 There would be merit in the Council preparing masterplans of the key development sites falling within the conservation area, to stimulate interest in their redevelopment and to provide an integrated planning policy framework for the commercial heart of the city.

5.1.7 While, as noted above, it may be unrealistic to expect that modern structures, considered to be damaging to the character and appearance of the conservation area might be demolished other than on commercial grounds, it might be possible to consider how extensions to the rear can be either modified or demolished to permit greater commercial use to be made of the closes and the backlands which have been harmed by them. It would be desirable to return building frontages within the closes, presently having window and door openings blocked up, to active beneficial use.

5.2 Degraded sites and buildings: Buildings at Risk

5.2.1 A list of buildings considered to be currently at risk is included in Section 5.7 of the conservation area appraisal. Buildings at risk which are in considerable disrepair, or have been boarded up, have a

marked negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Moreover, they can detract from the efforts of other property owners who have invested in the enhancement of their properties. They are also one of the clearest indicators of the health of the local economy. While there are always challenges imposed by the appearance of redundant buildings within the streetscape, empty shop units can have a particularly harmful effect on public perceptions of what may constitute a healthy and successful retail centre.



Redundant buildings on South Street, and lines of redundant and boarded up buildings within the closes

5.2.2 It is acknowledged that lists of buildings at risk will vary from time to time as buildings may be declared redundant due to a changing economic climate. Other factors may be prompted by a change in ownership, or from a business relocating to elsewhere. Buildings may be taken off the Buildings at Risk Register when redevelopment proposals get underway for any individual building or a site involving a group of properties. It will be incumbent upon the Council to monitor the list on a regular basis, and establish effective measures to encourage repair and redevelopment where this may be appropriate.

5.2.3 Certain buildings may prove difficult to secure compatible uses on account of their architectural importance, poor structural condition, building type, size, or location, or due to other factors. In cases where redevelopment may not be possible commercially, consideration may be given to encouraging feasibility studies to be carried out with the benefit of public funding, to look at a range of possible options for buildings or sites of high architectural or historic importance. In such cases the assistance of a building preservation trust (BPT) may be sought.

5.3 Archaeology

5.3.1 There have been various archaeological investigations in advance of development in the city which have provided a certain amount of evidence for past ways of life in medieval and post-medieval Elgin, as well as an indication of the nuances of likely survival of archaeological

deposits. Recent work at the eighteenth century mill site by the river at Deanshaugh, beyond the bounds of the burgh, is a timely reminder of the geographical spread of Elgin's economic foundations.

Archaeological survivals embedded in the fabric of the conservation area

5.3.2 The potential wealth and extent of the medieval resource within the current conservation area and beyond should not be under-estimated: arguably only evidence associated with the medieval burghs of Perth and St Andrews seems to have survived to a greater degree. This is reflected in the *Scottish Burgh Survey of Elgin: the archaeological implications of development* (1982) and its updated version (1995/6), to which reference should be made.

5.3.3 Developers and their agents would be expected to be familiar with these documents, although the ever-increasing knowledge base does mean that liaison with the Council's appointed archaeological adviser regarding the archaeological implications of change is imperative, as advised in PAN 2/2011 and Historic Scotland's Technical Advice Note (TAN) 27 *Development and Archaeology in Historic Towns and Cities.* The consequences of proposed developments may range from desk-based assessments and recording of standing buildings to invasive work in advance of, or during, building works.

5.3.4 Opportunities to add to the current knowledge of the archaeological resource within the conservation area should be taken, irrespective of whether development is being considered. Sites where merit in conducting a building record survey for standing archaeology are the 1694 former merchant's house freshly discovered on North College Street; Thunderton House; and the White Horse Inn and properties to the rear where the core of the foreland property is believed to incorporate a structure of seventeenth century date.

5.4 Demolition and rebuilding

5.4.1 There will be a presumption against the demolition of buildings within the conservation area where they make either a neutral, or positive, contribution to the historic townscape, whether or not the building is listed. For unlisted buildings, for the case for demolition to be made, it will need to be demonstrated that the structure has a negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Conservation Area Consent will be required for the demolition of any building within the conservation area boundary.

5.4.2 The demolition of buildings in conservation areas and replacement buildings is strictly controlled and will be governed by the tests set out in clauses 3.58-3.60 of Scottish Historic Environment Policy (July 2009) (SHEP). Further guidance is set out in the Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Demolition leaflet (2010).

5.4.3 Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of any structure within the conservation area will not be granted in isolation of considering the extent to which a replacement scheme has the potential to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Design guidance set out in Section 6 should be taken into account when considering the appropriateness of any replacement building. The demolition of an unlisted building within the conservation area should, in addition, comply with Policy BE3: Conservation Areas of the Moray Local Plan 2008.

5.4.4 The demolition of a listed building, or part of a listed building, within the conservation area will be subject to satisfying one, or more, of the tests set out in clause 3.44 of the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (July 2009) (SHEP). Further guidance is given in the Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Demolition leaflet (2010). The case for the demolition of a listed building must also comply with Policy BE2: Listed Buildings of the Moray Local Plan 2008.

5.5 Extensions to buildings

5.5.1 Extensions to buildings, and in particular to dwelling houses in the closes of the conservation area, will be likely to be governed by the constraints of the linear feuing patterns of the historic burgage plots. If carried out insensitively they can have a detrimental impact on the surrounding buildings and on the wider conservation area.

5.5.2 There will be a presumption against the building of porches or conservatories onto the facades of buildings unless historical evidence can be established that a similar structure had existed in the past, and that the proposal will be restoring historic precedent.

5.5.3 Extensions to existing properties should be subservient in scale and in volume to the original structure. Where extensions are proposed to the gable of a property, the roof ridge should not be greater in height than the main roof ridge and the symmetry of the principal façade, where appropriate, should always be observed. Wherever possible, extensions should be confined to the rear of properties for which there should be no relaxation of the design standards. The impact of an extension on the wider conservation area should always be taken into account. In certain cases where development will be visible, key views into the conservation area from outside the boundaries will require also to be taken into account.

