

# LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

## ST FILLANS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL October 2011

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

St Fillans is a picturesque village located on the banks of Loch Earn at the north-eastern corner of the National Park. The resurvey of listed buildings by Historic Scotland, and work carried out by the National Park Authority as part of the review of Conservation Areas highlighted the special historic and architectural interest of St Fillans.

The purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal is to define and evaluate the special qualities and architectural and historic interest of St Fillans with a view to Conservation Area designation. The appraisal process has involved researching the areas historical development (Section 6), and carrying out a detailed character appraisal (Section 7) and character assessment (Section 8) leading to the identification of the conservation areas key features.(Section 9) Key features are the elements which should be considered when preparing development proposals for the St Fillans Conservation Area. The Appraisal also identifies key challenges where improvements are required (Section 9) and opportunities for preservation and enhancement (Section 10).

The Appraisal also provides a basis on which to prepare ongoing management and enhancement programmes as well as determining funding priorities.

# 2 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Cs) (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended by the Historic Environment (Amendment) Scotland Act 2011) states that conservation areas “are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The designation of a conservation area is a means to safeguard and enhance the special qualities, character and appearance of our most valued historic places. The National Park Authority, as Planning Authority, is required to identify and designate such areas. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) February 2010 contains the Scottish Government’s over-arching policies on land-use planning, including conservation areas and encourages local planning authorities to prepare conservation area appraisals. This is reinforced in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) July 2009.

Additional guidance is included in Planning Advice Note 71: Conservation Area Management which complements national policy and provides further advice on the management of conservation areas.

The National Park Plan 2007-2012 contains Built Heritage policies and objectives and identifies Conservation Area Review and Appraisal as a priority for conserving and creating a stronger affinity with the historic built heritage. This has been implemented through the preparation of the Local Plan and is reinforced in the Historic and Built Environment policies contained within the National Park Local Plan which guide day to day planning decisions. The emerging new Park Plan for the period 2012 – 2017 (issued for consultation in August 2011) emphasised the importance of the Park’s built heritage and includes priorities actions. Approved Conservation Area Appraisals will be regarded as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Plan and will complement the Authorities Sustainable Design Guide which is due to be adopted soon.

### 3 SUMMARY OF HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

St Fillans is a small planned estate village which has grown through tourist interest, but has maintained its unique character. This picturesque lochside village enjoys a spectacular landscape setting, and responds to the topography of its site in a sensitive and charming manner. Its main street is lined with a mixture of small cottages and later Victorian development with gabled fronts and decorative bargeboards, all of which are generally well maintained, set within well stocked gardens. There is a good representation of local architectural interest in the numerous buildings by George T Ewing, the Drummond Estate architect during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Historical figures, such as St Fillan and Sir Walter Scott, are associated with the village and the surroundings area, and are recognised as important in a national context. The Conservation Area contains 9 Listed Buildings.

