APPENDIX 3

Consultative Draft

Forres Conservation Area

Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

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June 2013

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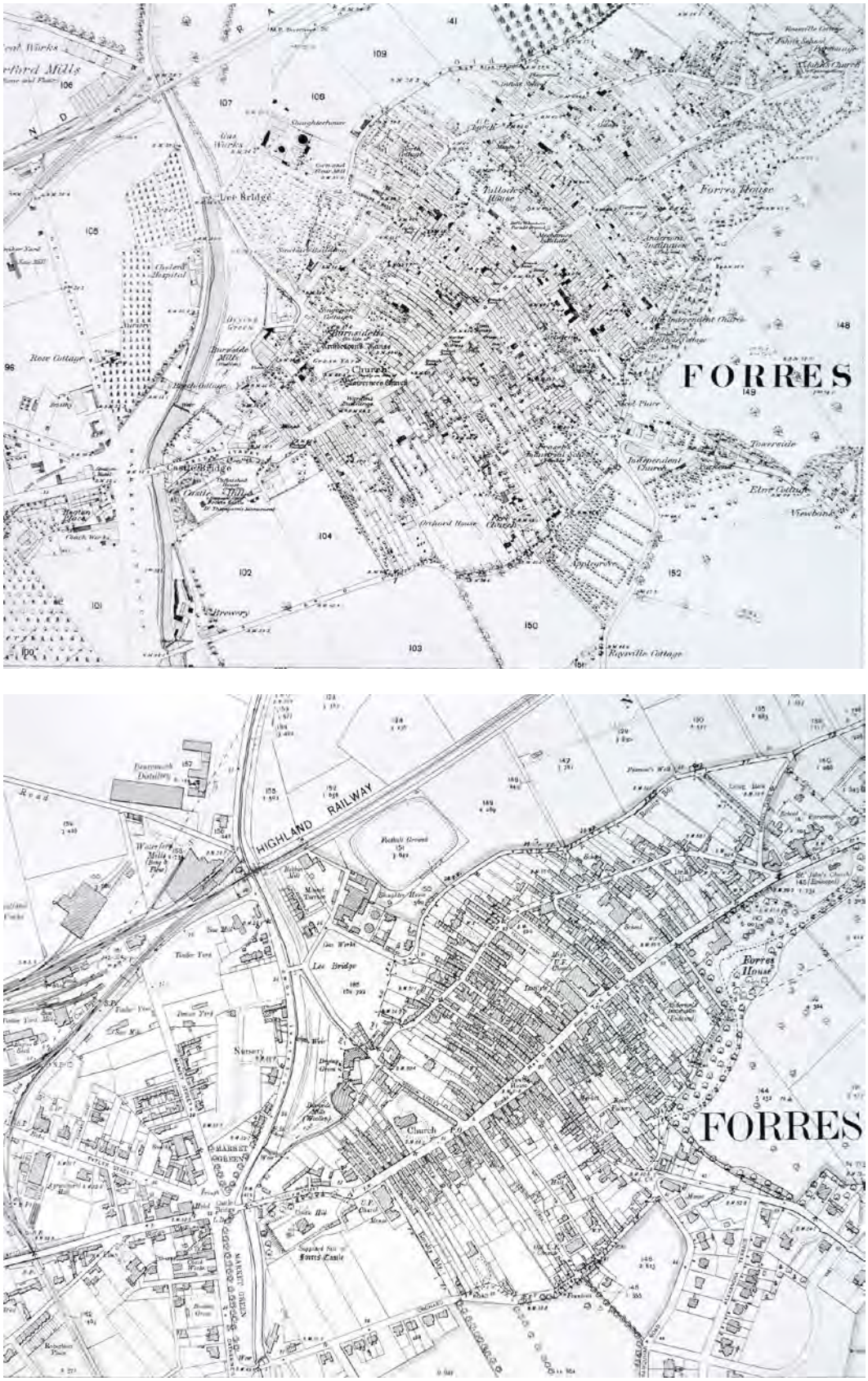

Extracts of Ordnance Survey maps published in 1868 and 1905 respectively showing the centre of Forres, both © National Library of Scotland

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0 Executive summary

The Forres Conservation Area Appraisal is the first of a suite of four related documents which are linked to a number of strategic economic initiatives which are being developed for Forres. Although it satisfies the encouragement given by Scottish Government for local authorities to undertake conservation area appraisals where areas have been designated already, it is timely having regard to the measures for the enhancement of the town centre already underway through Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) and other organisations active in the town. It is also timely with regard to the operational running of key public buildings and monuments of the Forres Tolbooth and Nelson's Tower entrusted to the newly constituted Forres Heritage Trust, and because of the uncertainty surrounding the future of the Falconer Museum arising out of the severity of local authority cutbacks in expenditure.

The format of the report follows closely the recommendations set down by Scottish Government for undertaking appraisals. The conclusions are underpinned by extensive audit work and historical research leading to new levels of understanding of the invaluable, but diminishing, assets that make up a historic environment of considerable distinction and variety. The Forres Conservation Area fully deserves the category of 'outstanding' given to the area when it was first designated. As a clear indication of this there is a high density of listed buildings within the conservation area, with several Category A historic buildings considered to be of national importance. However, the audit work has resulted in recommendations for a review of the listings to take into account the wealth of good late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings which have not been recognised adequately to date, and which make a positive contribution to the outstanding historic townscape. Also, in common with many other features, these buildings often have high levels of authenticity.

Apart from the qualities of the townscape - largely derived from the survival of the medieval layout of the burgh - the research has highlighted two areas of interest which have not perhaps been recognised adequately in the past. A similar study carried out on the Elgin High Street Conservation Area (2012) drew much the same conclusions. Firstly, in Forres there is the remarkable legacy left of original or historic shopfronts of all ages that have survived unscathed from when they were inserted (a number of them cast-iron),

recognising the long retail history of the town. Secondly, the town boasts remarkable numbers of stone carvings and architectural decoration waiting to be discovered on the street frontages of the town's buildings or in less obvious places. In addition, the closes have considerable potential to contribute to the regeneration of the town centre, much more than they have done to date. There are very few buildings of the late twentieth century on the High Street, and studying historic photographs can be revealing as to how the town centre has changed relatively little. Some of the changes of the twentieth century have had positive benefits for the health and wellbeing of the townsfolk from public-spirited philanthropy. Few towns in the United Kingdom can boast of public space of the quality of the Grant Park which is so accessible to the town centre.

The historic core of Forres may have avoided the worst excesses of destruction of the late twentieth century through redevelopment but more recent change has not been altogether kind to the conservation area. Much of the damage caused has been incremental. It has resulted in some loss of authenticity which has affected the character and appearance of the conservation area, suggesting that it has not always been controlled effectively. Occasionally defective chimneyheads have been taken down and not replaced, and the area has been afflicted by a growing trend for replacing windows and doors without regard to historical precedent. Encouragingly, levels of intrusion have been significantly less than in some conservation areas.

It would be unusual for a visitor not to conclude that, despite the resounding success of the award-winning floral displays that adorn the town in the summer season and the sporadic efforts to enhance the public realm, the town centre exudes a sense of sad decay and of economic decline. Redundant buildings and empty shop units all detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. The central area lacks activity and visual interest at night. This, and the accompanying documents, set out measures by which the historic environment can play a positive role in the regeneration of the town centre.

One of the requirements when undertaking conservation area appraisals is for the boundaries to be reviewed, with recommendations made if changes are considered worthy of being implemented. After careful consideration it is recommended that minor changes should be made to the conservation

area boundaries to overcome anomalies, for instance where new houses have been erected which make no contribution to the character and attractive appearance of the conservation area. To the authors of this document it seemed that a more major issue was the artificial subdivision of the outstanding designed landscape of the Cluny Hills and accordingly recommendations are made for this to be extended to the designated area defined in the entry in the Inventory of Designed Landscapes.

Although the historical analysis in Section 3 of this document covers the history of the whole of the town – as indeed it must – the conservation area appraisal can only address the issues within the defined boundary as it is currently designated. The boundary, in itself, should not be allowed to become an artificial barrier. To be effective, the recommendations set out in this suite of documents will require to be embedded within the planning system.

There is so much surviving in Forres that is worthy of being celebrated and enjoyed – as indeed many famous visitors have noted with great satisfaction in the past. Furthermore, none of the problems identified within the conservation area are incapable of being resolved.

1 Introduction

1.1 Commissioning and brief

1.1.1 The Forres Conservation Area Appraisal, together with the accompanying set of three other reports, has been commissioned jointly by a partnership of organisations with an active interest in the future of the town under the title of the Forres Conservation Area Working Group. The client group is represented by the Moray Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), the Forres Heritage Trust, Forres Area Community Trust (FACT), the Friends of the Falconer Museum and the Forres Britain in Bloom Committee. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Consultant's Brief for which tenders were sought during November 2012. The tender submitted by a team led by Andrew PK Wright, Chartered Architect and Heritage Consultant, was accepted by the Moray Council on behalf of the working group at the end of November 2012.

1.1.2 The document is the first of four documents prepared in accordance with the Consultant's Brief, listed as follows:

Part 1 Conservation Area Appraisal

Part 2 Conservation Area Management Plan

Part 3 Conservation Area Action Plan

Part 4 Conservation Area Interpretation Plan

Although the boundaries of the conservation area are tightly drawn, the research carried out into the historical background must consider not only the growth of the town and how it has developed over time, but also the dependency on the wider area which includes the coastal fringe and the landward area. The research undertaken for the interpretation plan follows a similar approach, and in accordance with the brief linkages a strategic approach will be adopted which seeks to strengthen the links between the centre of the town (upon which the conservation area is focused) and the established tourist destinations within the immediate vicinity.

1.2 Project team

1.2.1 Andrew Wright is the team leader. He is an accredited conservation architect and an architectural historian and has lived and worked in Forres for thirty-five years, and most of the members of the team are local with direct experience of the area. Andrew Wright, Gemma Wild of the Scottish Civic Trust and John Mackay of McLeod & Aitken collaborated over the preparation of the suite of documents for the Keith Conservation Area, completed in 2011. Andrew Wright, Gemma Wild, John Mackay and Duncan Bryden worked as a team, led by Andrew Wright, on the suite of documents prepared for the Elgin High Street Conservation Area, completed in 2012. Horner & Maclennan, landscape architects of Inverness, were invited to join the team for the Forres Conservation Area study on account of the high proportion of public parks, recreational spaces and designed landscape within the designated boundary of the conservation area. Their work has been carried out by Roz Maclennan and Katherine Wolfe.

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

Gemma Wild	Buildings analysis and Buildings at Risk
Katherine Wolfe	Evaluation of the public realm, street furniture and signs, and public recreational spaces including public parks

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The headings within this document follow in general terms those set down in the Appraisal Checklist in Planning Advisory Note (PAN) 71 *Conservation Area Management*. The methodology used for the study has been that set down in the same document.

1.3.2 Photographs have been taken of each of the properties within the conservation area for general record purposes on a street-by-street basis. Photographs appearing in this document, in the main, were taken during the month of January 2013, although some of the photographs have been taken beforehand in the autumn of 2012 for the preparation of the submission document. Occasional photographs come from the lead consultant's own records and may relate to earlier assignments (for instance, for the preparation of the conservation statement on the Forres Tolbooth prepared for Forres Heritage Trust in March 2012). Supplementary photographs have been taken of elements of construction, or features of the historic townscape, deemed to give character and a sense of uniqueness to the conservation area. These are reproduced in Section 5.

1.3.3 Site visits have been supplemented by archival research into the history of the burgh and its buildings. Research has been carried out in the following locations:

- Moray Heritage Centre, Elgin
- Local Heritage section of the Forres Library
- The historic photograph collections held by the Falconer Museum
- The historic photograph collections held by Forres Heritage Trust
- National Monuments Record for Scotland, held at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)
- Map Library, National Library of Scotland

1.3.4 Online research has included the following sources:

- Scran (site hosted by RCAHMS)
- Dictionary of Scottish Architects (site hosted by Historic Scotland)
- Statistical Accounts of Scotland (site hosted jointly by the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow)
- Maps of Scotland (site hosted by the National Library of Scotland)
- Valentine of Dundee and other historic photograph collections (hosted by the University of St Andrews Special Collections)
- George Washington Wilson historic photograph collections (hosted by the University of Aberdeen Special Collections)
- Pastmap and Canmore (sites hosted by RCAHMS)
- Historic Scotland Listed Buildings searches

1.3.5 The author's own library has been used as the basis for other research.

1.4 Credits, copyright and licensing of images

1.4.1 Credits for historic images selected from the above named sources are given throughout the document. Images which are not otherwise identified have been taken by the lead consultant or by other members of the project team.

1.4.2 Historic images are reproduced under licence for copyright granted solely for publication within this document. Under no circumstances should images be reproduced without the consent of the named copyright holder.

1.5 Public consultation

1.5.1 In addition to the feedback provided by the members of the working group through meetings and commenting on the drafts of the documents, public consultation has taken the form of an open public meeting held at the Town Hall on 9 May 2013, at which the consultants set out the principal findings and recommendations set out in the reports.

1.5.2 The documents were deposited in the Public Library between XX and XX July 2013 for scrutiny, when opportunities were provided for feedback to be passed to the working group and consultants.

1.5.3 The consultants have responded to the feedback from these sessions and the documents have been amended (these sections to be completed after the public consultation period has ended).

1.6 Acknowledgements

1.6.1 The authors of the conservation area character appraisal are indebted to those who have provided assistance with the archival research programme. Particular thanks are expressed to Graeme Wilson of the Moray Heritage Centre and Liz Trevethick of the Falconer Museum for their help in sourcing images and other material.

1.6.2 The document would be the poorer for not incorporating copies of historic images of the town which have been assembled and prepared for public viewing by the Forres Heritage Trust. A debt of gratitude is due to Franny Duncan for his help in making available the collection and with copying of the images. James Duncan, Chairman of the Forres Heritage Trust, is thanked for his help in making arrangements for property visits.

1.6.3 In conducting the research programme the project team has benefited from information which has been shared by the members of the team researching the history of the town for the unpublished volume of the *Buildings of Scotland* volume. Particular thanks are expressed to Dr Matthew Woodward of the research team.

1.7 Date of the designation of the conservation area

1.7.1 It has not been possible to establish with any certainty the date when the Forres Conservation Area was designated. It seems likely that this would have been addressed around the time when the Elgin High Street Conservation Area was designated in the mid-1970s and so it is not unreasonable to assume that Forres would have been designated around the same time.

1.8 Extent of the conservation area

1.8.1 The conservation area is comparatively large, and a map showing the boundaries as presently designated is reproduced in Appendix 14.1.

1.8.2 The boundaries have been carefully drawn to take in the core of the town centre; while this corresponds broadly to the current understanding of the extent of the medieval historic burgh and its early development, there are some minor anomalies and attention is drawn to these in Section 10.1 of this document. The boundary is extended to the west to take in the public recreational spaces alongside the Mosset Burn.

1.8.3 To the south and east of the town centre the boundary has been drawn to take in the nineteenth century villas with the plots backing onto Grant Park and Cluny Hill respectively. The villa developments along Victoria Road are included within the conservation area, the boundary of which terminates approximately where the Little Cross had been. The whole of Grant Park has been incorporated within the boundary, while approximately one half of the woodland at Cluny Hill and the whole of the cemetery is included in the conservation area.

1.8.4 As noted above, the justification for recommending adjustment of the present boundary of the conservation area is given in Section 10.1. A recommendation is also made that consideration be given to extending the boundary to take in the villa developments along Sanquhar Road, taking in Nelson Road and Alexandra Terrace.

1.9 Status of the document

1.9.1 The recommendations set out in this document reflect a series of meetings that have been held with the steering group representing the interests of the principal stakeholders, at which representatives of each and of the Moray Council have been present. It also incorporates feedback from the open meeting held on 9 May 2013 as noted in 1.5.X, and from the public consultation exercise in the town's public library (see 1.5.X).

1.9.2 Although a consensus view has been sought at all stages of the project programme, the recommendations set out in this document have been arrived at independently and are presented to the Council for endorsement.

2 Context

2.1 Topography and climate

The town of Forres seen from across the Findhorn Bay

2.1.1 The setting of Forres is enhanced considerably by the pleasing contrast between the ridge on which the medieval burgh had been founded in which it is surrounded by gently rolling hills as a backcloth, and the fertile plain of the Laigh of Moray. The elevation of the town set on its ridge ensures that the towers and spires of the principal public buildings and churches of the town are visible from a distance, with the most memorable views seen on the long approach from the east and from Findhorn, looking in a south-westerly direction across the open expanse of the bay. A further distant view on the approach to the town is to be enjoyed on the descent from the Findhorn Bridge on the A96 Trunk Road linking Inverness with Aberdeen and Fraserburgh. Approaching the town from the east the settlement is perhaps most clearly identified by Nelson's Tower on the skyline which appears above the tops of the trees of the woodland of Cluny Hill.

2.1.2 Travellers, on seeing the settlement for the first time, would often record their impressions, but neither was the beauty of the setting lost on those who knew it rather better. The parish minister recorded in 1842 that 'The general aspect of the parish, when viewed from any of the eminences in the neighbourhood of the town, is rich and delightful, and presents to the eye a landscape abounding in every feature of rural beauty'.

2.1.3 With the protection from the Mosset Burn running towards the bay at the western extremity of the ridge where at its highest point, it is unsurprising that this defensible site should have been chosen as the location of the castle, which had been set on its own motte. It was probably established at the time when the medieval burgh was laid out in the reign of David I (1124-53), but there is the evidence of an earlier hill fort to be found at the peak of the Cluny Hills where there would have been a commanding view over the firthlands. Although the origins are not known for certain it has been held that Macbeth could have had his stronghold here. The fording of the burn, and of the River Findhorn, which followed an uncertain course to the west of the settlement gave it particular strategic importance as it would have been unwise to establish large settlements at the mouths of the major rivers of the district, the Findhorn and the Spey, due to their erratic tidal behaviour. However, the proximity of the burgh to one of the few natural

havens of this length of the Moray Firth coastline gave the merchant burgesses of Forres distinct trading advantages.

2.1.4 The topography gives the burgh a distinctive appearance, which has often been compared with the contemporary twelfth century burghs of Edinburgh and Elgin. Although the High Street, running roughly from east to west, appears to be mainly on the level (unlike Edinburgh), the north and south slopes of the terrain fall away noticeably from the crest of the ridge at its western end. At the eastern end of the street the ground levels out to a plateau broadening out to accommodate the villas set in large plots of ground along the north side of Victoria Road and the open space at Grant Park to the south. Over a short distance to the north of the High Street (in the area behind St Leonard's Church), the ground rises gently, before falling away more steeply towards Bogton Road.

Changes in level: looking towards the High Street from North Street

2.1.5 The topography shaped the links with the extensive landward area to the south (see Appendix 14.2). The approach to the High Street from the south was logically from the gentle sloping Tolbooth Wynd (as it was called originally) with the Mosset Burn forded at Burdsyards, as shown on Roy's Great Map of the mid-eighteenth century (page 27), where it converged with the track leading to Rafford and Dallas. Known originally as Bullet Loan, St Leonards Road negotiates a route shaped by the topography between the southern slopes of the Cluny Hill and the rising ground to the south of the town at Breakback. Before the Cluny Hill became densely afforested it had been possible to observe that it had been as many as five hillocks with Nelson's Tower sitting on the highest of them, while at the heart of the four largest eminences lies a freely-draining depression known as Helgy's Hole. This range of small eminences had been known formerly as the Cloven Hills.

2.1.6 In several early descriptions of the Laigh of Moray the relatively benign nature of the climate compared with other parts of the country is celebrated, and was perceived as a factor contributing to the fertility of the land. Among the earliest and best known descriptions is that by Gordon of Straloch in 1640:

> In salubrity of climate, Moray is not inferior to any, and in the richness and fertility of the soil it much exceeds our northern provinces. The air is so temperate, that when all around is bound up in the rigour of winter, there are neither lasting snows nor

such frosts as damage fruits or trees. There is no product of this kingdom which does not thrive there perfectly, or, if any fail, it is to be attributed to the sloth of the inhabitants, not to the fault of the soil or climate. Corn, the earth pours forth in wonderful and never-failing abundance. Fruits of all sorts, herbs, flowers, pulse, and all early. While harvest has scarcely begun in surrounding districts, winter is hardly felt. The earth is almost always open, the sea navigable, and the roads never stopped.

From examining Timothy Pont's map of the late sixteenth century of the Province of Moray (page 22) it can be seen that the fertility of the land of the Laigh had led to prosperity among the landowning class, leading to an unprecedented burst of building castles and fortified tower houses whose towers populated the landscape with a density quite unlike anywhere else in the north.

2.1.7 Remarks upon the gentleness of the climate recurred in the majority of later descriptions of the Province and, of the burgh in particular. Lachlan Shaw was prepared to proclaim in 1775 '…. yet no Country in Europe can boast of a more pure, temperate and wholesome air'. James Donaldson in his *Account of the Agriculture of the County of Elgin, or Moray* (1794) was somewhat more objective, attributing the recurrence of fair weather to the landforms surrounding the firth and the fact that the Laigh nestled between the mountain ranges. He recognised that occasionally there would be years of famine when the harvest failed as a consequence of constant rainfall, or from the effect of a late frost in the spring. Flooding of the low-lying land from the river systems as they discharged into Findhorn Bay has always rendered the burgh vulnerable to their effect, of which the greatest event occurred in the late summer of 1829 with the Muckle Spate, the devastation from which was recorded in meticulous detail by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder of Relugas.

2.1.8 Throughout the nineteenth century climate was undoubtedly a factor in attracting those who sought to return to the area after a life spent abroad in military service during the Napoleonic or Crimean Wars, or from having served with the Honourable East India Company. Equally, Forres became an attractive destination for those seeking to retire from having made their fortunes from colonial activities in America, or from tea planting in Asia. Travellers to the town would remark upon the extent to which the villas of gentlemen's seats had sprung up around the nucleus of the town, adding to the beauty of its setting.

2.2 Geology

2.2.1 Forres lies on a terraced ridge that extends east west and slopes gently to the north and south, within a wider landscape characterised by topographic progression from coastal plain to rounded, upland foothills and valleys (see Appendix 14.2). The coastal plain lies between 0-150m AOD and is characterised by gently smooth and undulating terrain, with low mounds, ridges and depressions all typical of an ice-moulded landscape. This zone supports mixed farming and extensive forestry plantation on thin, typically acid soils, underlain by thick glacial deposits. The topographic grain of the coastal lowlands, within which Forres resides, is predominantly SW-NE as a result of glaciation exploiting geological weaknesses in the underlying Old Red Sandstone – this is known as the Caledonian trend and is marked by visible structural lineaments.

2.2.2 The underlying geology around Forres is the direct result of the Orcadian Basin, which occupies a large area around Caithness, Orkney and the Moray Firth. The basin was formed by the deposition of Old Red Sandstone, around 390 million years ago, and contains thick accumulations of Jurassic sandstones and dark shales. Erosion by ice sheets has carried these materials to the coastal plain giving rise to dark, muddy glacial deposits, with occasional fossils and shells, and areas of rich, wet, clay-rich soils. Outcrops of the earlier Old Red Sandstone rock are confined to the north of the former county area. Younger strata of rock were deposited over the earlier layers in the Moray basin, which take the form of desert sandstones of the Permo-Triassic age which give rise to the excellent building stones quarried around Elgin.

2.2.3 The topography has changed very little since glaciation. However, river floods and coastal storms have, over time, resulted in impressive changes in river courses and coastal composition, including the River Findhorn during the 1829 flood where flood channels are still clearly visible and sand-blowing at Culbin and Findhorn Bay. Post-glacial weathering has led to the development of different soil types and in turn differing vegetation patterns. Man has transformed a large proportion of the natural vegetation cover via settlement, forestry clearance and planting, agriculture and other industrial activities.

Nelson's Tower and the Cluny Hills present an attractive backcloth to the setting of the town on the approach from the west

2.2.4 The Cluny Hills which form the attractive backcloth to the setting of Forres and the ridge upon which the medieval burgh had been sited are often referred to as being sandy, and in the case of the former the hillocks are less likely to be a part of the once extensive Culbin dune system than the result of fluvio-glacial material deposited to a considerable depth against the edge of the ice flow. These glacial deposits characterise much of the landscape of the low-lying coastal plain to the east of the River Findhorn.

2.2.5 Some variation is found in the local geology, providing sources of materials used at different times in the history of the burgh. Red and grey sandstones were overbedded on gneiss in the adjoining parish of Rafford, and cornstone found at Cothall on the banks of the Findhorn produced limestone. A quarry producing grey slates was known to exist at one stage at

Cluny. Stones quarried for building purposes came from Burgie to the east of Forres and, later, from Newtyle to the south. Building materials are considered in greater detail in Section 5.5.

2.3 Vegetation cover

2.3.1 The pattern of vegetation cover typically comprises heather moorland and montane vegetation on higher ground to the far south of Forres. Native pine woodlands and coniferous plantations are present on lower hill tops and slopes and are often interspersed with rough pasture and heather moorland (see Appendix 14.2).

2.3.2 The Moray & Nairn area is one of the most wooded areas in Britain with approximately 28% of the total land area being covered by trees (the Scottish average is 15%). The predominant woodland type is Scots pine, with large areas occurring within the coastal plain and along the coast. Large areas of commercially managed coniferous plantation also occur within the landscape and have done since the 1920s, for example Culbin Forest which was established on one of the largest sand dune systems in the United Kingdom. Upland areas have also been commercially managed for forestry since the 1960s together with a recent initiative on deer management to encourage the natural regeneration of Birch and Scots pine. Native broadleaf woodlands are also most extensive within the river valleys, of which the River Findhorn is a good example.

2.3.3 The conservation area itself boasts a locally important woodland asset covering the Cluny Hills. Mixed woodland backdrops frame the town with a distinctive NW-SE split either side of Nelson's Tower and the Cluny Hills Cemetery, where the NW portion comprises a higher proportion of deciduous stock, notably Beech, and the SE comprises a higher degree of pine, including Scots pine.

2.3.4 A large proportion of the wider landscape is farmed. Intensive agricultural land, predominantly arable, occurs on the fertile, silty soils of the coastal plain, to the north of Forres. Undulating hill slopes and valleys on the fringe of the coastal plain comprise pasture with a small proportion of arable land. Semi-improved pasture and rough grazing land accommodate higher elevations to the south.

2.4 Regional context

2.4.1 Until the first bridge across the Findhorn was erected for the turnpike road in the early nineteenth century travel to the west of the Province of Moray was fairly constrained. Travellers could be held up for days at a time waiting for flood waters to subside. It was also a dangerous river crossing for ferries – in 1782 thirteen people lost their lives when the ferry boat capsized. The relationship between Forres and the wider area (see Appendix 14.2) has been fashioned as much by its isolation at the fringes of regional government once its self-governance ceased in 1975 as much as by its geographical isolation in the past.

2.4.2 Throughout history Forres has benefited from its landward area, acting as a centre for local government in addition to its role as a retail and service centre. The town fostered a strong relationship with its harbour at Findhorn until the mid-nineteenth century when trade collapsed. The landward area to the south is extensive. Until a direct route between Aviemore and Inverness was opened up by the Highland Railway in 1892, Forres had for

many years had been a major terminus at the junction with the Great North of Scotland Railway with connections that looked south, east and west.

2.4.3 Historically the town has looked towards the Highlands perhaps as much as it has towards Aberdeen and the Northeast of Scotland. In part this is attributable to the fact that it was more central to the area defined in the past as the Province of Moray, reflecting the former boundaries of the old diocese which ran as far as the Beauly Firth and included Badenoch and parts of the Great Glen as far as Spean Bridge. On the other hand, trade links had always been strong with Aberdeen.

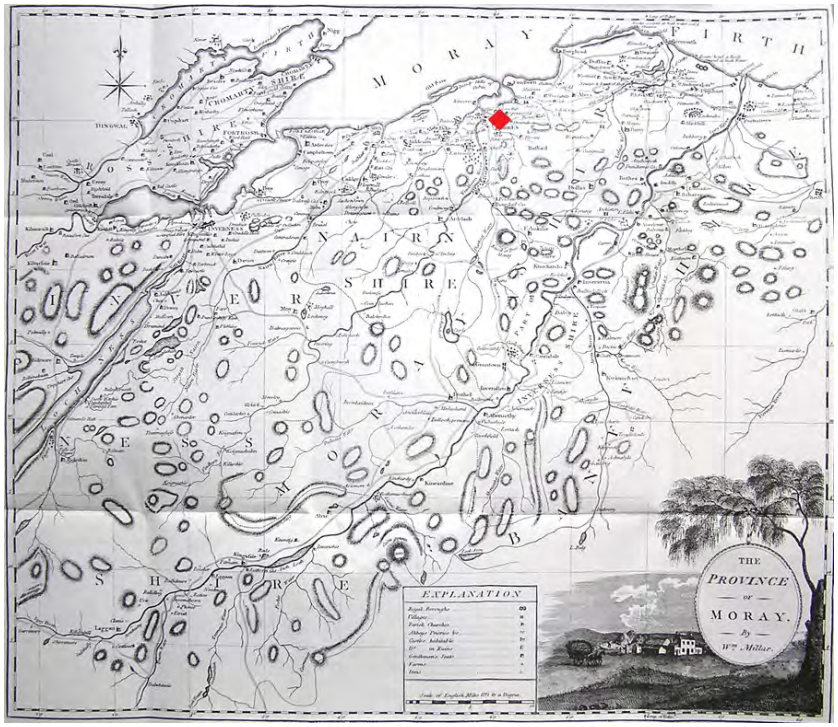
2.4.4 To some extent the town suffered more than other places after the successive rounds of local government reorganisation of the late twentieth century, with which came an acute sense of loss of its own identity. Governance brought with it some inevitable confusion – as the far west outpost of the Grampian Regional Council the historic links with Nairn (reflected in the former Moray & Nairn Joint County Council) were severed in favour of distant Aberdeen, and yet on the other hand economic support was offered to the district from the old Highlands & Islands Development Board which had its headquarters in Inverness, an arrangement which continues to the present time through Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) which has its local office on the outskirts of the town at the Business Park. In this respect, at least, matters improved once the Moray Council had been established as a unitary authority, but in many respects Forres misses out to Elgin as the regional and commercial centre, and it is exposed especially to patterns of regional shopping which is now heavily focused on Inverness and Aberdeen, with Elgin a secondary centre. However, the town maintains a well-established tradition of providing professional services and service industries for an area extending well beyond its own landward area. Employment prospects for those living in the town have been enhanced through the establishment of the Enterprise Park approximately one mile to the east of the town centre.

3 Historical background and patterns of growth

3.1 Pre-burghal history

No ancient documents exist which throw light on the early history of Forres, but there can be no doubt that Forres was a place of considerable importance at a very remote period. *The Rev Duncan Grant, 1842*

3.1.1 The parish minister's observation is one repeated by several contemporary writers. William Rhind, in his *Sketches of the Past and Present State of Moray* (1839), observed that Forres 'does not seem to have increased or kept up its consequence so much as Elgin' which he attributed to the relocation of the diocese there in the early twelfth century, and to the commencement of the erection of its magnificent new cathedral with its religious power base centred on the chanonry. He made the further observation that in the seventeenth century Elgin had been the resort of the country gentry, being the place where they would choose to build their town houses.



Map from *Survey of the Province of Moray* (1798) shows the strategic position of Forres at the heart of the mormaerdom in an area that would have extended from the West Coast to the Mounth

3.1.2 While there has been a great deal of speculation over the centuries as to the origins of the town's name, but without any firm conclusions being drawn, claims to its early importance would often be supported by making associations with a number of distant historical references. It has been considered to be the 'Varis' of the second century Roman cartographer, Claudius Ptolemy, while the sixth century Italian philosopher, Boethius, recorded an event when some of the merchants of Forres were supposedly put to death for some trading misdemeanour, leading to the confiscation of their goods.

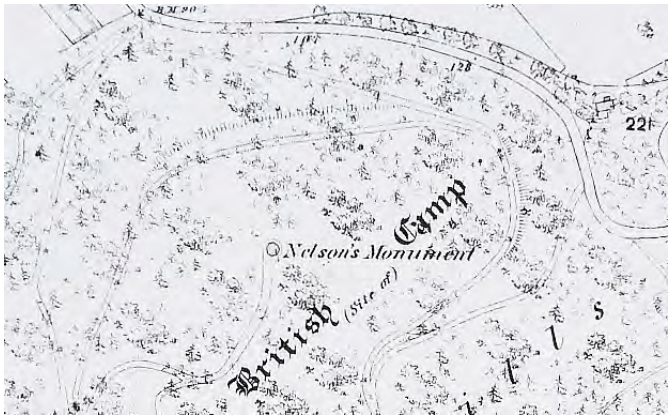
Sueno's Stone: on the left the lower half of the stone as depicted in John Stuart's *The Sculptured Stones of Scotland* Vol 1 Pl xviii (1856) and on the right, as the stone appeared before the protective enclosure was installed (from Cant *Old Moray)*. Left image Crown Copyright, licensor www.scran.ac.uk

3.1.3 The links between Forres and the turbulent events of the ninth and tenth centuries in Moray are unquestionably vague, but they take on a level of greater certainty with the tangible evidence left by the depiction of a major battle scene on the carved surfaces of Sueno's Stone, the tallest and one of the most impressive carved cross-slabs of this period to be found in Scotland. The monument, carved out of a massive slab of sandstone, is located at the eastern extremity of the town, just outside the boundaries of the conservation area. As the early history of Forres the origins of the stone remain shrouded in mystery, but there can be little doubt that it celebrates a heroic military campaign of the Pictish and early medieval period, described by Ian Shepherd as 'war reporting on a monumentally self-confident scale'. The battle could have been between the men of Moray and the Norse settlers of Orkney, and while other plausible alternatives have been offered by way of explanation, what it does signify is that Forres was set within the heartland of a powerful and independent political dynasty which controlled the northern territories in a finely balanced power struggle with the mac Alpin dynasty. Its location could signify an association with the defence of the hill fort to the immediate south (see 3.1.6 below).

3.1.4 The kings crowned at Scone seemed never quite to be able to quell the power of the Moray men who occupied a huge territory extending from the Mounth in the east to Ross and the coast overlooking Skye in the west. Their leaders were referred to in Scottish annals as mormaers, whereas to the Irish they were regarded as kings; the Norsemen referred to them as jarls. Successive kings of Alba were slain in battles with the men of Moray: Duncan mac Constantine died at Forres in 900; Malcolm I died there in 954, and 'Ulnem' or Dubh (King Duff), probably one of Cináed mac Alpin's successors, died on the outskirts of Forres in 966 where he may have been assassinated. The stubborn independence of Moray became a factor in shaping the destiny of the Scottish kings over an extended period, considered by Ronald Cant to have extended over a millennium, from 500 to 1500. It gave the province a unique and powerfully influential position in the shaping the future of northern Britain.

3.1.5 The failure of Malcolm II to subdue the rulers of Moray exposed a fatal weakness in the succession to the kingdom of Alba. Macbeth defeated Malcolm's successor, Duncan I, in a battle believed to have been fought at, or near, Pitgaveny on the outskirts of Elgin in 1040, by which he claimed the crown. Macbeth was a ruthless leader: in order to assume the title of Mormaer of Moray it is claimed he had slain his cousin Gille Comgain in 1032, and through his marriage to Gruoch he could have strengthened his claims to the Scottish throne. Once crowned, he proved to be an effective ruler of the kingdom of Alba until he, in turn, was defeated in battle at Lumphanan in 1057 when the kingship was finally resumed by Duncan's son, Malcolm Canmore, but only after the short transitory reign of Lulach, Macbeth's stepson.

3.1.6 The strong connection which has been forged between Macbeth and Forres is founded substantially on literary associations, having their origins in the mid-fourteenth century, and will be discussed in a later chapter. The regularity with which Forres was implicated in the major battles of the region raises the strong possibility that it had been a stronghold for the mormaers, being particularly well-placed in the heartland of the province to counter the threats from the powerful Norse earls, with whom Macbeth was to forge a political and military alliance. The Cluny Hills have been suggested as a possible location for the hill fort from which Macbeth may have carried out surveillance of the surrounding landscape and waters of the firth. The outline of an encampment is shown on the first editions of the Ordnance Survey maps, described as a 'British camp'. In 1887 it was recorded that yew trees had been planted to help identify the profile of the ramparts. It was surveyed in the late eighteenth century before the extensive woodland was planted, when it was considered to be in plan between a circle and an oval, occupying a large area of roughly six acres. It must therefore have been a place of importance.



The oval shape of the hill fort and ramparts on the Cluny Hills can be made out in this extract from the 1868 Ordnance Survey map © National Library of Scotland

3.1.7 Complex as the machinations may have been in the extended power struggles between the north and south, and accepting the many difficulties of establishing firm dates and locations for these historical events in the mists of time, in popular mythology connections have often been made between them and a royal castle which had been established at Forres. This castle has often been assumed to have been situated on the motte at Castlehill, rather than at the Cluny Hills. Legend has it that the son of Constantine, King Donald, may have been poisoned at the castle at the beginning of the tenth century, and that a foul murder was committed there

some fifty years later when King Duffus was assassinated by the castle's governor, Donald. Malcolm I may have resided in it as a royal lodging, and links between the site and the sovereign continued for a century and more after the founding of the burgh in the twelfth century. Although it has sometimes been held that the motte and bailey castle associated with these royal events had preceded the town's charter, it seems much more likely to have been the case that the first stronghold on the Castlehill site had been established with the date of the foundation of the burgh, and the extensive hill fort on the outskirts of the settlement would have been abandoned at around this time.

3.1.8 A further and in some ways a more tangible link with this turbulent and distant past can be seen on the roadside at Victoria Road where the witches' stone is displayed. It is purportedly the last remaining of three marker stones following the condemnation of three witches who had been condemned from having practised their craft, over which they were accused of causing King Duncan's deteriorating health after he had abandoned the royal residence at Forres in favour of Scone. The legend suggests that this occurred around the year 960. The witches met a gruesome death from being rolled from the top of the Cluny Hill in barrels with spikes on the inside by which they were impaled. The stone purportedly marks one of the resting places where the barrel, together with its mangled contents, had come to a rest, where it was set alight.