5.5.4 Guidance set out in the leaflet Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Extensions (2010) should be observed.

5.5.5 There will be a presumption against the introduction of attic box dormer roof extensions, whether flat-roofed or Mansard in profile. This presumption applies equally to box dormers built directly off wallheads, those set back further from the edge of the roof, or box dormers derived from infilling the space between original dormers on the roof.

5.5.6 The design of extensions and the selection of materials for extensions to buildings should follow the general guidance set out in Sections 6.2 and 6.3.

Box dormer formed between two traditional attic dormers

5.6 Satellite dishes, aerials and surface wiring

5.6.1 Unless carefully sited, satellite dishes are intrusive elements within the streetscape and their fixings and associated surface cabling can be damaging to the fabric of historic buildings. They can be particularly damaging when large numbers of these fixtures appear on the same elevation where houses may be in multiple occupancy. There will be a presumption against them being seen on any elevation visible from public streets or from within the closes, including gables and chimneyheads.

5.6.2 Radio or television aerials, taken collectively with the associated brackets, poles and surface wiring, can have a disruptive effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Wherever possible, they should be mounted within roofspaces of buildings, or in locations where they will not be visible from public streets or closes.

Satellite dishes, surface wiring and overhead lines

5.6.3 Much of the surface wiring seen on property frontages within the conservation area relates to telecommunications equipment, some of which is redundant. Redundant wiring should always be removed, and wiring to new installations should be routed indoors rather than appearing on the frontages of properties.

5.6.4 Further guidance is given in Managing Change in the Historic Environment: External fixtures (2010) leaflet. Policy BE3: Conservation Areas of the Moray Local Plan 2008 also sets out requirements to be complied with.

5.7 Building services

5.7.1 Modern developments undertaken in the conservation area have demonstrated that it is possible to disguise air handling plant and air conditioning units in such a way that the equipment is not visible from ground level. The problem is more difficult to resolve with older buildings. Where heat exchanger units appear on external walls, or where air extractor units have been fitted to the sashes of windows, the visual impact is always high. The appearance of pitched roofs can be damaged by poorly sited extractor fan terminals, especially where oversized.

A roofscape of aerials, satellite dishes and makeshift structures for water header tanks

5.7.2 Where positioned within the roofscape to comply with the requirement not to be visible from ground level, consideration should always be given to the extent to which building services installations may be visible from higher vantage points to which the public may have access – for instance from Ladyhill, or from the upper decks of public car parks.

Heat exchangers and roof ventilation cowls and roof vents fitted to slating on a new building are intrusive elements within the conservation area

5.7.3 Efforts should be made to route flues for mechanical extractor fans through redundant masonry flues to terminate at chimneyheads,

provided this does not result in the loss of historic chimney cans. There will be a presumption against mounting extractor fans or terminals within the sashes of windows or on external walls.

5.7.4 Flue exhausts associated with restaurant or fast food preparation should be positioned so as to have minimal impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

5.8 Security equipment

5.8.1 Security alarm sounders may require to be positioned where they are obvious to intruders as a deterrent to entering the premises, and for surveillance in identifying the possibility of forced entry. Invariably the boxes are brightly coloured, and positioned without regard to the architectural features of the building. Redundant alarm boxes are unsightly and should always be removed.

5.8.2 There are numerous examples of badly sited security alarm boxes in the conservation area. Consideration should always be given to mounting security alarms on elevations other than the principal street elevation where this is possible, or on overhanging eaves. If this is not possible the unit should be mounted having regard to the architectural features of the façade, for instance, centred on gables at high level or aligned with shop fascia boards. Units should be restrained in appearance and should not be brightly coloured. Wiring should never be visible.

5.8.3 Care should always be taken over the siting of security cameras, lights or other equipment. These features should never be prominent within the streetscape. Projecting brackets should be simple in design. As for security alarms, all surface wiring should be avoided.

5.8.4 Further guidance is given in Managing Change in the Historic Environment: External fixtures (2010) leaflet.

5.9 Sundry fixings

5.9.1 All fittings and fixtures referred to in the above categories should be positioned to minimise permanent damage being caused to the fabric of buildings throughout the conservation area. Walls of sandstone ashlar are particularly vulnerable to damage from being punctuated by fixing holes, revealed after the fixture has been removed. Consideration should always be given to selecting masonry joints for fixings where this may be appropriate.

5.9.2 Fixtures should never be fixed permanently to walling throughout the conservation area other than by stainless steel or non-ferrous fixings. Where iron fixings are left embedded in masonry, they should always be drilled out and the hole patch-repaired to avoid the risk of rust expansion damaging the masonry in the longer term.

5.9.3 Permanent installations for Christmas lights have been noted as being intrusive, and are detrimental to the appearance of the conservation area. Consideration should be given to ensuring that they are removed outside the festive season and reinstated or replaced as required. Fixings for festive lights should comply with 5.9.1 above.

5.9.4 Further guidance is given in Managing Change in the Historic Environment: External fixtures (2010) leaflet.

5.10 Micro-renewables

5.10.1 Not unlike satellite dishes (5.5 above) a profusion of visible micro-renewable installations in the form of wind turbines will have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area. To be cost-effective and efficient in operation freestanding wind turbines will be highly visible and incapable of being disguised, and will be likely to have an impact on the setting of individual buildings as well as the wider conservation area. In general there will be a presumption against the approval of building-mounted and freestanding wind turbines.

5.10.2 Solar or photovoltaic panels with careful siting, behind parapets or within the valleys of roofs, can be acceptable and preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. Other than on key building facades the use of roof unit-sized panels may be deemed appropriate. Consideration should be given always to the extent to which these features may be visible from higher vantage points to which the public has access in the conservation area.

5.10.3 Further guidance is given in the leaflets in the Managing Change in the Historic Environment (2010) series for Roofs and Micro-renewables.

