

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 25 AUGUST 2009**

**SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED FORFAR CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL  
AND BOUNDARY AMENDMENT**

**REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

**Abstract: Authorisation is sought to carry out public consultation on the Proposed Conservation Area Appraisal for the Forfar Conservation Area and proposed amendment to the Conservation Area boundary.**

**1 RECOMMENDATION**

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

- (i) carry out consultation with the Forfar community, and other stakeholders, on a Conservation Area Appraisal and proposed amendment to the boundary for the Forfar Conservation Area; and
- (ii) report back to the Infrastructure Services Committee once the consultation has been carried out.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A Conservation Area Appraisal is a management tool which helps to identify the special interest and changing needs of an area. It serves as supplementary planning guidance to the Angus Local Plan Review (2009). The design guidance which will form part of the Appraisal will aid the assessment of development proposals.
- 2.2 Appropriate design standards are required in Conservation Areas under the terms of section 64(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. In order to assess whether these design standards are appropriate it is necessary to analyse all designs against their effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Whilst design guidance is helpful it can often be too prescriptive thus stifling innovation. Nevertheless, there are key aspects of the character and appearance of Forfar that are so important they need to be stated as parameters for designers to work within. This includes alterations to existing buildings, new build and works to the public realm.
- 2.3 Conservation Area Appraisals also have a community planning role because they provide the community with information on the built heritage and are prepared through consultation with stakeholders.

- 2.4 The Draft Conservation Area Appraisal (not including images) and proposed boundary amendment are shown in [Appendix 1](#).

### **3 PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The Conservation Appraisal will be the subject of public consultation including a public exhibition. Copies of the draft Conservation Area Appraisal will be sent directly to key stakeholders.

- 3.2 Stakeholders of Conservation Area Appraisals include:

- Development Standards Officers in the assessment of development proposals and in preparing planning appeal statements;
- Development Plan Officers in determining the allocation of land for development and in preparing policies that relate to individual Conservation Areas;
- The Roads Authority in carrying out work that affects the public realm;
- Scottish Government Planning Reporters in determining planning appeals;
- Bodies responsible for managing projects such as Townscape Heritage Initiatives; and
- A range of community interests in assessing how to respond to development proposals and as a source of information on the historic environment.

- 3.3 Should the proposed amendments to the Conservation Area boundary be accepted then this will require the simultaneous deletion of the existing boundary and adoption of the new boundary. The issues regarding the revision of the Conservation Area boundary as set out within the Appraisal are contained in Appendix 1.

- 3.4 It should be noted that there may be a future requirement to have an Article 4 Direction in place within the Forfar Conservation Area which would provide greater control over development proposals which are otherwise regarded as “permitted development” and which can have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. Successful Article 4 Directions were put in place following the assessment of the Montrose, Arbroath Abbey to Harbour and Brechin Conservation Areas and were the subject of public consultation. Given the changes coming forward in the coming months to the General Permitted Development Order, it has been thought that consideration of the requirement for an Article 4 Direction should be given once the outcome of changes to “permitted development” is set out for implementation.

- 3.5 It is intended to undertake the six week consultation process and present the findings to a future Infrastructure Services Committee in due course.

### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There will be costs of approximately £250-£500 for preparing the consultation documents and postage. This cost will be met from the Head of Planning & Transport’s Conservation Grants Revenue Budget in 2009/10.

### **5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The recommendation in this report for the preparing of a Conservation Area Appraisal has potential implications for property owners and occupiers in terms of alleged interference with privacy, home or family life (Article 8) and peaceful enjoyment of their possessions (First Protocol, Article 1). For the reasons referred to elsewhere in this report justifying this

recommendation in planning terms, it is considered that any actual or apprehended infringement of such Convention Rights, is justified. Any actual or alleged infringement of owners' rights to peaceful enjoyment of their property and/or interference with their privacy/home/family life arising from the proposed Conservation Area Appraisal is in accordance with the Council's duties under the Planning Acts to protect Conservation Areas and is justified and necessary in the public interest on the basis that any such actual or alleged infringement is not significant or material as balanced against the need to protect Conservation Areas in the wider public interest.

## **6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

## **7 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

- 7.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.
12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
- The importance and benefits to society of the environment is recognised.

## **8 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Strategic Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. SEA applies to all plans, programmes and strategies (PPS) and this includes policies.
- 8.2 The Angus Local Plan Review (2009) was exempt from a Strategic Environmental Assessment and as the character appraisal is produced in accordance with, and as an extension to policies in the Angus Local Plan Review (2009), then this document is also exempt.

## **9 CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance and Head of Law & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**10 CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 Conservation Area Appraisals will eventually be prepared for all 19 Conservation Areas in Angus. They will provide stakeholders with information to assist with managing the development process and will help impart information on the built heritage of Angus to the wider public.

**ERIC S LOWSON  
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

**NOTE:** The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing to confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report are:

- PAN 71, Conservation Area Management, Scottish Government (2004)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997

**P&T/GWC/KM  
14 August 2009**

**ANNEX 1****Forfar Conservation Area Appraisal  
Draft for Public Consultation****CONTENTS****INTRODUCTION**

Conservation Areas  
Purpose of the Guidance  
Objectives of the Guidance  
Reason for Designation

**CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

Origins and Development  
Street Pattern  
Building Typology  
Scale  
Grain  
Materials  
Archaeology  
Proposed Boundary Changes

**DESIGN GUIDANCE**

Proportion  
Scale  
Building Line  
Materials  
Colour  
Roof Design  
Rainwater Goods  
Chimneys  
Windows  
Doors  
Gardens, Open Spaces and Trees  
Walls, Railings and other forms of enclosure  
Roads and Pavements  
Street Furniture  
Listed Buildings  
Ancillary Developments  
Micro Renewable Energy Equipment  
Shops and commercial frontages  
Advertisements  
Safeguarding Views