The Witches' Stone on Victoria Road: the iron cramps were inserted after the stone had been saved from being broken up for roadstone: it is capped with an unattractive layer of concrete

3.2 The medieval burgh

These traditional features are still so strongly marked as to make Forres one of the best places in Scotland in which to study the lay-out of a medieval burgh.
Ronald Cant: Old Moray (Elgin Society, 1948)

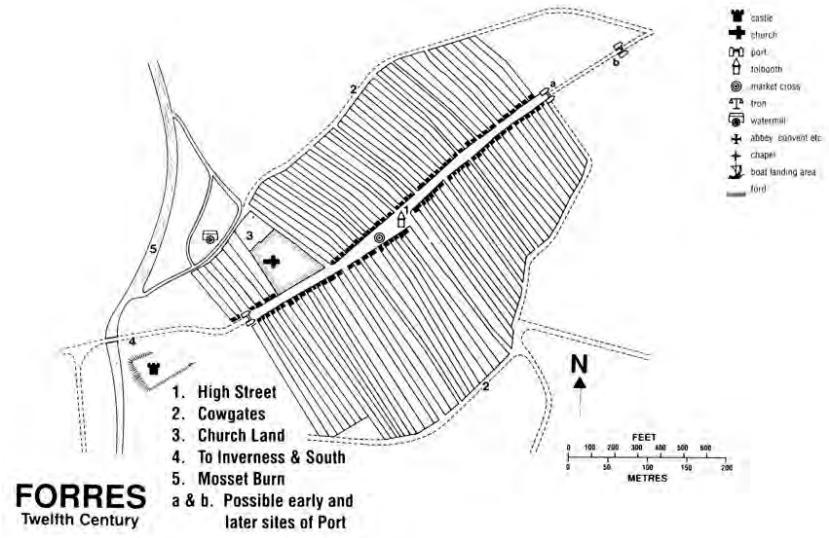
3.2.1 Although the original charter by which Forres was established as a royal burgh by David I (1124-53) has been long lost, it is clear that Forres was selected as a key site in the monarch's visionary plan to impose civil society on the kingdom during his reign. This he, and his successors, chose to do from the foundations of royal castles from which law and order would be

imposed through hereditary sheriffs; from establishing trade privileges to the burgesses from which taxes would be levied; and in setting up a hierarchical order for the church through the diocesan system of cathedrals and parish churches, and by granting preferential landholdings to the monastic orders. In the northern territories, Forres became one of three burghs on the fringes of the strategically important Moray Firth, a distinction it shared with Inverness and Elgin. Nairn was added to the grouping around 1190, and Dingwall, protecting the route to the far north, followed in the reign of Alexander II in around 1226/7. Fourteen royal burghs in total were established during David's reign, a statistic that underlines the strategic importance of Forres in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Its strategic location was strengthened by the associations forged with the Cistercian abbey at Kinloss, founded in 1150 towards the end of the reign of David I, which grew to become one of the largest and wealthiest Cistercian houses in Scotland. The burgh is often mentioned in the records of the abbey.

3.2.2 The word 'burgh' is derived from *burgus,* signifying a fortified enclosure. Vestiges of the power and responsibilities allocated by the sovereign are manifested in the physical appearance of the burghs. Thus the castle would be positioned on a defensible site, affording some measure of protection to the settlement which at this early stage would have been in the form of a motte and bailey, in all probability with timber palisades. The principal street of the town would be laid out to encourage the exchange of trade through markets and fairs, while the affairs of a town council or the burgesses would be conducted from a tolbooth, or a tron devised for the weighing of goods in the larger burghs, or a town-house; or a building with a combination of these functions erected at the broadest part of the street. Near this point a market cross would be positioned from which official proclamations would be made. The parish church and graveyard would normally be in a prominent position within the overall layout within the boundaries of the burgh. The origins of the medieval predecessor to St Laurence Church are still visible as the nave of the present church is aligned, as its predecessors, true east-west, which is noticeably different to the layout of the burgh which is more accurately northeast-southwest. Few of the Scottish burghs had defensive walls of sufficient strength to protect the inhabitants against attack, but most burghs would be expected to have ports to control entry for the purposes of maintaining trade privileges, or as occasionally happened, to repel those who may be carrying pestilence. There is evidence that Forres had all of these characteristic features, even if some of them may not have survived to the present time. A further location for fairs had been the Market Green alongside the Mosset Burn.

3.2.3 Forres displays most clearly the survival of its medieval layout. Under the auspices of David I the burghs would be laid out to a standardised arrangement – in its most straightforward form the layout might consist of a single, long, 'hie gait' or high street forming the backbone of the town plan, with the closes, vennels or wynds, running at right angles often leading to back gaits (peripheral lanes, here North Road and South Street respectively). In Forres the high street was also referred to as the 'king's calsay' (causeway). Edinburgh, Elgin and Forres are laid out in this manner, while the burghs of Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth and St Andrews had more complex layouts; most often the layout would be determined by the topography, in which Edinburgh and Forres in particular were laid out on a ridge with the castle placed at the highest, and most prominent, point.

3.2.4 These distinctive patterns were the result of intricate planning, setting out the relationship between the main street, or streets, and the narrow burgage plots, otherwise known as rigs, or tofts. David based his national plan on the systems introduced by the Normans, and the surveyors he engaged for laying out the royal burghs were likely to have been of Norman or Flemish descent. The house of a burgess would be positioned on the forelands, and the backlands of the long, narrow, burgage plots would be occupied by the lesser members of the community. Each of the burgage plots would be of a similar width, and in many cases access to the dwellings would have been confined to one side of the wynd - in Forres access can be from both sides, depending on the location within the burgh. As can be seen in Forres, over time, the plots might be doubled up at the forelands at a later date to provide more imposing townhouses, or shops, having a more substantial presence on the principal street, but the pattern of the original feus would still be visible in the overall townscape. In the original burgh layout of Forres the burgage plots measure roughly 18½ feet wide. The boundaries between the feus were rarely ever straight in any medieval burgh.



Conjectural layout of the medieval burgh in the twelfth century shows the fishbone pattern of the High Street on the ridge and the narrow burgage plots laid out towards the peripheral lanes where a nominal wall would have been erected (from Naismith)

3.2.5 As to exactly how many ports or gateways Forres might have had, and their locations, there is only scant evidence. Ports might be expected to be positioned to control the main through routes, and the principal approaches from the landward area with which the burgh would have had a high dependency for the success of its trading and prosperity. In the case of Forres, the links with the harbour at Findhorn would have been particularly important. There is evidence to suggest that there had been an east port at the point of entry to the High Street, roughly where the Masonic Hall is now, which was still standing in 1769 when it was referred to by Thomas Pennant as 'an arched gateway, which has a good effect'. A north port may have been positioned at the foot of Kirk Vennel (Gordon Street) near to the site of a waulkmill, according to burgh records. A west port would have been positioned at the commencement of the High Street to control the crossing over the Mosset Burn in the vicinity of the castle, and a further port to the south of the burgh could have been located at the foot of Tolbooth Wynd, now Tolbooth Street. Without firm evidence, with the east port being the possible exception, the locations of the ports can only be conjectural.

3.2.6 Royal connections with the castle were affirmed by the granting of the charter, and continued into the medieval period, but whether the site castle had been developed primarily for the purposes of defence as opposed to being a royal lodging, remains unclear. Historical records suggest that the castle had been occupied regularly by William the Lion, Alexander II and Alexander III, who is believed to have established a royal mint in the burgh. The site was still of sufficient strategic importance to attract the attention of the invading English army in 1296, when the castle was captured by Edward I and garrisoned by English soldiers. In his second campaign in the North in 1303 Edward took possession of the castle once more. The sheriffdom of Forres was served by several families, and during the rule of King Robert I, when Thomas Randolph was made Earl of Moray, it fell under his jurisdiction and would have remained with the earldom until it was forfeited in 1455 after the rebellious Archibald Douglas had assumed power. From around the end of the fifteenth century the Dunbars of Westfield were made hereditary sheriffs of Moray, and would have had possession of both of the castle sites at Forres and Elgin.

3.2.7 It is recorded that in 1244 nearly all of the burghs in Scotland were razed to the ground and were destroyed by fire. As an act of vengeance it was not an uncommon act during the medieval period. The destruction of Forres by fire is most closely associated with the ravages of the Wolf of Badenoch in 1390, but throughout the fourteenth century the wooden structures of the burgh had to be rebuilt on more than one occasion. As late as 1586 there is a reference to the homes of the common people in Forres being constructed of mud, with the walls most probably of wattle daubed with clay and dung, conclusions confirmed by excavations carried out at other medieval burgh sites. The roofs would have been covered with thatch. By this time, the castle would have been rebuilt in stone, but apart from that, possibly the only other buildings constructed of stone would have been the parish kirk and perhaps also the tolbooth. Parts of the old kirk could have survived the blaze. Edward III's military campaign of 1336 took him to Forres – again, an indication of the burgh's relative importance - where he razed the buildings to the ground once more after condemning Old Aberdeen to the same fate.

3.2.8 The most violent act perpetrated on the townsfolk of Forres came in 1390 when the 'wyld, wykked helend-men' descended upon the burgh under the leadership of Alexander Stewart, the royally-appointed Earl of Buchan, immortalised throughout history as the Wolf of Badenoch. He burnt down all of the buildings including the choir of the parish church and the archdeacon's manse. It was a precursor to the orgy of destruction upon which he was to embark a month or so later at Elgin when the cathedral and all of the eighteen manses of the chanonry were burnt down as an act of vengeance against the church. That so many of the inhabitants of the burgh of Forres could have been at the Meads of St John at Darnaway, preparing for a tournament, had been a blessing (if true). So rich is the event in the memories of the Forres townsfolk that the scene is captured in the nineteenth century painting by Charles Cranmer, on display in the Courtroom of the Tolbooth.

3.2.9 One of the likely effects of the raid by the Wolf of Badenoch is that no burgh records survive from before this period, and, as in so many other matters, the strength of the trading position of the burgh is difficult to establish with any degree of certainty. But there is sufficient to consider that it had not been insubstantial when at its peak in the medieval era. A trading union, or 'hanse', existed in the first half of the twelfth century, which listed the participating ports of Aberdeen, Elgin, Forres, Nairn and Inverness with

Aberdeen as the entrepôt (or distribution centre) on the Northeast coastline. A record of 1263 lists 540 cattle having been shipped from Forres to Leith. A few years after an act of 1364 had been passed legitimising foreign trade, coinciding with the end of the Hanseatic War, the Sound of Skagerrack reopened and trade was fostered between the Scottish east coast ports and the Baltic. The merchant burgesses of Forres would have participated in this trade. A comparison of how burghs performed against one another can be gauged from studying stent rolls, which recorded levels of taxation from trading. In 1485 it is of interest therefore to note that the stent for Forres was £6, marginally ahead of Montrose at £5 6s 8d, and twice the levels of Banff and Elgin at £3 each.

3.2.10 The trading position of Forres seems to have collapsed around the end of the fifteenth century, and the charter of 1496 records the fact that the burgh's trade had been interfered with and damaged from acts of lawlessness, although what these were and who committed them are, unfortunately, not stipulated. By 1535, Elgin had leapt ahead of Forres in taxation figures and continued to grow its mercantile base, monopolising local trade until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Almost nothing of the medieval burgh survives from this era, apart from the distinctive pattern on which the burgh plan had been laid out.

3.3 From lawlessness to a place of civilisation: the burgh from 1560 to 1750

Murray is indeed a Pleasant Countrey, the Soil fruitful, water'd with fine Rivers, and full of good towns.
Daniel Defoe (c1725)

3.3.1 Unlike the neighbouring burgh of Elgin, the upheaval caused by the Scottish Reformation in 1560 seemed to have relatively little effect on Forres. By all accounts the burgh's trading position declined further, an inference which may be drawn from the number of times that the Town Council was rebuked for having failed to send its representative to the Convention of Burghs of which it was bound to take up membership. The reason for this became partially clear in 1587 when a petition was lodged with the Convention on Forres's claim to impoverished circumstances. The town appeared, outwardly at least, to change hardly at all for almost two centuries.

3.3.2 Paradoxically, despite this gloomy outlook, it does seem to have been the case that the burgh's financial affairs were being well managed by the Town Council. During the seventeenth century the trading position must have improved. Regular trading was recorded between the ports of Aberdeen and Findhorn, and dues were paid to the Danish authorities at Helsingor, suggesting that trade with the Baltic was still strong. However, in 1691 a survey was conducted into the state of the greater majority of the 64 burghs who were members of the Convention, following reports of a widespread slump in trade which had affected both the home and the foreign export trade; poor Dingwall was reported as having no trade at all. Virtually all of the burghs were considered to be living beyond their means, of which only two possible exceptions were observed – Arbroath and Forres. Shortly after this survey was made, Forres suffered a harsh setback when its harbour at Findhorn was immersed by the river changing course in the autumn of 1694 when the shifting sandhills of Maviston consumed the fertile estate of Culbin, bringing its owners, the Kinnairds, to their knees. Bankruptcy followed within the space of just a few years. Although the harbour was rebuilt, trade continued to falter and, around the time of the

Act of Union of 1707, it was reported as being virtually non-existent. Trade was further restricted by the sand bar lengthening, making it difficult for larger seagoing vessels to enter the natural harbour of the bay. Forres merchants also benefited from the commercial fisheries operating at various times out of Findhorn, and in particular from the salmon netting at the mouth of the river. It appears that there had also been an established trade in white fish, and in particular in skate and ling.

Extracts from maps of Forres and the surrounding area by Timothy Pont (late sixteenth century, upper) and Joan Blaeu (1654, lower) shows clearly the numbers of country seats surrounding the town, a significant number of them owned by the quarrelsome Dunbar family. Both maps show the town's port at Findhorn before it had to be rebuilt after the shifting Culbin sands. A bridge across the Mosset Burn at Burdsyards is also shown. Both © National Library of Scotland

3.3.3 Two historic maps of the later sixteenth century and the mid-seventeenth century merit comment. Timothy Pont's map provides a clear indication that Forres had been a place of importance – not only is the parish church identified, but he gives the impression that there could have been towerhouses, or the residences of lairds, erected within the boundary of the burgh which is shown to be well rounded, enclosing what might be shown to be orchards and gardens. If the image he drew is correct (as it often was) it might be assumed that these towers would have been on the periphery of

the town plan, perhaps set within their own grounds, as opposed to being positioned on the ridge. The mill on the burn has been clearly identified, while the principal route from the south came across a bridge over the burn upstream at Burdsyards – the same arrangement is shown on the later map of 1654 of Joan Blaeu, which was based largely on Pont's mapping. Both of these maps show very clearly the historic relationship between the monastery and the associated lands at Kinloss, and also the town's port at Findhorn before the river changed its course with such devastating effect.

3.3.4 At a time when James VI was seeking to impose law and order on his wayward citizens across the breadth of his kingdom, the Laigh of Moray created a thorn in his side, perhaps unexpectedly as the main lawlessness came from the clans of the Northwest seaboard. The prosperity to be enjoyed from the fertility of the land and the harbours of the coastline of the firth saw families expanding, seeking to acquire estates for themselves upon which to build their defensive towerhouses – study of Timothy Pont's map on the previous page reveals just how dense had been the numbers of these structures, with a significant number of them circling the burgh of Forres. Petty disputes were frequent, and they often spilled over into outright hostility, even among the septs of the same family. This disharmony had a marked corrosive effect on local civil society. There were longstanding disagreements between the Dunbar family (who, after the Earl of Moray, were the leading family of the district) and the Innes's, whose lands were further towards the east. In the early seventeenth century, around the time that the Dunbars of Burgie and Blervie were both building their mightily impressive (and very similar) towerhouses on the hill overlooking Forres and within a short distance of one another, there was constant disagreement and feuding with the other members of the family which spilled out on occasions onto the streets of the burgh. Thus we learn that in 1610 Dunbar of Blervie had retaliated against the wounding of his son by the brother of the leader of the clan, Dunbar of Westfield, the current holder of the hereditary sheriffdom for Elgin and Forres. Despite a court appearance, and bonds of caution being issued to keep the peace, the dispute escalated in the following year when the Sheriff was shot dead on the streets of the burgh. The payment exacted out of the Blervie family for this malicious act all but resulted in its complete ruin. In the mid-1630s, in his *Annals of Forres* Robert Douglas reminds us of an invasion on the streets of the burgh by the Dunbars of Kilbuyack and Hempriggs, and that in the skirmish that ensued Kilbuyack killed two of Hempriggs's brothers, causing him to flee to England, awaiting a pardon which he was ultimately granted. Members of the clan were constantly apprehended, or in exile from their misdeeds, but it took some years yet before the rebellious Dunbars of Burgie could be tamed. As late as 1668, much to the embarrassment of the King's representatives, the laird's son held out against their authority within the walls of the castle with a garrison of supporters armed with pistols and dirks. Under the escort of twenty-four armed accomplices his father had only recently escaped from prison at the Tolbooth in Elgin, having been condemned to serve his time there as a debtor.

3.3.5 And neither was the Dunbar family alone in committing acts of outright violence. In 1623 the parish minister was assaulted by the Urquhart laird of Cromarty - not even in his manse, but in the body of the kirk. In 1700 the markets of Banff, Elgin and Forres were terrorised by a marauding band of around thirty brigands led by James Macpherson. Armed with matchlocks, broadswords and dirks at their side they would march into the burgh with a piper playing at their head. Macpherson was eventually apprehended and

sent to the gibbet at Banff, but until then the magistrates had been powerless to deal with him and his unruly followers.

3.3.6 As noted in the previous section, although there was never any suggestion that the walls of the burgh were erected for defensive purposes, in 1588 there is a record which suggests that a notional degree of security had to be observed. One of the townsfolk was directed by the magistrates 'to build a dyk to keip out Owtlands men' implying that there had been a need to keep out more than just stray animals. Maintaining the cleanliness of the burgh remained a recurring issue, with the residents reminded constantly by the magistrates of their obligations to keep the wynds clean.

Photograph by Ian G Lindsay taken in the 1930s of a venerable seventeenth century house on North Road (now demolished) with a roof of stone slates and catslide dormers, of a type that would have been common in the burgh at one time. Crown Copyright, licensor www.scran.ac.uk

3.3.7 By all accounts the quality of the structures erected in the burgh began to improve as the numbers of stone buildings increased. Records make reference to the Tolbooth in the 1580s, but the date when the structure was erected is not known. In many of the records thereafter it is recorded as being ruinous, and in need of repair. Forres is fortunate to have a few examples surviving of a type of building which was once commonplace in the historic burghs of the north. The roofs would normally be thatched, and the gables would be presented to the street, with the earlier examples having crowsteps. The earliest, at 154 High Street, has the date of 1668 inscribed on the skewputt. There is also the evidence of more elegant two storey houses of mid-eighteenth century date having survived well into the twentieth century in the backlands, only to be demolished in slum clearance programmes or to make way for new social housing. A building known as 'Roy's House' had been a stately property of some three storeys in height, of which a surviving carved panel carrying the date of 1730 has been carefully incorporated into the replacement building on the site at Nos 122-126 High Street, latterly the Longview Hotel, to mark its passing.

3.3.8 Forres seems to have suffered less than some burghs at the mercy of the armies passing through during the Civil War of the 1640s, and the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745. But these times were not wholly without

Datestones on the High Street: 1668 at No 154, and the carved panel carrying the date of 1730 from James Roy's house at 122-126

incident, and the commandeering of foodstuffs and other provisions would have taken their toll. Despite the fact that certain of the landowners may have expressed their allegiances to one side, or the other, it seems that the magistrates of the burgh had managed to pursue a wise policy of neutrality. Even this did not come without its own risks, as JB Ritchie reminds us in *The Pageant of Morayland*. A former provost, William Dawson, who was a prominent Forres merchant and a shipowner, was accused in 1715 by the Hanoverians of importing arms and ammunition for the rebels through the port of Findhorn, for which he was carried off for trial on charge of high treason to Inverness. He was able to prove his innocence, but only through the efforts of men of influence. The soldiers of the Jacobite and Hanoverian armies passing through the area prior to the Battle of Culloden in 1746 caused a great deal of trepidation among the townsfolk, while the physical damage they caused was later assessed and paid for after the hostilities came to an end.

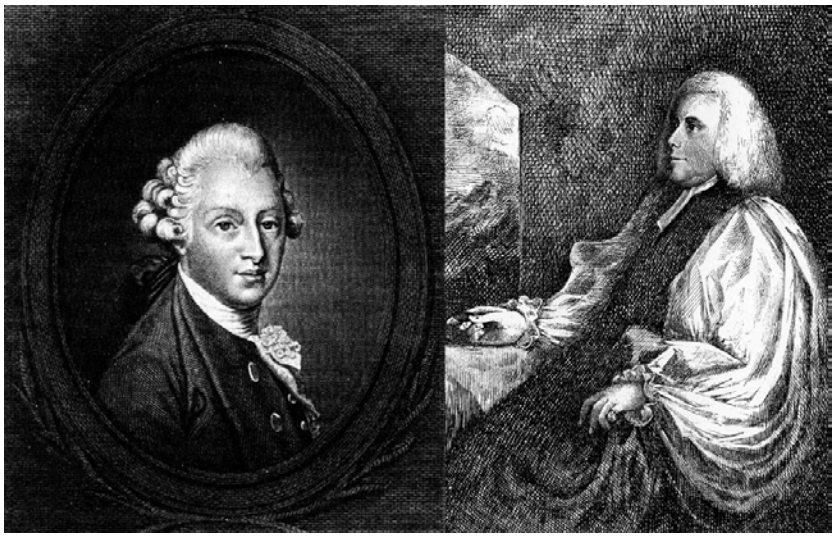
3.3.9 Little is known about the fate of the castle in the post-medieval era, other than it seems likely that its stone walls had been plundered for building dwellings in the town. The site passed eventually to the Grants of Grant in the late eighteenth century. The name of William Dawson appears once more over the commencement of the building of a new mansion house for himself on the Castlehill site. It is thought that he cleared away any standing ruins of the old castle, but he must have run into financial difficulties as the house he had begun in 1712 was never completed. It was abandoned with the walls standing no higher than nine feet, and it was frequently confused with the remains of the old stronghold (as shown on Wood's map of 1823), although the house would have been located at some distance in front of the old castle site. The foundations of the house appeared on the historic Ordnance Survey maps of the town, and they were not removed until 1934 when the area of the Castlehill was landscaped following the gift of Sir Alexander Grant, who acquired it on behalf of the Town Council. In 1845 when trees were planted by General Sir Lewis Grant on the slopes of the mound, the foundations of the old castle were exposed at a depth of some eighteen feet below the surface. They extended some 26 yards in an east to west direction and the walls were recorded as being six feet in thickness, suggesting that it had once been a fortress, erected to repel attackers.

3.4 Improvements and expansion: the burgh from 1750 to 1919

Rode to Forres …… a small well-built town, pleasantly situated near some little hills, and, as it has an eminence, capable of being kept very clean. The country about it

has a chearful appearance, having a few gentlemen's seats, with some plantations about them.
Thomas Newte (1791)

The town stands on a gently-rising ground, near the bay of Findhorn; it is very ancient, gloomy, and dirty. Poverty seemed to hang over it as an evil spirit. In the street I saw several qualified figures, who induced me to think that the race of Macbeth's witches was not quite extinguished; and I was glad to take my departure for Nairn…..
Sir John Carr (1807)



Travellers in the mid-eighteenth century with opposing views of how the town appeared: Sir William Burrell (1758) and the cleric Richard Pococke, Bishop of Meath (1760)

3.4.1 The appearance of the burgh must have changed markedly, and for the better, by the second half of the eighteenth century judging by the comments of travellers passing through (although as indicated in the above quotations, some were still none too complimentary). The evidence is also to be found in the quality of the buildings surviving from this period, while recognising that some of the best have been lost. In the late eighteenth century the expressions of praise and disappointment were about equally matched in the descriptions left by those who saw Forres for the first time, suggesting that the place was in a state of transition. To Sir William Burrell, passing through in 1758, it was 'full of beggars from one end to the other' and not in a thriving condition, with a single long 'ill-built' street. Bishop Pococke in 1760 was much better disposed towards the town, considering that the broad street was 'handsome' and noting that the 150 or so dwellings were 'well built'. The well-travelled Welshman, Thomas Pennant, sided with Pococke when he visited in 1769, sharing his view that the situation was picturesque. He described Forres as a 'neat town', and he particularly liked the 'handsome cupola' of the Tolbooth, as did others who admired it. In 1773 a delegation of an architect and a mason was sent to Forres by the Town Council of Dingwall, with a view to replicating it in improvements which were proposed for its own town house.

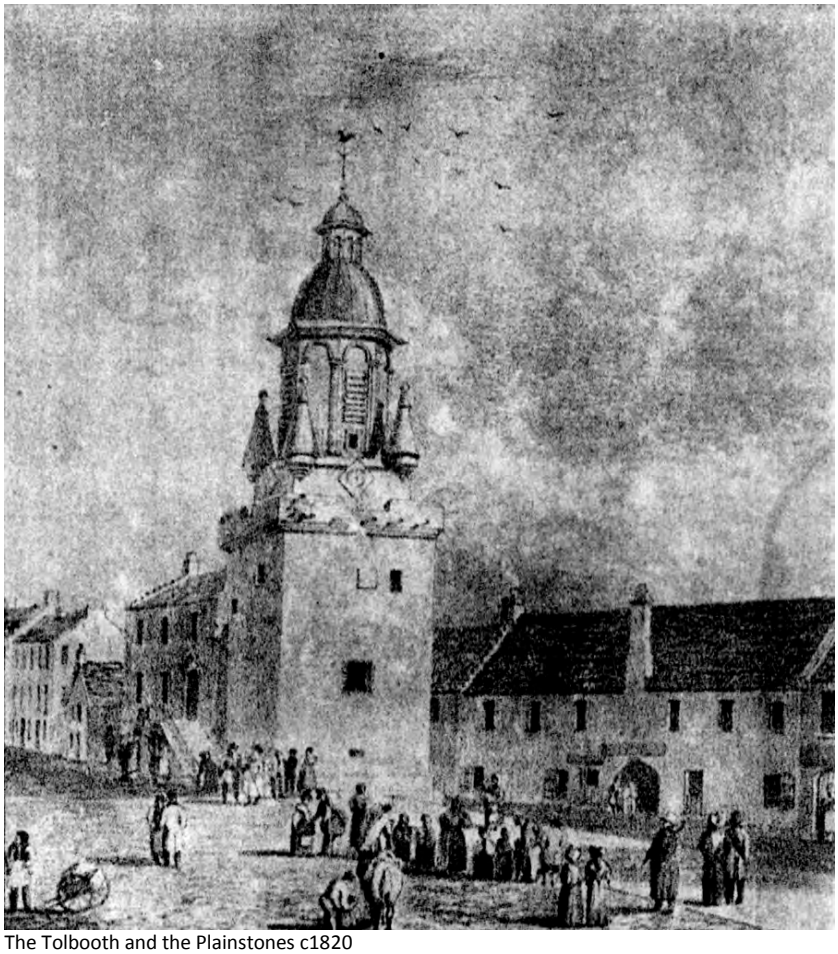
3.4.2 Pennant's description of Forres as a 'neat town' is conveyed in the map of Scotland prepared by General Roy and his military surveyors between 1747 and 1755, in which the extent of the burgh appears much as it would have been during the medieval era. The bridge over the Mosset Burn is shown at the foot of the Castlehill, although the main route southwards still appears to be in the direction of the ford at Burdsyards, entering the town at the foot of Tolbooth Wynd. The only other street of any note at right angles to

the High Street appears to be Kirk Vennel, leading in the direction of North Road. The graveyard and parish kirk appear to have been positioned accurately, while the Tolbooth is shown isolated in the middle of the market place. The burgh appears to be surrounded by orchards and enclosed gardens.

Extract from Roy's map of c1750 shows the High Street connected to the main route from Inverness to Elgin. Routes to the landward area diverge as at present at the foot of Tolbooth Street and the large enclosure at the west end on the former castle site may relate to the garden laid out by Provost Dawson. © National Library of Scotland / British Library

3.4.3 There are few surviving images of the old market cross and the Plainstones before the improvements of the early nineteenth century, but a sketch by J-C Nattes at the end of the eighteenth century indicated that the shaft of the old cross had been plain, and that the Plainstones had been well defined by stone pillars, or bollards.

A reproduction of a Jean-Claude Nattes sketch of the Market Cross and Plainstones c1800, from Volume V of MacGibbon & Ross (published 1892)



The Tolbooth and the Plainstones c1820

3.4.4 From the end of the eighteenth century more complimentary descriptions of the town tended to prevail. One association which would appear, almost without exception, was that with the celebrated and popular Shakespearian play *Macbeth*. Both Burrell and Pennant made the connection, and the latter seemed aware of the links that tied Forres to Boethius, and to the playwright; he also knew of the moor to the east of the town where Macbeth was supposed to have had his encounter with the three witches in the opening lines of the play. According to James Boswell, when his friend and travelling companion, the famous lexicographer Samuel Johnson, arrived at Forres in the summer of 1773, while Johnson found little to say about the town (which he found unremarkable but for Sueno's Stone), the Shakespearian lines resonated in his head as he recited 'How far is't called to Fores?' He recited a great deal more of the play, saying that, to an Englishman, this was 'classic ground'. Boswell noted that the inn was admirable, and they were delighted with the landlord who styled himself 'Wine-Cooper, from London'. Although Sir John Carr seemed little moved by Forres, he knew only too well the connection with Shakespeare and the history of the play, quoting its origins in Holinshed.

3.4.5 The connection with Macbeth seems rarely, if ever, to have been actively promoted at this time, although a tourist guide prepared in 1823 specifically for visitors to the Province of Moray set out in some detail the relevant verses of the play. Fact and fiction too often became a little muddled. The Poet Laureate, Robert Southey, on a tour in which he shadowed the civil engineer Thomas Telford in 1819, believed that the Witches' Stone which had been pointed out to him on the entry into Forres marked the spot

where the witches having made the prophecy to Macbeth had been burnt: of all people he should have known better, but he was not alone. The much read, and normally reliable, *Bradshaw's Descriptive Railway Handbook* of 1863 identified the town of Forres with: 'Here is *Forres Castle*, on the heath where Macbeth met the Weird Sisters, and murdered Banquo'. But the myth proved to be an enduring one, and the association continued throughout the course of the nineteenth century. Although Queen Victoria failed to stop at Forres railway station on a journey to the west with her entourage in September 1872, she was certainly aware of the Macbeth connection, noting it in her diary. Wilson's 1882 edition of the *Gazetteer of Scotland* considered that Forres had acquired celebrity through Macbeth, and a tourist guide published in 1887 readily acknowledged that most people would only know of the town through the Shakespeare association. It is only in recent times that the link has faded, an observation, perhaps, on changing standards of literacy in modern times.

The building at the corner of the High Street and Gordon Street carries the date of 1748 in the central dormer pediment; the arcade of cast iron shopfronts were introduced in the nineteenth century

3.4.6 From the buildings that have survived from the late eighteenth century it can be concluded that the 'ill-built' High Street was beginning to change. This reflected a growing sense of confidence and civic pride, perhaps best displayed in the imposing building of three storeys with the frontage extending over two of the medieval feus, erected in 1748 at the junction with Gordon Street (now the offices of R&R Urquhart). Bouts of rebuilding appear to have been largely focused on the street blocks to the west of the Plainstones, from which further rebuilding followed along the rest of the street towards the extremities. Domestic buildings with their gables to the street were still being erected in the late eighteenth century, but another, more distinctive type of façade of three storeys, normally associated with buildings of the middle and late eighteenth century, was appearing, of which three have survived (discounting the building of 1748 mentioned above). They are distinctive for having a central tympan gable (sometimes known as a 'nepus' gable) at the centre of the façade with a chimneyhead directly above. Three storeyed buildings were by now more commonplace, but it is difficult to form any opinion about how the town had appeared other than from the information gleaned from travellers' accounts. A significant house of two storeys with good architectural detail was erected

in 1778 at what became later Stuart's cycle shop, but it is now somewhat mutilated from alterations having been carried out in the twentieth century.

The early nineteenth century buildings at Warden Place; John Rhind's building at 122-126 High Street abuts the east block, erected in 1882

3.4.7 In the early nineteenth century, the carefully balanced grouped pair of buildings at Warden's Buildings (1808, built on the proceeds of a fortune made in India) and the grand three storey property erected by John Cumming around 1820 (until lately, the shop and offices of Mackenzie & Cruickshank), demonstrate how sophisticated, and fashionable, new domestic buildings erected in Forres had become. Among the villas Elm Cottage on St Leonard's Road (pre-1823, now the office of LDN Architects) and Cluny on Victoria Road (c1835) with its finely proportioned porch are outstanding examples.

3.4.8 The entry by the parish minister in the 1790s for the Old Statistical Account lists the growing importance of the commercial fisheries to the burgh's port of Findhorn, and he mentions also the possibility of canalising the bay to bring goods closer to the town (as was done some years later at Dingwall where a harbour was created), a matter which seemed to be under some discussion at the time. The idea prevailed for a while, but came to nothing. He noted that Forres historically had a strong retail base, and that the merchants and shopkeepers served a large geographical area following the coastline, extending as far northwards as Sutherland, Caithness and even Orkney. However, the introduction of shops in the principal settlements of these outlying areas had removed the trading monopoly, as the local shopkeepers could sell almost as cheaply as the Forres merchants. In her memoirs of the early nineteenth century Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus paints a rather different picture, recalling in 1809 that 'the Forres shops, beside being dear, were ill-supplied'. In a directory of 1851 it was noted that Forres still had a considerable retail trade.

3.4.9 The travellers' repeated observations that trade was meagre at the end of the eighteenth century is borne out by the fact that there was then very little industry of note. For some years linen yarn had been spun for the Glasgow manufacturers in a trade which employed mainly women, but the market had slumped in the 1780s due to the introduction of mechanised spinning looms in the south and from the introduction of yarn from Ireland. In 1842 it was reported that the only manufacturing industry was that of 'straw-plait for ladies' bonnets', but even that seems to have been a short-lived venture. The burn provided water power for a series of flour mills, and a public bleaching green was laid out on its banks. Further upstream at the Mills of Forres there was a productive sawmill operated by the Urquhart family, from which hexagonal timber setts were exported to be laid on the

streets and pavements of London in the 1840s, of which a handful have survived in one of the wynds off the High Street.

3.4.10 The growing prosperity of Forres at this time was gained largely as a business centre to serve its populous landward area which was beginning to benefit from agricultural improvement, reflected by the setting up of agricultural and horticultural societies in the town by the 1830s. A subscription library had been established around the turn of the nineteenth century, but the spirit of improvement is also reflected in the foundation of a Mechanics' Institute in 1847, endowed for the benefit of providing a library for the education of the working men of the town. Largely due to the generosity of the trustees of the recently deceased shipowner Duncan Dunbar of Seapark, the organisation was able to take over in 1855 the suave Masonic Halls which had been erected as assembly rooms in 1829 to the design of the celebrated Aberdeen architect, Archibald Simpson. In 1851 it was described as having a ball-room, supper room and other apartments. As a further indication of economic progress, each of the leading banks established branches on the High Street, and until the National Bank opened for business in 1833 the only bank serving the town had been the British Linen Bank which relocated its premises in 1839 to a more central site at the Plainstones, now occupied by the Clydesdale Bank.

The contribution of the Elgin architect William Robertson to the public buildings of Forres: left, Anderson's Academical Institution (1823) and, right, the tower of the Tolbooth (1838-40)

3.4.11 While the enhancement of the burgh can be attributed to an improving local economy, this is really only part of the story. The parish minister in 1842 could capture the mood of the population when he wrote, clearly with some reflection of pride over the recent embellishments that had been carried out in recent years:

> The great body of the people enjoy in a considerable measure the comforts and advantages of society, and are generally contented with their condition in life. They are warmly attached to their own town and parish, the beauty and amenity of which they highly appreciate, and take a zealous and lively interest in promoting every measure calculated for their embellishment and improvement.

Lord Henry Cockburn, the eminent circuit judge, was in full agreement. He described Forres as a 'nice old country town', choosing to stay frequently just outside the town boundary at Knockomie. He found it a sleepy place, describing it as a 'silent city', a trait he found most appealing. The parish minister was able to demonstrate the strength of his argument by making

reference to a number of factors: he extolled the quality of the recent public buildings erected in the town and the inspired creation of public recreational space carved out of the Cluny Hill, and he admired in particular the conspicuous philanthropy of the leading citizens of the town. His admiration for the high ambitions of the Town Council was manifested in the fine new Tolbooth building to replace the venerable crumbling structure at the heart of the town. It was designed by the Elgin architect William Robertson and completed in 1840, of which he said that 'the tower and dome are much admired for the beauty of their proportions, and form a great ornament to the town and neighbourhood'. The request that the upper stages of the tower should be designed to reflect the distinctive profile of its immediate predecessor came from those within the community having an interest in such matters of taste, and not from the Town Council or its appointed architect, although he was happy to comply with the request.

3.4.12 Robertson had already been the architect to another of the town's landmark buildings at Anderson's Academical Institution, which he was commissioned to design in 1822. Its elegant spire contributes to a skyline of great interest when seen from the low-lying land on the approaches to the town. Jonathan Anderson was the benefactor who, in 1814 from the proceeds of land he owned at Cowlairs in Glasgow, provided a bequest for the erection of a school building. Another Forres-born benefactor, whose legacy still provides educational bursaries to this day, was James Dick (1743-1828), whose family owned land at the west end of the High Street. He amassed the considerable fortune of £140,000 from holdings in Jamaica and London.

3.4.13 The enlightened decision of the Town Council to plant woodland and create a network of pleasure walks for the enjoyment of the townsfolk around the Cluny Hills around the turn of the nineteenth century seems to have been extraordinary act of foresight for the time. The woodland was destroyed by fire on more than one occasion – the slopes of the hills were replanted after a fire in 1815, and again, after another, in 1848 which coincides with the laying out of the new public cemetery, the area of which was extended in the 1920s. A gazetteer of 1842 extolled the virtue of the pleasure grounds, noting that the creation of the walks had been supported by private subscription. Its author observed that it was 'an appropriation of burgh-property which might with advantage be more generally imitated'. The authors of *Morayshire Described* (1868) considered, with some justification, that:

> Few towns in the kingdom, and certainly not one of this size, possess such extensive pleasure-grounds for the recreation and amusement of its inhabitants, as does Forres with its Cluny Hills.

3.4.14 The extended duration of the Napoleonic Wars marked a troubled time for Britain, and the rousing circumstances of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805 was marked in Forres with an outpouring of nationalistic pride and celebration. A long list of subscribers of the county contributed to the erection of a hilltop memorial to the late admiral, completed in the same year as the announcement had been made at the Market Cross, 1806. It was finished ahead of the Nelson Monument on Edinburgh's Calton Hill (1807-14). The tower was to be not only 'a monument to departed heroism'; its chosen location at the highest vantage point of the Cluny Hills promised that 'exclusive of answering the intended purpose, it will form a most agreeable object to every traveller and the country at large, an useful sea beacon, an excellent observatory, and a commanding alarm post in the event of an

William Daniell's aquatint of Nelson's Tower c1819

enemy's approach by sea or land'. The last mentioned potential use provided an indication of just how sensitive the defence of the realm had become at the time. Views of as many as seven counties were possible from the top of the tower on a clear day. William Daniell visited the site, probably in 1818, and captured the scene. The head of the tower had been adorned with a naval flagstaff which has been long removed.