5.11 Improvements to the public realm

Exemplary standards in the public realm: the war memorial by Percy Portsmouth, floral displays and the improvements to hard landscaping at the Plainstones

5.11.1 The pedestrianisation of the High Street in the 1990s and the associated improvements to the public realm have greatly improved the streetscape and allow a greater appreciation of the street's fine buildings and the views east and west. The Council will continue to monitor the condition of the public realm in the conservation area and will take action to maintain surface materials and features as necessary.

5.11.2 More recently, the pedestrianisation and resurfacing of Batchen Street has been undertaken. It has enhanced the setting of the surviving cast iron shopfronts and commercial buildings and has improved the pedestrian environment on this length of street, which is now substantially free from traffic. These improvements have however highlighted the patchy public realm elsewhere in the conservation area and opportunities exist for major change. Road and pavement surfaces in South Street are generally standard with uneven

pavements resulting from roads and utilities work. The Council will consider opportunities to upgrade the pavement surfaces on South Street, to better reflect the high quality of the historic built environment in this area.

Good standards in the public realm – well maintained planting schemes and surviving details of historic stone drains and cobbles in the closes

5.11.3 Many of the closes are in private ownership and the surface finishes vary considerably. Some have become degraded or have been altered inappropriately. There are good examples of surviving historic surfaces in these areas and examples of improvement schemes which have enhanced the character of these areas. There is an opportunity for significant enhancement here. The closes provide characterful pedestrian links between the High Street, South Street and northwards to Alexandra Road, but in many cases the potential of these routes is not being realised. On both South Street and to the north, towards Alexandra Road, few of the entries into the closes are finished attractively, or look appealing. The Council will work with the private owners of the closes in seeking to make improvements, encouraging a high quality and consistent approach, and highlighting historic features, such as drains and cobbles, which should be retained.

Poor standards in the public realm: unsupervised, or bland and uninvited spaces

5.11.5 The conservation area abounds in a variety of street furniture, much of which is in a 'heritage' style. The best streetscapes are often those where the 'clutter' of street furniture and signage is kept to a minimum and the Council will consider the cumulative impact of such features

on the conservation area when considering proposals for change. Improvements are under consideration by Elgin BID.

5.11.6 There is an opportunity to take a more creative approach to street furniture and signage within the conservation area, to create features which are truly local and appropriate, and which enhance the character of the conservation area. The Council will explore opportunities to improve existing street furniture to ensure that it reinforces local character.

Attractive private gardens at the heart of the conservation area

5.11.7 Attractive gardens – some semi-public, and some private – have been created within the backlands of the closes and provide an indication of how attractive these areas can be made to look with creativity and a commitment to ongoing maintenance.

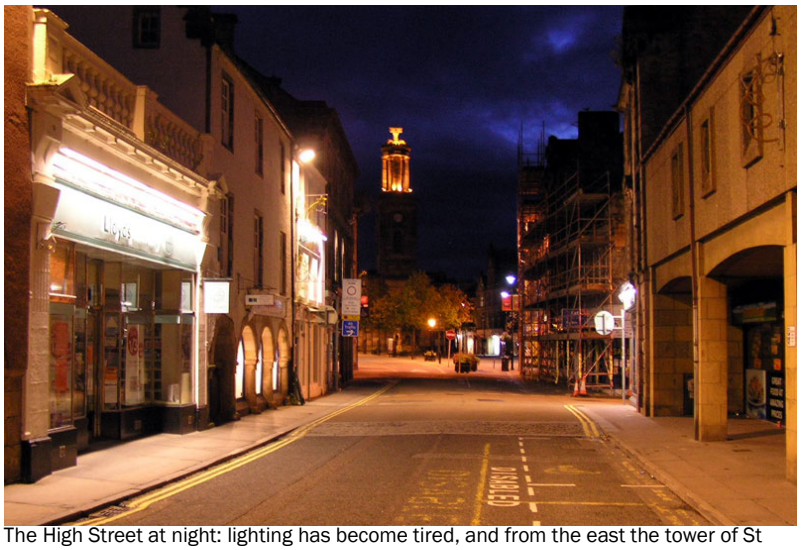
5.11.8 Consideration should be given to marking the ends of the closes with specially designed gates, the design of which might identify the old name of the close. Gates replacing old gates which have been removed during the Second World War should be of consistent design, and of high quality. Closes may also be identified by their names set within the paving of the streets, of which some examples exist at the present.

5.11.9 Opportunities to make improvements to interpretation and information for visitors will be addressed in more detail in the proposals for the interpretive plan for the heritage trail (Part 4).

5.12 Lighting and the public realm

5.12.1 The extent to which movement of vehicles and pedestrians tails off on weekday evenings has been remarked upon in the character area appraisal. After hours the central character zone is almost devoid of street frontages with life of any kind, and opportunities to use the installed lighting of signage and shopfronts is not always taken up with some of the lights switched off. The central area of the High Street is much less appealing than it could be if opportunities were to be taken up and the lighting of the area enhanced.

5.12.2 The mounting of street lights on the facades of buildings has been successful in removing the unnecessary clutter of street light columns. While they have been retained in the pedestrianised area of the High Street they are of an appropriate heritage design for the setting and of a diminished scale. Street lighting columns have been left at both extremities of the High Street and are much less successful. St Giles Church, the focus of the street, was installed some years ago with a ‘state-of-the-art’ floodlighting scheme. While the tower of the church has been illuminated, it appears detached from the rest of the building when viewed from the east end of the High Street.



The High Street at night: lighting has become tired, and from the east the tower of St Giles Church appears to have become detached from the townscape

Attractive illumination of shop signs on the High Street

5.12.3 Although the lighting of the heart of the conservation area has been successful, the over-reliance on sodium lighting detracts from the effectiveness of the lighting schemes, as technology has moved on in the intervening period. Lighting of public spaces appears tired, and the conservation area would benefit from a creative lighting scheme to enhance the appearance of the principal buildings and spaces of the principal thoroughfares. Uplighting might be introduced to illuminate the foliage of the trees around the Plainstones. The lighting scheme introduced at the Duke of Gordon's column at Ladyhill shows how effective modern floodlighting systems can be.