**CONCLUSION****APPENDICES**

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to identify the character and appearance of the Forfar Conservation Area and provide design guidance. This information will be used to manage change in the Conservation Area to ensure its preservation or enhancement. The character analysis in this document, together with Angus Council's Development Plan and Advice Notes that relate to development in Conservation Areas, will inform the assessments of development proposals and other changes against the impact upon character and/or appearance as required under section 64(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.
- 1.2 The basis for properly discharging the statutory duties imposed upon planning authorities, is the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 ("the 1997 Act"). The application of the principles laid out in the 1997 Act is a legal requirement. The proper consideration of developments and alterations in Conservation Areas is informed by analysing the character and appearance of the area and by applying policies and guidance prepared by both local and central government. These are referred to in this document. The same duty of care is incumbent upon the Scottish Ministers when determining planning appeals.
- 1.3 There are measures that planning authorities can apply to deal with threats to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas such as the use of statutory powers to rescue buildings at risk from dereliction or lack of maintenance.
- 1.4 Appropriate design standards are required in Conservation Areas under the terms of section 64(1) of the 1997 Act. In order to assess whether these design standards are appropriate it is necessary to analyse all designs against their effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Whilst design guidance is helpful it can often be too prescriptive thus stifling innovation. Nevertheless, there are key aspects of the character and appearance of Forfar that are so important they need to be stated as parameters for designers to work within.
- 1.5 Character appraisals provide the opportunity to inform residents about the special needs and characteristics of the area and help developers identify and formulate development proposals. If a Conservation Area's special interest has been clearly defined and published in an appraisal then this definition can be used to guide the form and content of new development.

### Conservation Areas

- 1.6 There are over 600 Conservation Areas in Scotland, which are usually areas within a village, town or city and can contain – other than buildings - parks, designed landscapes and further areas of historic interest. There are currently 19 Conservation Areas in Angus, of which 9 are classified as outstanding. These areas are designated in order to preserve and enhance the unique character of each. Although designation does not presume against new development, in order to safeguard this character any new development should be carefully assessed to ensure that it will also enhance this character through good design and use of appropriate materials. Conservation Areas are living environments that will continue to adapt and develop. Designating a Conservation Area should not be seen as prohibiting change but as a means to carefully manage change to ensure the character and appearance of these areas are safeguarded and enhanced for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.
- 1.7 The public are consulted on any proposals to designate Conservation Areas or change their boundaries. Once designated, local planning authorities are obliged to manage Conservation Areas, for example through:
  - Assessing the character of the area and possible enhancement schemes through a Conservation Area Appraisal or Management Plan

- Using appropriate controls over demolition and development
- Making available professional advice and grants, where appropriate, for repair and restoration
- Interpretation schemes

### **Purpose of the Guidance**

- 1.8 A Conservation Area Appraisal is a management tool which helps to identify the special interest and changing needs of an area. It serves as supplementary planning guidance to the Angus Local Plan Review (2009). The Design Guidance established will aid the assessment of development proposals.

### **Reason for Designation**

- 1.9 Forfar has significant historic interest as it was one of David I's original Royal Burghs which was designated between 1123 and 1154. To this day the Burgh still retains much of its medieval street pattern and much of the original building plots are still evident. The desirability of preserving and enhancing these features led to the designation of the central part of the burgh as a Conservation Area in 1972.

### **Objectives of the Guidance**

- 1.10 The guidance comprising the character appraisal and specific design guidance will allow for;
- Provide background information regarding the historical development of Forfar, in particular the central area
  - The review of the existing Conservation Area and provide alteration and amendment as part of the process
  - Provide specific design guidance which will aide the assessment of development proposals within, or affecting the character of the Conservation Area.
  - Will provide Supplementary Planning Guidance for any individual who associates with the Conservation Area.

## CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

### Origins and Development

- 2.1 The centre core of the town, incorporating the existing Conservation Area boundary, dates almost entirely from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and reflects the prosperity and requirements of a former thriving market and textile town. The layout and street pattern however, originate from much earlier in the medieval period.
- 2.2 The settlement established around the site of the royal castle "Castle Hill", an important residence for early Scottish Kings. The castle provided protection and economic stimulus for settlement which received Royal Burgh status as early as the reign of David I (1124-53). The winding route from the Castle to the medieval market place formed the origins of Castle Street (formerly the Cowgate). The market for the Burgh was situated at the "Cross", a natural hollow of land at the southern end of Castle Street, where the street broadened around the Tollbooth in the centre.
- 2.3 The main medieval thoroughfare into the township formed an east/west alignment, from the Tollhouses at the East and West Ports and followed approximately the existing East High Street and West High Street. All three routes into the township converged on the nodal point of the Cross, which today still acts as the focus of the town centre.
- 2.4 Royal Burghs were designated as trading centres and as a consequence, housing for merchants/workers, a Tollbooth (for collection of tolls), a church and a market place all grew up around the market cross. The cottage weaving industry established in the area created the trading links for the town and provided a focus for the surrounding agricultural activities. Burghal status also led to the formal laying out of the township into burgage plots, or tofts running back from narrow street frontages, which in time developed into back lanes. Evidence of the original medieval layout can still be seen in the terraced back gardens and boundary walls running from East High Street to Queen Street.
- 2.5 The medieval street pattern significantly expanded following the weaving industry boom of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of a rapid increase in the town's wealth and population levels. The street layout expanded into Back Wynd (Queen Street), Canmore Street, Little Causeway, Coutties Wynd and Osnaburg Street as development further to the west of Castle Street was curtailed by marshy ground. The resultant increase in prosperity had a marked visual impact on the townscape. Improvements and investments in public buildings followed; the Parish Church was rebuilt in gothic style in 1791 (forming much of the present day structure) and the Town & County Hall was rebuilt on the site of the former Tollbooth between 1785 and 1788, to the design of James Playfair. A major change at the heart of the town centre was the construction around 1824 of the Sheriff Court House, at the rear of the Town House (by David Neave, later Burgh Architect of Dundee). In 1816 the demolition of a centre line of buildings (shambles) opened up a wider thoroughfare in Little Causeway which accompanied the construction of New Road a few years previously.
- 2.6 Buildings were constructed on the site of, or directly over earlier structures and evidence may still exist of medieval structures sealed beneath 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings along the High Streets and Castle Street, and the vennels/pends leading off. Archaeological remains beneath floors and within structures may still be uncovered and should not be adversely affected by future building works.
- 2.7 The re-building over earlier structures has resulted in a shift in building lines along the street frontages. The south side of East High Street and the western side of Castle Street in particular, feature "dog-legs" or "neuks" as building lines have adjusted. This feature, in addition to the organic winding nature of the three main streets creates a sense of enclosure to the central part of the town. The deliberate placing of significant buildings, act as a "vista" stop e.g. Municipal Buildings in Castle Street, the Carnegie Baths along the Vennel, the