3.4.15 The town has had a long history of families which could boast distinguished military service abroad, perhaps none more than the family of Provost Duncan Grant of Lingieston. Among his sons were Sir James Grant (Wellington's senior medical officer at Waterloo); Colonel Alexander Grant (who served under Wellington in India); and Sir Lewis Grant, who became Governor of Trinidad. A younger son, Colquhoun Grant, was arguably the most distinguished of them all, and is commemorated as being a pioneer in the field of military espionage, having served also under Wellington who appointed him the country's first Head of intelligence. Another military figure of note from this era was Sir James McGrigor, Wellington's Chief Medical Officer during the Peninsular War. It was through McGrigor that a memorial to a medical colleague and hero of the Crimean War, Dr James Thomson, was erected at the Castlehill in 1857 to add to the growing skyline of monuments. A native of Cromarty, the town of his birth turned down the opportunity of erecting a monument to his fame and so it was provided for in Forres by public subscription, built of polished Peterhead granite. 'An object of curiosity of interest to Forres visitors and natives' as Douglas carefully describes it, the obelisk marks the site of the old castle and acts as a sentinel to the western approaches to the town.

3.4.16 A fine example of private philanthropy expended from service abroad resulted from the gift of Alexander Falconer, who died at Calcutta in 1856, leaving a legacy for the building of a new museum for the town. The gift was added to by his brother Dr Hugh Falconer, the geologist, biologist, and tea-planter in his early career, who had also served in the Honourable East India Company. The museum building in their name was erected on Tolbooth Street in 1869, and was designed by the architects A&W Reid of Elgin. It displays excellent stone carving of figureheads and sculptural detail on the street elevations by Thomas Goodwillie of Elgin. The original design showed the museum was to have been fitted up with a tower and dome.

Upper image: the Falconer Museum on Tolbooth Street (A&W Reid), with the Newmarket Buildings beyond designed by Thomas Mackenzie. Lower image: the Market Cross (1844) and the former Caledonian Bank (1854) both designed by Thomas Mackenzie

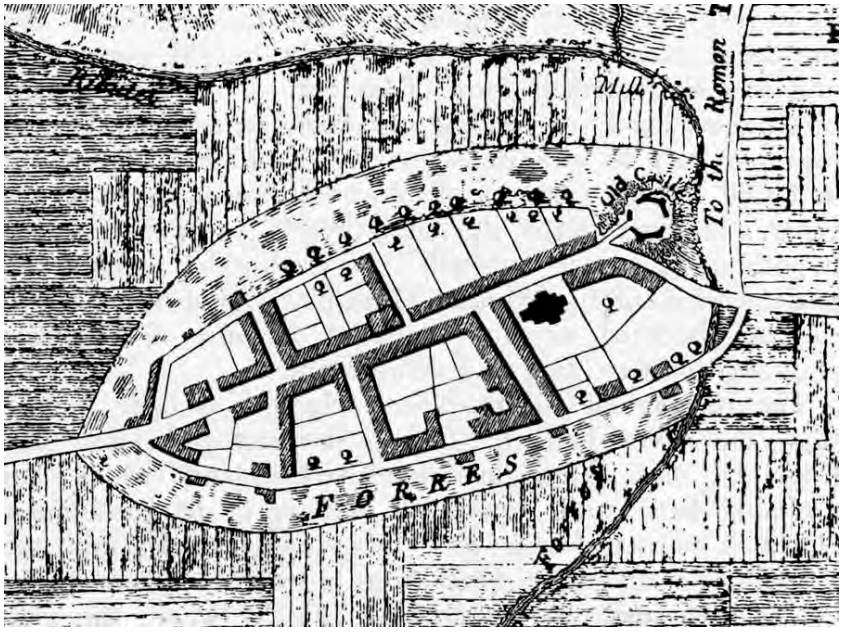
3.4.17 Enhancement of the public amenity at the Cluny Hills was matched by improvements carried out at the heart of the town centre following upon the completion of the new Tolbooth. In 1844 an architectural competition was held for a replacement market cross to be erected at the Plainstones, with the competition won by the talented Elgin architect, Thomas Mackenzie. The sum was raised by public subscription. Mackenzie was also the architect of the neighbouring impressive Italianate three-storey frontage of the Caledonian Bank, erected in 1854 (now the Bank of Scotland). Public utilities were introduced, with the gasworks bringing light to the streets of the town in 1837, and with the first piped water arriving in 1848; before then there had been a series of wells scattered around the town. A more reliable supply to serve the growing town came from Loch Romach in the hills to the south of Forres in 1902. Improvements to road surfaces and pavements seem to have been carried out over a number of years. Granite setts were laid along the length of the High Street, appearing in numerous

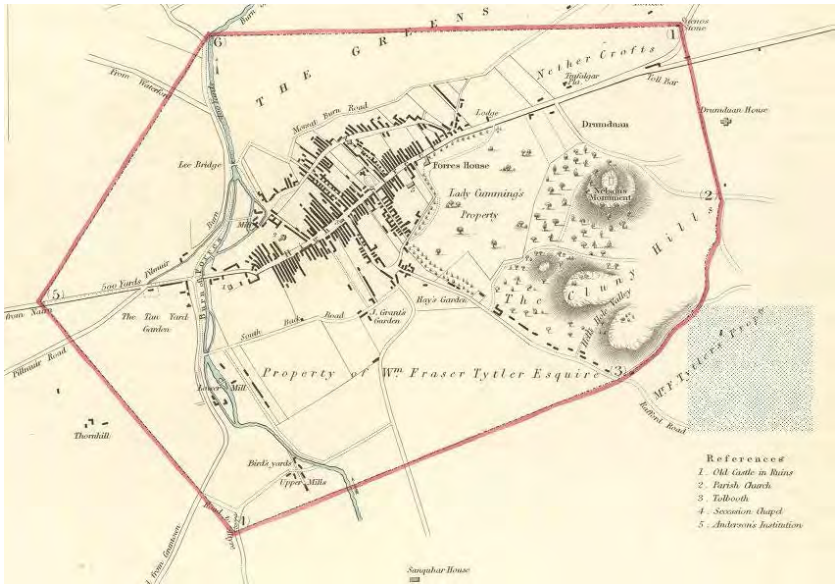
picture postcard images published towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Images from *Morayshire Described* (1868). In the upper image shows the High Street and the Tolbooth. In the lower image Forres is shown from Balnaferry with the town's skyline already well formed with the obelisk at Castlehill, the Tolbooth tower, Anderson's spire and the tower of St John's Episcopal Church in the distance. The profile of the old parish church can be seen. The full height of Nelson's Tower had yet to be obscured by the woodlands of the Cluny Hills.

3.4.18 The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map, published in 1868, captures the town on the threshold of change as it entered its 'third age'. This period of unparalleled growth was, to a certain extent, triggered by the arrival and growth of the railways from which the town benefited directly. The map was published in the same year as the Watsons' *Morayshire Described*, in which it is recorded that as many as thirty passenger trains departed daily from the station, some of them at that time with direct links to the south on the Highland Railway main line from Inverness, through Forres and Grantown, and onwards to London. The railway facilitated the exporting of goods from an expanding manufacturing base in the town and benefited the movement of agricultural produce from the landward area. It also opened

up the town as a base for tourism, with the numbers of hotels increasing dramatically in the second half of the nineteenth century to serve this growing market and the needs of business travellers. The venture to consolidate the town's historic trading links with the harbour through the spur from a junction at Kinloss by the Findhorn Railway Company in 1860 proved short-lived, however, as there was insufficient traffic to support it. An act of 1778 supported the maintenance of a harbour, and in 1852 14 ships were registered at Findhorn, compared with 13 at Burghead and 6 at Lossiemouth which confirms that, at mid-century, it remained a harbour of some importance. Shipping continued until 1914, but had declined significantly during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

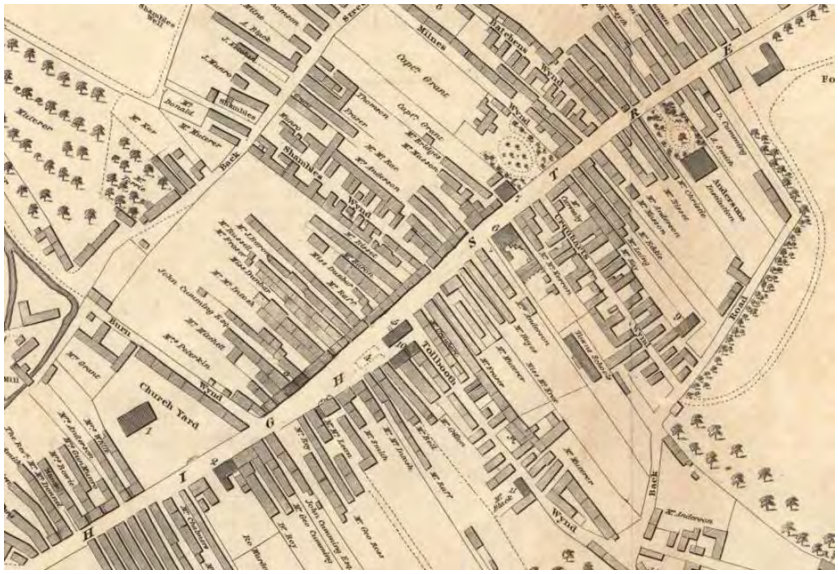




Upper image: diagrammatic map of Forres from Chalmers's *Caledonia* (1791) (north is to the bottom of the map, from Mackay Mackenzie). Lower image: map of Forres prepared for the Great Reform Act of 1832 shows clearly the extent of the town at that time – other than where Tolbooth Street or Urquhart Street had been developed, few of the burgage plots had been built upon as far as the peripheral lanes of the old medieval plan © National Library of Scotland

3.4.19 The town map appearing in Vol I of Chalmers's *Caledonia* (1791, see previous page) is somewhat diagrammatic, but it has sometimes been used to indicate that the growth of the town had been fairly constrained, and had not, at least by the end of the nineteenth century, broken out of its medieval straightjacket. The distinctive patterns of the houses set at right angles to the street in developments to the south of the town centre at the foot of Tolbooth Street, and along the length of Urquhart Wynd, are components of Wood's map of 1823 and the Great Reform Act map of 1832. On these earlier maps the only roads within the burgh carrying traffic to the north and south of the High Street were the old Kirk Vennel (shown as Burn Vennel on Wood's map, and later renamed Gordon Street), and Tolbooth Wynd which became Tolbooth Street. Cumming Street and Academy Lane were widened from existing wynds on the south side of the town centre, and similarly North Street, Caroline Street (formerly Shambles Wynd) and Batchen Street had all been widened and introduced on the north side; all are shown in the 1868 map. The other road to be introduced on the south side of the High Street at its west end, Castlehill Road, was for many years a rural lane, and was improved only in the twentieth century.

Forres from Breakback – two similar views dated 1823 and 1874 (from Douglas). The spire of Anderson's Institution must have been newly erected in the earlier view, but what is striking in the later image is less the extent to which the town had expanded than the maturity of the woodlands of the policies at Forres House and at the Cluny Hills. Larger villas are appearing on St Leonard's Road.

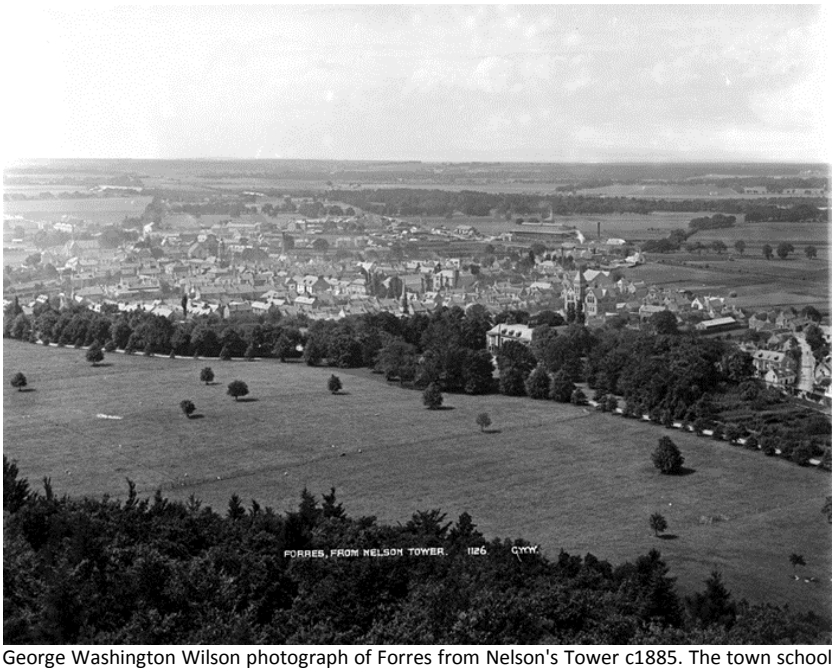


The centre of Forres from Wood's map of 1823 © National Library of Scotland

3.4.20 On both of the maps of 1823 and 1832 development can be seen to be strung out along the northern edge of Bullet Loan (later, St Leonard's Road), with some of the dwellings visible in the first of the views of Forres from Breakback, which is also dated 1823. Villa developments were strung along the north side of Victoria Road, although development here was sporadic, with each of the villas set in generous grounds. It was not until towards the end of the nineteenth century that the villa developments along Sanquhar Road, Alexandra Road and Nelson Road were embarked upon for the merchants, shopkeepers and the professional classes of the town seeking to leave their property within the centre of the town for the promise of the pleasant gardens of the suburban residences. Some of these properties had been built speculatively. Although the first stage of residential villa development which occurred during the first half of the nineteenth century can be related to the investment in the town from colonial money earned abroad, the villas springing up in the open spaces and orchards to the south of the town centre were a clear indication of improved mercantile prosperity at the end of the nineteenth century, and of changed aspirations. The villas spread out along Tytler Street responded to development opportunities opened up by the road leading directly to the railway station.

3.4.21 The pages of *Morayshire Described* provide a clear picture of the boom in manufacturing output where there had been next to nothing a few decades previously. Other than where the mill sites were developed along the water course, industrial development was focused on the low-lying ground to the northwest of the town centre at Waterford surrounding the railway station, where full advantage could be taken of the railway marshalling yards. Through this the fabric of the town centre was spared from the intrusion of new factories, slaughter houses or chemical plants and maintained much of its historic character. The Burnside woollen mills were first established in the 1840s on the old bleaching green adjacent to the Mosset Burn and had expanded considerably by the 1860s, absorbing the fabric of an earlier water-powered mealmill on the site; the works became known later as Taylor's Mills from which textiles were exported worldwide. Prominent in late nineteenth century photographs had been the North of Scotland Chemical Works at Waterford, established for the purpose of manufacturing sulphuric acid for agricultural purposes. A timber structure of a very substantial size (it looms large in the distance on the George Washington Wilson photograph taken from the top of Nelson's Tower) it suffered an

untimely and dramatic end when it burnt down in 1896 within the space of a couple of hours. It was never rebuilt. Adjacent to it was a large bone mill, which utilised the sulphuric acid pumped in from the adjoining chemical works to break down the animal bones in the process of conversion to agricultural fertiliser. Agriculture was supported in other ways – saddlers had premises in Forres, and there were busy blacksmiths' forges at work in manufacturing and repairing agricultural machinery. Forres also had its own ironworks in the vicinity of the railway station. The Ben Romach distillery was erected to the immediate north of Waterford Road, and was in operation by the early twentieth century. All of these industries had been readily identifiable by their tall red brick industrial chimneys punctuating the low-lying ground to the northwest of the town, of which only the distillery chimney still stands.



George Washington Wilson photograph of Forres from Nelson's Tower c1885. The town school of 1876 is prominent behind Forres House, to the right, and in the middle distance at Waterford the large bulk of the chemical works looms large. © University of Aberdeen, Special Collections

Civic pomp and dignity: a proclamation and parade at the Market Cross, early twentieth century, reproduced courtesy of F Duncan

3.4.22 Population growth had been steady, if not spectacular, throughout the course of the nineteenth century. There had been a large increase in the population between 1801 and 1831, when it rose from 3114 to 3895. By 1891 the population had increased by a further thousand, to 4891, and these figures coincide with the increase in building which was taking place at the end of the century right up to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, which can be measured by the proliferation of datestones incorporated in contemporary buildings. During the late nineteenth century the towns of the coastline of the Moray Firth accommodated large numbers of those from the rural upland parishes seeking employment prospects, and better wages and accommodation. Between 1881 and 1911 Elgin and Forres absorbed by far the highest percentages of incomers: Elgin's population increased by 31%, and that of Forres by 29.6%, while Keith attracted just 9.5% over the same period.

A medley of Forres churches, left to right: St John's Episcopal Church (Patrick Wilson, 1841), St Leonard's Church (Ross & MacBeth, 1903) and St Laurence Church (John Robertson, 1906)

3.4.23 The aspirations of the Town Council, and those who commissioned the new villas to adorn the suburbs of the town, were matched by the investment in new ecclesiastical buildings which symbolised perhaps more than any other building type this 'third age' of Forres, as Charles McKean has observed. An excellent example had been set when the Episcopalians erected their new church to the design of Patrick Wilson of Inverness from 1841, embellished by Thomas Mackenzie. It was an Italianate design reminiscent of Mackenzie's contemporary building for the Elgin Museum. The Disruption of 1843, painful as it was, had relatively little impact in Forres other than from adding, inevitably, to the numbers of church buildings in the town. The spireless Castlehill Church, now sadly vacant, and at risk, erected in 1871 to a design by David Rhind in a highly accomplished gothic idiom, was commissioned by the United Presbyterian Church. St Leonard's Church was built on the site of the 1760s mansion Tulloch House. For the Inverness architects Ross & Macbeth it is, for that practice, an uncharacteristically dull design, but it has at least the merit of adding a tall spire to the skyline of the town. Completed in 1903 its foundation stone was laid by one of the town's most famous sons, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, whose name is known worldwide for his association with the Hudson Bay Company of the Dominion of Canada, and as the co-founder of the Canadian Pacific Railway with his cousin, Lord Mount Stephen. John Robertson's design for the church of St Laurence is an essay brimming in confidence that maximises the use of its elevated site, replacing a plain Georgian preaching box of 1775. Bristling with towers and spires, with its vertical proportions and tall stone spire, it has become an unmistakeable landmark seen from a considerable distance, and adds variety to an already busy skyline of buildings and monuments. The foundation stone to this fine church was also laid by Lord

Strathcona in 1904, who contributed generously to its cost. The church opened for worship in 1906.

3.4.24 Forres began to take on the role of a holiday resort, in no small measure as a direct consequence of the choice of the south-east slopes of the Cluny Hills for building the hydropathic establishment, made possible by the expansion of the railway network. In the period between 1865 and 1882 no fewer than sixteen hydros were opened in Scotland of which the Forres establishment was the pioneer. Its promoter was Archibald Livingstone of Glasgow, and the establishment, bolstered by the direct rail links with the south, attracted clientele from far afield in Britain and abroad. It was a large establishment, having ninety rooms. The attraction of the site was that it offered a place for those seeking pleasant surroundings and good company, who may have needed relaxation from the stresses of everyday Victorian life. It was extended on a number of occasions, and around the turn of the twentieth century a fine golf course was established for the benefit of the residents. Town guides extolled the merits of using Forres as a base for tourism, and for improving one's health and well-being.

The Cluny Hill Hydropathic Establishment, the first to be built in Scotland, which opened in 1865. It was extended on a number of occasions to cope with its popularity (from *Morayshire Described*)

3.4.25 The High Street has many fine buildings from the late nineteenth century, reflecting a period of confident civic pride and growing prosperity. A number of the older (and mostly undistinguished) buildings of earlier centuries were cleared away and the sites redeveloped with new frontages. As a symbol of the new and of progress, the frontage of the Mechanics' Institute was dressed up with polished granite columns and with other architectural embellishments in 1901 by a local architect, John Forrest. In 1933 it was acquired as the town hall, as a place of public assembly. The architect of 122-126 High Street, one of the finest and most imposing structures to adorn the whole length of the High Street, was John Rhind, the designer of the Castlehill Church already mentioned above, for which the promoter was the Forres Postmaster, JH Gill. The building soars above its neighbours and plays a game enjoyed by late Victorian architects who would often ignore the scale and setting of the adjoining buildings, assuming that they might be redeveloped to a similar height and density in the future. As a form of architectural anarchy in such a sensitive historic setting, the structure - embellished with the most extraordinary carved detail and

sculpture -succeeds, whereas the Carlton Hotel at the corner of Caroline Street, by the Forres architect, Peter Fulton, is less satisfactory in making a contribution to the wider townscape. Other structures from this era may change the scale slightly, but are less iconoclastic in the contributions they make to the composition of the street blocks.

Victorian and Edwardian villas on Victoria Road: upper image, Ramnee on Victoria Road (now the Ramnee Hotel, the name of the house reveals colonial links with India) and The Park (1877) on Victoria Road seen from Nelson's Tower

3.4.27 Fulton was also the architect of the new bridge across the Mosset Burn erected by the Town Council, working under the civil engineer William Roberts. The bridge opened to traffic in 1908. It replaced a bridge which may have been built earlier than the date of 1823 given on the plaque, and frames the entry to the High Street on the approach from the west quite effectively.

3.4.28 Sheriff Charles Rampini summed up the potential of Forres in 1897. In a sense he was laying down the gauntlet to those of the next generations not to spoil it, and subject it to the sort of fate that befell Elgin in the twentieth century:

> Forres is still one of the brightest and pleasantest places within the country. And with its picturesque surroundings, its unrivalled climate, and its other natural advantages, there is nothing to prevent its ultimately attaining to that position amongst the burghs of Scotland for which its original founders, whoever they may have been, destined it.

Coloured picture postcard of Forres c1900 by Valentines of Dundee © St Andrews University, Special Collections

3.5 Modern developments: from 1919 to the present time

Today Forres is one of the snuggest towns you will find in the Highlands. You could pick it up and plant it in a comfortable place like Devonshire and no one would ask it any questions!
HV Morton (1929)

Forres High Street is rare in Scotland in the quantity of pre-1914 buildings still surviving, and in the excellent preservation of its medieval layout, the rigs running back from the High Street even better than Elgin's.
Charles McKean (1987)

Forres House (from Douglas, 1934)

3.5.1 Throughout the course of the nineteenth century Forres prospered from the financial support provided by benefactors who bankrolled several worthy schemes and projects that enhanced the town, creating a measurable sense of wellbeing for its inhabitants. In the years after the end of the First World War the town was to benefit further from the enlightened generosity of Sir Alexander Grant, a native of the town who had trained as a baker, leaving as a young man to work in Edinburgh under Robert McVitie. Upon McVitie's death, Grant became the principal partner in a business which laid the foundations for the empire of United Biscuits in later years. Sir Alexander's

Lady Grant cutting the ribbon at the formal opening of Grant Park, 1924: the cottage in the rear of the photograph is thatched as were many in the town at this time (from Douglas)

greatest gift was to enable the Town Council to acquire Forres House and its extensive grounds for the enjoyment of the citizens. The mansion house had occupied a key location at the east end of the town, surrounded by tall and inhospitable walls to provide privacy for its privileged occupants. It was a large, rambling pile which had been altered on a number of occasions, and had been owned over the centuries by a number of families including the Cummings, and the Tullochs of Tannachy. It was sometimes known as the 'Great Lodging'. After the transfer, the house fulfilled a number of public uses which included baths, the registrar's office and the provision of rooms for many of the local societies. The most valuable element of the gift, however, was the designed landscape surrounding the house which extended to 32 acres. After handover, the policies to the house were merged with the established pleasure walks through the established woodlands of the Cluny Hills. The grounds were named Grant Park in honour of the benefactor. The public park was opened formally in 1924, and new walkways and the planting of trees to create avenues were undertaken shortly thereafter. At the centre of the park a cricket pitch was laid out, which became the home of Forres St Lawrence cricket team. To mark the formal opening of the park an Australian XI was invited to play against a combined Northern Counties team, an event which was repeated in 1934 when the legendary Australian test player Don Bradman was famously twice at the crease during the course of the match, following which he expressed his admiration for the attractiveness of the setting in which the game had taken place. Forres House had a chequered life while in public ownership; it suffered from occasional outbreaks of dry rot and finally succumbed to a devastating fire in 1970, after which the shell was demolished. The sunken garden today corresponds with where the house once stood.

3.5.2 Sir Alexander's generosity did not end with his gift of the Grant Park. In 1934, when the Town Council was considering the acquisition of the ground at Castlehill with a view to landscaping it and adding it to the recreational spaces already provided in the town, he made this possible by allocating a sum of money for the purpose. A further act of philanthropy was occasioned when James Forbes, a native of Tomintoul who had made his fortune in China, financed the building of St Margaret's RC chapel at the east end of the High Street in 1927, thereby completing the legacy left by the many religious denominations in enhancing Forres's outstanding historic townscape.

The newly planted lime avenue leading towards the Cluny Hills (from Douglas, 1934)

Forres from Breakback, 1928 (from Douglas). Comparison should be made with the images on page37 – villa expansion has by now taken place along Nelson Road to meet Sanquhar Road

3.5.3 Near the foot of the rebuilt Castle Bridge stands the war memorial, for which the bronze figure of the kilted rifleman was sculpted by Alexander Carrick of Edinburgh. He had exhibited it at the Royal Scottish Academy Exhibition of 1920, while the overall design of the monument had been by the distinguished Aberdeen architect, Alexander Marshall Mackenzie, son of Thomas Mackenzie. Marshall Mackenzie had laid out the Cooper Park in Elgin in 1903. The memorial provides a fitting focus for the swathe of public recreational area in the shadow of the elevated site of the former castle enclosed by avenues of limes between the Mosset Burn and St Catherine's Road. In 1922 Thomas Mackenzie's Market Cross of 1844 had to be partially dismantled and rebuilt, as it had been damaged by vibrations from passing traffic.

The War Memorial, Alexander Carrick sculptor and A Marshall Mackenzie architect (1922)

3.5.4 The acquisition of the Mechanics' Institute in the 1930s for use as the Town Hall saw improvements carried out to the interior in 1938, and again in 1945. At suggestion of Sir Alexander Grant, Ramsay Macdonald's son,

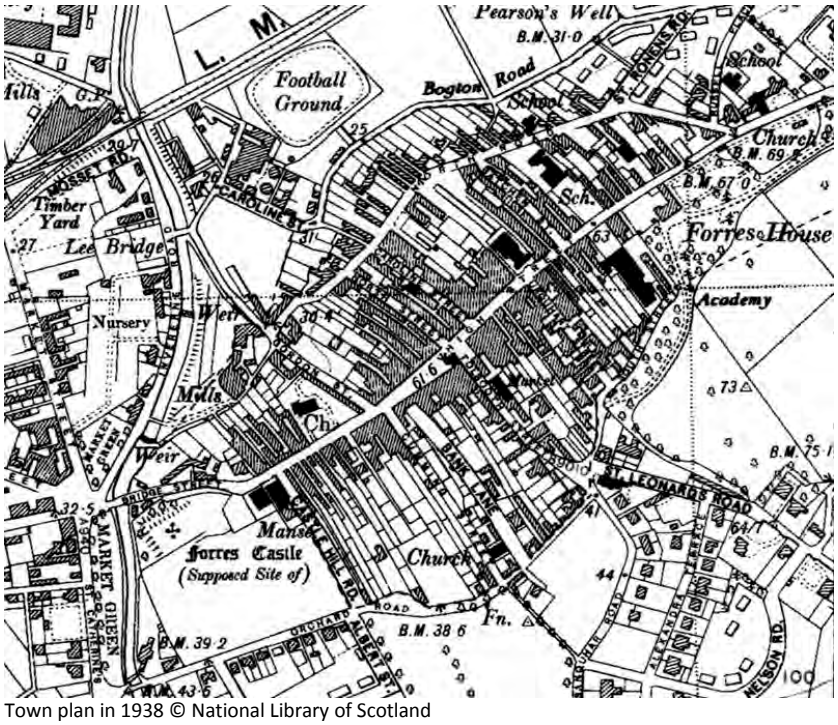
Alastair, was appointed by the Council as the architect, having had experience in the design of theatres and cinemas.

Lost Forres: top image, the junction with South Street in 1935 before the road junction was widened with the loss of the shops marking the east end of the High Street (photograph by the Rev Alan G Smith, reproduced courtesy of F Duncan)

Middle: Burnside House on Gordon Street, photographed in 1961; it was a venerable building on the site of the old archdeacon's house, and in the early nineteenth century occupied by the widow of Provost Grant. Crown Copyright, licensor www.scran. ac.uk

Bottom image: houses at the foot of Tolbooth Street, photographed prior to demolition for a social housing scheme, and to create a new road to serve the public car park behind the bank buildings on the High Street. Crown Copyright, licensor www.scran.ac.uk

3.5.5 As in many comparable towns in Scotland Forres suffered from the problems of an ageing housing stock which was either insanitary, or no longer met tolerable habitable standards. Despite the fact that the population had remained static in the forty years from 1891 to 1931, a report prepared by the Scottish Office revealed that the town suffered from the highest rates of overcrowding in the Northeast of Scotland. The revelation led to an extensive programme of providing new social housing carried out over several decades. The programme led to the removal of numerous older dwellings in the town centre, and resulted in the loss of some venerable properties on the minor streets such as Batchen Street, Gordon Street, North Road, or in the backlands of the High Street. While this mirrored events taking place elsewhere in Scotland (where the problem of slums was being tackled through the Housing Acts of the 1930s), at least in Forres no major losses of historic buildings occurred on the High Street.



Town plan in 1938 © National Library of Scotland

3.5.6 The social housing programme for the town centre accelerated during the 1950s and 1960s, and some damage to historic townscape values was inevitable. Arguably this was rather less than from the visual impact of new housing schemes that might be considered ugly than from the damage caused to the infrastructure of the medieval burgh layout. The patterns of some of the historic wynds were lost or impaired, and new access roads were introduced. Some of the housing programme was delivered through the government's own housing agency, the Scottish Special Housing Association (SSHA), and this resulted in local concerns being expressed that the town was absorbing housing overspill from other areas in the district, a policy which would be resurrected in the 1980s with the extension of the large scheme of social housing which existed already at Pilmuir. The patterns of the houses which had followed the old rigs along North Road were largely interfered with during the 1960s, but some pockets survived despite the successive schemes of rebuilding. Rebuilding on the Tailwell site proved particularly challenging due to the unexpected discovery of extensive cellarage which had been used in the past for the storage of bulk goods by the Forres merchant burgesses. The Castlehill redevelopment had been undertaken in 1957, and eighty new houses followed on the site

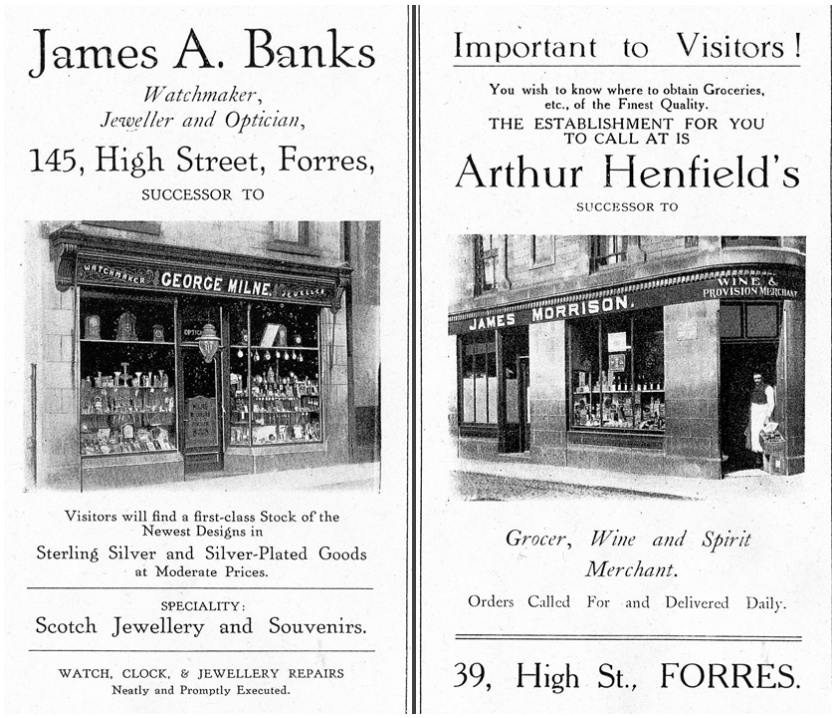
between Castlehill Road and Cumming Street in 1965. Among the more successful of the designs is the row of single storey houses on Batchen Street where a row of old derelict houses had been demolished in the 1950s.

Forres High Street looking east, 1930. Crown Copyright, licensor www.scran.ac.uk

3.5.7 In the mid-twentieth century the town's retail trade continued to prosper. A town guide of the late 1930s considered that the shops were 'far in advance of those usually seen in a comparatively small town', an echo perhaps of the prowess of the town's shopkeepers in the eighteenth century. Some shopfronts were modernised to keep up with progress, but on the whole the changes were not extensive. Although a preference for inserting new shopfronts continued into the 1970s, the visual damage caused has been significantly less than in many comparable historic towns and, despite some overbearing modern shop fascias, much is capable of being recovered, should the will exist. Shopkeepers' desires to keep abreast of modern retail floor space have been heavily compromised by the constraints of deep floor plans and narrow feus, making redevelopment on individual sites challenging. Relatively few of the older frontages were taken down in the period between the 1930s and the 1960s, and replacement shops inserted, but where sites were redeveloped in most cases the upper storeys would be omitted, which in the past had been used for habitation, offices, or for storage. The upper storeys of the shop frontages in Forres are, in general, used more extensively than in many towns, and a large number of properties still have residential accommodation on the upper floors. The 1986 redevelopment of the site owned by the Cooperative Wholesale Society on the High Street provides an object lesson on how a larger retail store might be accommodated within the fabric of the town, although the historic three-storey Queen's Hotel - which had been badly mutilated by changes made to its fabric from the addition of a disfiguring fourth attic floor - had to be demolished so that the development would be financially viable. The economic impact of out-of-town retail centres on the town centre is difficult to establish for certain, but there are many vacant shops at present on the High Street and retail units occupied by charity shops, in which Forres is by no means unusual. There is also the evidence of retail

units changing hands rapidly on short term leases. These factors point to a significant weakening of the town's retail base within the conservation area.

Peter Thomson's drapery store at what became later Manchester House; the shop is presently occupied by M&Co and the detail of the old shopfront has been lost. © Courtesy of Falconer Museum



Typical advertisements for retailers in town guides of the 1930s

3.5.8 Tourism remained a mainstay of the local economy, with Forres portrayed as a holiday resort and as a centre for touring the surrounding area in the town guides of the 1930s. The views of the travel writer HV Morton when he visited in the 1920s were influential as he enjoyed a wide audience. The guides extolled the virtues of the town through the eyes of Morton and other well-known visitors. From these sources we learn that the eminent biologist Thomas Huxley (1825-1895) considered the views from Nelson's

Shopfront from the 1930s, with much of the original Art Deco detail having survived

Tower to be without parallel, and when Professor John Stuart Blackie (1809-1895) from Edinburgh visited in the previous century, he composed the following piece of doggerel in the visitor's book of the place where he stayed:

I've travelled east, I've travelled west
In search of an expansive view.
But Cluny Hill exceeds them all
In my opinion. What say you?

Forres was justifiably proud of its well-known visitors. By the mid-twentieth century the town was no longer necessarily known to visitors purely because of its famous literary association, as indeed it had been in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But it was not far from Morton's mind when he opened his piece with the explanation that he 'approached Forres, unlike Macbeth, in brilliant sunlight'.


The Rose Garden in 1960 at the Mosset Park © The Scotsman Publications Ltd, licensor scran.ac.uk

3.5.9 In addition to the growth in tourism and its established retail trade, Forres had consolidated its position in the mid-twentieth century as a service base

for the wider landward area. Services included car sales and repairs, and the supply of agricultural machinery. Cattle and sheep sales at the Victorian mart on Tytler Street were important to the agricultural community, and commercial forestry became an increasingly important sector within the local economy. The railway continued to play a significant role at least until the savage cuts were imposed on the network in the 1960s - even though the main route to the south via Forres had been conceded in the 1890s when the direct link was introduced over the Slochd from Inverness to Aviemore. With Forres retaining its civic governance though its own town council, and with the growing importance of well-managed country estates surrounding the town, from their contribution to the local economy through sporting activity, agriculture and forestry, professional services based in the town were sustained, serving an area much wider than the town boundaries. This advantage has continued through to the present time.

High Street looking west, 1959. The Queen's Hotel has been given an ungainly attic storey. The building was demolished in the mid-1980s. © University of St Andrews Special Collections

3.5.10 The Forres Town Council achieved much in the decade before it was disbanded in 1975, after which the town suffered, to a certain extent, from a loss of political identity. Parking seems always to have been a problem in the town centre – one of the town guides of the late 1930s directed visitors to parking which was available at the Market Cross for the price of 6d. Opportunities were seized upon to improve the situation when word had arrived from the Regional Council that its administration was proposing to impose controlled parking, and with it a regime of parking charges across the town centre. The Forres councillors moved quickly into action, seizing the opportunity to acquire pockets of unused land and gardens in the backlands at notional cost in order to create a series of car parks close to the High Street. The arrangements involved establishing some new roads to give convenient access to these areas, causing some disturbance to the existing street pattern and the established urban grain.

3.5.11 Among other improvements carried out by the Town Council had been the clearing out of gravestones from around the parish church of St Laurence, leaving a small section of the old graveyard unmolested to the rear of the church. A valuable contribution has been made to the provision of open space at the heart of the town, but the near total loss of the historic

St Laurence Church, showing the graveyard before it was cleared of gravestones, reproduced courtesy of F Duncan

graveyard, which of course preceded the construction of the present church, must be regretted. With the demise of Taylor's woollen mills, the Council bought up land associated with the business in 1971 to add to the attractive pocket park and rose garden at Mosset Park, established already in the open space alongside the Castle Bridge (page 50). Certain of the mill buildings were demolished, including the tall industrial brick chimney, with the remainder converted to the Mosset Tavern. With the demise of the fire damaged Forres House, a new library and community centre was erected opposite Anderson's school in 1973 to the design of GRM Kennedy & Partners of Aberdeen. GRM Kennedy was also responsible for some sensitively designed social housing schemes which fall within the conservation area, undertaken for the Hanover Housing Association. The site of one of these schemes, sandwiched between Leask Road and North Road, is scheduled for demolition and redevelopment at the time of preparing this document. The scheme at Hepworth Lane of the mid-1980s provides welcome relief to a policy of demolition and rebuilding which has blighted so many of the towns of the north, carried out under the acclaimed Little Houses Scheme of the National Trust for Scotland.