5.12.5 In contrast, some of the closes are very poorly illuminated at night, to the extent that they become unattractive spaces which are little used

in hours of darkness. There are considerable opportunities for enhancing these 'dead' spaces through imaginative lighting which would have the added merit of improving personal safety.

6 Design standards

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 In acknowledging the damage that had been caused to the character and appearance of the conservation area from poorly designed development in the 1960s and 1970s, the Council will seek to encourage the highest standards of design for new buildings and the public realm, in line with Scottish Government policy. The objective will be to ensure that proposed development causes no harm to the conservation area and, moreover, that it should always enhance it.

6.1.2 Where the demolition of any historic building, or buildings, within the conservation area may be proposed, and is deemed appropriate in principle (see 5.3), the Council will seek to ensure that the replacement building, or buildings, will be of a higher standard than the structures being replaced. Designs for replacement buildings will be expected to make a positive contribution to the historic townscape and restore any values that may have been damaged by development in the past.

6.2 Design guidance

6.2.1 The Council will encourage the appointment of agents with the appropriate conservation, architectural and urban design skills to understand and apply the design guidance to development projects within the conservation area.

6.2.2 Reference should be made to the conservation area appraisal, in which those architectural features making a positive contribution to the historic townscape of Elgin are identified as a potential source for inspiring contemporary designers in the preparation of contextual designs for new buildings in the conservation area. For the design of new buildings it should always be borne in mind that the overriding requirement is to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, and its setting.

6.2.3 The advisory guidelines set down in Section 4 of this document should also be referred to, in order to avoid replication of elements of construction or materials considered to have been damaging to the appearance of the conservation area in the past.

6.2.4 A pastiche of features of past historic architectural styles should be avoided so as not to confuse, or devalue history. External wall construction should be appropriate for the use of architectural detail. For example, it is difficult to make skews look convincing when they are used in conjunction with timber frame construction, and they should never be of a width less than that used traditionally. Equally, chimneyheads should always be of solid masonry construction and of traditional width. Chimneyheads of the same width as the skews never appear satisfactory. Gables in the conservation area tend to look better with chimneyheads where it appropriate to accommodate them, but the functional purpose of a building should never be falsified through design.

6.2.5 Scale is an important element of architectural design, and may vary for different locations within the conservation area. A good example of

this is St Giles Church on the Plainstones. Although a structure of only two storeys with a tower that soars to a greater number of equivalent storeys, as a public building it displays a scale that is appropriate for its civic function and central location. The scale of the building is enhanced from the fact that it is a freestanding element within the townscape. A not dissimilar sense of enhanced scale is experienced in the civic and institutional buildings at the east end of the High Street. Within a varied townscape, their scale is enhanced from the fact that they may be set back from the pavement line.

6.2.6 The characteristic general height and scale of the rows of buildings at the west end of the High Street tend to be more regular, and less varied than elsewhere in the conservation area. Impressions of scale and height of buildings on Batchen Street and Commerce Street are informed by the relative narrow width of the streets. On Commerce Street there is welcome variation in the middle of the street where the Elgin Club, a tall building within the streetscape, abuts the former single storey bank frontage. The scale and height of buildings on South Street is also much more varied, with some tall buildings to be found here of an equivalent four storeys of domestic height. Tall buildings proposed on South Street must take into account the impact on the wider conservation area, being located on higher ground.

St Giles Church dominates the conservation area, a perception which is reinforced in the views over the roofscape from Ladyhill: tall buildings on South Street, to the right of the photograph, have the potential to dominate the townscape from being located on higher ground

6.2.7 In common with many historic burghs with royal charters planned on a medieval layout, consisting of a principal street with development laid

out at right angles to it along the burgage plots, the buildings fronting the High Street on the forelands are invariably of a greater scale and height than those within the closes. Historically, being the more important buildings, they will normally have taller floor to ceiling heights for architectural reasons, and in order to accommodate enhanced retail activity on the ground floor. In any new development within the closes a sense of descending scale should always be acknowledged in the design of new buildings, or in any extension proposed to an existing building.

6.2.8 New development should recognise that the established urban grain reflects the medieval plan. Due attention should be given to the linearity of the terraces of buildings laid out along the street frontages, or on the closes which tend to follow the line of the old burgage plots. Within the courts the narrow gable widths and heights, which will often reflect the descending scale referred to above, should be reflected in the design for any new development. Roof pitches of traditional buildings would be rarely outside the range of between 40 and 45°, except in the case of buildings pre-dating the early eighteenth century in which case they would be steeper. It is rarely satisfactory for buildings to straddle the width of burgage plots, and be given wider gables than would be the norm.

Problems of relative scale: while the tall block of the St Giles Centre does not challenge the height of the tower of St Giles Church within the wider conservation area, it dwarfs the adjoining terraces of traditional houses within the closes

The height, roof form and choice of materials are such as to render this new building disruptive within the established urban grain of the western end of the conservation area

6.2.9 Overall increases in density, height and scale are unlikely to be appropriate for sites where these characteristics within the existing historic townscape are less than those being proposed.

6.2.10 The rhythm of existing street frontages should always be observed, in terms of established plot widths, and the punctuation of wall surfaces which may vary between ground and the upper floors depending on differing functional uses. Rarely are traditional openings within walls other than vertically proportioned, acknowledging the limitations of traditional materials (for instance, the span of stone lintols). Where horizontality is adopted, or 'picture windows' installed, the rhythm of the street is invariably disrupted. Good design acknowledges that the proportion of the openings is not the only consideration – the numbers of openings and their positions within the elevation is a matter of importance in terms of the overall proportions. Designers and builders achieved this intuitively in the past.

6.2.11 The subdivision of wall openings is also of importance for maintaining the character of the conservation area; rarely in the past were large, unsubdivided panes of glass used for a single window opening due to technological restraints, aesthetic preferences, and the need to provide effective ventilation. Where panes are subdivided, inspiration may be found from the past in terms of proportions and appearance, but horizontal proportions are usually best avoided. Astragals should not be applied to the surface of the glass as 'mock' astragals as they never look convincing, and give a different appearance to where the glass panes themselves are subdivided.