corner building of Castle Street/East and West High Streets, curtailing views into and out of the central area. In common with many similar towns however, some insensitive developments in the 1960's and 70's paid scant regard to the historic fabric of the town. In some cases building lines, shop frontages and materials have compromised the traditional character and appearance of parts of the town centre.

- 2.8 Evidence of the wealth and civic pride of the town's people is apparent in the further expansion out of town in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Detached stone built villas and bungalows were developed in a linear form, aligning the major routes out of Forfar. Development out from the town centre has a more planned layout where streets of Victorian/Edwardian suburban expansion intersperse with green areas and formal parkland such as Lour Road, Brechin Road, the Reid and Boyle Parks. The 1950's and 60's schemes of local authority housing form distinct clusters of suburban growth infilling the land between the major routes around and out from the town. Over the last 20-30 years, private, lower density housing developments have sprung up on the outskirts strengthening the town's new role as that of a major population centre in Angus; its central location well served by a local and trunk road network.

#### Key Features

- **medieval street pattern still in evidence;**
- **nodal point at the Cross;**
- **"doglegs" or "neuks" created by adjusted building lines;**
- **diminishing scale further from town centre;**
- **buildings placed as "vista" stop.**

#### Problems which may arise:

- **loss of backland rigg pattern to new development;**
- **loss of defined boundaries/sense of enclosure;**
- **pedestrian/vehicular conflict at The Cross.**

#### Opportunities for Enhancement:

- **further definition of traditional street pattern;**
- **define and upgrade traditional "spaces" such as Little Causeway and Osnaburg Street;**
- **strengthen retail core/allow for increase in internal unit size.**

#### Street Pattern

- 2.9 The organic medieval street pattern of Castle Street, East and West High Streets still form the main spinal routes into and out of the centre of the town. At the very heart of the central area, The Cross remains the main focus of activity both in terms of traffic and pedestrian movements and as the prime retail core of the town. In land use terms, the buildings mostly comprise of shops on the ground floor with a mix of residential and commercial uses on the upper floors.
- 2.10 Further away from The Cross, the outer reaches of Castle Street, the junction with Queenswell Road and East and West High Street to the East and West Ports respectively form secondary frontages, a mix of commercial/retail and residential uses.
- 2.11 Along the winding streets, building lines remain relatively uniform with the exception of the southern side of East High Street. Here, building frontages have altered over the centuries forming a series of "dog legs" or "neuks" most prevalent from Coutties Wynd to the East Port. The winding and staggered nature of these main streets relieve any sense of monotony in such a linear street pattern and provide a sense of enclosure and shelter from any wind tunnels.

2.12 Building lines have only been broken on a few occasions in the past:-

- as a consequence of 1970's redevelopment schemes in West High Street (Library and Post Office) and East High Street (Royal Bank of Scotland) : an attempt has been made to continue the façade and roof line on the upper levels of the Library (former supermarket) building, however the uniformity of the street has been broken by the recessed ground floor frontage. Similarly the traditional street pattern is disrupted by the Post Office and Bank buildings which contrast with the detailing, building line and uniformity of their surroundings;
- the opening of Myre Road junction with Castle Street: the redevelopment of this area in the 1950's interrupts the continuous vista northwards along Castle Street. Roof lines have been maintained but the sense of enclosure and verticality of the street scene has been disrupted. Buildings on either side of the junction fail to address the Castle Street corner and form a poorly defined route into the main commercial centre;
- the demolition of the former Tannery on the west side of Castle Street has left a gap site, currently used for business parking , and an unsightly break in the building line at the north entrance to the Conservation Area.

2.13 The streets running off the main thoroughfare comprise secondary routes through the centre of the town. Most have their origins during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when the town expanded during the cottage weaving boom and form a distinctive pattern in the town's growth. Manor Street, Chapel Street, Canmore Street, Coutties Wynd, Little Causeway and Queen Street from residential areas of former weavers cottages/housing, often altered and extended/developed over the years. These minor routes are, in general, narrow and little room is left for passing traffic and on street parking.

- Key Features:**
- **Organic winding street pattern**
  - **Sense of enclosure created by positioning of buildings**
  - **Building lines relatively uniform**

### **Building Typology**

2.14 Buildings in the central area of Forfar are of varying 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles and heights. A sense of uniformity is maintained however through the use of similar materials such as stonework and slated roofs and in the detailing of these materials. Whilst every individual building has its own separate identity, variations in scale and importance only help to underline their collective strength and unity of character.

2.15 **Scale** – There is a distinctive increase in the scale of buildings on approach to The Cross, the main commercial focus of the town. Buildings of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and Victorian mercantile era introduce a strong verticality to the street scene which emphasise the importance of the former Market Cross. Three storey buildings predominate with only Nos. 10-16 on the east side and part of Nos. 13-15 on the west side of Castle Street, remaining as two storeys. The Town and County Hall and Municipal Buildings (former Sheriff Court) form the dominant anchor point, linking the surrounding buildings with the wide expanse of streets in the area around the Cross.