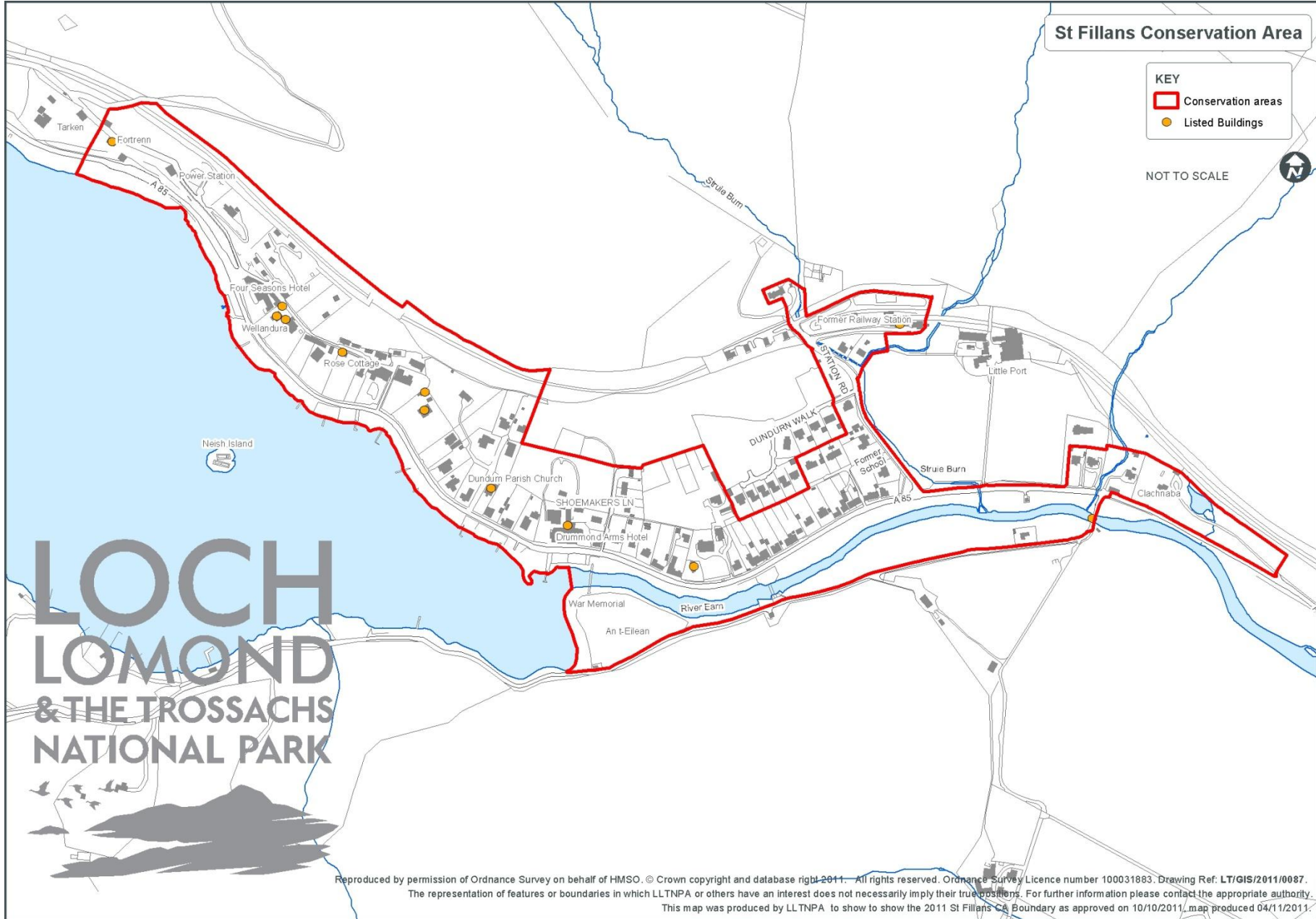
### 4 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

Following completion of the Conservation Area Appraisal, it was concluded that St Fillans merited designation as a Conservation Area of special architectural or historic significance.

The St Fillans Conservation Area was designated in November 2011 on adoption of the National Park Local Plan. The Conservation Area boundary is set out on page 5.

The boundary primarily includes the early cottage and Victorian villa developments which together contribute to the village's special character. Later developments such as Dundurn Walk and the A-framed properties to the west of the former station have been omitted.

The southern boundary follows the shore of Loch Earn from Tarken in the west, taking in the jetties. The boundary heads south to include the pedestrian bridge leading to An t-Eilean and the War Memorial and South Shore Road. It follows South Shore Road eastwards to include the old bridge before joining the A85 where it continues eastwards along the northern side of the road to the eastern entrance drive to Clachnaba. The boundary then turns west incorporating the garden of Clachnaba and round the garden of Cruachan before rejoining the northern side of the A85. It continues west following the southern boundary of the Little Port fields turning north to take in the former station buildings and the west side of Station Road. It then follows the property boundaries to the rear of the buildings fronting the A85 to the point where they bound the railway embankment. The boundary then follows the northern side of the railway embankment to Tarken.



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 This map was produced by LLTNPA to show to show the 2011 St Fillans CA Boundary as approved on 10/10/2011, map produced 04/11/2011.