6.2.12 Inspiration may be found from studying how buildings which make a strong contribution to the townscape were embellished in the past by decorative features such as finials or string courses to break up large unrelieved areas of walling.

6.2.13 Dormers introduced to provide additional interest in the roofscape should be carefully designed and detailed from an understanding of historical precedent. Modern dormer windows are often detailed clumsily, and can detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

6.2.14 For buildings on the High Street there will be a presumption against the use of timber eaves boards or bargeboards for main roofs in the design of new buildings.

6.3 Materials for new developments, or extensions to existing structures

6.3.1 There will be a presumption in favour of walls being finished in the following materials throughout the conservation area:

- Natural stone, with coursing, colour, texture and pointing to reflect traditional examples within the conservation area
- Lime ashlared renders or stuccoes, for limewashing or coating with traditional paints
- Traditional wet harling or roughcast, for painting or limewashing as appropriate, but only within the closes, and subject always to the approval of samples
- Smooth render for painting – the use of self-coloured modern proprietary renders may be considered appropriate, but only within the closes, and subject to approval of samples
- Brick should be used sparingly and should reflect historic precedent, and only in situations which will not be prominent when viewed from within the conservation area

6.3.2 It should be noted that finishes proposed for external walls should take into account the location of the development site within the conservation area. Types of finishes may vary according to the

character zone – for instance, in the central character zone the frontages of the buildings on the High Street will have a greater proportion of sandstone ashlar walls compared with the other character zones.

6.3.3 There will be a presumption against the use of dry-dash finishes of any type throughout the conservation area. Timber panelling should be confined to use as wall linings and should not be the predominant finish in any elevation. There will be a further presumption against the introduction of materials and techniques of building that may be alien to the conservation area, for which there is no precedent in this part of Moray.

Wall finishes in the closes: an unattractive dense cement wet-dash harled finish with coloured cement quoins (which is failing) and a property rendered with a dry-dash finish and re-roofed with interlocking concrete roof tiles

6.3.4 Roof finishes should be normally of blue/black natural slate; the specification of new slate as opposed to salvaged slate is encouraged for new developments so as to preserve stocks of salvaged material for old roofs. Imported slate must be selected with great care, and should match the traditional roofs of the conservation area in terms of texture, colour, coursing and general appearance. It is not uncommon to see slate roofs which appear alien within the conservation area from being too black, or too shiny.

6.3.5 Concrete tile ridges and hips as components of proprietary roofing systems will not be permitted, and there will be a presumption against the use of black clay ridge tiles. In those parts of the conservation area where these elements appear, eaves boards and bargeboards should be of durable timber for painting – uPVC or other proprietary maintenance-free cladding systems will not be permitted.

6.3.6 Where for reasons of architectural design low pitched or flat roofed finishes may be appropriate, because of the pitch being unsuited to slate, roof finishes should be of traditionally detailed lead, zinc, or of terne-coated stainless steel. There will be a presumption against highly reflective aluminium or proprietary standing seam systems, polymer, GRP or other high performance roofing felts or coatings where these finishes may be visible from street level throughout the conservation area.

6.3.7 Windows and doors should be normally of timber for painting and should not be standard stock items and should be purpose-designed for the conservation area; there will be a presumption against the use

of uPVC windows or doors, or mock timber units of the same, or similar, materials.

6.3.8 Colour in the conservation area should be used sparingly and have regard to historical precedent.

6.3.9 Rainwater goods should be durable, generally of cast-iron or aluminium for painting. There will be a presumption against the use of uPVC or GRP rainwater goods for new development in the conservation area.

6.3.10 Shopfronts should respect historical precedent (see 4.32 and 4.33). There will be a presumption against the use of proprietary aluminium shopfront systems in the conservation area.

6.4 Supplementary information

6.4.1 Proposals that involve the infilling of gap sites, or the demolition of structures and replacement with new buildings, will be expected to show in the documentation accompanying the application the development site in its context within the wider conservation area. In order to meet this requirement models or other three-dimensional media, including computer generated images will be encouraged.

6.4.2 There will be an expectation that the development site should be shown in relation to the whole of the street elevation. Applications for developments on corner sites should be shown in the context of the impact on each of the street corners, and on the adjoining street elevations. Where proposed development affects the larger part of any street elevation, there will be an expectation that street elevations for the adjoining blocks within the street block will also be shown to assess the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the wider conservation area or, in appropriate cases, on its setting.

7 Planning Controls

7.1 Article 4 Directions

7.1.1 The Council recognises the importance of managing change, and in particular of alterations and extensions to unlisted buildings within a conservation area. Within the Elgin High Street Conservation Area it is proposed that similar conditions should apply as for listed buildings. The historic fabric that survives in the city results in outstanding townscape qualities, and the guidance and recommendations set out in Section 4 of this document to preserve this significance will be promoted as setting standards for good conservation and repair practice.

7.1.2 Accordingly the Council, after having adopted the conservation area management plan, will give consideration to seeking Article 4 Directions of Scottish Government in relation to permitted development under the General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992.

7.1.3 The Council intends to review the desirability of applying Article 4 Directions pending the outcome of the consultation on the GDPO Amendment 2011 which may lead to legislative revisions under the Act.

7.2 Planning measures and enforcement

7.2.1 In pursuit of the aims to preserve and enhance the Elgin High Street Conservation Area the Council, as the planning authority, will be committed to the issuing of planning enforcement notices in cases of unauthorised development for the demolition, or partial demolition, of a building within the conservation area, or for its alteration or extension in ways that affects its character.

7.2.2 In considering whether to issue planning enforcement notices Article 4 Directions under the General Permitted Development Order, if implemented, will be considered to be material.