2.16 Modern redevelopment at Nos. 41-43 (Somerfield), whilst retaining the original width/height ratio, introduces an inappropriate horizontal emphasis in the window pattern and disrupts the character of the street scene. Further out from the centre, building heights in Castle Street, East and West High Streets are relatively uniform most 2/3 storeys, some with Victorian canted bay dormer windows. The streets in the backland areas, Manor Street, Queen Street, Canmore Street, Little Causeway introduce a smaller scale single and two storey domestic artisan type building, many surviving from the towns weaving days.

- 2.17 Frontages of buildings, for the most part, retain their original plot ("rigg") widths, built back off the street, often forming "pends" or closes to gain access to the land to the rear. Frontages are generally two bays or occasionally three bays depending on the plot width.

**Key Features:**      • **Increased scale and verticality at the Cross**

- 2.18 **Grain** – Forfar's townscape is generally fine grained in keeping with its medieval origins. The original 12<sup>th</sup> century burghal plot widths appear to have been in the region of 6-7 metres. Evidence of this can be seen along West High Street in particular, where the buildings tend to be older and smaller in scale than those clustered around The Cross and the southern half of Castle Street. This increase in scale and coarsening of grain (i.e. amalgamation of original medieval plots) suggests that the latter areas were the more desirable or prestigious trading sites. Examples of surviving medieval plot widths include 2-16 East High Street and 30-40 West High Street. Buildings which occupy more than one original plot include 34-36 and 38-40 Castle Street (two plot widths) and 6-7 The Cross and 60-64 Castle Street (three plot widths).

**Key Features:**      • **FINE GRAINED TOWNSCAPE;**  
                               • **Retention of plot widths in East and West High Street;**  
                               • **Amalgamation of plots in and around The Cross and southern end of Castle Street**

- 2.19 **Materials** – The most predominant building material is stone. Local sandstone was easily obtained from nearby quarries and formed the main type of construction from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The earliest surviving buildings are formed mainly of coursed or snecked rubble mainly from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. More sophisticated masonry work in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century formed ashlar, either stugged or painted elevations. Often this type of masonry formed only the front (public) face of the building, the side and rear elevations being of rubble construction.

- 2.20 Almost every building suffers from weathered stonework and on some, scaling is at an advanced stage eroding many of the cornices and stonework detailing. The repair of these facades is a matter for special care. The temptation for cement rendering and keying to look like stonework should be firmly discouraged. Cement mortar applied to stonework will eventually crack and fail giving rise to more problems of de-lamination than before. In some cases, entire buildings have been cement rendered; 19-23 West High Street (stucco finish) and 1-3 East High Street (bull faced render) are currently rendered, and the stucco finish was removed from 7 Castle Street in 1996.

**Key Features:**      • **Retention of existing stone facades within Conservation Area**

- 2.21 The variations in elements of the townscape all contribute towards the character of an area. This includes not only traditional features and materials but good, modern detailing which can contribute in a positive way to the vitality and appearance of the area. This may relate to individual details on a building or it may relate to the wider overall impact the building may have on the street scene.

### **Archaeology**

- 2.22 The archaeology potential within the Forfar Conservation Area is divided throughout the area. West High Street, The Cross and Little Causeway falls into the archaeological category where there is known potential. To date there has been no archaeological assessments carried out in any of this area. Although it is believed that the former site of the West Port is approximately where St Margaret's Church stands today. Of the known public wells to exist in Forfar one was believed to be located to the south of number 1 West High Street called the 'Quarrel Well'.

- 2.23 Along West High Street and The Cross frontages in this area have remained largely undisturbed for over a hundred years, and although some properties cut into sloping ground at various points, there is very little apparent cellaring, which would argue for the relatively good survival of archaeological deposits. It should be noted that any large – scale development here is unlikely in the future, but any environmental improvements such as pedestrianisation or the insertion of new services might expose earlier street levels, as well as evidence for the Tolbooth, market cross, tron and wells.
- 2.24 No archaeological investigations have been carried out in Little Causeway but it is believed that a central line of buildings was demolished in 1818 to allow for street widening to take place. In the future any large – scale development here is unlikely but the insertion of new services might expose fragments relating to these buildings.
- 2.25 Off the known archaeology in East High Street the majority of the sites are located out with the Conservation Area. These sites include the southern frontage of East High Street which is mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century in date, but of most interest is the irregular building line. This has formed several corners or neuks, which were used to accommodate cattle markets in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The north side of East High Street has seen considerably less modern development. From a point opposite the Parish Church to Queen Street a virtually unbroken stretch of open gardens may have preserved the boundaries of the medieval burgage plots. To date there have been two opportunities to determine the growth of the town eastwards. These assessments were at 169 East High Street and East High Street / North Street junction but no deposits were identified at either site. In the future there is scope for further archaeological development in East High Street.
- 2.26 The Historic Scotland burgh survey on Forfar, published in 2000, has determined that there is known archaeological potential in Osnaburg Street and the surrounding area. The properties on the east side of the street have been constructed in the backlands of properties facing onto East High Street. Although the street appears to date from 1783 the former Congregational Chapel dates from 1836, the Temperance Hall (above the pub) and a new house were supposedly being built in 1887. These later buildings may be built over earlier building and may hide some archaeological deposits.
- 2.27 The archaeological potential of Castle Street falls into the area where there is known archaeological potential. For example the buildings that front onto Castle Street were almost certainly constructed on the site of, or directly over earlier buildings, a sequence possibly going back to the medieval period and continuing up to the present day. Structural elements from earlier buildings have also been found to have been incorporated into later buildings or walls reused as foundations.
- 2.28 The Historic Scotland burgh survey on Forfar has acknowledged that there is known archaeological potential in Manor Street. To date the only archaeological assessment carried out in the street was at number 3 in 1995 when the property was converted from a store to a house. The site lay on the southern side of Manor Street just to the west of its junction with Castle Street, and was the first opportunity to investigate a possible approach to the site of the royal manor. The results were negative, revealing natural sand and gravel.
- 2.29 In the future the goal of any archaeological investigations in Manor Street will be to determine the location of the royal manor, as there is documentary evidence to suggest it existed but no supporting physical evidence.