3.5.12 The 1970s heralded other, less welcome changes. Castlehill Church closed in 1971, signalling a continuing decline in churchgoing which had seen the smaller chapels built by the seceders and independent minority congregations closing many years previously. The Castlehill Church saw further life after its conversion to the church halls serving St Laurence Church, but the difficulties encountered over the ongoing maintenance of the structure took their toll eventually, and the building has been at risk for a number of years from successive outbreaks of dry rot. Other changes can be traced to this period from studying historic photographs, which suggest that modern building materials – such as cement renders, or sandstone walls repointed in dense cement mortar – were by now prevalent. Traditional windows were being replaced with modern alternatives. As

noted in clauses 5.6 and 8.11 these changes have had a lasting effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area, and its authenticity around the time it had been first designated. The last of the modern shopfronts to disfigure historic buildings on the High Street appeared at this time.

3.5.13 During the course of the Second World War, and until only very recently, Forres had built up a close relationship with the extensive air base at Kinloss. During the war there had also been an Officer Training Unit unusually close to the town at Balnageith, leading to the occasional sad loss of life from training aircraft having to ditch on the outskirts of the town, or more rarely, near the centre, and there has been a growing interest in the town's association with aviation heritage in recent years. At its peak Kinloss had been a significant air base with worldwide connections. Housing had been erected in the town at Pilmuir for those serving at the base, which also employed many civilians from the town and the surrounding area. The base had a strong impact on the town's economy, especially on the local hotel and service industries. The impact on the long term economy of the recent transfer of the base to the Army has yet to be experienced, but the site is unlikely to operate at anything like the levels of the past.

3.5.14 The period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s saw unprecedented levels of growth in the Findhorn Foundation. Although its origins and headquarters were rooted in Findhorn at The Park where it was founded in humble circumstances in 1962, additional accommodation was always going to be needed for residents, and especially for those attending regular courses from abroad and from the rest of Britain. Some of the large houses in the town were bought up by wealthy individuals attached to the Foundation, and by the Foundation itself. The hydropathic hotel was acquired in 1975 and was renamed Cluny Hill College, while Newbold on St Leonard's Road was purchased at a later date. Drumduan House at the east end of the town saw new life as the Moray Rudolf Steiner School. Although in many respects the 'new age' organisation has had a positive effect on the town's buildings and infrastructure through ensuring that they are used fully, it has never been wholly integrated with the life and aims of the local community and, as a result, it has had little impact on the town's conservation area.

Cluny Hill College, seen from the golf course at Muiryshade

3.5.15 Throughout much of the twentieth century the town centre was choked by the volume of heavy traffic passing through on the A96 Trunk Road. It led to an unpleasant living and working environment in terms of noise and pollution that had to be endured. This was resolved in the mid-1980s when the bypass was constructed to the north of the town; unlike Elgin, where Alexandra Road cut through the historic links between the city and the Cooper Park, the layout of the historic burgh was unaffected, but concerns were raised at the time that the bypassing of the town would have a short term effect on the retail trade.

3.5.16 In 1975 the initiative of the European Year of Architectural Heritage was taken up enthusiastically in Forres, with a number of properties on the High Street given grants for facelift schemes. Article 3 of the ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Charter, through which the initiative began, included the following words of warning:

The architectural heritage is a capital of irreplaceable spiritual, cultural, social and economic value.

Each generation places a different interpretation on the past and derives new inspiration from it. This capital has been built up over the centuries; the destruction of any part of it leaves us poorer since nothing new that we create, however fine, will make good the loss.

It is arguably the case that Forres heeded these words perhaps better than other towns in the decades that followed, and that, by and large, its citizens have continued to uphold the values praised by the parish minister in the 1840s (page 31).

4 Character assessment

4.1 Character definition and character areas

4.1.1 The Forres Conservation Area is, in relative terms, large. While part of the boundary follows in broad terms that of the medieval burgh the area to the east and southeast covers the villas on the north side of Victoria Road, the Grant Park and roughly one half of the Cluny Hills, including the cemetery and Nelson's Tower. Recommendations are given for the possible extension of the boundaries, and for other minor alterations, in Section 10.1 of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

4.1.2 For the purpose of this document the conservation area is split into two parts in terms of character and appearance, designated **Areas A** and **B**. The extent of these character areas are shown in **Appendix 14.4**. **Area A** covers the nucleus of the urban development within the confines of the medieval burgh, and although it includes areas of public open space these are relatively small in relation to the overall built area which is of a relatively high density. It includes all the principal public buildings and landmarks.

4.1.3 **Area B** incorporates the larger amount of the town's principal public park, woodlands and open space. The villas of Victoria Road are in the main set within large garden with mature trees, while those along St Leonard's Road are strung out as linear development, with either the Grant Park or the woodlands of the Cluny Hills set as a background. The density of the development is significantly less than that within the town centre.

Area A – nucleus of the historic burgh

4.2 Primary land uses

4.2.1 Land uses are varied, and reflect the commercial uses of the burgh which are historical. Such commercial uses are primarily retail space and associated storage which is sometimes found in the backlands. Retail space is concentrated on the High Street, but is found also on Tolbooth Street and North Street and, more rarely, in the wynds. The principal banks are located on the High Street and often have offices on the upper floors. Other commercial uses will be as office space, or for professions which include legal practices, a dental surgery, optometrists, and alternative medicine practitioners. Sometimes professional office uses will occupy the ground and upper floors of premises and may have taken over former retail units on the ground floor. Other uses for buildings are as the town's Post Office, public houses, restaurants, cafes and fast food takeaway outlets. There is currently only one hotel now remaining within the town centre, whereas in the past there had been several. Upper floors above retail space may be used for storage in association with the business, or more often, will have residential accommodation. In the backlands, other than where premises are used for storage as noted above, properties are usually inhabited either as individual houses or as flats.

4.2.2 Among the public buildings are the community centre and library, the town hall, Tolbooth and the Falconer Museum. The area accommodates the majority of the churches still in use as places of worship. The Moray Council has its district office in a former residence and care home at Auchernack at the western end of the conservation area. There is a primary school at the eastern end of the High Street at Anderson's Institution.

4.2.3 Although the conservation area boundary has been drawn to exclude the larger twentieth century social housing schemes, smaller infill schemes do occur in the backland areas. There are two housing association schemes within the boundary, of which one, providing sheltered housing, has closed down with the building boarded up at the time of carrying out the audit work.

4.2.4 There is very little manufacturing within the backlands, although food production may take place in association with bakers and with established butchers' businesses having retail outlets on the High Street.

4.2.5 Public open space is found to north and south of the Castle Bridge alongside the Mosset Burn, and in the adjoining area surrounding the obelisk on Castlehill. Elevated above the levels of the surrounding roads, further open space has been left around St Laurence Church after the removal of the gravestones.

4.2.6 Following the policy of the former Town Council to acquire land in the backlands for the purpose there are several areas dedicated to car parking which are convenient to the High Street.

4.3 Setting and views

4.3.1 The medieval burgh had been set, quite purposefully, on a raised ridge. At the west end of the High Street the ground falls away from the ridge from which attractive views are possible on the north facing slopes towards Findhorn Bay and beyond to the Moray Firth. Views to the south from the High Street can be attractive where the wynds are framed by the wooded ground rising in the middle distance at Breakback and Sheriffbrae, and the view looking down Tolbooth Street is most attractive at all times of the year. Views from the highest point in the Cluny Hills towards the north, looking over the bay towards Findhorn, across the firth and to the hills of the Caithness coastline are outstanding. A visit to the top of the tower is a memorable experience which is matched perhaps only by the experience of the views from the Califer viewpoint.

4.3.2 Medieval burghs are laid out quite differently to the planned towns and villages of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which have a degree of formality. Rigid geometrical plans are not always easily reconciled with the topography. The roads leading towards the town centre all follow ancient routes which can be readily identified from the earliest reliable maps. Views within the town centre are shaped by these historic factors, and result in high townscape values as the roads curve and change direction constantly. Accordingly the High Street is not set out as a straight line and enjoyment of the views from along its length and from within the town centre is heightened by this.

4.3.3 Views *towards* the conservation area take on particular significance in Forres, a consequence of the fact that the historic burgh was set on a gentle rise making the settlement visible from the low-lying land of the Laigh. Nelson's Tower acts as a beacon which is visible from many miles and from most directions. Views towards the town are arguably at their best when seen across the water of Findhorn bay where the landmarks on the skyline are often seen in silhouette (page 1), or picked out in the low sun of

Forres seen on the approach from the west on the descent on the A96 from the Findhorn Bridge

summer evenings. Another impressive view is seen on the descent on the A96 from the Findhorn Bridge travelling eastwards, where the eye is drawn by the composition of the spires and domes of the principal buildings set within the background of the Cluny Hills and Nelson's Tower in the middle distance. Although the A96 bypass has taken away some of the more direct views on the approach to the town, the buildings on the town's ridge are highly visible when seen from the road; the same views are to be enjoyed by passengers on the railway approach from the east to Forres station.

4.4 Activity and movement

4.4.1 Forres is no longer the silent and empty town so beloved by Lord Cockburn in the early nineteenth century and captured by George Washington Wilson in his photographs. It must have been a bustling place throughout much of the twentieth century, at least until regional shopping centres and out-of-town retail units took their toll on the footfall to the pavements of the High Street. But in many respects it remains busy during the daytime – it is rare to be able to find parking spaces on the High Street and many of the car parks are full, or close to capacity, during normal working hours. The High Street is normally busy from 9 through to 5.30, with a constant flow of locally generated traffic. Traffic movements and congestion within the town centre were eased considerably once the bypass opened to traffic.

4.4.2 Data collected by the Moray Council during July 2012 suggested that the footfall had dropped on average by 23% from a comparable survey two years previously, but on a Saturday the maximum hourly number of pedestrians recorded approached 800, with around half that number on a corresponding weekday.

4.4.3 Of the remaining roads within the conservation area Tolbooth Street is among the busiest, carrying much of the traffic moving southwards from the town centre. Further traffic is picked up along the distributors at South Street and Orchard Road, and St Leonards Road is constantly busy at all times with traffic heading out towards Leanchoil Hospital, Rafford, Dallas and onwards to Strathspey. South Street is often used by traffic as a distributor avoiding the centre of the town. Roads to the north of the town centre generally carry only light traffic.

4.4.4 The car parks generate pedestrian movement though the wynds and help to bring some activity to these areas; in the case of one or two shops this adds

to the passing trade. Some of the privately owned wynds are gated, and as there are no through routes are quiet, maintaining the privacy of their occupants.

4.4.5 In the early evening the High Street is significantly quieter. Fast food takeaway shops generate activity at most times, as do public houses and restaurants. Churchgoing sees peak usage of the High Street and associated car parks for a relatively short space of time on Sundays, when lines of cars form on Victoria Road at the Episcopal Church, and in the centre of the town. In common with many rural areas, Forres churches attract high numbers of those attending on weekday funerals. Weddings have always been a source of great interest to the townsfolk.

4.5 Street pattern and urban grain

4.5.1 The street pattern and urban grain is set by the high degree of survival of the medieval layout of the burgh, the characteristics of which have been defined in 3.2 above. Combined with the topography, this provides a series of captivating views and sequences when moving along, and across, the High Street. The density of building is correspondingly high, and yet the scale is relatively low – for instance, there are very few structures built as tenements of three, or even four storeys in height, in the conservation area.

The town centre seen from the south, from Roysvale Park

4.5.2 Where the ground falls away from the central ridge this produces the distinctive pattern of dwellings laid out on the burgage plots or rigs, in which the gables with their chimneyheads and cans become particularly prominent when viewed from any distance. Buildings on the High Street tend to be of a greater scale or height than the structures laid out on the wynds, in part a response to commercial pressures and to statements of relative importance especially where banks, institutions or hotels are located. The urban grain is heightened by the tightly knitted wynds, the vast majority of which are accessible only to pedestrians. More survives here than in many comparable historic towns. Rising above all are the spires and domes of the town's principal buildings.

4.5.3 Some of the urban grain has been damaged by the alterations of the late twentieth century, especially where social housing schemes have been introduced or where car parks have been formed in the backland areas. Often access roads will have been driven through the streetscape, leading to gaps in street frontages that had been uninterrupted previously. The south

street frontages of the High Street have suffered in this respect, as has the foot of Tolbooth Street (page 46).

4.6 Historic townscape

High Street looking west towards the Market Cross

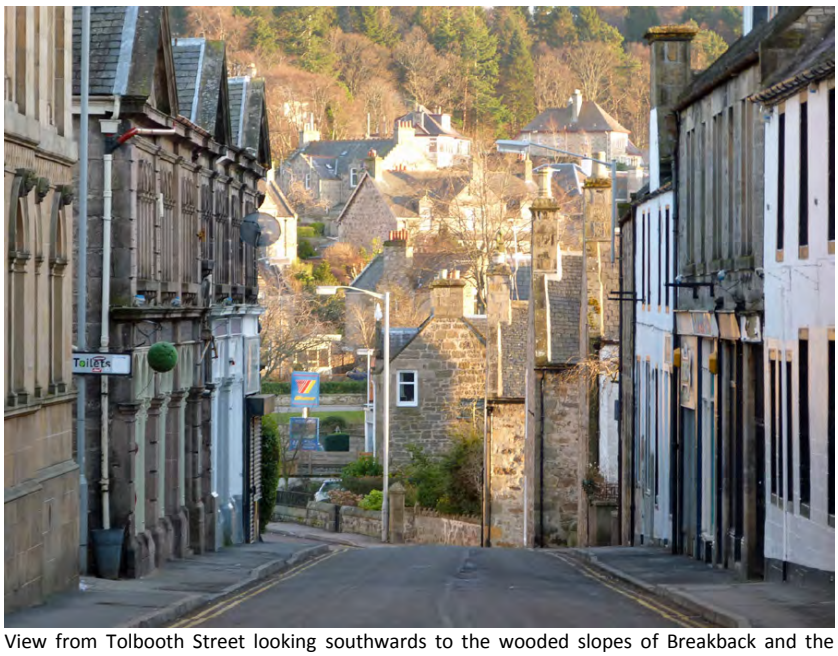
4.6.1 The combination of topography, setting, views to and from the centre of the town, and the established historic urban grain all conspire to produce a historic townscape of unusual richness and diversity. With so little of the High Street having been redeveloped in the late twentieth century there is much that has survived from several periods of the burgh's growth, adding significantly to its interest. That the pattern upon which the medieval burgh had been laid out survives so strongly is apparent in the development of the High Street and the wynds; the original burgage plots can still be registered in the foreland buildings where plots may have been doubled up, and where the arched openings give access to the heads of the wynds.

4.6.2 The layout of the original burgh is also manifested in the manner in which the town's principal street changes direction throughout its length, and in how the public space opens out in the area of the Market Cross and Tolbooth, both potent symbols of past civic life and the burgh's former trading position. These gentle changes in direction prevent long vistas, but create great visual interest in the way in which the street frontages can be seen in the distance leading the eye towards the ends of the street. The experience of passing along the High Street and appreciating these changing vistas is best when the journey is undertaken from the east to the west, starting from the eastern extremity of Victoria Road. The final scene takes in a gentle rise in the street and the axial view onto Dr Thomson's obelisk at the former castle site before the road falls away down towards the Castle Bridge which is set at a constant grade.

4.6.3 Travelling in the opposite direction, the Castle Bridge acts as a gateway to the town centre as the ground rises towards the ridge upon which the burgh was founded. The change in direction occurs at the head of the rise, framed by the bulk of the Castlehill Church, after which a long view opens up in which the staged tower and domes of the Tolbooth is framed. The vista from this direction extends over some distance, with the tower of St John's

This dramatic view of the newly completed Castle Bridge is from a postcard dated 1911 and shows the importance of the Castlehill Church in the townscape on the approach to the High Street. Reproduced courtesy of F Duncan

Church a distant marker, with the trees of the private gardens along Victoria Road beckoning the location of the town's principal public park. Some of the more attractive views are framed – to the north of the High Street the elevation, with the ground falling away from the ridge, creates memorable views northwards over the open land of the Laigh and towards the firth. The view towards Breakback and the suburban villas of the turn of the twentieth century is well framed on Tolbooth Street, heightened by the change in direction of the street at the lowest point.



View from Tolbooth Street looking southwards to the wooded slopes of Breakback and the suburban villas erected at the turn of the twentieth century

4.6.4 Within this historic townscape the landmarks on the skyline are significant elements; in each case their positioning and height within the townscape has been consciously contrived, to be seen not only from within the town centre, but from a great distance from the Laigh and across the waters of the Findhorn Bay as noted above.

4.6.5 The minor roads and narrow pedestrian wynds are in sharp contrast to the character and scale of the broad High Street; accordingly the buildings are of

Attractive spaces within the wynds: behind the Falconer Museum (left) and at Hepworth's Lane (right)

a more domestic scale, and are commonly laid out on the lines of the old burgage plots. In Forres a number of buildings survive with gables on to the High Street, and some of these from the earliest times are domestic in scale. At the west end of the High Street where two of these early buildings survive, their gables jut out onto the street and reduce the pavement width considerably, suggesting that the street had been narrower at this point at one stage; these buildings would have been considered dispensable in the wider scheme of improvements as new frontages were introduced, but quite extraordinarily, they have survived. Even when later building cut across the burgage plots, as happened for the entire length of Urquhart Street, the east-west orientation of the dwellings with their gables to the street prevailed, avoiding dull repetition in the wider townscape. Interesting views from the wynds can be opened up towards the rear of the buildings on the High Street as they are usually of a greater scale but sometimes the views disappoint, focusing the eye on unkempt land which is undeveloped, or on poor quality development that has taken place in the backlands. Conversely, some of the wynds can be among the most attractive spaces to be encountered and are well maintained by the residents. The quality of the traditional roofscape takes on particular importance when glancing views are taken across open spaces in the backlands.

4.6.6 The relative scale of buildings is an important factor in determining the character of the historic townscape. Taller buildings, and those with the most impressive frontages, tend to reflect civic, institutional or commercial uses; most of these are contained within the middle street blocks of the town centre. Setting aside the Tolbooth and the churches, apart from the Bank of Scotland building of 1854, the tallest structures are the former Longview Hotel (1882) and the Carlton Hotel (1900); their bulk is particularly visible when seen from the open spaces of the backland areas. The scale of new buildings on the High Street increased gradually towards the turn of the twentieth century. Where new buildings of the mid-twentieth century have been introduced, in general, they tend to disrupt the scale of the street, either from being of insufficient height, or from their frontages being set back from the established street line. Fortunately there are relatively few of these. In some of the street blocks the scale can change dramatically from buildings of three of more storeys of a commercial height juxtaposed with

structures of no more than two domestic storeys in height – this can add considerably to the visual interest of the High Street frontages.

4.6.7 Whereas in other historic burghs where the density of development had been greater – for instance, Edinburgh and Elgin, the entries to the closes or wynds were in general narrow (and gated) to maximise on the availability of the ground floor for retail space, in Forres it is quite common to find that access is through an arched entry. Forres and Edinburgh exclusively share an old term whereby these entries are defined as 'bows', referring to the form of the arch. Earlier arched entries are more rounded in profile, while later arched entries tend to have flattened arches, with some consisting of straight lintols of stone or cast iron. This provides a degree of variety in the rhythm of the ground floor arcades of the High Street.

4.6.8 The outstanding quality of the townscape is visible from elevated viewpoints from within the conservation area. Of particular note are the views from the top of Nelson's Tower, but fine, well-framed views of the historic townscape are also visible from the rising ground to the south. At the foot of St Leonards Road a framed view opens up which is on axis with the spire of St Laurence Church on the skyline.

View at the foot of St Leonards Road looking towards the spire of St Laurence Church

4.7 The evidence of historic photographs

4.7.1 The studios of George Washington Wilson of Aberdeen, and James Valentine & Co of Dundee, visited Forres from the late 1860s onwards and registered their images for commercial use. They documented the town's High Street at a period of change and their images provide a useful record of the alterations that have occurred. Valentines continued photographing into the 1930s and 1950s, and their images were mainly used as picture postcards.

4.7.2 Comparison between these early photographs and those taken today reveals that a surprising amount of historic fabric has survived, particularly above the level of the shop fascias where the rhythm of the openings has been very largely maintained without any disturbance. While some authenticity has been lost through replacement buildings and the insertion

The image on the left is c1885; the present day image confirms the amount of architectural detail lost from the Market Cross and the visual interference of the floral display poles but much else has survived

The image on the left is earlier, c1875; the present day image suggests that apart from the insertion of the Carlton Hotel and St Leonard's Church into the streetscape there is otherwsie little change to the upper storeys of the buildings

The main difference between these images of the High Street looking west is from the loss of the former Queen's Hotel on the left of the earlier image (c1875), and from the introduction of the Carlton Hotel in 1900. The new building at 122-126 High Street, erected in 1882 on the site of Roy's House, changes the scale of the street in the blocks beyond the Tolbooth

of modern shopfronts, the rate of change had been significantly less than in many comparable historic towns. The photographs of the mid-twentieth century reveal that a number of frontages had additional storeys built over the top of the earlier buildings – the Queen's Hotel was badly disfigured by the addition of the attic storey and was demolished in 1985 (page 51). Another, perhaps less obvious change, is that a number of the building frontages have been painted – while in the main this is likely to have been carried out for decorative reasons, to enhance the appearance of the High Street, in other cases external paint finishes have been applied to disguise decaying stonework.

4.7.3 These early photographs confirm that the surfaces of the main streets and pavements had been well finished by the 1870s with cobbles and stone pavements having been laid with appropriate drainage. Elsewhere at around this time in the poorer burghs it was not uncommon to see rolled gravel finishes. From these images it might be assumed that the significance of the

Plainstones, as suggested in the late eighteenth century image after J-C Nattes (page 27), had been diminished – the Market Cross appears marooned where the street widens out. The ranges of gaslight lamp-posts looked attractive in these early photographs.

4.8 Spatial relationships

4.8.1 The morphology of the town centre is composed of a complex series of interlinked spatial relationships, features which are not uncommon in historic medieval burghs. At the core of these relationships are the features that bind the ceremonial functions of the burgh together into a recognisable whole – a broad street for fairs and markets, and the setting for a town-house; the positioning of the parish church at the heart of the community with its common graveyard; and the royal castle for defence and administering justice. All of these elements are still visible in some form or another in Forres, and are highly symbolic of past uses. In contrast, the wynds are narrow, confined spaces, more conducive to accommodating the dwellings of the townspeople; many create attractive spaces in which to live. The density close to the foreland properties would be high, and in these spaces gardens might be rare with related open space provided historically at the extremities of the burgage plots. Some early development in the town centre swept aside the medieval pattern – the early nineteenth century Warden's Place is such an example (page 30), and another had been the mansion house erected in the 1760s at Tulloch House which had been set well back from the street line. This site was developed at the beginning of the twentieth century for St Leonard's Church.

4.8.2 Beyond these governing spatial relationships inherited from the medieval burgh are the public open spaces at the west end, which would never have been built upon in the past because of the risk of the burn flooding. Other open spaces have been invasive as regards the preservation of the medieval burgh pattern which had survived relatively unmolested right up to the 1970s, due to a series of car parks having been introduced behind the foreland properties. In places along the High Street the tightly knit character of the street frontages has been eroded, somewhat detrimentally, where roads have been introduced or widened to improve sightlines at road junctions.

4.9 Public parks and open space

4.9.1 The open space surrounding St Laurence Church at the heart of the High Street and the parks to either side of the Castle Bridge at the western entry to the town centre make an important contribution to this part of the conservation area. They are evaluated as part of the public realm audit in 6.1.

4.10 Negative factors

4.10.1 Negative factors for **Area A** which have been identified from the character appraisal may therefore be summarised as follows:

- Redundant buildings can be prominent in the historic townscape
- Empty shops, while no more numerous than in many comparable small towns, create an impression of economic decline
- The insertion of public car parks in the areas of the backlands, together with the roads that serve them, disturb the established urban grain

- ❖ Modern social housing developments often disturb the established urban grain where they have been introduced, and have been given poor boundary treatments
- ❖ Where car parks occupy areas within the backlands, where the burgage plots terminate structures are exposed which can be of poor townscape quality, for instance at the Leys car park
- ❖ Garages and undeveloped land at the east end of North Road are of poor townscape quality
- ❖ There is a small number of late twentieth shops introduced to the High Street which are intrusive in terms of low architectural quality, scale or in disturbing the established street building line
- ❖ There has been an erosion of the street frontages where new roads have been introduced, or roads widened to create greater visibility for traffic
- ❖ New modern shopfronts and oversized shop fascias can be intrusive
- ❖ Gaps between buildings, or views through the 'bows' at the end of the wynds, often reveal empty sites or unattractive modern development in the backlands of the High Street

Area B – Grant Park, Cluny Hill and the villas

4.11 Primary land uses

4.11.1 Land uses throughout **Area B** are much less diverse than in the more densely built-up zone of the town centre (Area A). Buildings are mainly residential, with the dwellings set within their own well-defined garden ground; some of the larger houses have found new uses as hotels while others may be used as guest houses or B&B establishments, or as the occasional office. Retail uses are confined to the foot of St Leonards Road.

4.11.2 Institutional uses are confined to the police station on Victoria Road. Also on Victoria Road there is a petrol station situated within the conservation area, scheduled for closure at the time of preparing this document, while the imposing Episcopal Church and rectory, and former school building to the rear (now the church hall) are located closer to the town centre.

4.11.3 The most extensive land area within Area B is associated with public recreational uses which include the Grant Park, the woodlands and pleasure walks of the Cluny Hills, and the public cemetery. Nelson's Tower is an attraction at the highest point of the Cluny Hills, while the Grant Park is noted for its summer floral displays in the areas seen from Victoria Road. Sports and recreational facilities housed within the Grant Park include the bowling club, squash club, and the cricket field and pavilion. The Grant Park fulfils an important role in the town's social calendar, holding many major public events which include the Highland Games, Toun Mercat events, summer galas and the annual fireworks display. These events attract many thousands of people for which the setting is an important attraction in its own right.

4.12 Setting and views

4.12.1 Victoria Road defines the main approach to the town centre from the east. It provides an attractive green corridor bordered by the mature trees of the gardens of the large villas, and by the attractive open spaces of the Grant Park. Villas seen in the distance mark the change in direction in the road before the High Street is entered where the vistas continue to change and the density of development increases.

The importance of trees on the approach along Victoria Road from the east, looking towards the town centre

4.12.2 Similarly, the approach towards the town centre from the south, from the Rafford direction along St Leonards Road, is framed by the boundaries of the gardens of the villas and by mature trees on both sides of the road. Buildings mark changes in direction in the road, and the view towards the buildings of the town centre on the approach to the Tolbooth Street roundabout is memorable as the spire of St Laurence Church is seen on axis on the horizon whether or not this is a feature which had been planned consciously. The views from Tolbooth Street in the opposite direction, looking southwards along St Leonards Road, are equally as attractive, with the backcloth of the tree canopy to the woodlands of the Cluny Hills always in sight, framing the views.

4.12.3 Fine views are to be enjoyed across the generous open spaces of the Grant Park, fringed by the rows of buildings on South Street, St Leonards Road and Victoria Road. The views from the viewpoint at Nelson's Tower, and from the head of the tower itself, are exceptional. Views northwards from the large villas on Victoria Road are also exceptional; equally these structures being on elevated, or rising ground can be seen from a distance from the low-lying land on the fringes of the Findhorn Bay.

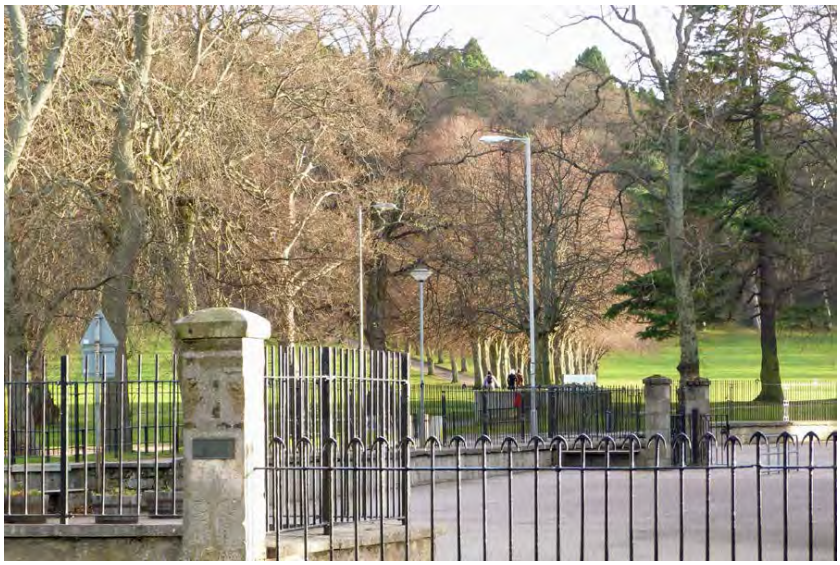
4.12.4 The gently rolling surfaces of the Grant Park and the wooded knolls of the Cluny Hills provide an important backcloth to the setting of the town centre when seen from a great distance, of which Nelson's Tower is a focal point.

4.12.5 With the demolition of the claustrophobic high walls surrounding Forres House, and of the mansion house itself in the 1970s, the parkland is now much more visible, and accessible, from the east end of the High Street. Immediately on leaving the shopping area attractive views are to be had of the park, for instance across the playground of Andersons Primary School.

4.13 Activity and movement

4.13.1 Area B is less busy than the streets of the town centre in terms of vehicular and pedestrian movement. Victoria Road and St Leonards Road attract constant vehicular traffic, but in neither case could this be considered to be excessive. Pedestrian movement is linked to the path network of the

principal open spaces while the Cluny Hills remain popular for walkers, joggers and dog-walkers.



View across the open railings of Anderson's Primary School towards Grant Park

4.14 Street pattern and urban grain

4.14.1 Victoria Road is a broad thoroughfare which had been the termination of a long straight road carrying the main Aberdeen-Inverness traffic until the bypass was constructed in the 1980s. Because of the manner in which villas have been planned adjacent to one another, narrow roads flanked by high boundary walls of brick or stone are a feature of Victoria Road and maintain the privacy of the proprietors. St Leonards Road follows the line of the old road leaving the town centre as it negotiated a route between the lower slopes of the Cluny Hills, and those of Breakback.

4.15 Historic townscape

4.15.1 Although development along St Leonards Road (or Bullet Loan as it had been called originally) had been established before the end of the eighteenth century, apart from the grounds of Forres House there had been little planned development until the nineteenth century. The attractive gatehouse, pillars and iron gates on Victoria Road are a reminder of how important this property had once been. Generous sites for the erection of new villas were established throughout the course of the nineteenth century, while the older cottages along St Leonards Road seen in the image from the Breakback in 1823 were replaced by new villas up to the outbreak of the First World War (page 45). Set well back from the road, some of the older cottages have survived, or have been replaced by later houses laid out in rows contrasting with the later detached villas which are often positioned on elevated ground.

4.15.2 With buildings set back within individual plots, boundaries and boundary treatments take on particular importance. Below the slopes of the north facing gardens at the eastern end of the conservation area the boundary walls are of stone or brick, and are sometimes the only features to be seen as they are tall and may act as retaining walls. Elsewhere the height and scale of the boundaries tends to be reduced – walls are usually of stone. A significant number of properties have metal railings although not always to the original historic patterns. At the foot of St Leonards Road some of the

boundary walls are constructed of rounded field stones, and are among the earliest to have survived in this part of the conservation area. Many stone walls have well maintained hedges associated with them to improve privacy of the householders.

View looking down St Leonards Road

4.15.3 Mature trees set within garden ground, associated in particular with the villas and church buildings along Victoria Road, make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The gates and piers to these buildings are also an important component of the townscape.

4.16 Spatial relationships

4.16.1 Space between buildings and the public recreational open parkland take on particular significance in defining the character and appearance of Area B. The enlarged scale of the buildings lining the northern fringe of the Grant Park on Victoria Road become significant elements, although some modern bungalows interspersed among the larger villas make little positive contribution in this respect. The larger villas are set well back from the back of the pavement and street boundary, encouraging privacy, while at the same time allowing larger trees to be planted.

4.16.2 Where forming part of the conservation area on St Leonards Road, the villas on the southern slopes of the Cluny Hills are of a reduced scale to suit the smaller plots within which they are sited. They are usually well set back from the street boundaries, creating a sense of spaciousness which the road would not have, otherwise. Many are placed on elevated plots well above the level of the road. Occasionally dwellings, or other ancillary structures, break the pattern and are brought forward closer to the road, adding to the visual interest.

4.16.3 The open spaces which had been formerly part of the Forres House policies are expansive, framed by the woodlands and the avenues of trees planted within the designed landscape. They contrast with the tightly knit character of the part of the conservation area defined by the old boundaries to the medieval burgh (Area A).

4.17 Recreational space and designed landscape

4.17.1 As noted in the foregoing, the open spaces of the designed landscape of the Grant Park and the extensive network of paths and of woodland planted at the Cluny Hills, together with the cemetery, conspire to make a strongly positive contribution to the wider conservation area. This is examined in more detail in 6.1.

4.18 Negative factors

4.18.1 In general the residential villas and other buildings falling within the defined character area B, together with any associated garden ground, are well maintained and cared for. Negative factors are, therefore, markedly less than in Area A. However, the following matters were observed:

- New houses occupying gap sites, or where larger gardens have been subdivided, are rarely of sufficient design quality and can detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area
- The continuity of boundary walls has often been breached to accommodate new development, modern garages constructed of low grade materials, or to provide access to enlarged areas for car parking
- Modern extensions, for instance of sunrooms and conservatories, can detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area
- The petrol station on Victoria Road has an adverse visual impact on the surrounding area, but as it is scheduled for closure there should be an opportunity to make good the damage

5 Buildings analysis

5.1 The archaeological resource

5.1.1 There is no standing archaeology that is known to have survived within the boundaries of the medieval burgh from prior to the seventeenth century, to which period the earliest of the surviving buildings can be dated. This is not, however, to deny the possibility that some of the buildings on the High Street and within the wynds closest to the High Street may not incorporate the remains of earlier structures, or cellarage from an earlier period. There is always the strong possibility that masonry from earlier structures could have been reused when sites were redeveloped.

Clockwise: top left, the armorial panel relocated in the wynd at 100 High Street believed to show the burgh's coat of arms and to have come from the bridge of 1607; a door lintol from the site of the Queen's Hotel repositioned in a garden wall on Victoria Road; a marriage lintol on a doorway to one of the wynds

5.1.2 Given the age and early importance of the burgh Forres is disappointing for the extent to which armorial panels and carved stonework from earlier demolished structures are not displayed visibly in later buildings. Elgin is particularly rich in this tradition, with many carved pedimented dormers, datestones and armorial panels displayed prominently throughout the city centre. This might suggest, of course, that few buildings of comparable splendour ever existed in Forres if the compelling evidence of Pont's map is to be ignored (page 22). The armorial panel dated 1730 on the site of Roy's House is one case where archaeology has been recycled (page 25), and the appearance of a decayed armorial panel believed to have been salvaged from the old bridge at Castlehill (known to exist in 1607) when it was rebuilt is another, resurrected in the wynd behind the arched entry at 100 High Street. A curious panel, possibly a door lintol of late medieval origin, is known to have been built into a garden wall to a villa on Victoria Road and is believed to have come from the rear of the old Queen's Hotel on the High Street when it was demolished in the mid-1980s.

5.1.3 The strongest archaeological evidence that has survived within the conservation area relates to the defensive fortifications, the earlier of which, an oval hill fort extending to around six acres had been at the highest point of the Cluny Hills, of which most traces appear now to have disappeared due to the extent of tree planting undertaken in the nineteenth century. The evidence of the later stronghold at the Castlehill site, which is unlikely to have been occupied as a royal lodging before the charter was granted for the royal burgh in the early twelfth century, has been substantially interfered with due to successive rounds of alterations and

enhancement through planting schemes, the creation of gardens and the public park, and from the construction of the new bridge in the early twentieth century. The motte upon which the castle had once stood has been levelled out and heavily modified, but an impression can still be gained of how it had commanded the approaches to the burgh.

5.1.4 From the degree to which the foreland properties have been rebuilt, sometimes on a number of occasions, the likelihood of surviving archaeology remaining of earlier structures may be slight, but it still exists. Likewise, although the sites of the town's ports cannot be established with exact certainty from the surviving records, it is always possible that evidence of them could emerge at some stage in the future. Further, in the knowledge that the town's parish church has been rebuilt on more than one occasion since the medieval period, and that the Tolbooth was rebuilt in the late 1830s on the site of the earlier structure, all evidence of them might be expected to have been wiped out. The discovery of human bones during historic excavations on the High Street might suggest that the graveyard of the old parish church extended southwards beyond the present boundary wall, and that the High Street may have been widened at some stage.

5.2 Gazetteer of selected buildings

5.2.1 The conservation area contains 146 list entries. Each list entry may cover more than one building.

5.2.2 Buildings and historic structures within the conservation area as it is presently designated have been selected for their architectural and historic interest from four phases – before 1800; 1800-1850; and 1850-1900 and 1900-1940. Groups of buildings, where individually the buildings may not be worthy of special note here, but the group as a whole contributes to the townscape quality of Forres, have also been included. Unlisted buildings of special note have been selected, which may be suitable for listing.

5.2.3 Our survey found many good examples of Victorian and Edwardian villa properties, particularly along Victoria Road and St Leonard's Road, which are of merit, yet remain unlisted. These properties are too numerous to list in full in this document, but a selection is presented in the gazetteer. Forres would benefit from a resurvey with a view to correcting this gap in the current Statutory List.

5.2.4 It should be noted that there are many buildings within the conservation area which, while they have not been selected individually for the gazetteer, make a positive contribution to the historic townscape.

5.2.5 The illustrated gazetteer of the key buildings within the conservation area is reproduced in **Appendix 14.3**.

5.3 Architects at work in Forres

5.3.1 Forres never seems to have made any connection with two towering figures in the development of British architectural history. They were roughly contemporary with one another, and although they were born in, or near, the town there is, however, no reason to suggest that they were responsible for the design of any buildings in the town where they were brought up. **James Smith** (c1645-1731) was the son of a mason burgess who moved to the town around 1659 from Tarbat in Easter Ross. After enrolling in the Scots College in Rome around the year 1671 he was to renounce his career

as a Jesuit for that as an architect and builder, and came to be recognised as being among Scotland's first architects. He became a burgess of Edinburgh and was appointed to the royal surveyorship in 1683. He acquired the estate of Newhailes near Musselburgh, and towards the end of his professional career he knew and influenced **Colen Campbell** (1676-1729) who was probably his pupil. A member of the family of Campbell of Cawdor, he had inherited the estates of Boghole and Urchany, to the east of Forres, in 1680 at the age of four. Trained as a lawyer, Campbell turned to architecture and was the author of the highly influential *Vitruvius Britannicus* published by subscription between 1715 and 1725. He set up in practice in London. An effective publicist, he was a leading exponent of the Palladian style of architecture.