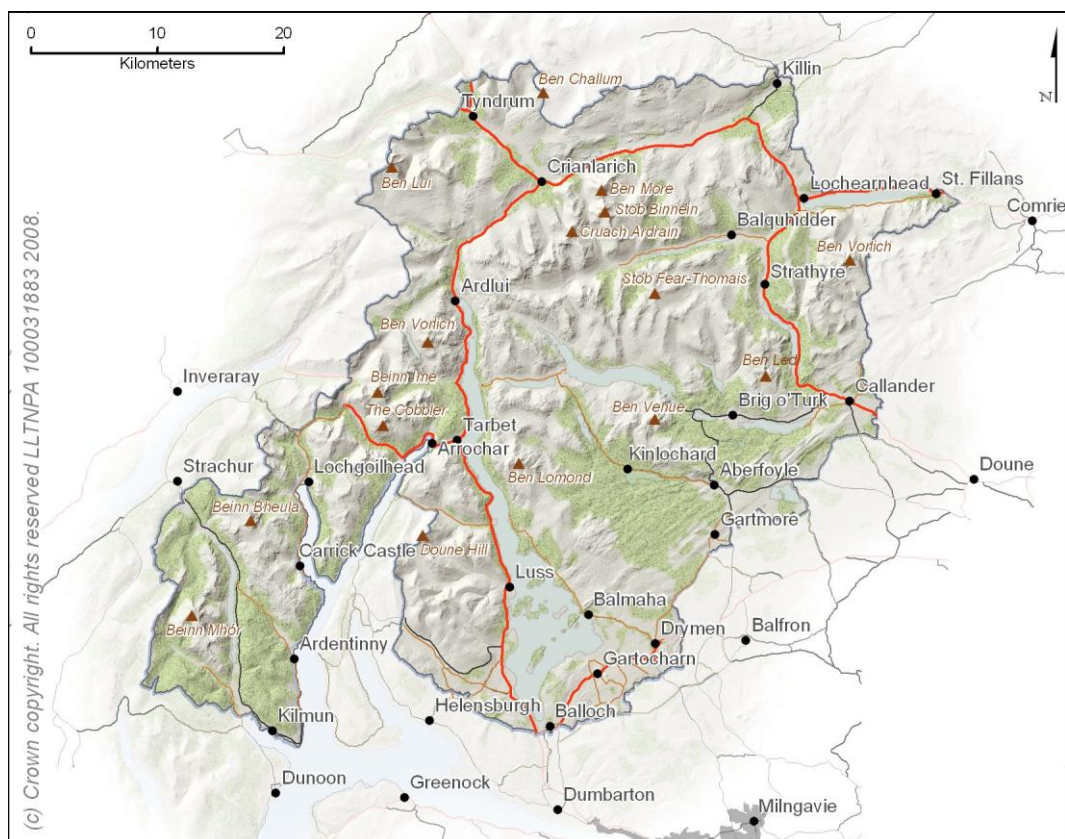
## Reasons for Location

The setting of St Fillans is characterised by a broad expanse of loch flanked by steep hills to the north and south. The physical landscape is defined by long glens and surrounding open hills. The establishment of an early settlement at St Fillans was primarily due to natural land forms making the site of defensive and strategic significance, focussing transportation routes along the glen floor leading to its emergence as a trading centre. The area is also widely associated with mediaeval religious sites related to Saint Fillan.

The village is set at the eastern end of Loch Earn at the point where the River Earn flows from the loch. The settlement is bounded by the shore of the loch and the river bank to the south and is largely enclosed within the sweep of the former railway embankment to the north. Glentarken Wood forms the immediate northern backdrop to the village, and behind that, the outcrops and moorland hills of Meall nam Fiadh and Meall Reamhar, rising to over 600m. On the opposite side of Loch Earn, Ben Vorlich rises to nearly 1000m, dominating views to the south.

St Fillans is 6 miles west of Comrie on the A85 to Lochearnhead, Crianlarich and Oban. It is a small village with a single shop, but nevertheless an important tourist centre for outdoor activities with several hotels.

**Map 1: Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park**



## **Geology**

The geology of the area is characterised by Dalradian metamorphic rock in the form of mica slate. Glaciers carved the steep sides and basin of Loch Earn, leaving behind typical glacial features and deposits. The loch is 7 miles long and almost a mile wide in places, narrowing to a point at St Fillans. It has its own “tidal” system, technically “seiching” or oscillations caused by the pressure applied to the water surface by prevailing winds.

## **Topography**

The village has a distinctive topography, mainly utilising the gently sloping area between the shoreline/river bank and the steep hills behind. At the west end of the village, houses such as Fortrenn are set high up on the bank above the road. From the west, the shore of Loch Earn curves outwards to the beginning of the river, and then the river bank curves inwards toward the old bridge. These double curves of the southern boundary are matched by the broad sweeping curve of the former railway line to the north, which acts as a man-made boundary to the settlement.



## 6 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

### Early History

It possible early settlers made their home on the manmade island or crannog located just off shore.

Remnants of a 7<sup>th</sup> century Pictish fort survives on the crown of the craggy hill of Dundurn -also known as Hill of St Fillans or Dunfillan - to the south-east of the village. It was named after the Saint who is believed to have lived here - either the 8<sup>th</sup> century Irish saint or the 6<sup>th</sup> century Celtic St Faolean the Leper. Also between the village and Dundurn, are the ruins of St Fillans Chapel, which date from 1300 but there may have been an earlier building on the site from Pictish times. The churchyard is the ancestral burial ground for the Stewarts of Ardvorlich,

### Mediaeval History

A castle was built on the island by the Clan MacNeish who occupied it from 1250 until mid 15thC. The island became known as Neish Island. In 1612 the MacNabs attacked,killing the chief and most of the clan.