### **Proposed Boundary Changes**

- 2.30 The existing conservation boundary is centred mainly on this shape around the town centre and after some investigation it is now thought that this boundary could be extended further East up the East High Street, also taking account of the streets to the East of Castle Street

that juncture from Castle Street itself. There is also a need to take into consideration the area of Myre Road to include Manor Court which was historically significant in the growth of Forfar in manufacturing textiles. The boundary changes would also ensure that a more logical boundary line was used which would take account of any garden ground that belongs to a building or where not applicable the boundary follows the line of the building.

- 2.31 The main justifications for undertaking an amendment to the current boundary are;
- Ensuring that any property and its curtilage are included within the boundary
  - To include where the origins of Forfar began (Forfar Castle)
  - To protect the areas which are archaeologically sensitive
  - Ensure that key areas of central Forfar which maintain the character and appearance are preserved or enhanced over the coming years.
- 2.32 A map can be found in Appendix 1 which shows the proposed changes. These changes help to preserve the already existing character of the conservation area and provide continuity for development within the town centre.

## DESIGN GUIDANCE

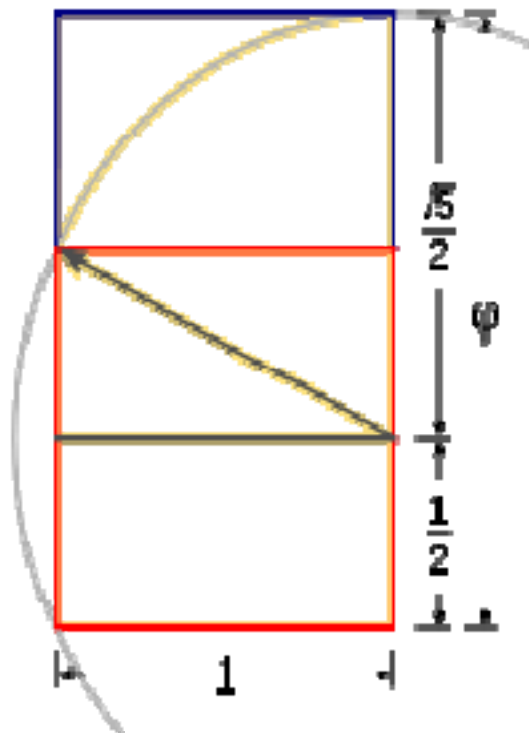
- 3.1 Forfar's Conservation Area was designated in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest. The prime consideration in considering applications for development is to secure the preservation or enhancement of this established character and appearance.
- 3.2 All development that takes place should secure the preservation or enhancement of the area. Fundamental to this sense of place is the retention and re-use of the historic buildings in the town wherever possible.
- 3.3 The design of new buildings or the extension or alteration of existing ones in the Conservation Area should be carried out with sensitivity. This requires particular architectural and historical understanding and knowledge, judgement, skill and care. The aspiration of any new build should be to create buildings that aspire to be listed buildings of the future.
- 3.4 The design of new buildings and extensions should be appropriate to and influenced by the nature of the building, the site, its context and the established special character of the area.
- 3.5 The following guidance has been prepared to help ensure that the characteristics of the Conservation Area are preserved or enhanced.
- 3.6 The design guidance will be applied to all proposals within, and which affect the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 3.7 The guidance emphasises the importance of having a consistently high standard of design appropriate to its site and context and the use of appropriate materials. The guidance points are summarised with key objectives which fit with the character of Forfar's Conservation Area. Advice Note 20 "Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas" also provides general information regarding development affecting historical buildings and conservation areas.

## Proportion

<b>Objective: Retention of plot widths in East and West High Street</b>
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- 3.8 Proportion is an important consideration in the design of buildings, both within and out with the Conservation Area. Since the Renaissance both artists and architects have used the golden rectangle (also known as the Golden Section or Mean) to proportion their work. The Golden Section is the ratio of the longer side to the shorter site and which this proportion is believed to be the most aesthetically pleasing. The ratio is approximately 0.618 to 1.

- 3.9 The ratio can be used in whole or part of a building and can include elements such as windows or doors, or the amount of solid wall to openings for windows and doors. The process for finding the ratio is shown below.



Construction of a golden rectangle:

1. Construct a unit square.
2. Draw a line from the midpoint of one side to an opposite corner.
3. Use that line as the radius to draw an arc that defines the long dimension of the rectangle.

- 3.10 In particular in the Conservation Area any new buildings or extensions to existing buildings should seek to replicate proportions already found within the area and this would include elements such as window openings as well as the overall building design.

### Scale

**Objective: increased scale and verticality at The Cross which continues in two and three storey form where this is the predominant form**

- 3.11 Scale relates to the size of the building in relation to its surroundings and the size of an individual element in relation to the size of the other elements. Inappropriate scale and proportion not only relates to the building within the area but also repeatedly within other building elements such as replacement windows or extensions.
- 3.12 It is important that the scale of new buildings and extensions to existing buildings should reflect the scale of buildings generally found within the boundaries of the Conservation Area. Any new development should reinforce the character and appearance of the street frontage in terms of height and scale, and should take its design cues from appropriate buildings in the immediate locality.

- 3.13 Storeys and buildings heights vary throughout the Conservation Area by two and three storeys although in Canmore Street there is a presumption towards one and two storey terraced and semi-detached buildings.

### Building Line

**Objective: Retention of the existing building line**

- 3.14 The building line is the point on a street or road beyond which the buildings tend to not project past. Although buildings do not tend to sit forward of this line it may be acceptable in some circumstances for a building to sit back from it. Within most of the Conservation Area the buildings sit directly on the footpath, with only a limited number, primarily residential, that sit behind a boundary creating a small front garden area.
- 3.15 Any new proposal should take account of the existing building line and this includes the retention of any front garden areas where applicable, including the boundary wall, hedging or planting.