5.3.2 And neither has the town's lack of association with key figures in the professions been restricted to architecture. To date the town has not celebrated the fact that the leading Highland civil engineer of the nineteenth century, **Joseph Mitchell** (1803-83) also came from a Forres family of masons. Mitchell's father was entrusted by Thomas Telford to the responsible position of engineer charged with working on the Caledonian Canal and on the construction of Highland Roads and Bridges on behalf of the Commissioners. Originally articled to Telford, the young Mitchell became a highly respected civil engineer who designed harbours, roads and bridges, and was involved in the programme for the Parliamentary churches and manses. From 1838 he became involved heavily in railway engineering, and he was later to survey the route of the Highland Railway, designing many elegant bridges and viaducts, including the innovative box girder bridge over the River Findhorn at Forres in 1858.

5.3.3 Despite these celebrated figures, Forres architects never flourished as did those who practised in the towns on the fringes of the Moray Firth, in particular in Elgin, Inverness, Dingwall and Tain. It was surely not just a question of patronage, as many of the finest buildings of the town have been commissioned of architects who were considered to be in the first league from Elgin and Inverness. Possibly the only architect brought in from further afield was the renowned **Archibald Simpson** (1790-1847) of Aberdeen who was commissioned to design the Masonic Halls in 1829, later to become the Mechanics' Institute and the Town Hall after a considerable number of alterations to the fabric. Simpson was already working extensively in Moray, for the Duke of Gordon at Fochabers and as the architect of St Giles Church (1827) and General Anderson's Institution (1832), both Elgin.

5.3.4 Of the architect of Nelson's Tower of 1806, **Charles Stewart**, nothing appears to be known other than the fact that he came from Darnaway. It is highly likely that he had been a dilettante architect member of Lord Moray's immediate family as his name does not occur in conjunction with any other known building.

5.3.5 **William Robertson** (1786-1841) was a key figure in Elgin's evolving architectural scene in the early nineteenth century, and his skill and abilities were such as to resist the appointment of architects from outside Moray. In Forres he was responsible for the design of two of the town's key public buildings – Anderson's Institution (1823), and the new Forres Tolbooth (1838-40). He also prepared designs for the National Bank in Forres, completed after his death by Thomas Mackenzie. His nephews and pupils, Alexander and William Reid (who practised as **A&W Reid**) inherited his practice and continued his success. Although based in Elgin initially, in the

mid-1840s the office was moved to Inverness, returning to Elgin in the late 1870s. Their work in Moray, and especially their public buildings, were distinguished and would often be embellished by the carved sculpture of Thomas Goodwillie of Elgin, a collaboration from which their work at the Falconer Museum (1868-70) benefits in particular. A number of private houses in Forres were designed by the practice, as was the Agricultural Hall on Tytler Street (1867).

5.3.6 A&W Reid's principal opposition in Elgin had been **Thomas Mackenzie** (1814-54) who designed some of Forres's finest buildings. Having served in Aberdeen under Archibald Simpson and John Smith he moved to Elgin in 1839 as William Robertson's principal assistant, and when Robertson died in 1841 he set up on his own account. In addition to his involvement in the National Bank as noted above, in 1844 he won the competition for the new Market Cross on the Plainstones and was involved in carrying out alterations and additions to Patrick Wilson's design for St John's Episcopal Church. In 1847 he designed the range of market buildings on Tolbooth Street, and between 1852 and 1854, the year of his death, he designed the Italianate Caledonian Bank (now the Bank of Scotland), one of the best of the town's commercial buildings. His son, **Alexander Marshall Mackenzie** (1847-1933) who was born in Elgin, but whose practice was based in Aberdeen, designed the town's war memorial at the Market Green in 1922.

5.3.7 **John Urquhart** (1795-1869) was the son of an established carpenter who ran the family business from the Mills of Forres, to which John appears to have returned from Edinburgh around 1840, after which he set up in business as an architect. After the death of William Robertson in 1841 he was appointed to design the extension at the Tolbooth which included the police cells, completed in 1850. He was still listed in the 1863 town street directory, by then under 'J&A Urquhart'.

Detail of the façade of the Mechanics' Institute, reworked by John Forrest (1899-1901)

5.3.8 Other architects based in Forres around the end of the nineteenth century were **John Forrest** (dates not established) and **Peter Fulton** (c1863-1918). Forrest was engaged to carry out improvements at the Mechanics' Institute in 1899-1901. He designed some of the villas in the town and was the architect of the Royal Station Hotel (1896). Fulton is understood to have moved from Paisley c1890, and became a town councillor, a position from which he had to resign in 1907 when he was appointed as the architect for the new Castle Bridge. He was the architect of the Carlton Hotel (1900) and

designed a number of villas in the town, including his own residence Ferguslie (1899, renamed Craiglen) on Sanquhar Road.

Inverness architects at work in Forres: left to right, the entrance to Ross & Macbeth's St Leonard's Church (1901-3), and the elegant rose window designed by John Rhind for the Castlehill Church (1871)

5.3.9 Inverness architects were sometimes engaged for the town's churches and commercial buildings. Unusually there are few examples to be seen of the large Highland practice of **Alexander Ross** (1834-1925), although St Leonard's Church was designed by his practice (when **Ross & Macbeth**) in 1901-3. The large public school building of 1876, demolished to make way for the new Forres House and prominent in the Washington photograph taken from Nelson's Tower was also designed by him. **John Rhind** (1836-1889), a native of Banffshire, had a productive relationship with the town and produced some excellent buildings. He was the designer of the Castlehill United Presbyterian Church (1871) with its adjoining manse (1874), and also of the fine block at 122-126 High Street undertaken for JH Gill in 1882, formerly known as the Longview Hotel. Another Inverness architect, **John Robertson** (1840-1925) had been trained in Ross's office before setting up in practice on his own account around 1880. His design for St Laurence Church (1903-1906) must be considered among his finest buildings – adorned with pinnacles and a lead fleche it dominates the townscape, especially when viewed at a distance.

5.4 Architectural distinctiveness

5.4.1 Forres is relatively unusual in having survivals of the more humble buildings on its High Street, whereas in many comparable historic towns the pressures of redevelopment had swept them away. These are manifested in a series of buildings at the west end of the High Street which occupy their original burgage plots, presenting gables to the street. These modestly scaled former dwellings and shops date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The earlier examples have distinctive roofs which are more steeply pitched than the later structures, while the buildings which have distinctive crowsteps and curved skewputts (as the example of 1668 at No 154) suggest a seventeenth or early to mid-eighteenth century date. No 154 also has a 'catslide' dormer surviving within the wynd, again a characteristic of buildings of this date. Some of the more imposing buildings have crowsteps, among which is the fine three-storey building of 1748 at the junction with Gordon Street. Others have crowsteps surviving, but only at the rear which suggests that there are several survivals of buildings from this era, some of which may have been rebuilt. These early buildings are also identifiable from the appearance of the chimneyheads with plain blocked copes, occasionally with a simple cavetto moulding.

Artistry in stone: the skewputt in the form of a capstan and the inscription to the owners on the chimmneyhead reads 'John Young, Mary Elder, 1778'

5.4.2 Of late eighteenth century domestic examples, one of the more important survivals is the structure dated 1778 towards the east end of the High Street, which has highly fashioned skewputts presented to the street on the gable and blocked keystones to sophisticated lugged architraved windows and doors. The crowstepped gable to the rear suggests that this could have been remodelled from an even earlier building on the site. A good row of late eighteenth century dwellings can be seen on St Leonards Road on the boundary with Grant Park. The High Street has three examples of three-storey buildings with 'tympan' gables, a building type often associated with the late eighteenth century. Excellent examples with Dutch gables flank the Bank of Scotland building. An elaborate Dutch gable with bartizans, seemingly to mirror the Tolbooth (its immediate neighbour), adorns the Red Lion public house on Tolbooth Street, which carries the date of 1838, and the same Dutch gable feature is perpetuated in later nineteenth century dwellings such as the former manse, set well back from Tolbooth Street.

Examples of traditional slated dormers of varying ages and styles

5.4.3 Dwellings of the early to mid-nineteenth century make up a large proportion of the buildings laid out in rows within the wynds. Many of them are plain, well-proportioned structures having two storeys and three symmetrical bays with a central doorway at ground floor and chimneys at each gable. Occasionally later examples may have projecting bay windows over two storeys and many still have sash and case windows with fenestration of traditional patterns. Dormers enliven the roofscape: the most prominent types are piended rather than pedimented and occur within the roof, although dormers built off the wallhead are not uncommon. There are many good examples surviving of angled piended dormers. Ungainly box dormers have begun to appear across the conservation area, but have yet to become the disease afflicting other conservation areas. Porches do exist but they are rarer, and tend to be restricted to villas set in their own garden ground, and

they may be of timber or stone. Early nineteenth century villas erected to a repeating design are to be found on Victoria Road.

5.4.4 Commercial buildings on the High Street tend to be more elaborate. Some buildings of the early nineteenth century have tripartite windows of a large central window flanked by a pair of narrow windows to provide additional light to the apartments of the principal storey. Some frontages are embellished with simple classical architraves or pediments to the windows, and have cornices and parapets at the head of the wall; hood mouldings are not uncommon. Most window openings have raised stone margins. All of these details add greatly to the variety within the streetscape. The rear elevations of the buildings on the High Street tend to be plain and unadorned, and there are several good examples of projecting towers enclosing staircases.

Late nineteenth century decorative cast iron rainwater goods

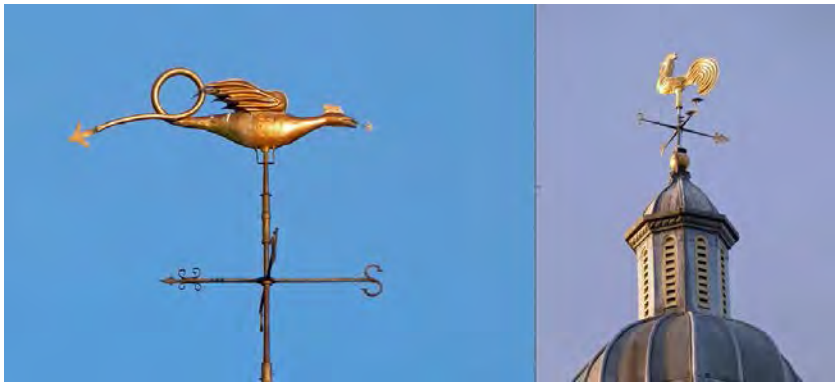
5.4.5 By the end of the nineteenth century even the plainest of dwellings were adorned with finials to window dormers of lead, timber, carved stone, or decorative cast iron selected from the catalogues of the leading manufacturers. The conservation area is exceptional for the extent and variety of cast iron decorative rainwater goods which have survived and which, to a large extent, have been maintained. Bootscrapers have survived, complete with the horizontal metal bar, in greater numbers than elsewhere. Likewise, there are good examples or ranges of chimneycans that have been preserved, many of which are of unusual patterns. By the late nineteenth century chimneyheads became increasingly decorative, and there are many examples of copings with heavy and elaborate mouldings.

Many ranges of chimneycans with distinctive patterns have survived intact

5.4.6 Public buildings commissioned by the town council and by the philanthropists of the nineteenth century are consistently of a high standard, reflecting the sort of aspirations articulated by the parish minister in his account of 1842 (page 31). Apart from Archibald Simpson of

Clockwise: the fabulously intricate carvings of 122-126 High Street and the sculpted heads of Sir Walter Scott and Hugh Falconer at the Falconer Museum

Aberdeen, architects of national repute were not invited to Forres to design the town's monuments and yet the townscape is none the worse for it. The graceful front elevation and spire of Anderson's Institution, the Tolbooth, and St Laurence Church are buildings of exceptional quality from different eras from the growth and renewal of the town and, not only do they command their position within the townscape, but they are landmarks on the skyline by which the town is recognised from a distance. Patronage finds expression in other ways: many of the buildings of the town (including dwellings) are embellished with stone carvings of unusual quality and variety. Landmark quality is assured by some remarkable finials – while the Tolbooth and St John's Episcopal Church have gilded cockerels at the head of their domes and towers, the spire of Anderson's is terminated with a sleek flying dragon with a forked tongue and tail which provides a wholly unexpected and fantastical antidote to a place dedicated to sober learning.



Flights of fantasy: left to right, the gilded dragon and cockerel at Anderson's Institution and the Tolbooth respectively

5.4.7 The mid to late nineteenth century detached houses and villas of Victoria Road and St Leonards Road are fine examples in varying styles. There are good examples of High Victorian and Edwardian mansion houses on Victoria Road such as The Tower, The Park and Ramnee, while Randolph Villa on St

Leonards Road is an earlier idiosyncratic Baronial design of 1865. Later villas would be characterised by overhanging eaves and bargeboards, and in Russell Place a villa of the 1880s has painted eaves of highly decorative fretwork, the only such example within the conservation area.

Traditional shopfronts on Forres High Street, displaying good examples of signage which is contained within the original fascia

5.4.8 Although many traditional shopfronts have been lost, Forres has an exceptionally high rate of earlier shopfronts having survived. There are many examples of the earliest type consisting of plain ashlar masonry punctuated by door and shop window openings. More sophisticated arcades in stone followed in the early nineteenth century, in which the piers were reduced to a minimum and shop windows would take full advantage of advances in plate glass technology. Later in the nineteenth century cast iron shopfronts began to appear of which a number have survived; often older buildings would have them inserted. A small number of shops have Edwardian shopfronts in which the area of glass has been maximised due to the insertion of long span iron or steel beams to support the masonry above. In some cases blind boxes and other traditional features such as console brackets have survived. Earlier shopfronts retain their original panelled stall risers. Many of the original glazed shop doors have survived together with the paired panelled outer doors.

5.4.9 Modern developments are often hidden away in the backlands, but wherever they appear they are invariably of undistinguished quality and appear bland. As noted above replacement shops and the social housing schemes of the 1950s and 1960s disturb the urban grain. The Forres House community centre disguises its bulk but the flat roofs which were common in buildings of this age are a disruptive element in the streetscape. When the block of interesting early nineteenth century houses at the Smokers' Shop at the centre of the town was demolished in the 1980s the street façade was replicated, even if the original materials were not reused with some corresponding loss of character. At the Cooperative supermarket of 1986 an effort was made to blend in the design with the wider townscape, and while one of the early nineteenth century houses was taken down, it was rebuilt in the same position using the materials salvaged from the downtakings. The openings to the ground floor were designed to reflect the rhythm of the existing shopfronts on the High Street and the temptation was resisted to straighten out the kink in the plot boundary across the frontage of the site.

Traditional windows with fine examples of historic glass giving distorted reflections

5.4.10 Compared with other conservation areas the numbers of traditional windows and doors that have survived is surprising. There are good examples of 'six-over-six' multi-paned sash and case windows, and within them a great deal of distinctive historic glass. Later in the nineteenth century as plate glass was introduced the window sashes became plainer, and there are many good examples of these to be seen. It was not unusual to refenestrate early buildings with the more fashionable plate glass sash windows during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Traditional panelled doors

5.4.11 Forres has a quite remarkable survival level of original doors of varying types and from different periods – many of the houses have panelled or double-margin doors, while the outer paired doors to some of the traditional shopfronts are flush-panelled. Also surviving are high levels of original ironmongery and decorative treatments which vary from paint to graining and varnishing.

5.5 Building materials

5.5.1 There were few freestone quarries in the vicinity of the town and in general stone was imported from any number of quarries operating to the east of the town across the Laigh of Moray. Some of these quarries were operating near the coastline, whereas others were located around Elgin at Newton, Spynie and at Quarrywood. During the late nineteenth century other building stones could have come from Nairn, and such was the demand for new buildings in the towns of the coastline by the end of the century a number of quarries were operating around Elgin and Nairn producing soft sandstone of uncertain quality which was easy to quarry and shape, but which has not always weathered well. Durable sandstone was available from the quarry at Burgie, appearing in a number of buildings of the early nineteenth century, including the Tolbooth. It produced a brown-coloured

stone noted for its gritty appearance and inclusions of pebbles and small stones. While it may have been liked by the Forres masons for ashlar work for which it could be readily squared it may not have been so well suited for forming mouldings, and was quite unsuited to decorative carving. As noted in the previous sections skilled carvers were at work in Forres from the earliest times, and the town's masons in the early nineteenth century would be chosen by John Mitchell, Joseph Mitchell's father, to travel to the Highlands to build harbours, bridges and the Parliamentary churches on behalf of Thomas Telford.

Examples of ashlar stonework of varying styles amd materials found in the conservation area

5.5.2 By the end of the nineteenth century the quarry at New Forres had opened up for building stone, producing a distinctive purple-grey coloured gneiss which was notoriously difficult to work. It was used in coursed facework, with the faces and edges of the stones shaped to a rough profile with the imperfections disguised through the use of a dark coloured lime mortar to which a pure lime pencil joint would be applied to define the course lines. It contrasted well with dressings of yellow sandstone. One of the best examples of this pointing is to be found at the War Memorial at the Market Green. Early photographs of the High Street show buildings (now demolished) with raised tuck pointing, no doubt introduced for similar reasons.

5.5.3 Limestone for building purposes never seems to have been in short supply. There were limekilns on the banks of the River Findhorn on the Altyre Estate, although the output was never large. It is possible that bulk lime was imported through the port at Findhorn. The Forres Conservation Area has suffered from the intrusion of repointing in modern cement mortar considerably less than in other comparable towns where evidence of historic mortars can be difficult to find. Consequently there are good examples of lime harling still to be seen in the buildings of the wynds; occasionally the surfaces will have been limewashed or painted but often the surface will have worn off revealing attractive colours from the rounded river-bed aggregates which may have been used. There are also good examples surviving of traditional Morayshire sneck harls, in which the faces of the largest stones would be left exposed in the pointing up of stone

rubble walls, with the final dashed coat consisting of a thin coat of pure lime and fine aggregate.

Examples of traditional lime harling found in the wynds

5.5.4 The use of early Portland cement for mortars or renders seems rare. The imposing corner property, dated 1748, at the corner of Gordon Street appears to have been finished with a smooth ashlared Portland cement render in the late nineteenth century, painted over in the late twentieth century. One or two of the cottages in the wynds appear to have been given a similar finish.

Rubble walling, lime pointing and sneck harling

5.5.5 Rubble stone was used extensively for the gables and rear walls of the buildings of the wynds, for which many types of stone were used. The masons would have relied on lime harling and pointing to disguise these materials which would not have been left exposed to any great extent, and that they have become visible now is as a consequence of these finishes having worn away. In the earlier work it is not uncommon to see rough field stones, or boules, used in the construction of the walls with the larger stones snapped in two. Stone snecks were not always introduced in a decorative manner as happened elsewhere in eighteenth and early nineteenth century work. All types of stone are used, giving great variety in the colour and texture of the finished walls. Granite and whinstones of pink or grey, and iron-rich sandstones of brown and yellow appear frequently. Occasionally the mortar joints are lined out to give a tidier appearance to the wall from an impression of coursing. There is evidence that some rubble walls may have been limewashed in the early nineteenth century.

Sandstone ashlar masonry

5.5.6 Sandstone used for ashlar work is equally diverse. Often the work is carried out to a very high standard, especially for the more important buildings of the town centre. The finish of the masonry also varies enormously, ranging from a vigorous rock-faced ashlar to fine rubbed surfaces with very tight joints. The surfaces of the individual stones may be channelled, or combed, droved or stugged with a bolster; often fine margins are defined by counter droving at the edges of the blocks.

The red brick walls to the rear of the Carlton Hotel pick up the colour of the setting sun

5.5.7 Brickwork appears perhaps more commonly than in many other towns, appearing mainly in the lesser buildings of the wynds. For the more humble structures, such as outbuildings, the brickwork would be given a coat of lime harling, but by the end of the nineteenth century it was being used as a material in its own right no doubt to save on the rising cost of building in stone. Red brick is used extensively for the rear walls of the Carlton Hotel. Brown coloured bricks also appear, and there are several examples of yellow brick extensions to dwellings, or of infill walls constructed of this material. A number of chimneyheads are constructed of brick, sometimes where the chimneyheads on a principal frontage is of stone.

5.5.8 Walls of mass unreinforced concrete capitalising on the introduction of early Portland cements are less common than in some areas, no doubt due to the ready availability of buildings tones. A good example of this was seen at the Orchard Road car park enclosing a private garden.

5.5.9 There are a few examples of timber structures clad in corrugated iron occurring throughout the conservation area. A few extensions to houses have walls of traditional boarded construction with rounded cover battens.

5.5.10 Thatched roofs appeared to survive in Forres longer than in many other historic burghs, and they can be seen on the more humble dwellings in photographs of the early twentieth century. No roofs within the conservation area have survived to the present day with this finish.

Roofscape on Urquhart Street shows slates of varying colour and texture from a variety of sources, but the overall colour of the traditional roofs of the town is blue

5.5.11 The roofscape is predominantly of blue slate from a variety of sources. Historic photographs reveal buildings of the later seventeenth and eighteenth century (all now demolished) with what appear to have been stone slates, with the same slate appearing on catslide dormers. Some of the earlier slated roofs were covered in West Highland slates from either Easdale or Ballachulish, and with the opening of the Caledonian Canal in 1822 the delivery of slates through the harbours of the Moray Firth was greatly facilitated. Roofs in Forres were also clad in Cnoc Fergan slates, a grey slate with a lustrous finish from the amount of mica present; the last roofs known to have had this finish were in the ranges behind the Smokers' Shop, demolished in the 1980s. Also imported to the town, but much rarer than other slate types were grey stone slates from the Tarrymount quarries to the east of Fochabers, which were shipped out of the harbour at Portgordon. A roof on one of the properties in Hepworth Lane may be the sole surviving example of this finish which could have been more common at one stage.

5.5.12 Early nineteenth century roofs often have a blue-grey coloured slate which appears to be unique to the town. While craggy in appearance, it is significantly lighter in shade than the West Highland slate, and it is possible that it was derived from the farm of Clunie, just outside the boundaries of the burgh falling within the Rafford Parish. The parish ministers described it in the 1790s as being rented out by the farm tenant to slate quarries, but it seems to have been disused by 1840, even though the resource may not have been exhausted at that time. Later in the nineteenth century slates were delivered to the town by the railways, after which the character and appearance of the roofscape began to change. No longer necessarily would slates be laid in diminishing courses to maximise on the use of the available material but larger machine dressed slates of more regular face sizes began to appear. Welsh slates would often be supplied with a colour, texture and

thickness more suited to traditional Scots roofs, and purple Welsh slates may have appeared first only when roofs had failed and were reslated at a later date. Looking across the roofscape, it is often possible to see roofs of several types of slate which harmonise with one another. To some eyes, roofs of regular machine dressed slates appeared monotonous, and so, increasingly, scalloped and diamond-patterned slates adorned tower or turret roofs.

5.5.13 Unless carefully chosen, replacement roof finishes never harmonise with the older roofs described above. Few roofs have been replaced with interlocking concrete tiles, but where they appear on twentieth century buildings the effect can be discordant within the conservation area. Roofs renewed with corrugated asbestos sheeting can also be discordant - a particularly prominent example can be seen at the refurbished museum store at the head of the car park, seen from some distance away from the High Street. Equally unsatisfactory can be thin slate substitute finishes, such as asbestos cement or equivalent composition slates which require pegs on the bottom edge of the slate to hold them in position. Recently roofs have been reslated in Spanish slates – once more, even if care is taken over the size and texture of the slate, the colour is too black and highly reflective, striking a discordant element.

5.5.14 The earliest roofs have ridges of plain sandstone providing a satisfying finish where they have survived. By the early nineteenth century lead ridges had become more commonplace, and would be the preferred material also for slate-clad dormers. As the nineteenth century progressed red and yellow clay ridge tiles became more common, and by the end of the century decorative red clay tiles appeared, mainly on the roofs of the residential villas.

5.5.15 Traditionally detailed flat roofs of lead are commonplace.

Traditional slated roofs with a variety of skylights; the modern velux rooflight appears intrusive

5.5.16 Rooflights can become intrusive elements within the roofscape. Rooflights sold as ‘conservation rooflights’ can tend to be clumsy in appearance when compared with traditional examples which sit down without disturbing the line of the roof. The roofs within the conservation area have many examples of traditional rooflights, varying from simple sheets of glass to cast iron skylights of up to three lights, of which a number still retain their original glass.

5.6 Impact of change on authenticity

5.6.1 Materials, no matter how they have been maintained, can reach the end of a cycle beyond which they can no longer be conserved. While many examples can be shown to confirm the extent to which unsympathetic

repairs or the replacement of traditional materials has been damaging to the conservation area, nevertheless it is the case that the consequences of the rate of change have been less than in many places. Most of the changes involve the use of inappropriate modern materials. Creeping changes can have a long term detrimental impact on authenticity.

Roof reslated with new slates which are too black in colour and reflective; the ventilated ridge is a proprietary product for modern roofing systems and the 'conservation rooflights' are oversized and do not match the traditional rooflights found across the conservation area

5.6.2 The importance of the roofscape to the harmonious character and appearance of the conservation area has been stressed in the preceding paragraphs. One roof was observed to a property on the High Street where a proprietary paint had been applied to the slates of a traditional roof presumably to overcome inherent defects. Disfiguring changes may relate to the introduction of modern rooflights if poorly positioned, oversized or of an inappropriate design. Where roof materials have been renewed, but only over half of the roof of a building sharing a common frontage, the effect can appear disconcerting. Roof ventilators, where inserted, are also disfiguring elements to the appearance of a traditional roof. The insertion of solar panels, whether a single panel visible from the street, or an array of panels can be particularly disfiguring. Examples of all of these features are to be found in the conservation area.

5.6.3 The loss from the removal of defective chimneyheads can affect the rhythm of gables appearing in the wynds. A few chimneyheads have been taken down and renewed in modern materials which appear incongruous. Missing chimneycans from a range which would otherwise have been complete, or the total removal of chimneycans from a chimneyhead can also affect the authenticity of the conservation area.

5.6.4 Finials to towers, spires, dormers and gables make a distinctive contribution to the skyline and Forres has some excellent examples. Their loss can have a considerable impact. Among the worst cases is the Market Cross, where a number of pinnacles have been removed and have not been replaced, damaging the artistic integrity of a public monument in a location which is highly visible.

5.6.5 As noted in 5.4.5 the town has a fine array of cast iron distinctive rainwater goods, of which many rainwater systems are largely intact. In some cases lengths that may have failed have been replaced in incongruous materials.

5.6.6 The paraphernalia of modern living is taking its toll on the historic townscape. Individual terminals may not always be seen to have a visual impact, but taken collectively the impact of them can be immense.

Chimneyheads are adorned with television aerials, of which many could be redundant. The advent of satellite dishes has had a marked impact on the conservation area, appearing within the roofscape, on chimneyheads, and - potentially more damaging even - on the frontages of buildings. The cumulative visual impact can be considerable where domestic properties appear in a single row. Terminals for fast food shops on the High Street become prominent features in the wynds and the backlands, and also for cafes and restaurants. A growing problem is the gradual introduction of air handling units which are commonly affixed to the walls of historic buildings without regard to their setting, with much of the associated cabling and trunking on view.

The roofscape is sensitive to visual intrusion from aerials and satellite dishes

5.6.7 The centre of Forres has escaped much of a problem encountered in other conservation areas of external walls having been coated in unsympathetic modern cement finishes such as harling, drydash finishes and smooth renders. Examples were seen of these finishes, but to date they are not extensive. Similarly, as noted in 5.5.3, many examples of traditional lime mortars survive, and there are as yet relatively few cases where walls have been repointed in cement. Where stonework has decayed, plastic repairs may have been carried out in cement mortar, accelerating the rate of damage to the underlying sandstone which can no longer breathe. The ashlar frontage to Andersons Primary School, one of the town's most important historic buildings, has been very badly affected in this respect.

5.6.8 Historic photographs reveal that a significant number of the town's outstanding collection of shopfronts have been lost through modern replacements. However, many still survive. A significant number of them have been damaged by inappropriate modern signage, which may be oversized, concealing the structural frame and the original fascia of the traditional shopfront.

5.6.9 Although many traditional doors are still to be found, too many have been lost already to 'off-the-shelf' modern replacements in hardwood, aluminium or PVC. Where inner glazed doors have been replaced any historic glass has been lost.

Properties on the High Street where window replacements no longer match the patterns or design of the traditional windows on the lower storey

5.6.10 The invasion of modern window replacements has been taking place for some considerable time, and may even have begun before the conservation area was designated. There has been the consequential loss of the original window frames, fenestration patterns and any historic glass that may have survived. Throughout the conservation area, where houses may be in multiple occupancy, too often windows have been replaced to one of the upper floors so that the fenestration no longer matches, or worse perhaps, the symmetry inherent in the design of a single street frontage has been damaged by non-matching fenestration patterns reflecting different occupancy. The constant endeavour to replace traditional windows with more thermally efficient units has seen the introduction of a variety of designs and materials, including aluminium, hardwood, varnished softwood and PVC. It is problematic that, only rarely, do the replacement units match the original windows in how they operate: sash and case windows are replaced with inward opening bottom hung windows or casements – when opened the visual disharmony becomes apparent instantly. Where windows have been renewed, replacement windows are fitted, unnecessarily, with ugly trickle ventilators better suited to windows in new buildings where ventilation standards and requirements are quite different.

5.7 Buildings at Risk

5.7.1 Buildings at Risk identified during the street survey audit are detailed below.

5.7.2 **The Castle, 29 Caroline Street**
A 2-storey L-plan building (above image, left) which consisted originally of a late 18th century villa to the north with later 19th century arm forming U-plan frontage to Caroline Street. The building has been vacant for some time and is in generally poor condition with a neglected appearance. An application to demolish the building was refused in 2008 which was upheld at appeal. The property is thought to have changed ownership recently with some repairs underway and the outlook appears to be very much more promising according to recent newspaper reports. Category C-listed. Currently on the Buildings at Risk Register.

5.7.3 **27 North Street**

This single storey, harled, traditional cottage (above image, right) is clearly vacant and in poor condition. The southern chimney stack is engulfed by vegetation. Unlisted. Currently on the Buildings at Risk Register.

5.7.4 **6 North Street**

This traditional, harled, 1 ½ storey cottage is disused with many windows boarded or broken at ground floor. Unlisted. Currently on the Buildings at Risk Register.

5.7.5 **Benrinnes, 35 North Road**

This 1 ½ storey traditional stone built cottage (below, left) appears to have been disused for some time. Many windows are boarded and/or broken at ground floor. Windows have been replaced with modern PVC frames at the 1st floor. A modern porch has been added which is in poor condition. Some evidence of vandalism. Unlisted. Currently on the Buildings at Risk Register.

5.7.6 **154c High Street (in close)**

Late 18th century single storey cottage (above, right) with corrugated iron roof. Part of a significant range behind 154 High Street. Appears to be vacant and in need of maintenance. Category B-listed. Candidate for the Buildings at Risk Register. See also Building Gazetteer (Appendix 14.3).

5.7.7 **Castlehill Church, High Street**

This church, in a prominent corner position on the High Street, is boarded up and has been vacant for some years. Wire mesh has been fitted over the stained glass windows, many of which are broken. There are areas of serious structural movement and water ingress. The owner has expressed a desire to see the building in use by the community and discussions have taken

place with the local planning authority and Historic Scotland over its current condition and the opportunities it presents. Category B-listed. Currently on the Buildings at Risk Register. See Building Gazetteer (Appendix 14.3).

5.7.8 **Cottage to rear of 147-9 High Street**
This single storey traditional cottage (below, left), possibly dating from the mid-18th century, has been vacant for many years and is in very poor condition with extensive areas of slates missing from the roof. The northern gable and chimney stack are heavily overgrown with vegetation. The cottage is part of a range to the rear of a High Street property (147-9). Currently on the Buildings at Risk Register, which notes that Conservation Area Consent for demolition in favour of two new build dwellings was refused in June 1994.

5.7.9 **Workshop, Hepworth Lane**
This 2 storey stone workshop building (above, right) with corrugated iron roof at the bottom of Hepworth Lane is in poor condition - the roof is corroded in places and there is vegetation growing at a high level. The building is currently on the Buildings at Risk Register, which notes that Full Planning Permission for restoration and conversion to residential use, with a single storey new build adjacent was approved in March 2011 and that the site is being marketed for sale as a development opportunity.

5.7.10 **Former stables block to rear of Clydesdale Bank, 96-98 High Street**
An attractive former stables range with stone dormers serving attic storey, forming a courtyard to the rear of the Clydesdale Bank (above, right) with which it is likely to be contemporary (c1839). Had been in use as a retail space and café. Within the curtilage of a B listed building.

5.7.11 **Hanover Court, Leask Road**
A traditional stone two storey house (above, left), the sole survivor of a long row of houses now demolished, at the heart of a sheltered modern housing association scheme which has been vacated with all ground floor windows

boarded up. Had been refurbished in the mid-1970s. Plans for the replacement of the housing scheme are being considered and it is important that the older building should be preserved as part of the new scheme proposed for the site (see also 5.8.5 below).

5.7.12 **Victoria Wines shop and rear premises**
The Victoria Wines shop on the High Street became vacant when the business went into administration and has not been let for a couple of years. Behind it there is an attractive range of rubble-built outbuildings with an upper storey which is believed to be inaccessible. These structures have the potential to make a contribution to the activity and interest of the conservation area.

5.8 Redundancy and under-use

5.8.1 Relatively few buildings within the conservation area are totally vacant. In upper floors above commercial premises levels of occupancy appear to be at a reasonable level. It is difficult to establish levels of use in closes, which are not always publicly accessible.

5.8.2 Several ground floor retail units are not currently in use, raising concerns about the maintenance of traditional shopfronts where they survive and contributing to a lack of vitality on the High Street. While the physical condition of these buildings is currently not a cause for concern, their reuse and continued upkeep should be encouraged.

5.8.3 There are several properties at 3-11 North Street which appear to be underused and in need of maintenance. There is certainly some vacancy on the ground floor with broken windows, rotten window frames and spalling paint creating a general air of dilapidation.

5.8.4 The Lloyds TSB Bank at 156-8 High Street (below, right), while not considered to be at risk, is clearly unoccupied on the first floor with boarded up windows to the front. The property is in need of some maintenance and currently appears faded and neglected.

Vacant retail premises as at January 2013

5.8.5 The housing at Hanover Court (above, left), while not historic, is currently vacant and awaiting redevelopment. This has a significant impact on the area around Leask Road with large numbers of buildings unused and boarded up. Permission for demolition of all buildings within Hanover Court and erection of a new build 34-person care facility is currently being sought.

5.8.6 There is a historic building within the complex of the Mosset Tavern, thought to be a former mill, at the bottom of Burngreen Lane which appears to be unused or underused. This large 2 storey, 6 bay rubble walled block

has a large square timber boarded door to the west elevation. The building sits within a yard which does appear to be in some sort of service/storage use. The majority of the windows are boarded, and some slates appear to have been replaced at eaves level with a slate that does not match the existing, traditional roof covering. The eastern elevation is adjoined to a flat roofed extension to the rear of the main Tavern building and is therefore not visible.

6 Public realm audit

The lime avenue in Grant Park leading to the Cluny Hills in autumn

6.1 Public parks and open spaces

6.1.1 PAN65 defines open spaces as follows:

Open spaces are important for our quality of life. They provide the setting for a wide range of social interactions and pursuits that support personal and community well-being. They allow individuals to interact with the natural environment and provide habitats for wildlife. They can also be important for defining the character and identity of settlements.

6.1.2 The Conservation Area has a wealth of open space, which, under PAN 65, can be classified by the following typologies:

Public parks and gardens – Areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden. These may be owned or managed by community groups.

Private gardens or grounds – Areas of land normally enclosed and associated with a house or institution and reserved for private use.

Amenity greenspace – Landscaped areas providing visual amenity or separating different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons and used for a variety of informal or social activities such as sunbathing, picnics or kickabouts.

Playspace for children and teenagers – Areas providing safe and accessible opportunities for children's play, usually linked to housing areas.

Sports areas – Large and generally flat areas of grassland or specially designed surfaces, used primarily for designated sports (including playing fields, golf courses, tennis courts and bowling greens) and which are generally bookable.

Green corridors – Routes including canals, river corridors and old railway lines, linking different areas within a town or city as part of a designated and managed network and used for walking, cycling or horse riding, or linking towns and cities to their surrounding countryside or country parks. These may link greenspaces together.

Natural / semi-natural greenspaces – Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with residual natural habitats or which have been planted or colonised by vegetation and wildlife, including woodland and wetland areas.

Civic space – Squares, streets, waterfront promenades, predominantly of hard landscaping that provide a focus for pedestrian activity and can make connections for people and for wildlife.

Burial grounds – Includes churchyards and cemeteries.

6.1.3 Out of eleven types of open space, the conservation area can boast a total of nine (listed above), which for a relatively small area is outstanding. A large proportion of identified open space is served by the network of adopted core paths allowing easy access and movement from one to another, which provides enhanced benefits to the town's folk.

Grant Park

The avenue in Grant Park looking north towards the town centre

6.1.4 Grant Park, including the sunken garden and bowling-green, offers a host of different types of classified open space; public parks and gardens, amenity greenspace, playspace for children and teenagers, and sports areas. The park also forms an entrance to the wider landscape and countryside and therefore can be classed as a green corridor.

6.1.5 The designed landscape at Grant Park was developed in the early nineteenth century around the established policies of Forres House. In 1922 Forres House and gardens were put up for sale and bought by Forres Town Council for £5,000. Sir Alexander Grant gifted money for the purchase together with a further £1,000 for the laying out of a public park in 1924. Prior to its development, the Cluny Hills were separated from the town. Sir Alexander stated that 'the community of Forres does not take advantage of the Cluny Hills as they ought'. In 1971 Forres House burned down and the remains demolished. The site of the house is commemorated by a sunken garden designed by Alistair Sinclair. It is now managed by Moray Council. The park and sunken garden have remained unchanged in their extent ever since.

6.1.6 The main entrance to Grant Park is from Victoria Road via the Forres House Lodge drive. The drive runs westwards beneath a grand avenue of deodar cedars and limes, towards the sunken garden. The drive runs parallel with

Victoria Road and separated by an area of ornamental parkland, which, during the spring and summer months, witnesses all the glory of the Forres in Bloom floral displays. A cricket pavilion and a bowling green, enclosed by a clipped privet hedge, lie to the south of the drive with open playing fields and the Cluny Hills beyond. A further spectacular avenue of limes planted in the early 1930s, lead up to the Cluny Hills and separates the cricket playing fields to the east from the football pitches to the west.

6.1.7 The parkland is predominantly mown grass with gentle grass terraces enclosing the cricket pitch. An area of enclosed children's play equipment is located to the rear of the lodge together with a block of toilets and associated hard landscaping. A range of promoted and adopted footpath routes are located around and through the park, linking folk through to the Cluny Hills and the wider landscape. Adopted and promoted core footpath routes include; FR38, FR39, FR40, FR41, and FR42.

6.1.8 A small, enclosed community garden is located on the eastern boundary of Grant Park, called Wee FIBbees, but is unfortunately fronted by an area of car parking and the intrusion of the toilet block, its setting, just back from the petrol station, leaves it largely unnoticed.