7.2.3 The Council will be committed to monitoring the condition of the historic fabric of buildings within the conservation area. Where a property is in poor condition and considered to be at risk, consideration will be given to issuing a building repairs notice under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. This action will be adopted where there are early indications of decay in the interests of securing the future of the building and long term uses for its survival, and when costs of undertaking effective repair will be relatively inexpensive.

7.2.4 In the case of a property where the condition is considered to be deteriorating rapidly, and to be at risk, for levels of intervention which may involve temporary support and protection, or by carrying out emergency repairs, an Urgent Repairs Notice will be instructed. If not acted upon within the statutory timescales, work will be undertaken by the Council and the cost of such repairs may be recovered from the owner of the property. Before taking this action the Council will undertake to consult with the owner of the property. A repairs notice may be withdrawn at any time.

7.2.5 Where the conditions of a building repairs notice have not been observed, the Council will seek the approval of Scottish Government to acquire the property by Compulsory Purchase Order. The subjects for acquisition may include neighbouring land for the amenity of the building and for access to it for its protection and future management.

8 Implementation and review

8.1 Preamble

8.1.1 Clear recommendations were set out in Section 12 of the conservation area character appraisal for monitoring and reviewing proposed action, and on the need to engage with key stakeholders and with the wider community in Elgin. Actions in the past have not always been taken in the interests of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. Standards in the repair of historic buildings, and in the design of new development, have left much to be desired and damage has been caused, however unintentionally.

8.1.2 Suggested performance indicators were set out in the character appraisal (Section 12.2.1), and for ease of reference they are repeated here:

- the redevelopment of undeveloped sites which preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area

- improvements to shopfronts and fascias
- reduction in the number of empty shops
- return to use of vacant floorspace at the upper floors of properties on the High Street
- reduction in the number of entries on the Buildings at Risk Register (BARR)
- evidence of improved conservation standards being adopted
- evidence of improved skills in the conservation of historic fabric
- enhanced public realm, for instance in the number of private closes improved
- review of the success of any CARS scheme, priority projects, and any other publicly funded works
- review of the impact of guidance set out in the conservation area management plan
- tangible evidence that interpretation introduced in conjunction with improvements to the public realm are responding to the needs of visitors and residents

8.1.3 For effective monitoring to take place, the need to embark upon preliminary surveys in order to establish reliable baseline data was recognised, and is endorsed in this document.

8.1.4 The future of the conservation area cannot be reliant upon actions being taken by the Council alone. It is evident that reacting to change, rather than managing it in a positive way, has not been satisfactory as an approach. Despite the guidelines set down in successive Local Plans and national guidance on managing change within conservation areas, damage to the character and appearance of the Elgin High Street Conservation Area has continued through the incremental erosion of the qualities for which the area had been designated. Without effective controls being put in place a distinct loss of authenticity of historic fabric becomes a real possibility. The conservation area management plan, once adopted, will set the agenda for change, but change can only be possible with the willing support of owners of historic buildings within the conservation area.

8.1.5 An important first step will be to proceed with setting up the monitoring group to work with the Council in meeting its objectives. The monitoring group should include representatives from interested local organisations to work with the Ward Councillors and the Council's officers over the implementation of the conservation area management plan.

8.2 Communications and conservation awareness

8.2.1 The buildings of the Elgin High Street Conservation Area suffer from a number of problems in common, highlighted in both this document and in the conservation area appraisal. Upon receipt of CARS funding, if an application is successful, it is proposed to provide dedicated advice on the repair of historic buildings with the full support of Historic Scotland. This will be of considerable help in raising standards throughout the conservation area, and in giving assistance over routes to funding repairs and improvements.

8.2.2 Close contact with property owners in the conservation area would be beneficial through leaflet drops to encourage greater awareness of the conservation area. Opportunities should be explored for creating conservation awareness through conducting workshops on the

maintenance of historic buildings, or from seminars related to individual topics, for instance, on the subject of traditional shopfronts.

8.3 Skills training in conservation

8.3.1 A programme for conservation awareness among property owners should be matched by a programme for improving skills for those working on historic buildings, and in providing targeted helpful advice on the procurement of specialised materials, such as building limes, castings for rainwater systems, matching clay chimney cans or on the selection of building stones appropriate to the conservation area. There are a number of organisations operating in the historic environment sector which could be called upon to assist with this initiative.

8.4 Promotion of the conservation area

8.4.1 Guidance is given in the conservation area management plan on the potential for improving understanding of the history of the city through enhanced interpretation of its history and development, and of those who shaped it in the past. An effective heritage trail for the principal attractions of the city centre could build upon some of the excellent local history publications that have been prepared already by the Council and by individual authors on behalf of the Moray Society.

8.5 Arrangements for review

8.5.1 Recommendations set out in the character appraisal are repeated in the clauses that follow.

8.5.2 Review of the conservation area character appraisal and the conservation area management plan should be instigated in the first instance by the managers of the committees listed in 8.6.3. It should take into account feedback from the conservation area monitoring group and an evaluation of agreed performance indicators as recommended in 8.1.2 above.

8.5.3 Recommendations following any review should be considered by the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee, and by the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee of the Council, or their equivalents, at the time when the review is carried out.

8.5.4 The conservation area appraisal and the conservation area management plan should be reviewed on a regular basis. It is suggested that this should be quinquennially.