### Materials

**Objective: Retention of existing stone facades within the Conservation Area**

- 3.16 The most important element that helps to unify the townscape, particularly in Forfar where there is wide variety in proportion and scale, is that of the materials and construction methods. Harled or lime washed masonry were probably widespread until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but no front elevations show any traces of either material. It is important therefore that the facades facing onto the main streets i.e. Castle Street, West High Street and East High Street be retained in stonework. In outer lying areas of the town centre, a traditional wet-cement harl would be an acceptable finish. The application of paint or tiled frontages to stonework which remains otherwise in good condition will not be acceptable within the Conservation Area.
- 3.17 Traditional materials include;
- natural slate for roof finishes;
  - natural stone;
  - cast iron for rainwater goods and railings; and
  - timber for windows and doors
- 3.18 Materials for an extension should match the finish on the main building although, in the case of stone buildings where the original stone is unavailable or the cost is prohibitive, an alternative traditional material such as render can be used. Information related to the repair of sandstone walls is contained in Advice Note 30 "Repair to Sandstone Walls".

### Colour

**Objective: Colour should be carefully considered to ensure that it does not detract from the visual aspects of the building or its surroundings**

- 3.19 The use of colour is an important consideration in building elevation and streetscape. Painting schemes should be harmonious and add to the environment rather than detract from and be injurious to the streetscape. In the case of a listed building, painting the facade can be a material alteration which can affect the character of the Conservation Area. Colour can significantly alter features or proportions which can in turn make the building and its surroundings seem off balance and inharmonious. This relates not only to stonework and

facades but also to smaller features such as windows and doors. It also includes details such as letter on shopfronts.

- 3.20 Stonework which has not already been painted should not be painted in the future. Paint schemes should be carefully considered, including for smaller fascia panels, as this can detract from the overall appearance.

### Roof Design

<b>Objective: Retention of traditional roof features and materials</b>
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- 3.21 The central area of Forfar has an interesting roovescape, formed by the organic layout of street levels and buildings of varying heights. A good example can be seen from an elevated position looking northwards from The Vennel into the backland area of East High Street.
- 3.22 The majority of roofs are pitched, the ridgeline running parallel to the street with outbuildings to the rear running at right angles along the former "rigg" boundaries. A few buildings remain as "gable-endies", such as 31 and 82 East High Street, and 1 Albion Place facing on to the main street and forming the end gable of a perpendicular row of buildings.
- 3.23 Most roof finishes are of traditional Scotch or blue (Welsh) slates, the former laid traditionally in diminishing courses, on the street elevation of the buildings. To the rear, particularly on outbuildings, stone slated roofs are a common feature but are, in many cases, in derelict condition or having been removed altogether and are therefore becoming increasingly rare. Those roofs which have survived were laid originally dry hung only by oak pegs although some have been pointed with lime mortar along the edges. These historic roof materials are important in a local context and every endeavour should be made to retain, or reinstate traditional stone slated roofs where feasible
- 3.24 Modern concrete tiles have, in some instances, replaced the traditional local materials but are never an acceptable substitute within a Conservation Area and should not be used. Second hand slates are an acceptable alternative and can be recycled from stock piled supplies
- 3.25 A feature which contributes to the character of roofs is the tabling above the gables and party walls; this feature should be maintained where in existence, and considered as part of any new design proposals.
- 3.26 The varying topography, the juxtaposition of the buildings, the use of traditional materials and features and varying building heights all collectively add interest to the street scene.
- 3.27 Where a traditional dormer pattern exists this should be maintained. Permission will not normally be given to enlarge or alter an existing original dormer, or to add one which does not conform to the original pattern. Permission is only likely to be given for roof lights on front roof slopes, if appropriate, where they would not affect the appearance of the street. In such circumstances the roof lights should be small, traditionally designed, flush fitting and have slim cast iron or steel frames. Only one would normally be acceptable, and its position should relate to the windows below.

### Rainwater Goods

<b>Objective: Rainwater goods should be retained or replaced with traditional forms rather than UPVC and retained in a darker colour such as black</b>
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- 3.28 Rainwater goods are important to help remove water from the roofs on buildings and take it away from the base of the building.



- 3.29 Traditionally rainwater goods were manufactured in cast iron with gutters shaped into a half round or ogee shape and laid to a fall. The gutters were fixed either using 'drive in' brackets, which were inserted into the wall and carried the gutters along the eaves, or attached to brackets fixed to a timber fascia board. Downpipes were fixed vertically to the wall using collars and discharged the water into gullies. Hoppers, either plain or with some form of decoration, were often placed at the junction between the gutter and the downpipe.
- 3.30 It is acceptable to use either cast iron or heavy duty cast metal for rainwater goods. Extruded aluminium is very light and easily damaged and therefore considered inappropriate. UPVC is not acceptable as it is not an historic or traditional material. The proper maintenance and upkeep of traditional rainwater goods will avoid decay and unnecessary replacement.
- 3.31 Rainwater goods should be clearly specified on applications as cast iron or cast aluminium, painted in a dark colour, usually black. The positions of any soil vent pipe, (SVP), or other pipes should be clearly marked on drawings accompanying the planning application.

### Chimneys

<b>Objective: Retention of traditional roof features and materials</b>
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- 3.32 Chimney heads were formed originally in stone but where they have been replaced, many have been rebuilt in facing brick. Whilst either material is historically accurate, it would not be acceptable to truncate any existing chimney stack, even if the flues are not in use, where it forms an important feature of the building and the roofscape. There remain a number of wallhead chimney features throughout the central area, which dominate and contribute to the overall architectural quality of the buildings.
- 3.33 Whilst all chimney stacks should be retained, if there is a structural reason why one requires to be taken down, it should normally be rebuilt to match exactly the style, proportion and detailing of the original. Adding chimney stacks of the correct scale and proportion to new works is also important to retain the particular character of the streetscape.