Market Green

The war memorial at the north end of the public park at Market Green

6.1.9 Market Green follows the route of Mosset Burn along the western extent of the conservation area, south of Castle Bridge. This linear park, lined either side by mature lime trees, was believed to be the location for town fairs and markets. To the north of the linear park stands an elevated war memorial, with a bronze figure of a kilted rifleman sculpted by Alexander Carrick of Edinburgh. A flight of hand railed steps, in poor condition and utilitarian in nature descend from the Castle Bridge, and a ramp lead up to the poignant Nimrod crew memorial surrounded by landscaped shrub beds and traditional Forres bedding plants.

6.1.10 Market Green, including the additional open space once titled Market Green also, north of the roundabout, provides classified public park and garden space and amenity greenspace. It further provides green corridor value through which the adopted core footpath route, FR31, runs.

Mosset Park

Mosset Park seen from the Castle Bridge

6.1.11 Mosset Park, to the north of Castle Bridge, offers yet further open green space and is classified as a public park and garden, amenity greenspace and green corridor under PAN 65.

6.1.12 The park boasts an attractive weir, associated with the historic water management of the burn for the mill lades and bleaching green, a collection of pedestrian and vehicular iron lattice bridges, mature tree planting including a selection of cherry trees and weeping willows, shrub planting (formerly a rose garden with arbours), seating and a network of footpaths including an adopted core footpath route (FR31). The burn banks are generally well managed, however, with increasing distance north from Castle Bridge, they become more overgrown and less well-managed. The ramp descending from the Castle Bridge is utilitarian in appearance and materials. The banks of the burn can get untidy and public spirit is manifested in the tidying up of the banks of the burn by volunteers from the community.

Castlehill and the obelisk

6.1.13 The site of the former Forres Castle to the immediate northeast of Market Green and Mosset Burn, is now marked with a commemorative 65ft obelisk to Dr James Thomson, surrounded by grassland and mature trees with an avenue of cherry trees lining the footpath approach from the High Street. This space forms an extension of the High Street and is classified as a public park and garden.

St Laurence Church

6.1.14 The raised open frontage of Church of St Laurence provides a green lung along the High Street with mature trees, which could almost be classed as street trees, mown grass and shrub and bedding plants. Although gated and elevated above a retaining wall, the grounds are open to the public. The hidden graveyard to the rear of the church building provides a quiet and secluded open space, which is relatively unknown. The existing gravestones and those that have been moved from their original position at the front and side of the church, are densely positioned in organised rows and around the retaining wall, creating a tightly packed and fascinating space.

Plainstones and museum square

6.1.15 The Plainstones, to the west of the Tolbooth, provides a social gathering space at the heart of the town and is classed as civic space. It represents a hub of activity with seating, soft landscaping in raised planters and on hanging baskets, and the impressive sandstone market cross of 1844. Some enhancement of the public realm has been undertaken. An extension of this space continues to the east of the Tolbooth, across Tolbooth Street opposite the museum, and features a grilled and guarded street tree, raised stone and timber planters, seating, a water feature and a large chess board. This area, and its collection of individual features, appears somewhat incongruous and disconnected from the surrounding arrangement of streets and open spaces.

6.2 Cluny Hills and town cemetery

Cluny Hills cemetery in winter

6.2.1 The Cluny Hills are classed as natural / semi-natural greenspace and green corridor. The close proximity to mature woodland, both mixed broadleaf and coniferous, and the ease of access from the town provides an invaluable asset for people's health and well-being together with an exceptional landscape setting and backcloth. Through the vast network of existing, promoted and adopted core footpaths, walkers are within easy access of the wider countryside. Key footpath routes include; FR18, FR37, FR39, FR40 and FR41.

6.2.2 Cluny Hills Cemetery is a hidden gem within the Cluny Hills' woodland and is easily accessible by a network of drives, the main access being along the metalled track which loops up and around from St Leonard's Road. Established in 1848 many of the trees within the cemetery are mature.

6.3 Trees and woodland

6.3.1 Mature trees, woodland and areas of well-maintained soft landscaping are integral to the character and setting of the conservation area.

6.3.2 All trees within the conservation area contribute significantly to its amenity value and are thus protected from uncontrolled development. It is an offence for any person to cut, lop, top, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy a

tree unless six weeks' notice has been given to Moray Council. Within this six week period, Moray Council has the authority to protect the tree(s) in question by placing a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on it/them to ensure it/they is/are protected from loss or damage. There are currently no TPOs within the Conservation Area. The last TPO within the Conservation Area, located on Tolbooth Street/South Street, blew down in a gale.

6.3.3 The majority of trees within the conservation area are mature (over 150 yrs) and exhibit great size and stature especially the avenue of Lime trees within Grant Park and Mosset Park. Mature trees within private gardens, especially along Victoria Road and St Leonards Road, contribute significantly to the overall character of this heavily wooded part of the conservation area, softening hard urban edges and integrating and feathering the town into the wider countryside.

6.3.4 One grilled and guarded urban street tree has been identified within the conservation area, adjacent the chess board on Tolbooth Street. There are further, mature street trees aligning St Leonards Road to the south, which contribute to the overall wooded character of the town.

Mixed woodland within the Cluny Hills walks

6.3.5 Mixed woodland over the Cluny Hills is mature, impressive and bears great historical, ecological and recreational significance for the conservation area. It has been the town's property since ancient times. The woodland was first planted around the turn of the nineteenth century as a more profitable asset than broom, but was destroyed by fire in 1815. In 1806 Nelson's Tower was built on the highest of the Cluny Hills and footpaths laid out around it. In 1865 the hills were enclosed and replanted with trees and between 1889 and 1926, further levelling and footpath formation was undertaken. Folklore around the curious hollow formation in the centre of the four largest hills is enshrined in the hearts of the townsfolk; however it has been typically used as a dumping ground for vegetation cleared from the cemetery.

6.3.6 The northern slopes of the Cluny Hills overlook the town and beyond to the Moray Firth. The southern slopes afford panoramic views inland over Muiryshade Golf Course and peripheral parts of the town. In 1838, Evan MacColl visited the Cluny Hills and described his visit in 'Towns in the North of Scotland', noting 'the view altogether a magnificent one'. The Cluny Hills

are a prominent feature in the local scenery and important for the contribution they make to the setting of the town. The Cluny Hills were initially divorced from the town by the private gardens of Forres House until, in 1922, Grant Park was developed.

6.3.7 The Cluny Hills Hydropathic Establishment, now Cluny Hill College owned and managed by the Findhorn Foundation, was a major draw to the town when it opened in the 1860s, a pioneer establishment of the spa movement during the 19th century. Commanding fine views to the south over the golf course, its setting in the landscape today is framed by the wooded rise of the Cluny Hills to the north with mature mixed woodland sweeping down to the east and west of the college buildings. The immediate grounds are also wooded and mature with well-maintained hedgerows marking boundaries to the south as the gardens rise and form the ascent up the Cluny Hills. The building and garden currently fall outwith the conservation area with the boundaries as drawn at the present (see 10.1).

6.3.8 There is a clear change in character north and south of the cemetery and Nelson's Tower – southeast facing slopes have a higher proportion of coniferous stock, primarily Scots pine, whereas northwest facing slopes have a higher degree of deciduous stock, notably Beech. There are also concentrations of ornamental trees and shrubs, conspicuously Laurel, particularly within the vicinity of Nelson's Tower.

6.3.9 Currently active management (summarised on a small interpretation sign) is focused on ecological values resulting in piles of brash left to decompose over the woodland floor.

6.3.10 Cluny Hills Cemetery and the caretaker's lodge was developed during the 1840s and opened in 1848. It is discreetly located within a bowl in the hills and is further enclosed by the mature woodlands around its perimeter. Although the majority is well managed and trees and shrubs are pruned back (however, leaving some arisings lying about, and in one case observed across a footpath), the oldest portion has come into some significant neglect. Ivy and gorse can be seen engulfing gravestones, encroaching on footpaths and dislodging stones and edges. In some respects, this enhances the character of the cemetery, but in others, if left unmanaged, will result in the ultimate loss of what is a very important collection of town graves.

6.4 Soft landscaping

6.4.1 In general, the majority of soft landscaped areas throughout the conservation area are in good condition and clearly well maintained. This is a good reflection of town pride especially when coupled with the repeated success of 'Forres in Bloom'. The lack of suitable open space for soft landscaping along the High Street has not deterred the town from introducing soft landscape through a plethora of portable, raised planters and hanging basket hooks and stands. Due to the season, planting beds, planters and baskets have not been witnessed at their full potential and the degree of annual bedding plant usage has resulted in large areas being left as barren topsoil, but nevertheless, neat and tidy topsoil.

6.4.2 A number of soft landscaping areas, however, have been left under-managed throughout the winter season, including a couple of raised, brick planters outside Anderson's Primary School and the upper reaches of Burn of Mosset.

The sunken garden at Grant Park

6.4.3 On the conservation area periphery and within a number of gap sites and abandoned properties (in particular the site of the former Tesco and car park) vegetation has been left unmanaged with resultant overgrowth, moss and weed spread, and a resultant neglected character. Although the former Tesco site is outwith the conservation area and is subject to future development, it still, currently, imposes a negative impact on the character and quality of the conservation area by degrading its setting from being at close proximity.

6.4.4 As with all planting areas, failures and pedestrian shortcuts result in bare patches and a fragmented bed. This is notable in the soft landscape area to the immediate east of East Lodge, adjacent the car park and Wee FIBbees.

6.5 Car parks

Public car park on the south of the town centre opposite Applegrove School

6.5.1 Generous car parking is well provided for in and around the conservation area, allowing easy access to many of the local facilities. However, as is the case with much car parking, appearance is second to function. Car parking within the conservation area, both public and private, has made use of open, unused spaces between buildings and boundaries with excess areas typically taken up with set cobbles, hard standing or grass. These spaces do little to enhance or strengthen the quality or character of the conservation area and it appears that little attempt has been made to enhance these areas since they were established in the 1970s.

6.6 Utilities infrastructure

6.6.1 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (GPDO), as amended in 2012, sets out various permitted development rights including those for statutory utility providers. This allows certain types of development, repair and maintenance to be undertaken without the need to apply for planning permission. Although for conservation areas it has been possible to introduce additional controls over development under the direction of Article 4, and remove permitted development rights completely, the legislation has been altered recently.

6.6.2 The obvious presence of utility infrastructure within the conservation area is from the numerous tracks of patching work along pavements, access tracks and private drives, and in road surfaces.

Overhead wires and poles disfigure parts of the conservation area

6.6.4 There is a great deal of perceptible overhead wirescape within the conservation area cluttering the skyline. It results in visual confusion and an inevitable loss of architectural clarity and character. Compared with elsewhere locations of wheelie bins do not, on the whole, detract from the street scene.

6.6.5 One electricity substation was identified on North Road, ingeniously incorporated into the stone walling; however, it was overgrown with perennial weeds, brambles and creepers, some of which are over-spilling to or from the adjacent properties.

6.7 Footways and pavements

6.7.1 Within the urban fabric of the conservation area, a range of differing footways and pavements can be seen. There is little or no historical merit to the majority of existing hard surfacing except for a number of hidden gems within a number of the Wynds. A number of these footways and pavements are identified as adopted core footpaths, existing footpaths and promoted footpaths. These include; FR15 and FR42.

6.7.2 Typically, those areas not within the High Street or Wynds are surfaced in tarmac and edged with standard pre-cast concrete kerbs. Red coated chippings have been used in the tarmac surfacing to the east of the conservation area and an area of concrete slab and granite block detailing is present outside Anderson's Primary School.

6.7.3 The sunken garden, adjacent the bowling-green, is detailed with paving and steps constructed from square, riven concrete slabs – the same concrete slabs used to create the obscure stepping stone driveway leading up to

Nelson's Tower, which appears incongruous in this situation as it is more suited to domestic curtilage or a private garden. The steps and paving up to the War Memorial, including a bench surround, is constructed from concrete crazy paving with granite block edging. The granite block edging is also provided to the edge of the immediate tarmac footpaths.

6.7.4 A substantial degree of patching work can be seen for various repairs and/or statutory authority work.

6.7.5 Along the High Street and down the Wynds and side streets, a complex and bewildering array of pavement surfaces is revealed. The entire length of the north side of the High Street is surfaced with in-situ concrete slab work, again with 'mismatched' repair work where necessary. The kerb edge is formed from standard pre-cast concrete kerbs with buff and red blister paving inserted at pedestrian crossings as necessary. The south side of the High Street is a mix of in-situ concrete slab work, again patched and cracked, interlocking type block paving, concrete block paving, concrete riven slab paving, and tarmac. There appears to have been some thought given to paving design within the market square including the incorporation of a surface water drainage channel and two seating areas/open areas either side of the Market Cross; however, the design is not inspired and attempts to resolve difficult joints with 'messy' detailing.

Historic finishes within the wynds off the High Street

6.7.6 The Wynds, some of which are privately gated and locked, also display an interesting collection of modern day and historic surface types. A number hint at past uses, revealing old timber and iron horse and cart tracks within stone block work and cobbles, whilst another has the remains of a very small section of hexagonal timber block work. Many have been resurfaced with tarmac, concrete slabs, concrete blocks and in-situ concrete slab work and a number are in a sorry state of repair with a mismatch of many materials including bare earth. Some good examples of paths of historic stone slabs survive in a number of the wynds.

6.8 Footpaths

6.8.1 Within the conservation area there are a number of 'remote' footpaths most of which form part of the adopted Moray Core Path network. These include; FR18, FR31, FR37, FR38, FR39, FR40, and FR41. Surfacing varies from tarmac, to self-binding gravel, to stone and earth, to woodland, to desire line trodden grass. Widths also vary from a 500mm desire line to a 3m access track. The approach to Nelson's Tower is particularly interesting and comprises a driveway arrangement of concrete flag stepping stones, which do little to enhance the historical value of the tower or its setting.

6.8.2 The quality of all tarmac footpaths is satisfactory, apart from patching and occurrences of moss and weed growth, however, self-binding gravel footpaths, for example within Mosset Park, are beginning to erode and puddle and timber edging is starting to rot and split.

6.9 Street furniture

6.9.1 Street furniture within the conservation area is, to a degree, consistently styled, however there are a number of instances where the styles differ. The complex mix of differing elements leads to visual confusion and the fragmentation of the conservation area.

6.9.2 Three types of bench have been identified and in some cases - for example in the sunken garden adjacent the bowling green - two different bench types are located side by side.

Different types of park bench alongside one another in the sunken garden at Grant Park

6.9.3 This mix of furniture styles and designs continues through other elements such as bollards, railings, wall mounted railings, cycle stands (which, tend to appear in situations along the High Street not best placed to house a collection of cycles e.g. along the footway), tree grilles and guards (only one of which has been identified), litter bins, lighting columns (standard street lighting columns, black Victorian street lamp columns, and one old green street lamp column on the south-western edge of Grant Park), signage and interpretation, and raised portable planters (three different styles were identified).

6.9.4 Although creating a visually cluttered street scene, together with differing lighting columns and wall mounted hanging brackets, the hanging basket poles are an integral feature of Forres town, today to serve the 'Forres in Bloom' at the height of the summer season. However, the style of pole, particularly when not in use, does little to enhance or complement the historical street scene. Their lack of purpose during the winter months creates an impression of tired decline.

6.9.5 The modern electronic information point, adjacent the Tolbooth and telephone box, looks incongruous in character and has been sited poorly, detracting from the attractive Tolbooth building and its setting.

6.9.6 Street furniture on the Cluny Hills appears to have vanished or never been considered an important asset. One area, at the top of the lime avenue through Grant Park, which gives the impression of past seating, has been replaced with a concrete bin (not in-keeping with any other bin within the conservation area) and a dog waste bin. The style of plastic picnic bench at Nelson's Tower is unattractive and does nothing to complement the tower

or its setting and does not conform to any other type of street furniture within the conservation area.

6.10 Road signs

6.10.1 Typical highway signage is sighted and lighted accordingly without cluttering the highway or street scene unnecessarily.

6.10.2 Street name signage of black letters on a white background, is generally consistent in style and scale. However a number of signs are looking tired and less clear.

6.11 Historic signs and fixtures

A reflective glass sign of the early twentieth century preserved on a prominent building on the High Street, now converted to social housing

6.11.1 There are now very few traditional painted shop fascias left in the town centre, and one of the last of these at the shop owned formerly by Mackenzie & Cruickshank has been covered over recently with a new plastic sign. A few remnants of old painted signs, long out of use, or overpainted, do appear occasionally and provide fascinating evidence of past business names and uses. The former ironmonger's business of Pat Mackenzie is commemorated in the elaborate painted glass sign fitted at high level on the building looking down Tolbooth Street, from which it can be seen from a distance.

6.11.2 Examples of good traditional wall signs survive at the Eagle and Castle public houses on North Street; the latter will be at risk as the building is no longer in use.

Painted house numbers

6.11.3 Evidence can still be found of painted numbers on door jambs to street properties, although many are now faded. Some are of interest because

they reveal earlier street numbering. Occasionally properties are identified by early painted house names, such as at Bronte Place.

6.11.4 There are relatively few examples of historic interpretation panels or cast plaques within the town centre. One exists at the Town Hall, relating to the temporary use of the building during the Great War. Other signs are to be seen at Plainstones recording the history of the site; another is the Witches' Stone on Victoria Road (where the information can only be confusing to the visitor) and are to be found in greater profusion at Nelson's Tower.

Interpretation panel at the Town Hall (left) and a historic mortar and pestle at a chemist's shop on the High Street

6.11.5 Interesting and unusual historic relics from the nineteenth century survive at two of the pharmacists' shops on the High Street, both gilded mortar and pestles on decorative iron brackets. They can be seen in the early George Washington Wilson photographs; a similar survival is known to exist in Dingwall.

6.12 Christmas and floral decorations

6.12.1 Forres has always installed attractive Christmas light displays which do much to make the centre inviting during the festive season. Unlike some historic towns the displays are dismantled and stored each year rather than being left in their place, which can have a considerable adverse visual impact. Signs and banners require effective fixing points, and these add to the clutter on the frontages of the town's historic buildings.

6.12.2 The conservation area boasts a splendid floral display throughout the growing season and has won the Britain in Bloom award on numerous occasions since 1979. This portrays a town with great pride for its local environment. The only downside to having a prolific floral asset is the winter months when vast areas of bedding plant beds reside as bare topsoil, albeit neat and tidy topsoil, and hanging basket poles and brackets and a mix of different portable plastic planters clutter the street scene until the displays return.

6.13 Street lighting and floodlighting

6.13.1 An audit carried out during the hours of darkness revealed that the wall mounted street lighting throughout the length of the High Street appears reasonable, but floodlighting which has been installed at key buildings was no longer maintained. The overall impression conveys a tired impression.

6.13.2 Floodlights at the Tolbooth were not working on all of the faces and the yellow sodium lighting installed is unattractive. The floodlighting at the Bank

of Scotland building on the High Street has been installed for a number of years and produces an attractive bright white light which floods the whole of the façade when in working order. Floodlighting to the frontage of the Falconer Museum is somewhat unsophisticated, but provides a welcome point of interest on Tolbooth Street. The open space at St Laurence Church, together with the church building, is not presently illuminated and this is considered to be a missed opportunity.

The High Street seen at night

6.13.3 Few of the shop displays were lit during the audit, resulting in large areas of darkness at ground level. Some of the shop fascias are illuminated by lights projecting from the wall above or from the fascia, which produces an attractive effect, but a number of the lighting schemes are no longer switched on. There are one or two unattractive internally lit projecting signs.

6.14 Interpretation

6.14.1 Notes are provided above regarding interpretation plaques of historic events within the conservation area (see 6.11). At present wayfinding maps of the town centre are found at car parks in the backland areas and there is a touchscreen facility located at the Tolbooth.

6.14.2 Black, Victorian styled, pole-mounted tourist information signage, is generally smart and well placed; however, there is a degree of paint peeling. The Victorian style of information signage complements the similar styled interpretation boards that appear around the conservation area displaying the town map.

6.14.3 Rural, timber signage is located over the Cluny Hills to direct visitors around the network of footpaths and is consistently styled.

6.15 Negative factors

6.15.1 Negative factors in relation to the public realm are considered to be:

Degraded public realm at car parks

- Areas of poor management of soft landscaping include the northern extent of Mosset Burn and a number of raised planters and planting areas within the Conservation Area; the older portions of Cluny Hills Cemetery are also under managed
- There is a mismatch of street furniture items throughout the Conservation Area, most of which are substandard in terms of quality and style
- The public realm, especially along the High Street and down the side streets, is in poor condition with areas of improvement undertaken in a piecemeal fashion resulting in a fragmented character from the wide palette of materials used
- The surfaces of many of the wynds, assumed to be in private ownership, are often substandard and detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Both public and private boundary treatments vary greatly throughout the conservation area in terms of material, scale and quality, with some areas of poor and unsuitable treatments located in prominent areas
- A number of private gardens and communal areas are undermanaged with overgrowth, and convey a general neglected character
- Overgrowth and the spread of non-native, evergreen shrubs within the woodland areas of the Cluny Hills (especially Laurel) detracts from the historical character of the woodland and lowers the biodiversity value; its invasive and extensive spread also interrupts and ultimately screens impressive views once gained from the hills
- Woodland management through the use of brash cover is not undertaken sensitively in respect of its placement and leaves the woodland looking untidy and utilitarian
- Car parks in the backlands cover large areas and result in uninspiring hard-standing contained within a discordant array of boundary treatments; excess space is typically taken up with cobbles
- During the winter season, floral hanging basket poles and brackets, and raised planters and beds containing bare earth, are intrusive and leave the conservation area looking tired
- Although the Conservation Area is typically very clean and tidy, there are a few hot spots where litter and fly-tipping is evident – for instance, within Mosset Park and Burn of Mosset where bottles

are washed downstream and collect along the banks; similar problems occur within woodland to either side of Clovenside Road

- ❖ Floodlighting of buildings is not always maintained or used to full advantage, and in some cases where it has been installed it is unimaginative
- ❖ The overhead wirescape is unattractive and devalues the conservation area
- ❖ Damage to surfaces from public utilities results in a fragmented public realm which detracts from the conservation area

7 Significance

Forres from Breakback

7.1 Summary of significance

Compared with other historic burghs, the survival of traditional features occurring within the conservation area, by which the historic environment can be identified, is remarkably high. It is difficult to know whether this has resulted from fewer development pressures when compared with elsewhere, or whether the citizens of the town have adopted an enlightened approach to enhancing the townscape values of the town, and hence an appreciation of the architectural and historical significance of what has survived. It is more likely the case that it is a combination of the two, and for the same intrinsic reasons the highly distinctive buildings of the High Street were not destroyed in the orgy of redevelopment that engulfed other towns in the late nineteenth century and throughout the course of the twentieth century.

What appears to be fading in the memories of the townsfolk is the importance of the early history of the burgh, and the key role it played in the period when the Scottish nation was being shaped. It was fully embraced and celebrated in all the accounts of town in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the historical links resonated and were kept alive. Tradition maintains that sovereigns of the emerging nation state chose to reside in, or near, the area where the town was established and, according to the annals, some were murdered here while others died in battle. As confusing as the evidence can be, this turbulent period gave full force to the creation of the myths and legends which are captured vividly in JB Ritchie's *The Pageant of Morayland*, and it fired also the fertile imagination of William Shakespeare, with whose dramatic play the town came to be immortalised. If one were seeking tangible evidence of these dark ages it is to be found in the remarkable carvings of the stone slab known as Sueno's Stone. Among the finest monuments of Pictish art, the stone had lain undiscovered until the mid-eighteenth century, when it was resurrected on the spot where it was found.

At the time when the strategic importance of Forres, as one of fourteen royal burghs, was recognised by the granting of its charter by David I in the

twelfth century, the town was more important as a political and trading centre than Elgin, at least until the diocese was established there in the early thirteenth century. It attracted the unwanted attention of invading armies and suffered its share of devastation on a regular basis. However, nothing quite captures the imagination more than the ritualistic burning of the town in 1390 by Alexander Stewart, the notorious Wolf of Badenoch. Within a few weeks Elgin suffered a similar and even more dramatic fate which left the diocesan cathedral in ruins. The burning of these towns happened regularly, and so the only tangible reminder of this early importance is the outstanding survival of the twelfth century plan of the burgh, laid out in the characteristic fishbone pattern of a 'hie gait' with the tofts, or burgage plots, set out at regular intervals to take advantage of the natural slope of the land on which the burgh had been planted. These defining features not only survive, but they create a townscape of outstanding quality which can be experienced from standing within the conservation area. It is also apparent in the views to be enjoyed of the town in its setting when seen from a distance on the approaches to the town, from across the Findhorn Bay, or from the low-lying fertile land of the Laigh of Moray. Framed by the Cluny Hills and the foothills to the uplands to the south, the resulting views are memorable as the array of domes and spires of the town's principal buildings and monuments punctuate the skyline.

One of a number of outstanding views from Nelson's Tower looking over the Laigh towards the burgh's former port at Findhorn

In the eighteenth century Forres was noted as a retail base for a wide geographical area which extended beyond the fringes of the Moray Firth. Until the settlements along the north coastline expanded, Forres merchants travelled and sold their wares as far as Caithness and Orkney. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the town maintained its strong retail base, serving a flourishing landward area from which its merchants had prospered greatly in the medieval era, bolstered by the local and international trade passing through the port controlled by the burgesses at Findhorn.

From the early nineteenth century, the town benefited hugely from the philanthropy of those who sought service in the colonies or with the Honourable East India Company abroad, for which the quality of their education in the town served them in good stead for rapid promotion. Many found their fame from distinguished military service. Attracted by the benign climate - considered widely to be the best to be found anywhere in

Scotland - many sons of the town chose to return when their careers ended, erecting beautiful residences in the countryside, or villas set in generous grounds in the suburbs which grew up around the town. Their philanthropy, and their patronage, laid the foundation for the legacy of the town's range of fine civic and ecclesiastical monuments. It arrived first with the flush of patriotism that led to the erection of the tower in 1806 to the commemoration of Lord Nelson (among the first of such monuments to appear in Scotland), and later, in the erection of the new Market Cross in 1844, a scaled down version of Kemp's monument on Edinburgh's Princes Street to Sir Walter Scott. Both of these projects were funded by public subscription. From private individuals the Falconer Museum was financed, while Donald Smith, a leading pioneer in the opening up of Canada for which he was given the title of Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, funded the beautification of the churches of St Laurence and St Leonard, for which the foundation stones were laid within a couple of years of one another in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Forres High Street looking west

Before the new Tolbooth was erected in the late 1830s the venerable, but decaying, old tolbooth had been the subject of constant admiration. The satisfying appearance of the corner bartizans and staged tower with its dome and cupola were admired in particular by the town councillors of Dingwall, who sought to erect a replica of it as the centrepiece of their own town. Such was the significance of the memory of this structure to the townsfolk of Forres that they insisted that the design of the old building should be captured in that of its replacement.

Private philanthropy was reflected in the aspirations of the seventeen members of the town council. At the turn of the nineteenth century the magistrates had the inspiration and foresight to lay out a network of pleasure walks and woodland at the Cluny Hills: one observer some years later endorsed their 'public-spirited zeal'. Their vision created an outstanding resource to which was added, in 1848, the town's new cemetery. For its picturesque layout and beauty it is on a par with the best burial grounds in the North of Scotland. In the twentieth century a philanthropic gesture resulted in the generous gift of Forres House and its policies to the citizens of the town by the Forres-born baker magnate, Sir

Alexander Grant, and after this the public park, which connected with the woodland walks of the Cluny Hills, was named in his honour. In the 1930s he helped with the transformation of the Castlehill site for its enjoyment as a public park. These well managed and generous open spaces make a significant contribution to an appreciation of the conservation area.

Picturesque townscape qualities – looking east from St Laurence Church

The plan of the historic burgh was well contained until the redevelopment and expansion of the burgh began in the mid-nineteenth century, spurred on by the expansion of the railway network in which Forres was a major hub with links direct to the south. It triggered growth in manufacturing and the service industries, which had been negligible hitherto, and also in tourism. Whereas Forres had been once known to outsiders only through the literary connection with Shakespeare's Macbeth, visitors flocked to the Cluny Hydropathic establishment which opened its doors in 1863. It was the pioneer of many such health-conscious hotels to be erected across Scotland, and thereafter the town was heavily promoted as a place to be visited and enjoyed for an individual's health and wellbeing. From the beginning of the nineteenth century many travellers extolled the virtues of the growing town and how it appeared; one travel writer in the early years of holidaying by car considered Forres to be unlike many Scottish towns, going so far to suggest that it would not look out of place in Devon. He could have been captivated by the softening effect of the gentle woodlands and gardens surrounding the town (by then, in the 1930s, well established), and by the unforgettably picturesque qualities of the townscape.

The growth in the town's industrial base was relatively short-lived, and unlike many Victorian towns the factories and industrial sheds bypassed the town centre and the growing residential suburbs. The new prosperity of the 'third age' of Forres finds expression in the multitude of fine buildings of the late Victorian and Edwardian era. In common with many small towns, the challenges of the late twentieth century have taken their toll on the local economy, but at least here the devastation caused elsewhere by comprehensive and ill-considered development seems to have been avoided. As a consequence, Forres has significantly fewer buildings of the twentieth century causing damage to the character and appearance of the High Street. Where sites have been comprehensively redeveloped, the

replacement buildings have taken the historic context into account and have preserved the qualities of the townscape. Latterly developments within the backlands behind the High Street have been of low quality, mundane even, and perhaps for the first time in the history of the town the citizens' aspirations seem to have faltered. Similarly, although Forres can boast among the highest levels of authenticity in the fabric of what has survived, this is gradually being eroded, largely unchecked, by the actions of individuals.

The closure of the airbase at Kinloss, for many years closely associated with the life and prosperity of the town, adds to the economic pressures and has dented confidence, slowing down the pace of regeneration. While there are clear warnings in these trends, there are also opportunities which can be identified.

8 Specific issues

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Several issues have been identified during the audit, highlighted below. It is envisaged that – with the exception of addressing any shortfall in the statutory lists, primarily a matter for the Moray Council to take forward with Historic Scotland – clear guidance can be offered in respect of each through the conservation area management plan (Part 2).

8.2 Shopfronts and signage

8.2.1 Forres has a rich legacy of shopfronts of many types and from many ages which represent the historic importance of retailing to the economic prosperity of the town. Unusually, several original external outer doorsets still survive. While some traditional shopfronts were lost in the twentieth century many still survive close to their original state, or one which had been modified through improvements carried out before 1919.

8.2.2 Shopfronts pose a number of issues for the character and appearance of the conservation area. Taken collectively, these issues can create a poor impression on visitors to the town and may suggest that the conservation area is not being managed adequately, or that the town is in economic decline. Even where historic shopfronts have survived they may have been damaged visually by fascias which are mainly of plastic and nearly always oversized, or in graphics which can appear aggressive in colour or in unattractive fonts or imagery which disrupt the unity of the streetscape. The frontages are sometimes painted in unsubtle, or discordant, colours.

Range of shops to the north of the Market Cross has a substantial number of modern shopfronts, many of them undistinguished

8.2.3 The greatest concentration of modern replacement shopfronts occurs in the most sensitive part of the townscape, opposite the Plainstones within the north street block. Here there is a succession of poorly designed shopfronts and fascias which, taken collectively, detract from the appearance of the conservation area. Other unattractive modern shopfronts occur elsewhere on the High Street, mostly at the east end. In a few cases shopfronts which extended over two units, but were given a unified appearance, have been broken up with the loss of one of the shopfronts from having been replaced.

8.2.4 Where new shops have been erected during the mid-twentieth century the facades may be set back from the established building lines, and invariably these structures are of a poor standard of design, conveying the impression of being temporary additions within the streetscape with flat roofs and lacking the upper storeys of the earlier buildings. In general they disrupt the unity of the streetscape.

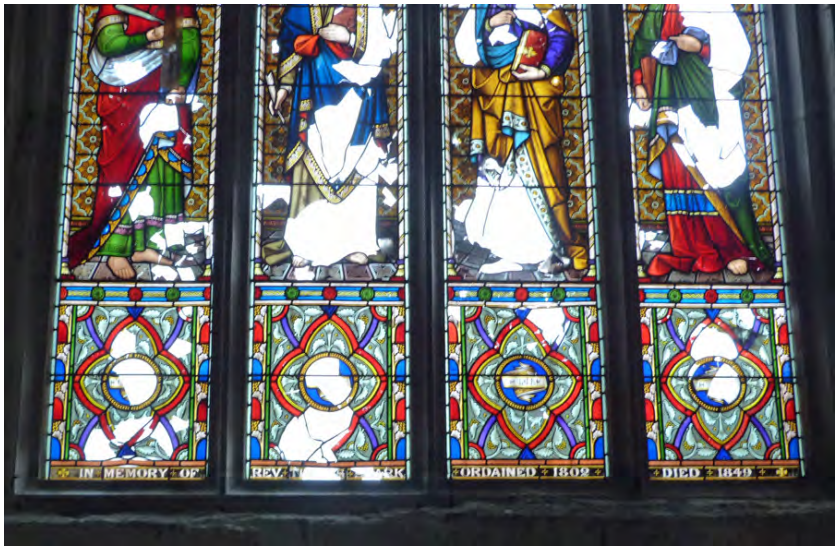
Unattractive modern shopfronts have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the High Street

8.2.5 Occasional vandalism can be a problem, and while some shopfronts have purpose-made external shutters which can be removed during opening hours which can add to the quality of the townscape, others have more utilitarian shutters which detract from it. A few shop windows and doors are protected by ugly roller shutters.

8.2.6 Internally illuminated projecting signs are to be found, while there are relatively few projecting signs or shop fascias which are top-lit.

8.2.7 A proportion of shops were, at the time of the audit, without tenants.

8.3 Redundant buildings and Buildings at Risk



Vandalised stained glass at the Castlehill Church

8.3.1 Forres has more than its fair share of sites which have been entered on the Buildings at Risk Register (BARR, see 5.7). While a number of these may be hidden away in the backlands a few are critical to maintaining the outstanding qualities of the conservation area. But overall there is mixed news, and not all of it negative: a key historic building on the High Street, at the former premises of Mackenzie & Cruickshank, has returned to use after a period of being redundant as an ironmonger's shop.

8.3.2 The longstanding problems encountered in the fabric of the former Castlehill Church present a rather more intractable problem. The building is large, and sitting on a prominent corner site, it is an important component of the historic townscape as can be seen from the postcard image reproduced on page 60. Its loss, were that to happen, would have a considerable impact on the conservation area.

8.3.3 With the possible exception of the house on the periphery of the conservation area, which sits in among undeveloped land on North Road, redundant buildings in the backlands are not in prominent locations, but their presence (and in some cases, advanced state of decay) have a marked negative impact on the conservation area. A more challenging site at the corner between North Street and North Road is the former Castle Inn, parts of which are known to be in poor condition.

8.3.4 It is understood that the boarded up Hanover Court scheme on Leask Road is to be demolished and replaced by a new scheme. As this represents a large development site within the conservation area care will need to be taken over the design and layout of the scheme so that it has no adverse impact on the conservation area. Consideration should be given to preserving the traditional house at the heart of the scheme.

8.3.5 A number of shops are presently vacant, as noted in the preceding section.

8.3.6 Some sites within the conservation area suggest that they may be under-used, if not actually redundant. Some relate to the upper floors of properties, in which the town has a reasonably good record for achieving high occupancy rates. The boarded windows to the TSB/Lloyds Bank building at 156-158 High Street leave a marked negative impact on the conservation area.

8.4 Gap sites and undeveloped land

Gap site at the junction of Cumming Street and Hainings Road, and undeveloped land to the north of the High Street

8.4.1 Forres suffers perhaps more than other historic towns for the numbers of gap sites occurring within what has been identified as Character Area A, within the town centre. They appear to have come about as a result of demolitions in the past, and given the high demand for sites in the town it may seem surprising that this should be the case at all. The somewhat haphazard manner in which some of the sites have been developed on the lines of the old burgage plots, particularly to the north and west of the High Street, may have deterred appropriate development; the difficulties of access on sloping ground may be, in other cases, also be a deterrent.

However, gaps sites occurring within the town centre can disrupt the historic urban grain.

8.4.2 No issues were identified with gap sites in Character Area B.

8.5 Public realm and parks

8.5.1 The quality of the public realm is, at best, patchy, and recent initiatives to improve the appearance of public areas and pavements of the High Street appear to be driven more by the availability of funding than from an inspired integrated design for enhancement. As a consequence, the work undertaken can be described as having only a limited impact.

Poor standards of finishes in the wynds in private (left) and public (right) ownership

8.5.2 Equally variable is the quality of the hard surfaces within the wynds, or at the entries to the backlands. In some cases it would appear that resurfacing has been the responsibility of the Council, while in the majority of cases the wynds will be in private ownership. Many historic finishes survive at the arched entries to the wynds, and occasionally they occur deeper in to the site where historic stone slabs and cobbled surfaces and stone drains may have survived. In too many instances these materials are breaking up: not only do they appear unsightly, but there is a high risk that they will be lost permanently.

8.5.3 The quality of the street furniture and of park benches is also variable, lacking an overall strategic design approach which is not in keeping with the outstanding qualities of the conservation area. A pragmatic approach has been taken where damage may have been incurred – often features are not replaced, leaving a gap; or frequently replacements do not match.

8.5.4 The entry points into the public spaces following the Mosset Burn to either side of the Castle Bridge are now tired and uninviting: not only are the concrete steps in poor condition but the mild steel balustrades are of poor quality and design.

8.5.5 Boundary treatments in the backlands of the town centre can be uninspiring – sometimes they have come about as a consequence of car parks having been introduced, exposing elements of the townscape which were not intended to be seen to any great extent. The eastern end of North Road and the garages and stores appearing at the car park at the Leys have a marked

adverse impact on the wider conservation area. Boundary treatments to social housing schemes which have been introduced to the conservation area are of universally poor quality and emphasise the impact the schemes may have on the established urban grain.

Poor boundary treatments: to social housing on Urquhart Street, and exposed in the backlands from the introduciton of the car park at Leys Road

8.5.6 Public parking introduced by the Town Council in the 1970s has a positive effect on maintaining business activity throughout the town centre, but the car parks have left a legacy of poor finishes and boundary treatments. There are large open areas of tarmacadam and in the majority of cases very little by way of vegetation has been introduced to soften them. Many of the peripheral surfaces and boundary treatments appear tired.

8.5.7 The Grant Park and woodlands of the Cluny Hills are a highly valued resource. Some invasive and non-native species of shrubs were observed which affect the biodiversity of the site. In the area around Nelson's Tower, and at the cemetery, some management issues were observed and need to be addressed which affect the beauty of each respective site.

8.6 Public utilities

8.6.1 The backlands of the town centre suffer from an unacceptable level of intrusion from overhead wires mounted on poles which detract from the historic townscape.