9 Appendices

9.1 Existing conservation area boundaries

9.2 Glossary of architectural and building terms

ELGIN CONSERVATION AREAS - HIGH STREET AND ELGIN SOUTH
ELGIN
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Glossary of architectural and building terms

AGGLOMERATE	Building stone composed of smaller stones such as pebbles bound with a sand matrix and fused together by volcanic activity
AGGREGATE	Pebbles or sand used in mortars or concrete mixes as a binder
ANNULET	Horizontal rings around a column shaft
ANODISED	Treatment to aluminium frame members to improve weathering; allows the introduction of colour
ARCHITRAVE	Moulded surround to an opening or recess based on classical architecture
ARMORIAL PANELS	Decorative panel of carved stonework, often carrying the arms or insignia of the institution, family or families, and also monograms and dates
ASHLAR	Fine rubbed sandstone or other stone to provide walling of great precision
ASHLARED RENDER	Smooth render finish to masonry, with pointing lines added to resemble finished stonework
ASTRAGAL	Wooden glazing bar between window frames, usually moulded on the inner face
BACKLANDS	Land behind 'foreland' properties, set out on the pattern of the old medieval burgage plots – may refer to ground occupied by buildings or undeveloped land
BALUSTERS	Shaped posts of timber or stone at regular intervals supporting a handrail
BARGEBOARD	The end board of a roof occurring at gables, normally overhanging the wall
BEADED PANELLING	Panels, often in doors or window shutters, with a fine applied moulding inset from the framing moulding to emphasise the design
BOLECTION	Applied moulding to a wooden panelled door, projecting beyond the surface
BOOTSCRAPER	Iron bar, often found within a masonry recess at the principal entry into a dwelling or tenement

BOSS	Knob, or projection, which may appear on a string course of a wall, or in a vault at the point where ribs intersect
BOX DORMER	A large continuous flat-roofed dormer, often built directly off the wallhead to give height to attic rooms
BRATTISHING	Decorative metalwork, normally of cast-iron, found at roof ridges, parapets, bay windows or porches at wallheads
BURGAGE PLOTS	Long strips of land defined at the time of setting out the medieval layout of a historic burgh for accommodating phased development to the rear of a property on a principal street
CASEMENT	Side, or top-hung window
CAST-IRON	Brittle metal formed into complex mouldings by casting on sand beds
CAT-SLIDE	Describing the sloping roof of a dormer which is built into the roof, set at a slightly lower pitch than the main roof
CAVETTO	A hollow moulding, with its moulding a quadrant of a circle, used principally in cornices and early 19th century chimney copes
CEMENT	Used in building mortars to achieve a rapid set; from the mid-19th century the term normally relates to Portland cement which gradually replaced lime as the set is faster and has greater initial strength
CHAMFERRED	Angled surface, often appearing around wall openings to provide a more elegant margin
CHERRY COCKING	From 'caulking': a decorative treatment given to mortar joints consisting of small stones laid within the pointing to the wall, normally for better class work
CHIMNEY CAN	The clay pot at the head of the chimney
CHIMNEYHEAD	Masonry structure for carrying flue gases from internal fireplaces
CILL	Horizontal piece of stone or timber at the base of a wall opening
CLAY RIDGE TILES	Fired red or yellow clay formed into profiles for roof ridges or hips; later examples will often have a black surface treatment

CLOURED	Masonry hammer-dressed back to a plain surface
CONCRETE	Building material set within timber moulds or shutters, of Portland cement and aggregates of sand and pebbles, reinforced with steel bars or mesh
CONSERVATION	All of the processes of looking after a site or building so as to retain its cultural significance
CONSERVATOR	Highly trained and skilled craftsperson with expert knowledge of the conservation of works of art; in historic buildings the skills may relate to sculpture, carved architectural detail, ceramic tiles, or decorative and stained glass
CONSOLE (BRACKET)	Decorative bracket supporting a cornice or entablature, often appears on shop fascias to support the cornice and box for the awning
CONTOUR SCALING	The loss of the face of building stones from weathering, caused by weaknesses within the sedimentary beds, exposing layers of the underlying material on the surface
COPE	Flat, or moulded stone or concrete at the head of a wall or chimneyhead
CORBEL	Projecting stone supporting walling or a beam
CROCKET	Decorative leaf pattern moulding applied to vertical features such as pinnacles or spires
CROWN GLASS	Glass blown into large circular discs and cut into panes
CROWSTEPS	Stepped stones at a gable wallhead
DELAMINATION	A tendency for sandstone to weather along its natural bedding planes
DORMER	Window projecting above the roof slope or wallhead
DOUBLE MARGIN	Usually found in doors of 2 middle stiles separated by a parting bead
DOUBLE PILE	Appearing mainly from the early eighteenth century onwards, a plan form of two rooms in depth sometimes resulting in two gables of identical appearance at each of the side elevations of the building
DROVED	Chiselled ashlar, finished in fine lines which may be vertical, horizontal, or angled

DRY DASH	Cement rendered finish to walling, to which small pebbles or aggregate may be thrown to form a coloured or decorative finish
DRYSTANE	Walling constructed of rubble stone without mortar
DUTCH GABLE	Gable with a decorative profile of curved sides
DYKE	Stone boundary wall, often of drystane construction (see above)
EAVES	The head of a wall
EAVES BOARD	Projecting board at wallheads, usually of timber
ENCAUSTIC (TILES)	Decorative floor tiles, popular in Victorian times, achieved by colouring, glazing and setting by heat
ENTABLATURE	From classical architecture, the moulded cornice and frieze above columns or pilasters
FANLIGHT	Glazed panel above a door
FASCIA	Horizontal panel, normally of timber, applied to wall surfaces for receiving shop names; early examples were often painted stone string courses
FIELDED	Panel in a door or in wall panelling raised to be flush with the rails and stiles
FINIAL	Decorative feature terminating of the head of a wall, gable or spire
FORELAND	Property occupying the head of a medieval burgage plot, fronting a principal street of a historic burgh
FRETWORK	Open decorative carving to bargeboards
GABLE	The end wall of a building; may also appear on the front walls of buildings (see tympan gables)
GRANITE	Hard, metamorphic rock, normally grey or pink in colour
GRP	Abbreviation for Glass Reinforced Plastic, a material capable of being moulded into profiles
HAFFIT	Vertical panel, for instance of a dormer window
HAMMER-DRESSED	Dressed stone with a roughened finish applied by hammer in the stone quarry
HARLING	Traditional method of coating walls applied in layers to finish surfaces and repel water; originally of lime but, from the 20th century, increasingly cement-based, finished normally with aggregate applied wet before the surface has set and to give a roughened appearance