### 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> Century

Timothy Pont's late 16<sup>th</sup> century map depicts settlements, plantations, a port, a mill and an island fortress (Loch Earn Castle) at the eastern end of Loch Earn and "Doundarn" south of the River Earn. John Adair's map of 1683 also shows a port on the north shore and the island fortress, and marks Dundurn fort and "St Phillins" Chapel south of the river. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century a small clachan known as Port of Lochearn, Portmore or Meikleport consisting of a few thatched cottages and a distillery, had developed in the location of the current village. A bridge below Little Port is first shown on George Taylor and Andrew Skinner's road map and survey of 1776.

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The later development of the village was a result of its re-foundation by the Drummond Estate in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The name "St Fillans" was established for the village in 1817 by Lord Gwydyr, husband of the Drummond Estate heiress Clementina Drummond. It was derived from the nearby chapel dedicated to St Fillan, The new village was described by the schoolmaster, John Brown: *"It consists of a single row of houses or villas, in extent upwards of half a mile, and for the most part slated; of which several are two stories in height. But that which will forcibly arrest the stranger's attention, and afford him the greatest pleasure, is the happy way in which the little plots in front of the house are laid out and cultivated."*

The publication of Sir Walter Scott's poem, *The Lady of the Lake*, in 1810 began an influx of visitors to see the stream called Allt Ghoinean to the south of Dundurn fort, claimed to be the inspiration for Monan in the poem.

A small inn was known to exist on the site of the Drummond Arms Hotel in 1817. In 1819 the St Fillans Highland Society was formed resulting in the construction of a hall which was later incorporated into the hotel. The hotel was extended in 1867 and extensively remodelled between 1870 and 1880 with a ballroom finally being added in the late 1890's.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert passed through the village on their tour of Scotland in 1842. As elsewhere on their route, tourists followed the royal precedent, seeking healthy rural retreats during the summer from the towns and cities. In 1856 the Free Church was built, Caledonian Railway Company established coach tours from Crieff in 1872, further fuelling the demand for holiday houses in St Fillans. In that same year a compact well designed villa called Beaconsfield,



later to be known as Wellandura, was built, occupying a prominent position in the village. An ambitious extension to the original feuing plan was drawn up by the Drummond Estate architect, George T Ewing, but it was never implemented. However, his proposed church, now Dundurn Parish Church, was built to a modified design with a distinctive onion dome in 1878.

## **20<sup>th</sup> Century – present**

The arrival of the railway in 1901 had a dramatic effect on the social and physical character of the village, bringing day-trippers and introducing the associated cuttings, embankments, bridges, tunnels, viaducts, signal box and station to the backdrop of the village. The railway continued to Lochearnhead in 1904 and Balquhiddel c1905 but finally closed in 1951 leaving numerous railway buildings which are now incorporated into a caravan park. The *Annals of St Fillans*, written by Alexander Porteous in 1912, reported that of the old villas described by John Brown in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, only two or three remained. The rest had “*given way to more ornate and commodious residences*”. The Free Church was sold to the Episcopal Church in 1936 and later converted to residential use in 2005.

The Hydro-electric Power Station, a major, but largely invisible, structure buried in the hillside at the western end of the village was built in 1957 and refurbished in 2002.

The local primary school closed in 2004 and is now being converted to residential use.

A number of new private houses and holiday properties have been constructed during the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century within the existing built-up area. A new residential development of large luxury homes, known as Dundurn Walk, was completed in 2011. It occupies a site to the west of Station Road. The field to the north of Dundurn Walk has planning consent for further residential development and incorporates a large stone which traditionally houses the fairies that protect the village.

## **Historic Pattern of Land Use**

Forestry and farming are the predominant land uses surrounding the village and at Little Port. The village buildings have always primarily had a residential use, and in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century housing for estate workers. Residential use still predominates, but there are also significant tourism-related uses such as holiday letting, guest houses and hotels and provision for water-related activities on the Loch.

A major industrial land use, the hydro-electric power station, is largely hidden from view underground.