Untidy cables and cable boxes on buildings

8.6.2 The buildings on the street frontages of the High Street suffer from a profusion of surface mounted cables, regulator switches, and brackets which have a harmful effect on the building fabric and on the appearance of the conservation area.

8.7 Street lighting and floodlighting

Floodlighting to one of the principal buildings of the High Street has not been maintained

8.7.1 The appearance of the town centre at night is underwhelming. In part this may be considered to be due to a lack of maintenance of systems that have been installed, but some of the design of night illumination to buildings and the principal public spaces is poor. The full potential of illuminating shops displays does not appear to have been realised, and some of the lighting of fascia boards and signs is switched off. As a consequence the town centre at night appears uninviting.

8.8 Property neglect

Valley gutter choked with vegetation causing dampness at the wallhead below, slipped slates and woodwork not maintained or decorated

8.8.1 Many owners of traditional buildings within conservation areas experience increasing difficulties of carrying out regular maintenance due to restricted access from the narrow wynds, and the application of more stringent health

and safety standards. While there is evidence of serious property neglect arguably the problem is less than in comparable historic towns, but where it occurs there is the ongoing risk of the loss of historic fabric.

Architectural detail missing and stone decay at the Market Cross

8.8.2 It has not always been the case that the Council has maintained historic buildings appropriately where the responsibility for maintenance and identifying problems with the fabric falls within its care. During the course of the fieldwork it was observed that the stone ashlar façade of Anderson's Primary School has suffered over many years from decaying stonework. Repairs appear to have caused further damage to the elevation and problems were observed with the base of the spire. It is understood that urgent action is being taken to overcome this. Following repair programmes the stonework of the Market Cross has been left in an inappropriately incomplete state.

8.9 High level masonry decay

Instability in chimneyheads from missing pointing and stone decay

8.9.1 While Forres does not suffer from stone decay perhaps as much as many comparable historic towns on the coastline of the Moray Firth, high level masonry decay is not an isolated problem. In some cases stone decay may be severe, leaving a chimneyhead unsound. In other cases internal decay will have caused the chimneyhead to bulge, creating instability. This is not an isolated phenomenon, and occurs with regularity across the conservation area.

8.10 Structural defects

Façade showing distortion in lintols and cills from ground conditions and a gablet at the Castlehill Church showing structural distortion from the failure of an internal beam

8.10.1 Evidence can be found throughout the conservation area of properties which have suffered structural movement in the past. It is assumed from the typical patterns of cracking that localised poor ground conditions may occur in some parts of the conservation area, possibly as an indication of where watercourses or naturally occurring wells may have been located in the past. It may be the case that the contributing causes will have been addressed, or that the movement has ceased, but in some cases there remains concern about stability for which analysis of the problem should be undertaken and the evidence of the cracking monitored.

8.10.2 One of the dormer pediments of the former Castlehill Church shows evidence of rotational movement caused by the settlement of an internal timber beam for which a localised risk of structural collapse of the displaced masonry seemed possible.

8.11 Dilution of character: loss of authenticity

8.11.1 The first changes from the introduction of unsympathetic modern materials, or from the insertion of non-matching windows and doors, appears to have begun in the 1960s, but despite controls having been in place for the conservation area it has continued apace and the rate of change may be accelerating. The risk of damage to the character and appearance of the conservation area is very high, especially as levels of authenticity are higher than in comparable conservation areas.

8.11.2 The replacement of windows and doors with non-traditional patterns and in non-traditional materials can be very disruptive, but it is not the only area where the impact of change may be high. The outstanding roofscape of the town centre appears to be increasingly at risk from the jettisoning of original slates and replacement with new material – while in some cases this can be a reasonable solution, the high visual impact of new slate roofs in which the texture and colour does not match the range of materials used in the past is proving to be a highly disruptive element. The impact is exacerbated when non-matching rooflights are inserted, or if the numbers and size of the rooflights are non-traditional in appearance.

8.11.3 Although the level of retention of the original cast-iron rainwater goods is high throughout the conservation area, with the high cost of securing matching replacements parts of systems are being renewed in cheaper non-matching material.

8.12 Solar panels and services terminals

Roof to a domestic property within the conservation area showing an array of solar panels on a south-facing roof (left), and a flue terminal serving a fast-food outlet on the High Street and satellite dish appearing within a wynd well used by pedestrians

8.12.1 With the recent financial incentives to encourage householders to install solar panels and renewable forms of energy, the appearance of individual panels and banks of panels on roofs have begun to emerge. They have a disruptive effect on outstanding roofscape of the conservation area. Satellite dishes are appearing on principal elevations, adding to the clutter of television aerials, having an adverse impact on the appearance of the conservation area.

8.12.2 Visual damage to the buildings of the conservation area has been caused by oversized flue terminals serving commercial kitchens and fast-food shops in the town centre. Surface-mounted commercial air conditioning units are beginning to appear, but to date the damage in Forres has been less than in many other historic towns.

8.13 Statutory listings

Uncertainty over listing entries: of these properties on Russell Place only the late eighteenth century (left) is listed, while the very fine examples of late nineteenth century villas are currently unlisted

8.13.1 Forres has a wealth of buildings entered on the statutory lists, a clear indication of the quality of historic buildings which have survived. However, the survey team uncovered a number of significant buildings from the late nineteenth century and thereafter which appeared not to have been

recognised. Although these structures are, to a certain extent, covered by the conservation area designation it is deemed to be a matter of the utmost importance that the lists reflect the value of the legacy of the buildings that have been left, and that the designations are appropriate.

8.13.2 In a few cases there are grounds for considering whether a building has been placed in the right listing category.

8.14 Interpretation and signage

8.14.1 Except in a small minority of cases – such as at Nelson's Tower where informative cast iron plaques have been installed - the interpretation of historical events and identification of key historic sites within the town centre is almost non-existent. A plaque dated April 1919 affixed to the frontage of the Town Hall provides a link with the use of the building during the Great War. In the case of the cast iron plaque at the Witches' Stone on Victoria Road, the interpretation is confusing. There is currently no interpretation provided at the Castlehill site other than can be seen on the inscription to Dr Thomson whom the obelisk is dedicated.

The fading evidence of former painted signs

8.14.2 Many of the town's painted signs indicating past uses and occupants, street names or numbers, are fading and the surviving examples are in need of being recorded.

9 Development opportunities

9.1 Gap sites and undeveloped land

9.1.1 Gap sites occur throughout the conservation area and offer potential for stitching back together sites which may have been damaged by the loss of buildings in the past, or where modern development has exposed areas of the backlands to view. Where new roads or car parks have been inserted, for instance at Hainings Road or at the Leys Road car park, both on the south of the High Street, the exposed edges of the backland properties provide opportunities for redevelopment. In one or two cases gap sites are being marketed as development opportunities, as at the corner plot at the junction between Cumming Street and Hainings Road.

9.1.2 Subject to overcoming problems of access, significant opportunities exist for redeveloping former wynds on the north side of the west end of the High Street. Sporadic development of some new houses has occurred already at the foot of the old burgage plots, but this disturbs the established urban grain. Priority should be given to developing land within the town centre as opposed to elsewhere in the town to ensure that a vibrant residential community is maintained within the wynds off the High Street.

9.1.3 There are no major development sites occurring within the conservation area.

9.2 Redundant buildings

9.2.1 Redundant buildings are mostly small in scale and tend to be scattered in the lanes and wynds to the north of the High Street. In general it is not possible to state whether they are candidates for repair and refurbishment, although some of them appear to be in reasonable condition but are not occupied. Most of them make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

9.2.2 Among the larger structures the Castlehill Church and the Castle Inn at the junction of North Street and North Road pose particular problems. In the case of the latter, an application has been submitted for demolition and has been refused in the past, but it is understood that a new owner is seeking to regenerate the property which is to be welcomed. Both buildings make a contribution to the historic townscape, and are important listed buildings in their own right. The former church has had historic problems with the building fabric over an extended period, and while there is a sympathetic owner the property is considered to be a Building at Risk. If sound reasons can be presented which satisfy the terms of the SHEP (Scottish Historic Environment Policy) for the demolition of either building, given the prominence of the respective locations within the townscape replacement structures will require to meet the highest standards of building design which respect the historic context and the contribution to the wider townscape.

9.2.3 At the time of preparing this document there is a live application for the demolition of the 1970s housing association scheme bounded by Leask Road, North Street and North Road. At the centre of the scheme is a two-storey traditional house for which very effort should be made to retain it and integrate it within any design for a new scheme for the site as it is an

isolated survivor of the old medieval layout. The potential impact of this scheme on the wider conservation area is high.

10 Planning action

Cluny Hill College, seen from the golf course at Muiryshade

10.1 Review of conservation area boundaries

10.1.1 The conservation area boundaries have been reviewed and some recommendations are made for the reduction of the conservation area at the east end, and for the expansion to take into account the suburban developments undertaken around the turn of the twentieth century to the south of the present conservation area boundary. These adjustments are shown in the maps in Appendix 14.5.

10.1.2 At the northeast boundary the suggested adjustments take into account the erection of modern houses and bungalows which make no positive contribution to the conservation area. On the south side of Victoria Road it is suggested that the boundary be redrawn in to follow the route of Clovenside Road, so as to exclude modern development such as the Police Station and the row of houses to the east. The boundary as redrawn would exclude a stand of modern woodland which has no amenity or heritage value.

Villas on Alexandra Terrace

10.1.3 The logic of having cut in two the historic planted woodlands of the Cluny Hills, at the time when the conservation area boundary was drawn up

originally, is not obvious. The artificial line divides the area designated as the Inventory landscape. It is strongly recommended that the boundary be extended to follow Clovenside Road, which would have the additional merit of including the former hydropathic establishment, now Cluny Hill College.

10.1.4 Although there has been subdivision of the original house plots and some new buildings erected within garden walls, the pattern of the villa development together with terraces and semi-detached houses of the first section of Sanquhar Road, Nelson Road and Alexandra Terrace merits careful consideration. The area still has an overriding unity of traditional materials and design throughout the defined area, and many stone boundary walls still survive. The extension of the conservation area would draw in the large freestanding villas in this part of the town, set on rising ground to the south of the town centre, which can be seen on the descent from the High Street at Tolbooth Street and from a number of the wynds.

Semi-detached villas on Sanquhar Road and Alexandra Terrace with the backcloth of the Cluny Hills, seen from Roysvale Park

10.1.5 Consideration should be given to extending the conservation boundary beyond the roundabout at the junction at the foot of the Castle Bridge to take in the open ground on the corner site. This would extend the open ground of the parkland following the meandering path of the burn. The extension could include the first row of traditional dwellings which form part of the setting of the Mosset Park.

10.1.6 If the recommendations are accepted that the conservation area boundaries should be expanded, as this will increase the size of an already large conservation area, there could be merit in splitting the conservation area into two, perhaps along the lines of the two identified character zones A and B identified in Section 4.

10.2 Article 4 Directions

10.2.1 There are no Article 4 Directions in place for the Forres conservation area as presently designated and, given its considerable importance and the risks identified during the audit work from incremental change from uncontrolled or permitted development, this appears at first sight to be a serious anomaly.

10.2.2 Article 4 Directions have been reviewed by Scottish Government, and are to be phased out. Effective measures require to be put in place to discourage unauthorised development – see 10.4 below.

10.3 Enhancement

10.3.1 Enhancement of the conservation area will come from addressing the issues set out in Sections 8 and 9, and in relation to the public realm in Section 6.

10.3.2 By far the most significant way in which the conservation area can be enhanced and revitalised is from the adoption of a strategic approach in order to attract long term investment in the town centre. Such a strategic approach should place the outstanding qualities of the conservation area at the forefront of planning policy. This should address the sensitive redevelopment of gap sites, replacing redundant structures which make no positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, the return of redundant buildings into compatible uses, and bringing life back into the wynds wherever possible.

10.3.3 Carrying out regular maintenance, by cleaning out gutters and ensuring downpipes are working properly, and redecorating the exteriors of properties can have a marked impact on perceptions of the conservation area. Equally, the promotion of repair work undertaken to high conservation standards, and the recovery of authenticity where original features of the historic townscape have been lost or harmed by poor remedial work, will leave a lasting legacy. Not only will the character and appearance of the conservation area be enhanced, but there is also the potential of improving craft skills for those engaged in the repair and maintenance of historic buildings. The conservation area management plan and action plan will be crucial to the success of this initiative.

10.3.4 It is readily acknowledged that residents of the town and of the landward area will be drawn to Forres for the quality and attractiveness of the shopping experience. While ease of parking, accessibility, and the quality of the public realm are considerations, existing shopfronts have considerable potential to be made more attractive than they are at the present. There are excellent examples of traditional shopfronts to be found, and a number of them have been enhanced sympathetically, adding considerably to an appreciation of the outstanding qualities of the historic townscape. Conversely, single storey shops introduced in the late twentieth century are of poor quality and detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. Wherever possible opportunities should be taken to remove them and replace them with new buildings which make a positive contribution to the qualities of the townscape and the established urban grain.

10.3.5 Opportunities have been identified for the enhancement of the public realm within the conservation area. Improvements in the wynds may be more difficult to achieve if they are in private ownership, but financial help should be made available, and actively encouraged, in order to raise standards.

10.3.6 Floodlighting of the Falconer Museum and the Tolbooth is tired and unimaginative. There is a perceived need to make the town centre more attractive at night by a variety of means, including the use of architectural lighting, which can be used to good effect in highlighting key buildings within the historic townscape. Dark zones without lighting are unattractive at night and could pose a risk to personal safety. Consideration should be given to floodlighting St Laurence Church, and each of the town's vertical features seen during the daytime on the skyline. Floodlighting the obelisk at the Castlehill would provide a visual stop at the west end of the High Street as well as improving levels of public safety in this area. Lighting systems

should be maintained and greater use should be made of opportunities to illuminate shopfronts, signs and shop fascias.

10.3.7 Enhancement of the conservation area should take into account the need to interpret the historic townscape effectively, and in ways which are integrated with the public realm which would be of potential benefit to visitors and to residents alike.

Floodlighting of the Falconer Museum on Tolbooth Street

10.3.8 Overall, it should be recognised that the enhancement of the conservation area depends on an integrated approach which is tied in with strategic planning and development objectives, rather than upon focusing on individual elements of an improvement programme. The primary purpose of the measures should be to ensure that Forres survives as an attractive place to visit, and in which to do business.

10.4 Enforcement

10.4.1 The success of the measures set out in this document, and in the conservation management plan (Part 2), in securing the future of the conservation area will depend upon effective measures being adopted for planning enforcement. It is accepted that this may have to be introduced gradually, given the extent to which there has been a precedent set already for unauthorised development. To some degree this is likely to have been occasioned by a lack of understanding, to the layperson, of the complexities surrounding historic environment legislation. Accordingly there would be merit in raising awareness of the issue for the benefit of property owners throughout the conservation area.

10.4.2 During the fieldwork exercise the poor state of much of the masonry at high level was observed, where materials are subject to the greatest exposure and for which repairs may be challenging in terms of securing safe access. The problems are noted in clause 8.9 of this document. This is likely to be a continuing problem and will require constant vigilance to ensure that decaying masonry does not descend into a structurally unsound condition.

10.4.3 More recent problems observed within the conservation area include the introduction of solar panels to traditional slate roofs; if allowed to proliferate they will have a marked adverse impact on the conservation area and have the potential to disturb the integrity of the slate roofs upon which they are fixed.

11 Conservation management – strategic objectives

11.1 Guidance in relation to historic environment legislation

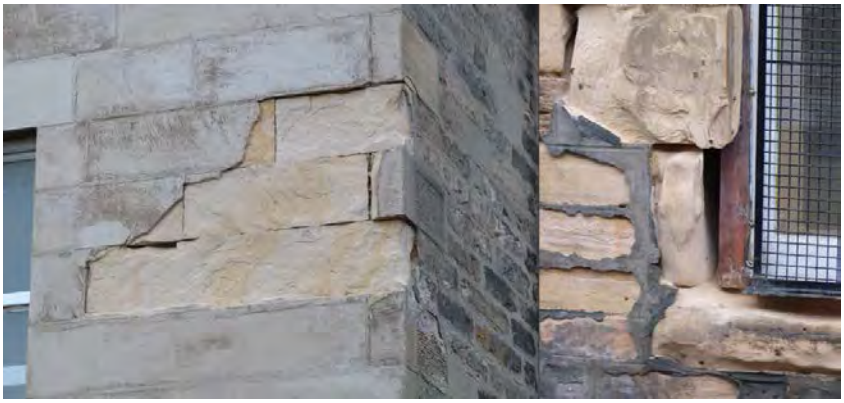
11.1.1 Current guidance in relation to the interpretation of historic environment legislation should be referred to when considering the management of change, proposals for new development within the conservation area, and any proposals outside the conservation area which have the potential to affect its setting.

11.1.2 Specific reference should be made to the general principles set down in the relevant clauses of Scottish Planning Policy (2010) and in Historic Scotland's Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), December 2011. Further guidance is provided in the Managing Change in the Historic Environment series of publications focusing on selected topics, published by Historic Scotland in 2010.

11.2 Conservation principles

11.2.1 In any scheme established for the repair and enhancement of the town's historic buildings within the conservation area, consideration should be given to creating a greater awareness of the importance of the traditional buildings and skills, and of the underlying principles that should be applied when repairing authentic historic fabric.

11.2.2 Although damage has been caused to the historic buildings within the conservation area from uncontrolled incremental change – for instance, from the loss of the original windows and doors and replacement with modern alternatives which may not match the original patterns, loss of the original rainwater goods, the application of modern cement renders – it is not necessarily always the case that the changes are irreversible. It can be demonstrated that some of the changes will have caused harm to the underlying fabric and, possibly also, the structure of the building. Encouragement should be given always to regaining the authenticity of historic buildings that have the potential to make a positive contribution to the townscape by restoring original features that may have been lost or damaged – for instance, the patterns of original windows and doors - and by reinstating the original appearance of walls or boundaries to properties.



Accelerated damage caused to soft sandstone from inappropriate plastic repairs to the face in cementitious materials (left), or from the use of dense cement mortar (right)

11.2.3 In general, historic fabric should be repaired using like material. Modern materials may perform differently to traditional materials in historic buildings. Setting aside the question of having an alien appearance within

the conservation area, they may also accelerate the rate of damage or decay.

11.2.4 Conservation is not purely about preserving the historic environment – it is also about the management of change. The need for change should in general be accepted, but there should be a presumption always towards preserving and repairing historic fabric where it has survived in an authentic state.

11.2.5 Where historic fabric has been altered, or features removed or lost over time, they should be restored to an earlier known appearance or state, verified always by archival or pictorial research, or the evidence of the building itself. Restoration, or returning of fabric to a known earlier state, should never be conjectural.

11.2.6 In general, conservation practice and philosophy should observe the relevant guidance set out in Historic Scotland's publications, and in relevant international conservation charters.

11.3 New development in the conservation area

11.3.1 Where it is appropriate new development should be encouraged in the conservation area. It should seek to preserve and enhance the established urban grain and open spaces, which have a strong identity in Forres throughout each of the character areas which have been identified. The scale and form of new buildings, or of extensions to existing buildings, should never be such as to overpower the existing historic buildings within the townscape, and should have regard to those elements of scale and height and the topography of the site identified in Section 4.

11.4 Conservation area management plan

11.4.1 The general principles set out above are expanded in the sister to this document (Part 2 of the suite of documents) the Forres Conservation Area Management Plan to which reference should be made.

11.5 Extended conservation area

11.5.1 Should the recommendation for extending the boundaries of the conservation area as presently designated be adopted (see clause 10.1), consideration should be given to carrying out a character appraisal for the enlarged areas. The character appraisal should build upon the work carried out already for the preparation of this document, to which it should be considered an addendum.

11.6 Funding sources and opportunities

11.6.1 Working with other stakeholders, priority projects for carrying forward will be identified and will form the basis of the Action Plan (Part 3). In addition to seeking funding for priority projects, and given the identified need for urgent repairs to be undertaken to important historic fabric, a programme for building repair grants should be established based on an application for Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) funding from Historic Scotland should such be still available. With a CARS project in place additional funding might be sought of other public bodies or from private charitable sources.

11.6.2 While noting the specific requirements of the grant programme, consideration should also be given to the potential benefits for the community from a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) project for the town centre, administered by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

11.6.3 Nothing in the foregoing would prevent private owners of outstanding historic properties in the conservation area from seeking alternative funding sources, for instance Building Repair Grants from Historic Scotland. Other projects may be suitable for funding from bodies such as the HLF, or other agencies depending on the nature of the project. Conditions attached to funding will require to address issues such as public access to and enjoyment of the heritage.

11.6.3 The preparation of applications for funding and the administration of the funding schemes, if approved, will require dedicated staff to be appointed by the Council.

11.6.4 Opportunities of working with established Building Preservation Trusts (BPTs) should be examined for priority projects identified in the applications to funders, or for Buildings at Risk (BARRs) which have been identified within this document.

11.7 Buildings at Risk Register (BARR)

11.7.1 The staff of the Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) team at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) should be formally notified by the Council of any buildings identified in Section 5.7 of this document to be added to the BARR.

11.7.2 In the preparation of this document the list of properties held on the BARR has been consulted and the audit team has been in liaison with the BARR team over the possibility of adding new entries to the list, and in giving updates on information gleaned during the course of the research programme.

12 Monitoring and review

12.1 Monitoring of the conservation area

12.1.1 The Council should seek to continue to work with stakeholders representing the interests of the community in monitoring the health of the conservation area and measures put in place to preserve and enhance its amenity. Consideration should be given to setting up an external monitoring and advisory group for this purpose to work closely with the Council's officers.

12.2 Performance indicators

12.2.1 It is recommended that performance indicators should be established, whereby the external monitoring group would monitor the success, or otherwise, of the implementation of the conservation area programme. Depending on whether a bid for CARS funding is successful, the indicators could be, for instance:

- the redevelopment of gap sites or 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 (BARR)
- evidence of improved conservation standards being adopted across the conservation area
- tangible evidence of the improved maintenance of historic buildings
- enhanced public realm, for instance in the number of private closes improved
- review of the success of the 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 is responding to the needs of visitors and residents
- evidence that enforcement measures have been effective
- evidence that any measures taken to inform property owners of the conservation area legislation in force, and to provide appropriate guidance, have been effective

12.2.2 If an application lodged for a CARS scheme is unsuccessful, or if the scheme is no longer running, a different set of performance indicators to those set out above may require to be considered.

12.2.3 For effective monitoring to take place it may be necessary to embark on preliminary surveys in order to establish baseline data - for instance, for the degree of redundancy in the upper floors of premises above shops.

12.3 Review: arrangements within the Moray Council

12.3.1 Review of Parts 1 and 2, of the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Conservation Area Management Plan respectively, should be instigated in the first instance by the managers of the committees listed in the following clause (or their equivalent in any new administration). It should take into

account feedback from the conservation area monitoring group referred to above and an evaluation of agreed performance indicators as set out in 12.2 above and such other relevant indicators as the group may decide.

12.3.2 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.

12.4 Frequency of review

12.4.1 In accordance with good governance the Conservation Area Appraisal (Part 1) and the Conservation Area Management Plan (Part 2) should be reviewed on a regular basis. It is suggested that this should be quinquennially, or timed to suit the preparation of a new Local Plan, or any change in historic environment legislation, to ensure that the advice contained therein remains relevant.

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14 Appendices

14.1 Map showing the extent and boundaries of the conservation area, as currently designated

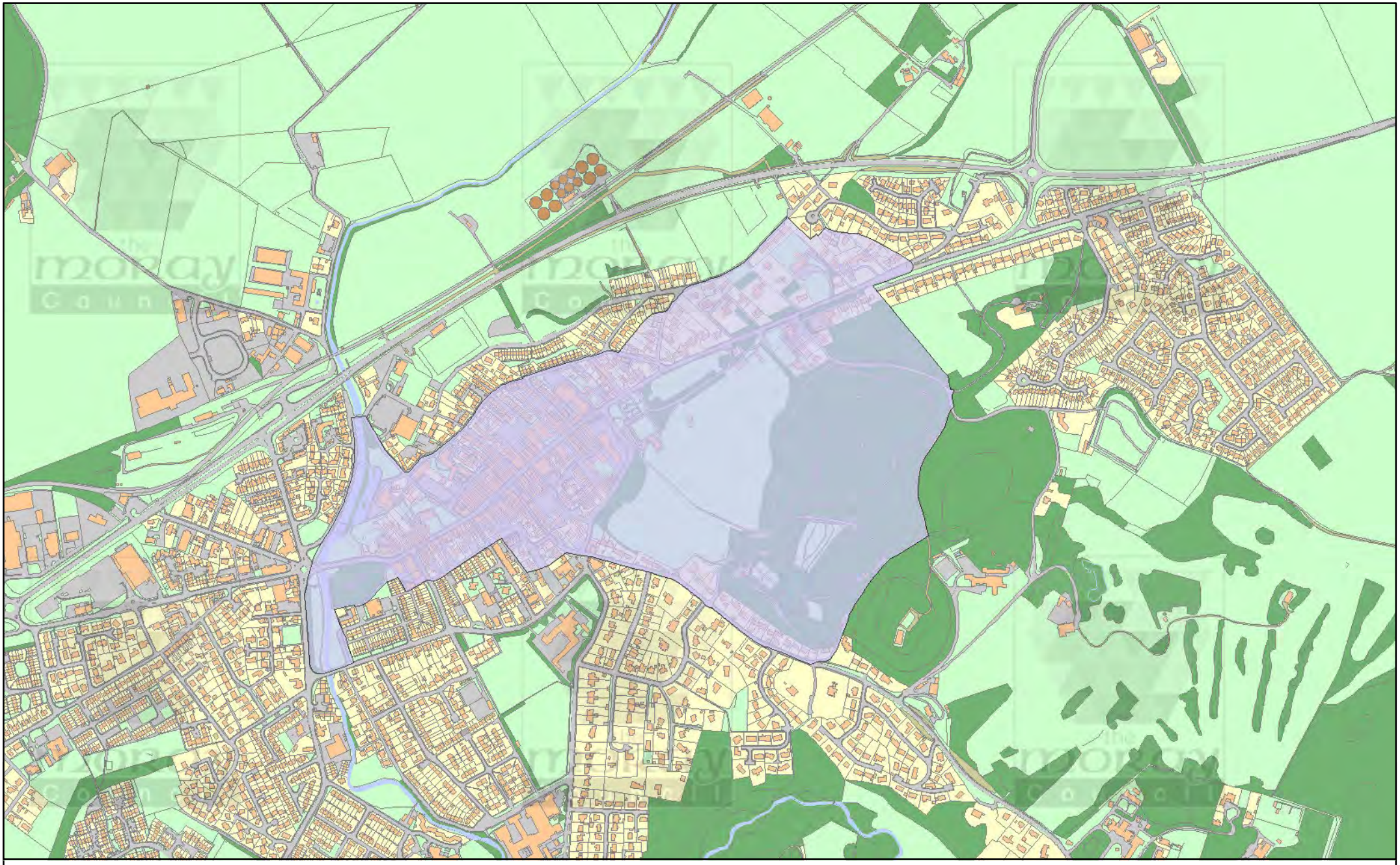
14.2 Diagrams showing location, topography, geology and land cover

14.3 Illustrated gazetteer of selected buildings within the conservation area

14.4 Maps showing Character Areas A and B

14.5 Map showing suggested amendments to the boundaries of the conservation area

14.6 Glossary of terms



Moray Council

Forres : Conservation Areas

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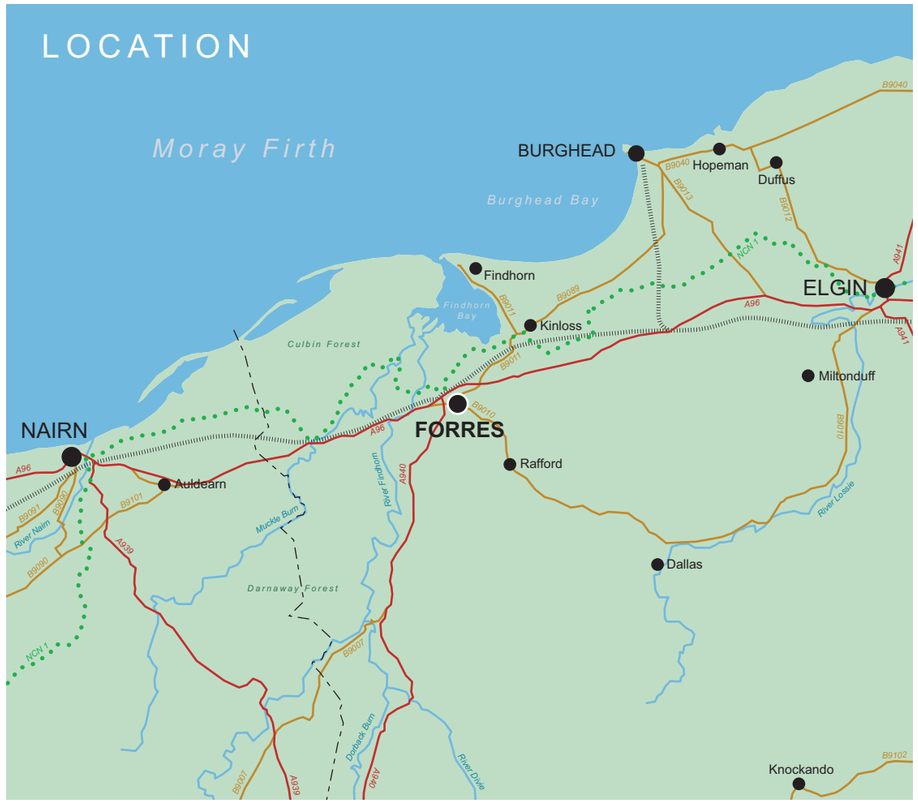
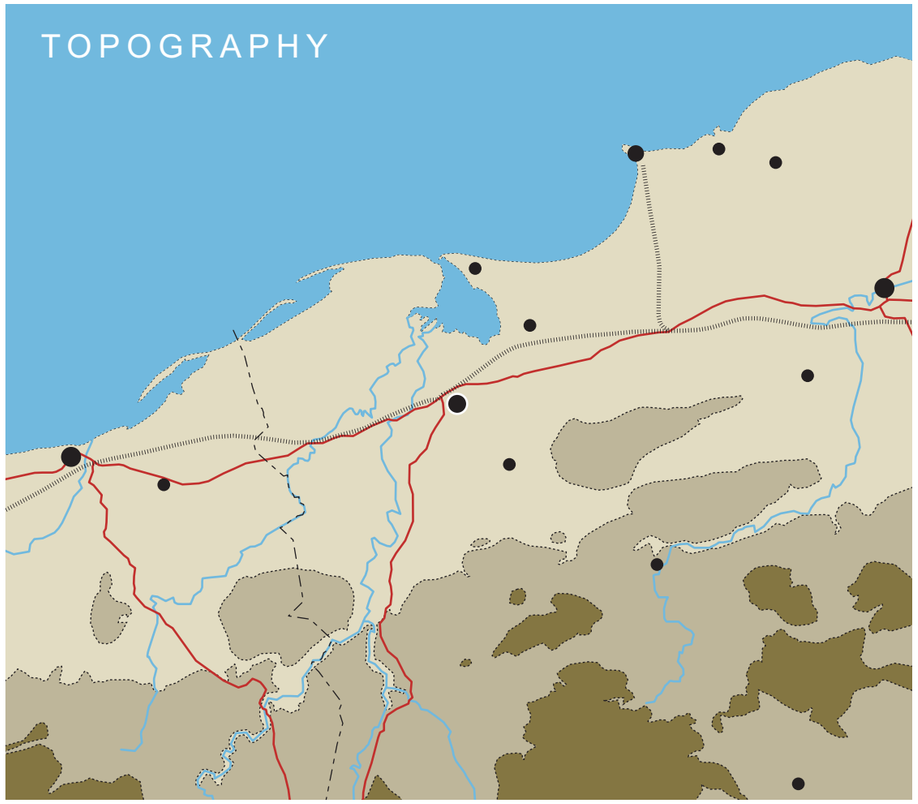
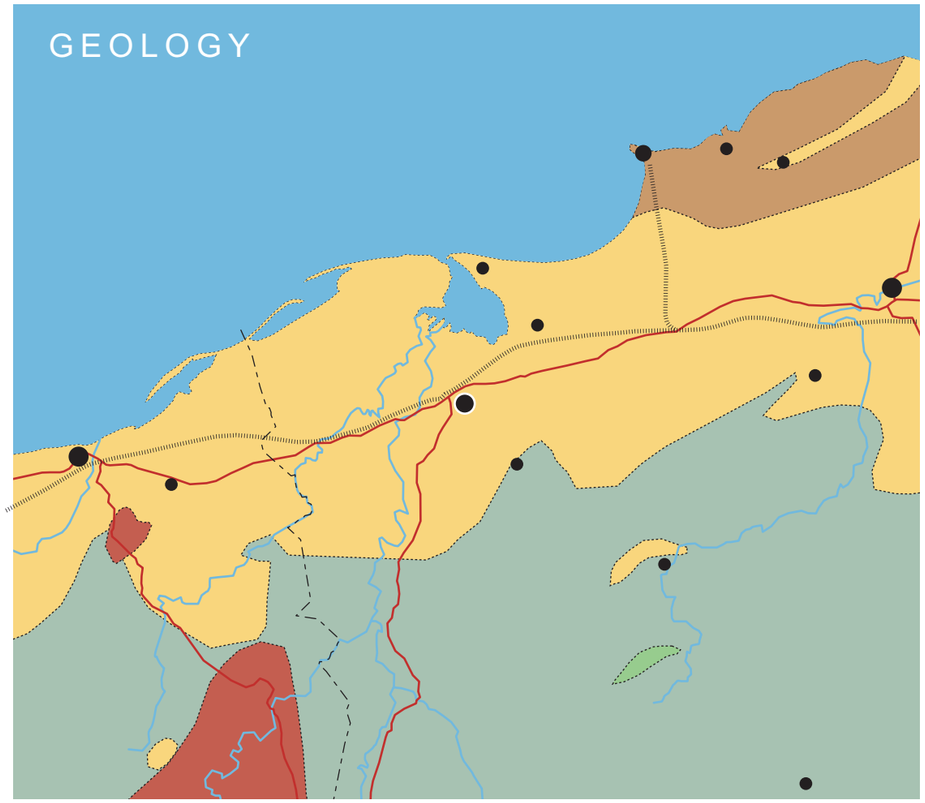
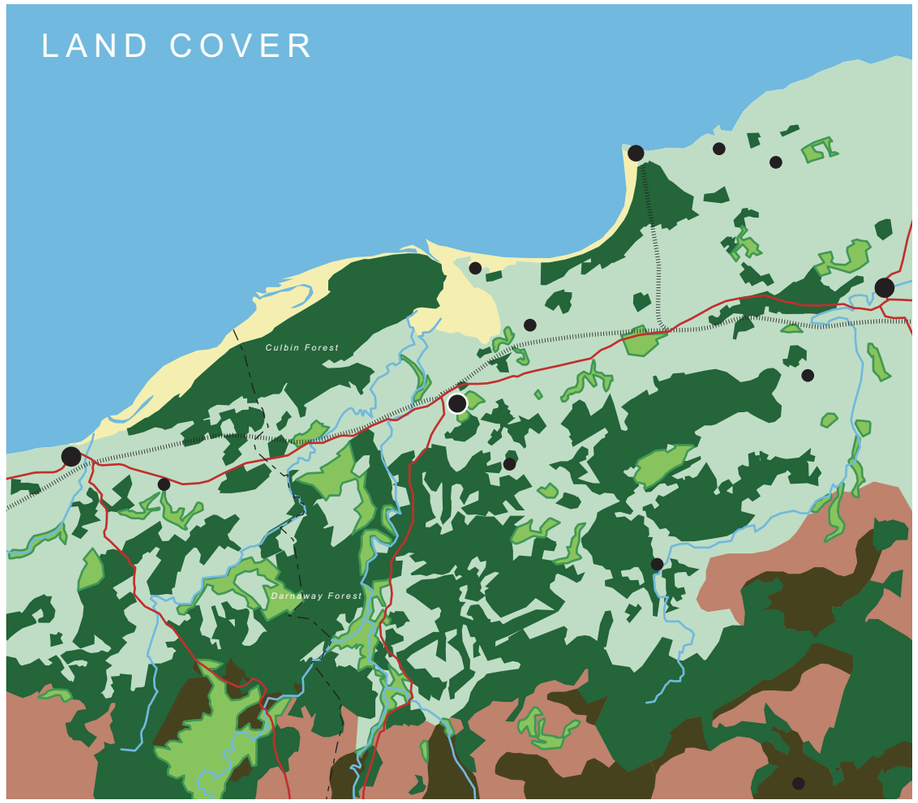








Context

- Towns
- Villages / hamlets
- A roads
- B roads
- Railway line
- National Cycle Network Route 1 (NCN 1)
- Principle watercourses
- Highland / Moray Council boundary

Topography

- 0m - 150m AOD
- 150m - 300m AOD
- 300m + AOD

Geology

- Moine metamorphics
- Dalradian metamorphics
- Granite
- Devonian sandstone (Old Red Sandstone)
- Mesozoic sandstone

Land Cover

- Sand / dunes / marsh
- Improved grassland and arable
- Native woodland
- Coniferous woodland
- Peatland / montane
- Heather moorland

0 5 km 10 km

Forres Conservation Area Appraisal

Wider Landscape Context

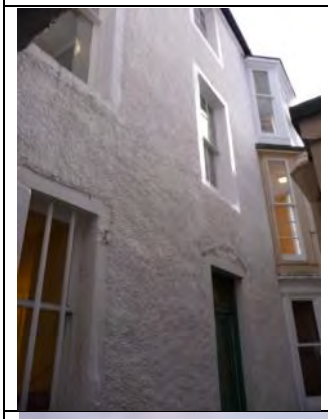
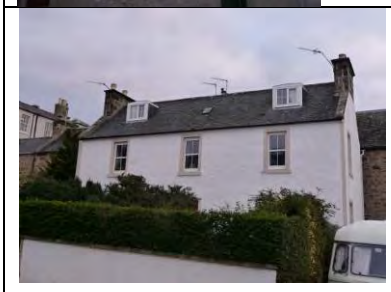
Figure 1

Appendix 14.3 Gazetteer of selected buildings

Buildings before 1800

	**154 High Street** Dated 1668 in skewputt. Said to be the oldest inhabited building in the High Street, and typical of a building which was once common on the High Street. Single storey and attic with 2-bay gable to High Street. Door in gable has later moulding. Painted margins. Crowstepped gables. Paint spall to frontage. Harled to the close. Single pane windows to ground floor with single pane sashes above. Category B-listed.
	**154a High Street (in close)** 18th century single storey, 2 bay cottage. Harled. Corrugated iron roof, painted purple. Previously thatched. Small 12 pane sash window, with bars. Category B-listed.
	**154b High Street (in close)** Later 18th century. Single storey 3 bay cottage with centre door. Harled with painted margins. Corrugated iron roof, painted purple. Previously thatched. Bars over 6 over 1 sash windows. Category B-listed.
	**154c High Street (in close)** Late 18th century. Single storey, 3 bay cottage with central door. Harled with painted margins. Corrugated iron roof. 12 pane sash windows, with broken panes and frames. Evidence of a porch which has been removed. Appears to be vacant and in need of maintenance. Candidate for the Buildings at Risk Register. Category B-listed.
	**154d High street (in close)** Late 18th century single storey cottage with attic rooflight. 3 bays with central door. Previously harled, but rubble stone walling now exposed. 12 pane timber sashes. Modern double leaf timber boarded door. Roof may have previously been corrugated iron, now slated. Category B-listed.