HIPPED	Angled roof pitch
HOLDERBATT	Bracket for fixing cast-iron downpipes
HOOD MOULDING	Decorative moulding above windows or doors
HORNS	Appearing late 19th century, extension of the upper stiles of sash windows to strengthen joints with the introduction of larger panes of glass
HYDRAULIC LIME	Term used for a naturally occurring building lime with inherent strength once carbonated; the term 'hydraulicity' refers to its ability to achieve an early set
JAMB	The side of a window or door opening in a wall
JETTIED STOREY	A storey of timber construction projecting over the face of the wall below
LIME MORTAR	Mortar based on lime and mixed with aggregate, for which the lime provides the hydraulic set
LIMEWASH	The application of whitewash based on slaked lime to wall surfaces, common in the 18th and 19th centuries
LINTOL	The flat beam at the head of a wall opening supporting the wall above
LUGGED	Extending beyond the line of the moulding
MANSARD	Roof with four pitches in section, often introduced to incorporate additional height in attic storeys; the front section slopes away from the wallhead
MARGIN	Raised section of walling, with a smooth surface to provide a decorative edge
MASS (CONCRETE)	Concrete cast in moulds without reinforcement where the structural strength relies on the bulk of the material once the shutters have been struck
MITRED PIENDS	Or 'close-mitred piends', where slates are cut on an angle to abut one another tightly at a change in roof slope, without hip tiles or sheet lead coverings
MOULDING	Decorative feature derived from classical architecture to embellish surfaces
MUDSTONE	A grey sandstone, easily cut and carved, but prone to early decay in exposed or persistently damp locations as the binding sand matrix breaks down
MULLION	Structural pillar dividing two or more windows; normally of stone, but applies also to the dividing member of a timber window

MUNTIN	Central vertical member in a frame, normally refers to doors
OGEE	Double curved decorative moulding composed of 2 curves in opposite directions without a break, found often in cast iron gutter patterns
PANELLED	Framed doors most often with a central mullion, or muntin
PANTILE	A curved S-shaped red clay roofing tile
PEBBLEDASH	Dry dash finish to cement rendered wall coating, finished with decorative marble or stone chips before the surface has set
PEDIMENT	From classical architecture, a low-pitched triangular gable or feature applied to wall surfaces or to dormers
PIENDED	Angled, or hipped roof
PILASTERS	From classical architecture, flattened columns applied to wall surfaces
PLATE TRACERY	Window patterns commonly found in ecclesiastical buildings in which the decorative glass is accommodated in openings punched through flat stonework
POINTING	Mortar for finishing off the appearance of joints between masonry units or bricks within a wall, for which the style of pointing may vary considerably; historically lime based
POLYCHROMATIC	Applies to brickwork, in contrasting colours, normally red and yellow
PUNCHEONED	Stone dressed with a blunt pick, or with a pointed chisel
PVC	Applies to plastic products moulded from polyvinyl chloride, and variants of this material such as unplasticised PVC (uPVC)
QUOINS	The shaped corner stones of a building
REINFORCED	Applies to concrete, where the introduction of steel reinforcement increases strength and allows the section size to be reduced
RENDER	Finish applied in more than one coating to wall surfaces, from the 20th c normally cement-based; often applies to a smooth render, or one finished with a woodfloat

RHONES	Cast iron gutters
RIDGING	Finish to the head of a pitched roof: may be stone ridging, clay tiles, lead or zinc
ROCK-FACED	Ashlar dressed to look as though it is natural, and straight out of the stone quarry
ROOFLIGHT	General term applying to roof windows following the roof pitch
RUBBLE	Walling material of undressed or roughly shaped stones; in better work may be laid as coursed or square-snecked rubble
RUSTICATED	Ashlar, of which the courses may be grooved or channelled to emphasise the face of the stone
RYBAT	Stone at window or door jambs forming the wall opening
SASH AND CASE	Vertically sliding windows, historically always of timber
SANDSTONE	A common building material from sedimentary rock, normally easy to shape into mouldings and carved with precision; durability will vary depending on the quarry source and the degree of exposure
SKEWS	Flat stones at the head of gables to prevent water penetration
SKEWPUTT	The stone at the foot of the skews, sometimes carved, to prevent them from slipping off the wallhead
SKYLIGHT	Historic cast-iron roof light
SLATES	Thin stone roofing units from metamorphic rock, easily split; colour, face size, and texture will vary according to the quarry source and how the material is dressed
SNECK HARLED	A form of pointing or harling to a rubble wall in which the faces of the largest stones are left exposed
SPANDRELS	Wall panels of slender masonry between the lintols of windows and the cills on the storey above
STAINED	Modern proprietary wood stained finish
STAINED GLASS	Coloured glass, set into lead or rolled zinc framing
STALL RISER	In shopfronts, the area below the shop window and the pavement
STILE	The vertical frame member at the edge of a door or window

STRING COURSE	Horizontal decorative band in walling
STUCCO	Smooth render finish, normally of proprietary cement based fine-grained materials to provide a decorative treatment to masonry, favoured in the late18th/early 19th centuries
SYMMETRICAL	Design replicated to either side of the centreline, for instance, of an elevation
TABLING	Plain, or moulded, stone projecting from the wall face at the head of the wall
TERRACOTTA	Decorative moulded treatment using the medium of unglazed baked clay, commonly used in the mid-late 19th century
THACKSTANE	Projecting stone found on the front and rear walls of chimneyheads to protect the head of thatched roof finishes
TILES	Roofing units for pitched roofs, normally other than slates
TYMPAN (GABLE)	Central gable, or gablet, appearing on a principal elevation, built direct off the wallhead
uPVC	See PVC
VARNISHED	Clear finish, mainly for wood
VERMICULATED	Rustic work in stonework, with wavy lines in heavy relief, giving the impression of having been worm eaten
VOUSSOIRS	Radial stones making up the curved profile of an arch
VITRIFIED	Strengthening of finishes – either glass or clay – by intense heat avoiding the need for an applied glaze
WET DASH	Applies normally to harling and the application of a final coat of small graded chippings mixed with cement