

Agenda Item No

Report No 817/99

ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

26 AUGUST 1999
2 SEPTEMBER 1999

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF MONTROSE CONSERVATION AREA AND
PROPOSED ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION**

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Abstract: This report explains the outcome of the public consultation exercise for the review of the Montrose Conservation Area and the proposal to apply for an Article 4 Direction.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee authorises the Director of Planning & Transport to:-

1. re-designate the Montrose Conservation Area on the basis of the map shown at the public exhibition in Montrose from 2-11 June but with the areas indicated in paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 being deleted;
2. apply to Historic Scotland for outstanding status for the re-designated conservation area;
3. apply to the Secretary of State for Scotland for an Article 4 Direction to bring permitted developments under Classes 1, 7 and 8 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 within the scope of planning control.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Committee previously authorised the Director of Planning & Transport to undertake public consultation in respect of the proposed revisions to the Montrose Conservation Area boundary and the proposal to seek an Article 4 Direction (report 395/99 refers). A public exhibition was subsequently held in Montrose Library from 2-11 June. The exhibition was manned for part of that time and a number of interested bodies were sent invitations to attend. Questionnaires were available for members of the public to fill in and return to the Planning & Transport Department. A visitor log was available which allowed visitors to enter any comments.
- 2.2 Details of the various conservation grants schemes were available in leaflet form and a number of these were taken away by visitors. The Committee may wish to note that Historic Scotland have now agreed to set aside up to £20k for the first year of the Montrose Town Scheme, a figure which the Planning & Transport Department will match from the Conservation Grants Budget. In addition, a further £10k has been awarded from the Tayside/Fife PESCA Programme (a European Regional Development Fund budget). This means that there is up to £50k available for the first year of the three-year Town Scheme which will be used to award grants at a level of 50% of the eligible costs. On the basis of the known budget it is possible that up to

£300k of repair work will be commissioned in Montrose over the next three years with consequent benefits for the built heritage, environmental improvement and work for local building contractors.

3 FINDINGS OF CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 3.1 The majority of respondents were supportive of proposals to amend the conservation area boundary and to seek an Article 4 Direction. Written comments received included "very well documented and welcome", "one of the finest High Streets in Scotland - broad and spacious", "rich history and centralised shopping", (the comment regarding shopping is significant in the context of the "17 Towns Study", which was partly funded by Angus Council) and "excellent High Street and the outstanding Mid Links area".
- 3.2 Many individuals welcomed the availability of grant assistance. In fact, a substantial number of people were not aware of Angus Council's Conservation Grants Schemes. The availability of explanatory literature at the exhibition, and the presence of officers who could explain the background to the schemes, resulted in a number of enquiries relating to grant assistance. These are now being actively pursued and may result in good quality conservation projects.
- 3.3 A few, but not many, unfavourable comments were received but these cannot be regarded as significant in the context of the favourable, overall response.
- 3.4 The strongest representation came from the Montrose Port Authority regarding the proposed inclusion of Area 8, which comprises the western half of Erskine Street, the Dock Buildings and a small building group in Meridian Street and Area 10 which comprises an extension to the area on the south side of Wharf Street.
- 3.5 The Port Authority requested a meeting with the Director of Planning & Transport at which they expressed concerns over potential restrictions on their future expansion. The Port Authority would like to clear the Dock Buildings and erect warehouses on the site. However, the Dock Buildings are not in the Port Authority's ownership and they are statutorily listed in any case. Consequently, listed building consent would be required to demolish the buildings and the application would have to be accompanied by evidence that the buildings were structurally unsound, incapable of reasonably beneficial reuse and had been offered to restoring purchasers, on the open market, for at least six months.
- 3.6 The reason for including the Dock Buildings in the conservation area is that they are an important part of Montrose's industrial and commercial heritage. A good conversion scheme could provide office and light industrial units within a building which is both imposing and has considerable heritage merit. It seems short-sighted to propose clearing a historic building from this site, without exploring all of the options. A feasibility study would reveal much about the potential of the building to act as the focal point of a regeneration scheme in this part of Montrose.
- 3.7 It should also be pointed out that new warehousing on this site could adversely affect the amenity of the residential properties on Caledonia Street, immediately to the north. A redevelopment which resulted in increased vehicular movements and other disturbance, may result in objections from the neighbouring residential proprietors.

- 3.8 The Port Authority also queried the inclusion of their offices in Meridian Street. This is a small building which has been altered over the years. Its inclusion would be desirable, but any alterations would be classed as "Permitted Development", over which the planning authority does not have control. Accordingly, it is proposed to amend the new boundary slightly to delete the Port Authority's office.
- 3.9 Similar considerations of Permitted Development rights apply to Area 10. Some of this is operational Port Authority land so development would not be subject to planning control. The only exception to this is the important, medieval wharf which is statutorily listed. On balance, the lack of planning control over operational, Port Authority land suggests that extending the conservation area boundary would not have any affect, so it is proposed to delete Area 10 also.
- 3.10 As regards the proposed Article 4 Direction, no significant objections were received to this proposal. The effects and implications of the Direction were clearly indicated on the display boards and the text on the display board was available as a handout. People attending the exhibition could thus read the information at their leisure and respond in due course.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There will be no direct financial implications as a result of the revised conservation area boundary and the implementation of an Article 4 Direction. There may be a slight increase in workload for Development Control Officers but this is unlikely to be significant, given that very few of the buildings in the conservation area enjoy permitted development rights at present.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Chief Executive and the Directors of Finance and Law & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposal to review all of the Angus Conservation Areas and to consider implementing Article 4 Directions has already been raised in the Finalised Angus Local Plan. The exhibition, dealing specifically with Montrose, was well reported in the press with articles appearing in The Courier, Montrose Review and The Press & Journal. Accordingly, the proposal has received extensive publicity and the Council has discharged its requirements in respect of public consultation.
- 6.2 It was interesting to note the level of support for the proposals and the number of positive comments received. One or two objections notwithstanding, it seems there is a high level of support for conserving the burgh's heritage. The major changes to the original proposals are the deletion of operational Port Authority land. It is anticipated that the design and conservation issues, on the sensitive wharf area, will be the subject of consultation with the planning authority. The exhibition was also useful for promoting the availability of funding for conservation work.
- 6.3 Given the model that was developed for the Montrose Conservation Area exhibition, it is now proposed to undertake reviews of the other urban conservation area before summer 2000. The model for the reviews is already in place and it will be a case of substituting details and information as required within the existing framework.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

AA/PM/IAL/KW
13 August 1999

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport

Article4