	**160a, 162 High Street** Dated 1784 in skewputt. 2 storeys and 2 bays with gable end to street. Simple shop window to ground floor with pair of 4 pane sash windows above. Harled frontage with painted margins. Dormers to wynd with slated haffits. Category B-listed.
	**118, 118A High Street** Mid to late 18th century. 3 storeys & attic, 3 bays. Painted rubble. Modern shopfront at ground floor. 12 pane sash windows to 1st floor. PVC windows on 2nd floor. Chimneyed gablet with small window above. Pend to right filled with doorway. Category B-listed.
	**1 Hepworth Lane (Off 73-75 High Street)** C. 1780. 2 storey, 3 bay house with centre door. Harled rubble walling with ashlar margins. 12 pane, stained modern timber windows. Tarrymount stone slab roof. Cobbles at front door. Restored by the National Trust for Scotland Little Houses Improvement Scheme. Category B-listed.
	**139 High Street** Mid-to- late 18th century. 3 storeys, 5 bays. Rendered with render lined as ashlar above. At ground floor, arched pend to left and Victorian shopfront to right. Possible structural movement to right bay with deformed window openings and lintels. A rear Victorian extension with large multi-pane window. Category B-listed.
	**Towerside, 19 St Leonard's Road** Late 18th century. 2 storey and attic house. 3 wide bays with central door. Harled and painted with painted margins. Classical porch with modern PVC door. Replacement PVC windows to frontage. Boundary wall with arrowhead cast-iron railings. Category B-listed (erroneously listed as No.6)

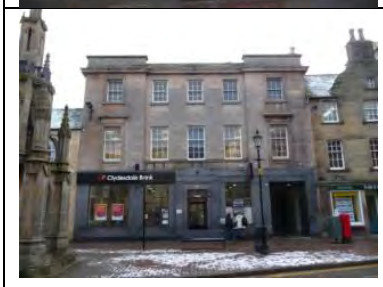
	**100 High Street** Later 18th century. 3-storey and attic, 3-bay. Formerly North of Scotland and Town and County Bank. Polished ashlar ground floor Bank facade (c. 1900) and narrow entrance to pend at ground floor. Coursed ashlar with a chimneyed gablet to High Street. 12-pane sashes, 2nd floor windows shorter than at 1st floor. Slate roof. Coat of arms (appears to be of Royal Burgh, Forres) said to have been found during reconstruction of Castle Bridge 1908, and reinstated at rear of building over pend. Category B-listed.
	**100a High Street (through pend)** Later 18th century wing to rear of 100 High Street. Tall 3-storey, 3-bay house with centre door; to the right is a full height bay window. Harled with stone margins. Some 12 pane sashes. Timber panelled stair in close gives access to 1st floor. Slate roof. Category B-listed.
	**6 Cumming Street** Later 18th century. 2-storey and attic (with basement), 3-bay with centre door. Harled with painted margins. 2 modern dormers and small rooflight. West Highland slate roof. Appears on Wood's map adjoined to other houses; evidence remains on N gable. PVC windows to frontage & modern door. Category B-listed.

Buildings from 1800-1850

	**Nelson's Tower, Cluny Hill** Charles Stewart 1806. Restored after fire by John Forrest, 1900. Erected by public subscription as a tribute to Admiral Lord Nelson. Tall octagonal tower. Harled with ashlar margins. Simple gothic windows and door. Naval flagstaff originally fitted at head of tower, now removed. Category B-listed.

	**Tolbooth, High Street** William Robertson, 1838-40. Scottish Baronial. Prominent corner site with Tolbooth Street, building juts out in to the street. Ashlar walling with rubble to Tolbooth Street and tooled ashlar dressings. 3-storey courthouse, with imposing 3-stage tower and belfry, said to perpetuate the design of its predecessor. Entrance on west front of the tower in round arched doorway. Tower capped with cupola and weather vane. Courthouse and jail to east, completed in 1849 by architect John Urquhart. A tolbooth has stood on this site since the late 12th century. Currently on the Buildings at Risk Register due to lack of use, although Forres Heritage Trust is in the process of taking over the building. Category A-listed.
	**Market Cross, High Street** Thomas Mackenzie, 1844. Erected by public subscription. Pinnacled mercat cross resembling the Scott Monument in Edinburgh. Four octagonal piers supporting pinnacles and arched to central pier. Rumoured to incorporate the basement stone of its predecessor. Partially dismantled and rebuilt in 1922; damaged by stone cleaning late twentieth century and some architectural elements now removed. Category B-listed.
	**Anderson's Primary School, High Street** William Robertson 1823. Endowed by Jonathan Anderson of Glasgow for the education of children from Forres, Rafford & Kinloss. Classical single storey facade to High Street with central steeple. Central 3 bays advanced and pedimented. Remodelled in 1881. 1926 extension behind Anderson's frontage (not included in listing). Restored in 1971 as Anderson's Primary School. Gatepiers and railings also listed. Category B-listed.

	**Mechanics' Institute, High Street** Originally Archibald Simpson, 1827-9. Refronted and remodelled internally by John Forrest 1899-1901. Classical, ashlar facade with paired Doric columns. 2 storeys and 3 bays with central bay slightly advanced and pedimented. Built by Forres St Lawrence Lodge of Freemasons as Masonic lodge, purchased by Mechanic's Institute in 1854 and by Town Council in 1930s for use as town hall, alterations by Alastair Macdonald. Vegetation at high level. Category B-listed.
	**145 High Street** 1817-8. 3 storey, 3 bay former Church of Scotland manse, with gable to High Street. A few remaining 12 pane sashes with historic glass. Panelled double leaf door in close and central pilastered and corniced doorpiece at 145a. Late 19th century shopfront to gable. Category B-listed.
	**128 – 140 High Street** C.1820, possibly William Roberston. Listing notes that it is similar to buildings designed by Robertson 1822-3 in Cullen. 2 2-storey blocks of identical but reversed design. Built by Robert Warden of Forres, and known as Warden's Place. Slightly recessed bowed corners to a courtyard. Ashlar frontages. Round arched doorways with some original fanlights and panelled doors. 12 pane sashes with historic glass at 1st floor. At No's 128-132 late 19th century shopfront survives. At No.138 - aluminium windows and door. Category B-listed.
	**108, 110, 112 High Street** 1830-40. 3 storeys, 3 bays. Coursed rubble. Art Deco influenced ground floor, although shopfront at No.112 breaks from unified scheme and detracts from overall effect. 12 & 16 pane sashes, some broken on top floor, which appears to be vacant. Category B-listed.

	**107 - 111 High Street** Possibly John Paterson, c.1820-25 List descriptions notes that John Paterson of Edinburgh practised in Elgin 1784-89 and there is evidence he designed buildings in Moray after that date (e.g. Edinkillie Manse 1823). He had a predilection for curved rooms, and the rock-faced rustication of the ground floor is common in Edinburgh but uncommon in Moray. Appears on Wood's map of Forres as 'BL Bank'. 3 storeys, 5 bays, Distinctive rock-faced rustication to ground floor with ashlar above. Mackenzie & Cruickshank Ironmongers handpainted sign. Central arched pend with arrowhead gates. Had been vacant, but currently being fitted out for new owner. Fine decorative plasterwork internally. Plaque above central pend. Plethora of brackets and wiring on frontage. Category B-listed.
	**100b High Street (through pend)** Circa 1800. 2 storey and attic, 3 bay house with central (modern replacement) door. 12-pane windows with historic glass. Category B-listed.
	**95 - 99 High Street** Late 18th/early 19th century. 3 storeys and attic. 6 bays. Ashlar frontage with rusticated quoins (No.95 is painted). Central pend entrance flanked by modern shopfronts. Slate roof with scrolled skewputts. Some vegetation growing at No.95. Category B-listed.
	**Clydesdale Bank, 96 - 98 High Street** 1839, probably William Robertson. 3 storey, 5 bay Classical bank. Flat arched pend to right. Ashlar on first and second floors. Ground floor remodelled by J & W Wittet, 1938, in polished granite. Single storey gighouse to rear converted and appears to be vacant. Boarded up to car park behind. Category B-listed.

	**93 High Street** Circa 1830. 2 storeys and attic, 3 bays. Ashlar frontage with rubble to rear. Modern shopfront at ground floor with square headed pend entrance to the right. 12 pane glazing and modern flat roofed dormers. Category B-listed.
	**74 - 78 High Street** C.1820. 3 storeys, symmetrical across 5 bays with central pend. Finely tooled ashlar with polished dressings. Original shop with central door to right. Good late 19th century shopfront to left. Painted to Tolbooth Street. Rubble and harl to wynd. Category B-listed.
	**82 - 86 High Street** C.1820. 3 storey, 5 bay with central arched pend and flanking shops. Rusticated ground floor, tooled ashlar above. Surviving original shopfronts with modern glazing. Category B-listed.
	**69 - 71 High Street** John Urquhart, 1845. 3 storeys and 6 bays with ashlar frontage and dressings. Historic 12 pane sashes with lying panes, in need of maintenance. Modern shopfront at ground floor. Category B-listed.
	**Royal Bank of Scotland, 57 High Street** Thomas Mackenzie, 1843 incorporating earlier building probably by William Robertson. Ashlar with rusticated ground floor and a polished granite base. 2 storeys and 6 bays with 2nd and 5th bays slightly advanced. Modern glazing at ground floor, single pane sashes at 1st floor. Multitude of modern security lamps, wiring and brackets to the frontage. Category B-listed.

	**22 - 24 High Street** Early 19th century. 2 storey and attic with 3 bays. Corinthian pilastered shopfront (painted). Square headed pend to right. Aluminium windows to 1st floor with PVC above. Pedimented skewputts and two gabled dormers. Category B-listed.
	**St John's Episcopal Church, Victoria Road** Patrick Wilson, 1830-40. Simple church substantially altered and encased in Italianate style, and refitted internally by Thomas Mackenzie in 1844. Ashlar frontage with elegant arched portico and rose window above. 4-stage campanile to east. Category A-listed.
	**Craigouris, 25 St Leonard's Road** Early 19th century. 2 storey and attic, 3 bay house with central door. Rubble walling with tooled margins. 2 dormers. 12 pane sash windows. Modern door. Appears on Wood's Town map of 1823 as Trafalgar Place. Category B-listed (erroneously listed No.12)
	**The Elms, St Leonard's Road** Early 19th century. 2 storeys and attic. 3 wide bays with slightly advanced and pedimented centre bay. Coursed rubble walling with ashlar dressings. Wide elliptical arched doorway with paired columns. Hipped slate roof with 2 dormers. Shown on Wood's Map of 1823 as Mr Logie's house. Category B-listed.
	**15 Tolbooth Street** C.1815. 2 storeys and attic over raised basement level. 3 bay house of coursed rubble with ashlar dressings. Rusticated rubble to basement level. Slightly advanced central pedimented bay with pilastered doorpiece. Two small piended dormers. West Highland slate roof. Category B-listed.

	**30 Tolbooth Street** C. 1800. 2 storeys and attic over 3 wide bays with central door. Rubble walling with painted margins. Gable to Tolbooth Street with some stone erosion at low level. Some 12 pane glazing survives. Three canted dormers. West Highland slate roof. List description notes a square gatepier, which no longer seems to exist. Category B-listed (Erroneously listed as 28 Tolbooth Street)
	**3 - 11 Tolbooth Street** Thomas Mackenzie, 1847. Alterations by A&W Reid in 1893. Former market in tooled ashlar with polished dressings. Central pend with timber boarded door. In a variety of uses. Ground floor to south painted with altered shopfront at right. Category B-listed.
	**Braeriach, Victoria Road** C.1800. 2 storey and attic, 3 bay house with central door. Coursed rubble walling with ashlar dressings. Simple Doric columned porch. 12 pane sashes with historic glass. 3 small pienided dormers. Category B-listed.
	**Carrour, Victoria Road** Early 19th century. 2 storeys and attic, 3 bay house with central door. Coursed stugged rubble walling with ashlar dressings. Square timber porch with cast iron brattishing. 2 piended dormers and slate roof. Modern garage to east. Category B-listed.
	**Cluny, Victoria Road** Possibly William Robertson, c.1835. Classical single storey cottage to Victoria Road, two storeys to rear with later additions. Central Doric columned portico with pediment. Pink harl with ashlar dressings. Similar to Hazelwood, Mortlach also thought to be William Robertson. Category B-listed.

	**Forres House Lodge, Victoria Road** Earlier 19th century, single storey entrance lodge. Rubble walling with ashlar dressings. Advanced centre portico with pediment and Doric columns. Shallow slate roof. Four square rusticated gate piers with cast iron gates. The lodge formerly served Forres House which was destroyed by fire in c.1970. Category B-listed.
	**Roseville, Victoria Road** Early 19th century. 2 storeys with attic. 3 bays with central door. Coursed stugged rubble with ashlar margins. Later square porch. 12 pane sashes and 2 dormers. Category B-listed.

Buildings from 1850-1900

	**Falconer Museum, Tolbooth Street** A&W Reid, 1868-70. Built with the bequest of Alexander & Hugh Falconer. A rectangular building in Italian Lombardy style. 2 storey, 3 bay entrance to the north with a pedimented central bay. 6-bay elevation to Tolbooth Street. Ground floor windows with shell-hood carving with busts commemorating Scots engineers, botanists and literary giants. Sculpture by Thomas Goodwillie. Category B-listed.
	**Bank of Scotland, 102 High Street** Thomas Mackenzie, 1852-54. 3 storeys, 5 bay palazzo in polished ashlar (now painted). Roman Doric porch with mosaic flooring. 4 pane sashes with historic glass. Good carved faces in capitals at 1st floor. Opened as Caledonian Bank. Category A-listed.
	**Carlton Hotel, 63 - 67 High Street** Peter Fulton, 1900. 3 storeys and attic, 3 bay frontage to High street with curved corner bay to High Street & Caroline Street featuring stained glass fanlight. Bullfaced rubble with ashlar dressings. Oriel windows to 1st floor. Decorative red clay ridge tiles to dormers/gables. Harled to Caroline St. Shopfront at No.65 dates from 1908 when Greenlees opened their shoe shop. Modern shopfront at No.67. Category B-listed.

	**122 - 126 High Street** John Rhind, 1881-2. Scottish Revival, ashlar frontage. Elaborate carved detail including heraldic beasts on top of gables Central doorway currently boarded. Original shopfronts with slender columns, although shopfront to left altered to add multi pane windows. Overbearing modern fascia to right. New windows in stained timber, except curved oriel windows which may be original and some PVC at 2nd floor. Category B-listed.
	**Castlehill Church, High Street** John Rhind, 1870-1. Decorated Gothic with cruciform plan. Coursed, stugged rubble with tooled ashlar dressings and slate roof. Building at Risk. Boarded up and vacant. Wire mesh fitted over stained glass windows of good quality, many of which are broken. Areas of severe structural deformation and water ingress. Category B-listed.
	**Rosebank, St Leonard's Road** C.1865. 2 storey and 3 bay symmetrical villa. Rosebank and neighbouring Laurelbank built as a matching pair. Rubble walling with contrasting ashlar dressings. Balcony at first floor with wrought-iron brattishing and Doric columns to the ground floor. Single pane sashes. Category B-listed.
	**Russell House, Russell Place** Dated 1896 above central bay. 2 storey and 3 bay house with idiosyncratic details. Single pane timber sash windows. Dutch ogee gable to left with smaller chimneyed gablet to right hand bay. Tripartite window at first floor reflected below in door with margin windows. Oriel to side elevation. Unlisted.
	**Seaview, Russell Place** Late 19th century L-shaped assymetrical villa of coursed rubble and ashlar dressings. Wide gable to left with ornate barge board and bay window to ground floor with fishscale slates and iron brattishing. 2 storey entrance tower in re-entrant angle with tented roof with fishscale and diamond-shaped slates. Modern replacement windows throughout. Unlisted.

	**Macaulay & Kirkholm, Warden's Place, off High Street** Dated 1880. Tripartite doorpiece with carving above. Initials 'JR' on Macaulay. Tooled snecked rubble with dressed margins. 2 over 4 sash windows with some stained glass. Decorative ironwork to 1st floor windows. Neighbouring Jadevilla is also of merit. Unlisted
	**Randolph Villa, St Leonard's Road** 1866. Idiosyncratic tall, asymmetrical Scots Revival villa. Snecked rubble with ashlar dressings. Roughly T-plan. Crowstepped gables. Frontage to St Leonard's Road features projecting wide crowstepped gable with central canted bay window rising to 3 storeys. Angle turret to left with tented roof and fishscale slates. Entrance to west features name 'Randolph Villa' delicately carved above doorway. Shown on the 1868 OS Map. Unlisted.
	**The Park, Victoria Road** Late 19th century Scots Revival house. Snecked pinkish bullfaced stone walling with buff ashlar dressings. Elaborately decorated with crowstepped gables, animal finials & gargoyles. Main frontage features turret in re-entrant corner with fishscale slates. Erected for Provost John Burn, latterly a hotel, now converted to apartments with new houses in the grounds. 1877, unlisted.
	**Singapore House, Leask Road** Mid 19th century villa. 2 storeys and 3 bays. Rubble walling with tooled ashlar dressings. Wide gable to right with pedimented crowsteps. Pedimented crowsteps also to the east gable. Square porch with carving above. String course at first floor. 2 first floor windows with decorative dormerheads. Slate roof. Shown on the 1868 Town Plan as 'Singapore Cottage'. Unlisted

Buildings from 1900-1940

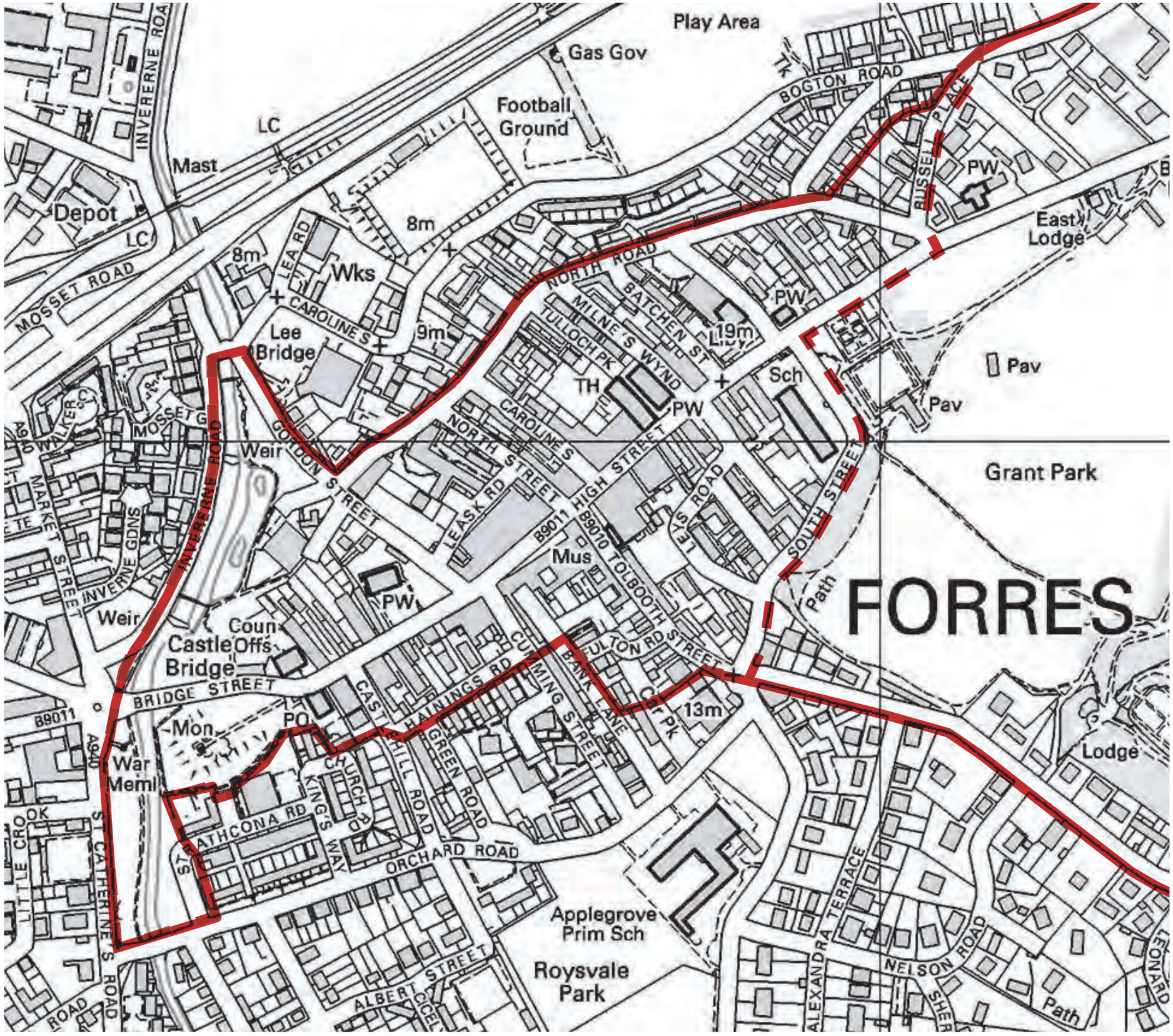
	**St Laurence Church, gatepiers and kirkyard walls, High Street** John Robertson, 1903-6. Gothic, with bull-faced rubble but finely tooled dressings of lighter stone. Oriented E/W with entrance in east gable in recessed porch. 3-stage tower topped with pinnacles and steeple. Lancet windows, paired or tripled in Gothic arches at higher level. Stained glass by Douglas Strachan to south elevation (gifted by Sir Alexander & Lady Grant of Logie Forres, 1939) and baptistry. East and west windows by Percy C bacon c.1920. Later 18th century gatepiers. Arrowhead railings lost except near gate. Gravestones moved to rear. Category B-listed, recommended for A-listing for high townscape value.
	**Castle Bridge, Bridge Street** William Roberts, engineer, and Peter Fulton, architect, 1907-08. Stone from Cummingston and Newton. Castle Bridge first mentioned in 1607, although likely to have only been a footbridge at that time. Rusticated ashlar with parapets of polished ashlar. 2 segmental arches and octagonal crenellated turret-like pillars. Granite panels bearing dates and Burgh arms. Category B-listed.
	**War Memorial, Bridge Street** A Marshall Mackenzie 1922. Sculptor, Alexander Carrick of Edinburgh. Bronze figure of a Highland soldier on tall, battered pedestal of bullfaced whinstone from Wester New Forres quarry with contrasting white tuckpointing; plinth of Aberdeen granite. Category B-listed.

	**St Leonard's Church, High Street** Ross and Macbeth, 1901-3. Decorated Gothic. Coursed tooled rubble with ashlar dressings. Large gable to High Street with triple entrance. Triple geometric traceried windows above. To right, 3-stage tower with corbelled angle turrets to upper stage and topped with a spire. Steeply pitched slate roof. Church hall to rear. Category B-listed.
	**Ramnee Hotel, Victoria Road** Built 1907 for Cruickshank family. Edwardian Arts and Crafts house in fine setting, snecked rubble with ashlar dressings. Central crenellated entrance porch with two wide gables to the left with half timbering, and a turret with slated bell roof to the right. Currently in use as a hotel. Unlisted.
	**43 High Street** Single storey property with surviving Art Deco shopfront. Art Deco pediment, suffering from paint spalling and partially obscured by shop fascia, with flanking sunburst railings. Original glazing below with lying panes and textured glass in the clerestorey. Deep recessed entrance with mosaic tiling. Surviving awning fittings. Unlisted.

Building groups

	**97 High Street (to rear of 95 High Street)** Early – mid 19th century. 2 storey rubble range with painted margins. Some 12 pane sashes. Traditional lamps fixed to wall in close. 97J is Category C-listed.

	**17-26 Urquhart Street** Early 19th century group of 2 storey, 3 bay houses. Rubble walling, either left bare, painted or harled with painted margins. The gables and end stacks to the street create a distinctive street scene, demonstrating the way buildings historically changed orientation as they moved further back from the High Street to present their gable ends to the wynds or closes. Shown on Wood's map of 1823 as Urquharts's Wynd. All Category C-listed.
	**Tulloch Park/North Road** Dated 1901 in corner arched hood moulding. Group of properties on corner site. Snecked rubble walling with ashlar dressings. Regrettable loss of original windows and in some places stone mullions. Some original timber boarded doors with lying pane fanlights. Frontage features gables, timber bracketed porches and hipped wall head dormers. Unlisted.



Primary land uses

- Commercial
- Residential
- Municipal
- Light industrial
- Recreational
- Car parks and hard standing

Setting and views

- Key views
- Areas of tree cover
- Watercourses
- Landmark features

Activity and movement

- Activity hub
- Key traffic routes
- Key pedestrian routes

Street pattern / urban grain

- Built form
- Active frontage
- Passive frontage

Historic townscape

- 1868
- 1905
- 2013

Open space

- Formal open space
- Informal open space

Negative factors

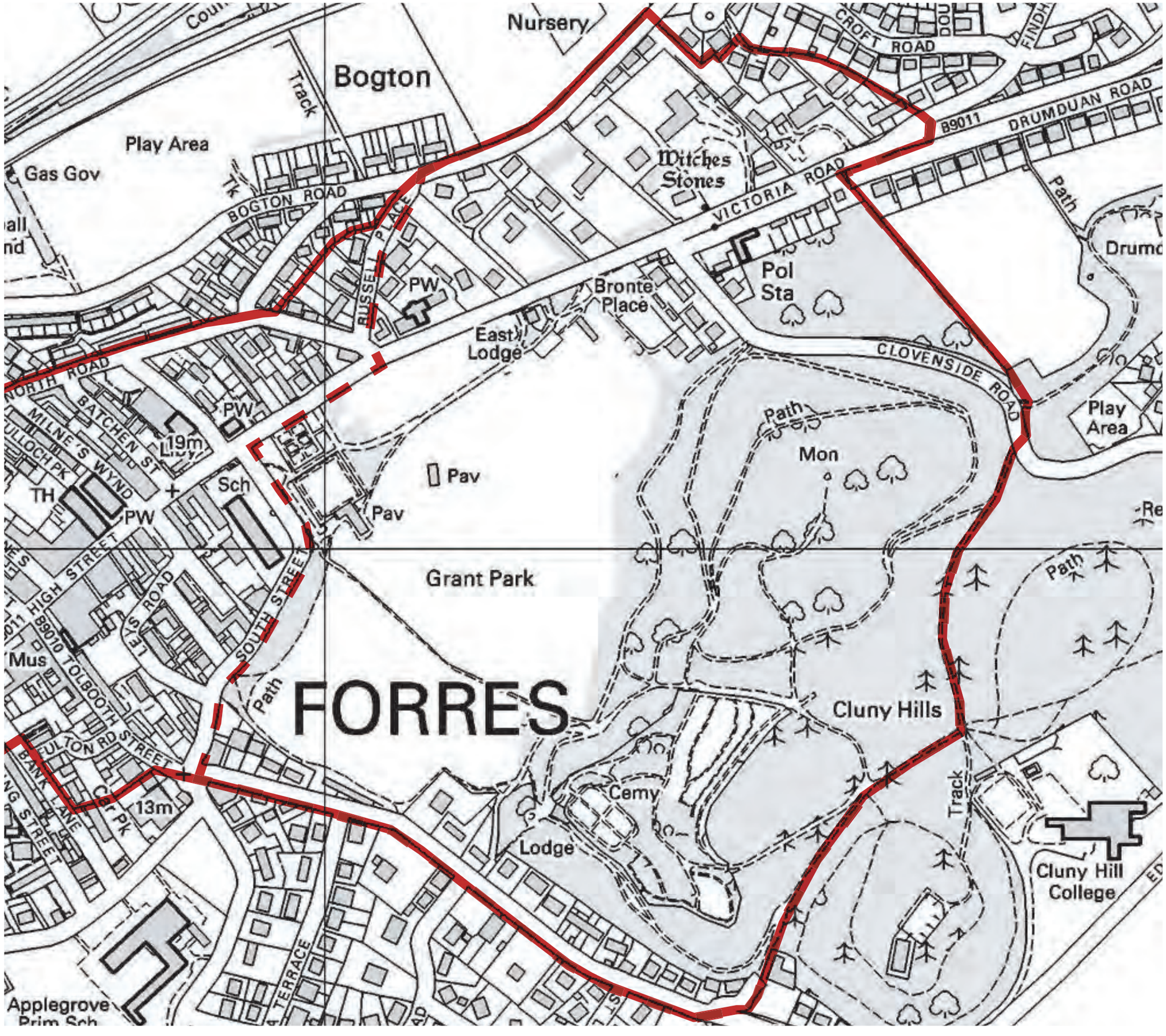
- Target notes *(refer to report)*

1:XXXX

Forres Conservation Area Appraisal

Area A - Nucleus of the Historic Burgh

Figure 3



Primary land uses

- Commercial
- Residential
- Municipal
- Recreational
- Car parks and hard standing

Setting and views

- Key views
- Tree cover
- Landmark features

Activity and movement

- Activity hub
- Key traffic routes
- Key pedestrian routes

Street pattern / urban grain

- Built form
- Active frontage
- Passive frontage

Historic townscape

- 1868
- 1905
- 2013

Open space

- Formal open space
- Informal open space
- Gardens and Designed Landscape

Negative factors

- Target notes *(refer to report)*

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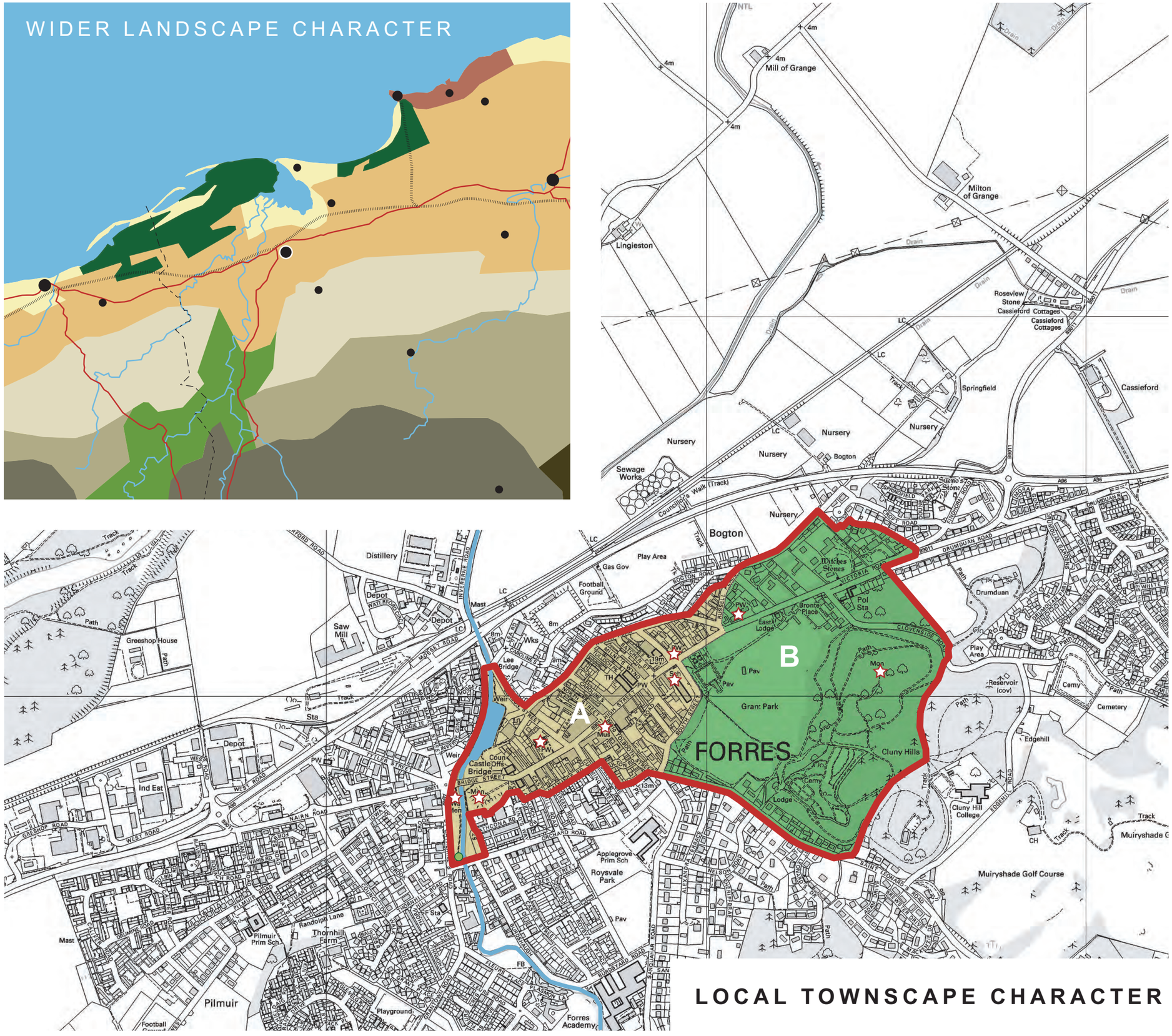
Forres Conservation Area Appraisal

Area B - Grant Park, Cluny Hill and villas

Figure 4



LOCAL TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

Wider Landscape Character

- Soft coastal shore
- Hard coastal shore
- Coastal forest
- Coastal farmlands
- Rolling farmlands and forest
- Narrow wooded valley
- Broad farmed valley
- Upland moorland and forestry
- Open uplands

Local Townscape Character

- Forres Conservation Area
- A - Nucleus of the historic burgh
- B - Grant Park, Cluny Hill and the villas

Setting and Views

- Key external views
- Key internal views and approaches
- Key framed views
- Areas of tree cover
- Watercourses
- Landmark features

Historic townscape

- 1868
- 1905
- 2013

0 5 km 10 km and at 1:10,000

Forres Conservation Area Appraisal

Landscape and Townscape Character

Figure 2

Appendix 14.5

Map showing suggested amendments to the boundaries of the conservation area

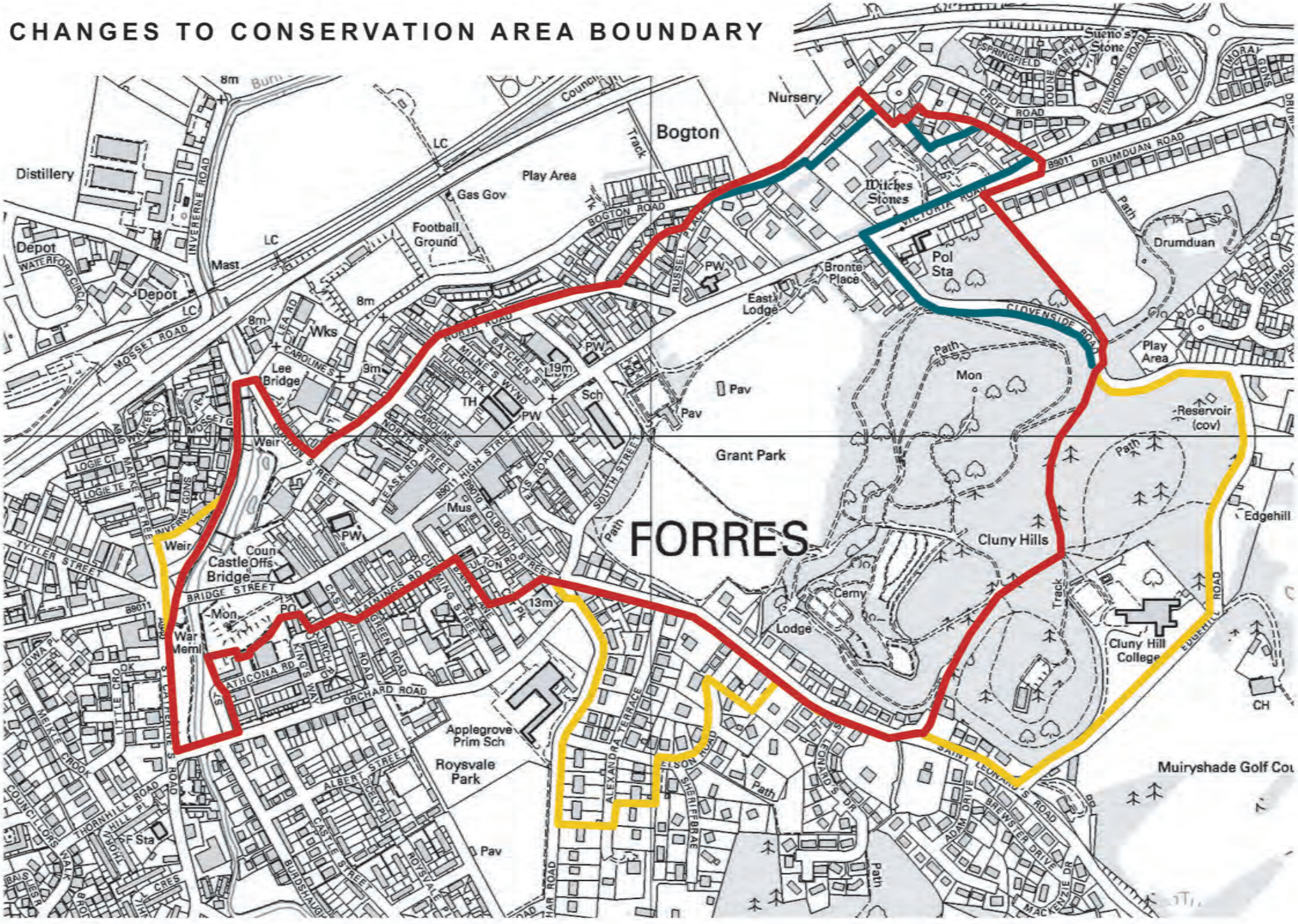
Legend

Red shows the **existing** boundaries of the conservation area

Yellow shows where the present boundaries might be **extended**

Blue shows where the present boundaries might be **reduced**

CHANGES TO CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY



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
BOW	An arched opening
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); a small gable at a wallhead is known as a GABLET.
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
STUGGED	The face of a stone dressed roughly with a pointed chisel
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
WITHES	Bridging pieces of thin slabs of stone to segregate flues terminating in a chimneyhead

WYND	Often termed a 'close' or 'pend': a lane or street at right angles to a principal thoroughfare in a traditional Scots burgh