### Windows

<b>Objective: Reinstatement of the traditional window patterns throughout the Conservation Area</b>
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- 3.34 Window details are important to the character of any modern or traditional building but particularly so in relation to their wider impact on the Conservation Area. The character of any historic building or area is reinforced by the continued use of traditional windows, the vast majority of which are timber sliding sash and case types, contemporary with the building period. Many original windows have survived but in some cases have fallen into disrepair only to be replaced rather than overhauled upon any upgrading of the property. Common to all other areas, the installation of poorly designed and unsuitable replacement windows can have an adverse impact on the overall character. Further information on the Council's adopted policy on replacement windows can be obtained from Advice Note No. 9 "Window Alterations".
- 3.35 Replacement windows in general, should reinstate the original sash and case appearance of traditional windows. Most window and door openings are formed with surrounding margins either in painted render or in decorative stonework.
- 3.36 Although of varying architectural styles and periods, one common factor is the vertical emphasis of the window openings – small squat windows in buildings of pre-1800, taller grand windows of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The upper floor windows of 28-32 Castle Street/Queen Street elevations in particular, retain unusual four over four square paned

window sashes from the mid 1840's. Every endeavour should be made to reinstate the original window patterns, particularly on the main public elevations.

- 3.37 There may be an opportunity to insert double glazing in any building if new windows have to be installed. It will not always be possible to replicate the same design in timber framed windows to include double glazing, particularly if there are glazing bars and therefore double glazed timber sash and case windows may not always be possible. Where the original windows have been removed in the past the reinstatement of timber windows to the original pattern would enhance both the character and appearance of the building and the Conservation Area. Where double glazed units are not possible, windows can be just as efficient regarding air permeability, watertightness, wind resistance, thermal performance and noise resistance through adequate draughtproofing. Further information relating to windows is contained in Advice Note 9 "Window Alterations".
- 3.38 Upper floor windows particularly above shop fronts should have a vertical emphasis and should follow the recommendations for windows in residential areas.
- 3.39 Dormers should also be of vertical proportion with a traditional pitched and slated roof. Large wide dormers are not considered appropriate as the scale and proportion is not traditional to the area (see also section on Roof Design).

## Doors

**Objective: Retention of existing traditional doors or replacement with replication of original design or that reflects the design style of the building**

- 3.40 Where there are existing doors they should be retained and if new doors are required, these should replicate the original if it exists in any form or be of a style that reflects the design style of the main building.
- 3.41 The correct style of ironmongery should be used for all historic entrance doors. Modern lever handles are not acceptable nor are modern materials such as stainless steel. Cast iron, brass and bronze are all acceptable. Letterboxes, handles, knobs and knockers should complement the style of the entrance door.
- 3.42 Timber entrance doors to residential properties should be painted an opaque colour. Bold colours look best including black and white.
- 3.43 The style of every external door, the material, colour and ironmongery should be specified on every application. UPVC doors are not considered appropriate within the Conservation Area.
- 3.44 Existing door widths should not be altered and alternative arrangements may be needed to accommodate disabled access where possible. Steps to front entrance doors may be relocated to allow the discrete positioning of a ramp.

## Gardens, Open Spaces and Trees

**Objective: Protection of defined spaces**

- 3.45 On the whole there is a sense of enclosure in the winding nature of streets/vista stops. There are still some important pedestrian routes/walkways throughout town which still have some traditional surfacing and walls. This is found in The Vennel/ Osnaburg Street/Little Causeway/West High Street/Castle Street and into Myre Car Park. These defined spaces should be protected from intrusive development.

- 3.46 Areas of open space and other natural landscape elements should be retained. Development will not normally be permitted which will result in the loss of, or have a detrimental impact, on the quality of these natural features.
- 3.47 Although there are no tree preservation orders within the Conservation Area it is important that trees and other landscaping features, which have developed over the years, are not lost to development. They are part of the sense of place which is created when the built form and natural elements combine together.

### **Walls, Railings and other forms of enclosure**

<b>Objective: Retention of walls and railings</b>
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- 3.48 The predominance of stone boundary walls throughout the town centre, many of which are former "rigg" boundaries, is an essential part of the areas character and unifies the historic townscape. Built of rubble sandstone, often one and a half to two metres in height, these walls create a sense of enclosure and delineate private and public boundaries. Examples can be seen to the rear of 6-14 The Cross, Coulties Wynd, between Manor Street and Myre Road and particularly to the rear of properties in East High Street. A number of these walls along Queen Street have however been removed or altered to make way for vehicular accesses and infill redevelopment. Where possible this should be avoided.
- 3.49 It is common for building walls, gatepiers and railings to be included in any list description pertaining to a listed building and therefore are covered by the protection offered from the listing status and any alteration would be the subject of consent requirements.

### **Roads and Pavements**

<b>Objective: Retention/reinstatement of traditional street surfacing in select areas</b>
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- 3.50 Streets are the foreground of our buildings and the backdrop to everyday lives. Streets cluttered with traffic signs, bins, bollards, guard rails and street furniture result in streetscapes that are both unsightly and lack character.
- 3.51 Retaining historic features keeps the streets individuality and helps create a sense of place. It can contribute to regeneration. Investing in quality solutions reduces maintenance costs and makes cleaning easier.
- 3.52 The traditional stone "setts" or "cassies" which were a feature of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Forfar have all but been removed or covered over. A few original examples remain in the town centre, such as around the Cross but all main thoroughfares have been black-topped/tarmaced. Manor Street was probably the last street to have the setts removed in the mid 1980's.
- 3.53 Whilst it would be desirable to reinstate the original street surfacing this is unlikely to be pragmatic in view of traffic management and disruption to main thoroughfares in the town centre but careful consideration should be given when considering the undertaking any similar works.

### **Street Furniture**

<b>Objective: Retention of traditional street furniture</b>
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- 3.54 Any new street furniture should complement the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and be consistent in appearance. Contemporary design, provided it is of a high quality and complements its context can be used.

- 3.55 Existing historic materials and traditional street furniture should be retained wherever possible. Any redundant signs should be removed unless they relate directly to the Conservation Area.
- 3.56 Traffic calming measures should be fitted sensitively into the street-scene as though they were part of the original design of the area. These should involve minimal interference with the existing streetscape and use traditional materials.
- 3.57 Environmental improvements should enhance local distinctiveness and reinforce those qualities which make an area special. The most modest schemes are usually the most successful in reinforcing a sense of place.

### Listed Buildings

**Objective: Protection of both the individual building and its group form**

- 3.58 Most of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings around the Cross, Osnaburg Street, Little Causeway and West High Street are listed, mainly Category 'B', both individually and as a group. The group listing emphasises not only the collective importance of the individual buildings but the cohesive nature of the townscape in a wider sense. Details of the listed buildings in the Conservation Area which are contained on the Statutory List are listed in Appendix 2.

### Ancillary Developments

**Objective: Unobtrusive placement of ancillary development**

- 3.59 All ancillary development, for example, garages, fire escapes, satellite dishes, burglar alarms etc., should be designed so as not to detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 3.60 Satellite dishes and burglar alarms should be positioned as discreetly as possible. Acceptable positions for satellite dishes can generally be found, often concealed in gardens or within roof valleys, in preference to obtrusive positioning on front elevations or on roof ridges. Advice Note 12 "Satellite Antennae" contains information relating to the positioning of satellite dishes.
- 3.61 Alarm boxes are best located at the highest corner, just under the eaves, with the box painted the same colour as the wall.

### Micro Renewable Energy Equipment

**Objective: Consideration of location and effect on the building's appearance**

- 3.62 An historic environment is significant but also sensitive to change and the location of solar panels must sit harmoniously within the environment.
- 3.63 Solar panels can be set vertically, on roof slopes, on outbuildings or in the grounds of a property. In general, as solar panels will change the appearance of a building or structure even where a slim-line panel is used, care should be taken when locating them. Where possible, solar panels should be sited on the rear roofs of buildings. It is preferable to locate panels in less intrusive locations to minimise the visual impact on the building and on the street scene. Providing that the panel is not overshadowed it will still provide the necessary energy required.

### Shops and commercial frontages

**Objective: Shopfronts should respect and the form of the building without creating monotony**

- 3.64 The design and appearance of shop fronts play an essential role in ensuring that diversity and vitality continues by improving perception of the public realm. In this way they contribute significantly to the local economy. Where original good quality shop fronts exist, they should be retained. Planning permission may be given to replace shop fronts that are of inappropriate design or beyond repair.
- 3.65 Reference to a shop front includes all ground floor premises with a fascia sign and/or window display, including non-retail uses such as banks, building societies, estate agents, cafes, bars, restaurants, hot food takeaways and launderettes.
- 3.66 A good shop front should respect, but does not need to copy, the scale, proportion and architecture of the building above it, so that it forms an integral part of the building. Each frontage may, therefore, be separate with its own individual style, but should respect the form of the building above and frontages to each side; this gives the shopping street rhythm and harmony without monotony.
- 3.67 The key to achieving a good shop front design is proportion. The design may be traditional or contemporary but the elements which make up the shop front must be correctly proportioned and detailed. Shop fronts should be constructed in timber or powder coated aluminium, although the stall riser, or base of the window, should be constructed in solid masonry to keep any timber off the ground and protect it from decay. Advice Note 2 "Shopfronts and Signs in Conservation Areas" provides further information and advice on this topic. Also see Advice Note 10 "Shop Window Security" which contains information regarding security for listed and unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas.

### Advertisements

**Objective: High standard, traditional format with clear lettering in scale with the fascia panel and overall shopfront**

- 3.68 All outdoor advertising affects the appearance of the building or place where it is displayed. Advertisements should contribute in a positive way to the appearance of an attractive and cared-for environment.
- 3.69 Fascia signs and other advertisements should be of a high standard of design and be of a traditional format with clear lettering in scale with the fascia panel and that of the overall shopfront. Freestanding lettering applied directly to the masonry is often less incongruous. No advertisements should be positioned above the ground floor fascia level. Internally illuminated fascia signs and the illumination of signs using backlighting are not appropriate. Hand painted and raised lettering signs may be illuminated by discreetly sited washdown lighting. Further advice is contained in Advice Note 2 "Shopfronts and Signs in Conservation Areas".

### Safeguarding Views

**Objective: Safeguarding of views in and through the conservation area, particularly in relation to vista points**

- 3.70 Views and aspects need to be taken account of when considering development proposals. The height and/or building line of new development may detract from the character of the area or make the existing view inharmonious or disproportionate. It is thought that many of the vista points, usually buildings of significance, were placed within that aspect to signify their importance. These important views are shown in Appendix 4.

**CONCLUSION**

- 4.0 Angus Council is committed to work with all matters relating to conservation of the historic built environment. A dedicated conservation section deal with a wide variety of aspects relating to listed buildings and the management of conservation areas.
- 4.1 Forfar is important in the development of Angus. The Conservation Area located within the heart of Forfar holds important architectural and historic importance. The Conservation Area in Forfar is defined by a number of elements and small changes to any of the elements can result in the character being eroded. Therefore it is vital to control any potential development in the Conservation Area in the future to ensure that the character and appearance of the area is preserved and enhanced.
- 4.2 The design guidance set out in the document, along with the character appraisal allow for a better of understanding of the Conservation Area, emphasising the important features and how best to ensure that changes and new development do not have an adverse effect on the area. The information contained in this document, along with the relevant legislation and policy should be used to guide any development within the Forfar Conservation Area.