## 7 CHARACTER APPRAISAL

### Landscape and Surroundings

St Fillans is set in a spectacular mountainous and loch-side location at the point where the River Earn begins its 46-mile journey to join the River Tay. Typifying the romantic vision of the Highland village, St Fillans has long drawn visitors to enjoy its picturesque natural setting and the reputed healing powers of St Fillan's Well and St Fillan's Chair on top of the Dunfillan or Dundurn

*"We passed along Loch Earn, which is a very beautiful long lake skirted by high mountains; but is not so long or so large as Loch Tay. Just as we turned and went by St. Fillans, the view of the lake was very fine. There is a large detached rock with rich verdure on it, which is very striking."* Queen Victoria, *Highland Journals*, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1842.

### Street Pattern

The main road follows the course of the river and northern shore of the loch with smaller subsidiary roads such as Shoemaker's Lane branching northwards linked by a series of footpaths. South Shore Road mirrors the route of the river continuing westwards along the south shore of Loch Earn. A footpath links South Shore Road via a pedestrian bridge to the centre of the village. Station Road, as the name suggests, provided access to the former railway station from the main road and also serves the Dundurn Walk cul-de-sac which lies just outwith the Conservation Area. At the west end of the village two minor, partially surfaced roadways branch from a single access point from the A85, one travelling west up the hill and the other going east both running parallel to the A85.

### Plot Pattern

The original plot pattern is characterised by the well maintained single storey cottage plots primarily positioned along the main road with small front gardens in front and long feus behind. The later villa developments occupy much larger plots with the fine properties set back from the road with in spacious grounds. The largest plots are now occupied by hotels.

### Open Space

There are no formal planned public spaces in St Fillans. Perhaps the closest to a public space is the small garden and viewpoint at the War Memorial at An t-Eilean. A small community garden has also been established at the corner of the main road and Station Road. A public right-of-way runs to the north of the Dundurn Walk development. To its west and to the rear of the Drummond Arms Hotel an open area of green space, part of which is utilised as a small football pitch and part of the remainder, a former caravan site, has planning permission for housing.

Well kept grassed areas of amenity open space including small shrubs, trees and planters, stretch along the south side of the main road along the northern bank of the river and north shore of the loch. These areas also incorporate lay-bys, information boards and seating. Dozing ducks often share the area with visitors admiring the view,

Two further large fields stand outside the settlement boundary below Little Port Farm, between Station Road and Cruachan. These fields are currently in use for grazing and have a low stone wall as a boundary along the A85. Both areas of field slope gently up towards trees at the base of the railway embankment.

## **Views and Landmarks**

Long views to and from St Fillans are some of the finest in the National Park. The approach from the west along the A85 offers distant glimpses of the Four Seasons Hotel at the entrance to the village. Views to the village from the south shore of the loch are dominated by the Drummond Arms Hotel. Entering from the east, there are good views across the field at Little Port, and approaching the centre, the villas east of Ardsheean make a particularly attractive grouping. Any elevated position around the village offers exceptional views of both the village and its highland setting. Views out of the village to the loch and surrounding hills are good from many locations with reflections in the loch of the village streetscape and backdrop being particularly stunning on a calm day. The view along Loch Earn from the War Memorial at An t-Eilean is particularly notable due to the combination of the southern lochshore woodlands with distinctive wooded knolls with the waters edge and being enclosed by a steep mountain backdrop. The views are strongly affected by the season and time of day.

## **Activity and Movement**

The principal area of activity and movement is the main A85 road, which runs the length of St Fillans. Much of the activity is vehicular, and a considerable proportion of that is through-traffic in both directions. However there is also significant pedestrian use of the area to access facilities such as the village shop, church, hotels and jetties. The speed of through-traffic on the main road is noted as a problem in the Community Action Plan (2008-2011), and in several places the sinuous nature of the road does not allow clear sightlines for crossing.

Recreational use of the loch, particularly during the summer, generates increased economic activity and physical movement in the village and around the jetties. It also presents problems in terms of noise and litter.

## **Architectural Character**

The predominant building type is the detached cottage or villa, and most have large gardens to the front or rear. The larger houses and gardens are located at the west end of the village, some retaining former service buildings such as stables. Generally alterations, and extensions have been sympathetically carried out, are well designed and use traditional materials.

The earliest cottages, such as Rose Cottage, Shoemaker's Cottage and White Cottage, are single storey in origin and very simply detailed with slated roofs, broad gablehead chimneys and "thackstones" – stones built into the chimney to hold down the original thatch. The entrance is centrally located with traditional sash and case windows positioned on either side. Walls are either stone or rendered white. The boundaries to these attractive properties vary some with low rubble walls, hedging, or small timber fences.

The mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses however are larger and more decorative. Many have overhanging timber eaves and decorative bargeboards typical of the "picturesque cottage style" used widely by the Drummond Estate and promoted by contemporary architectural journals and pattern books of the time. These well maintained houses are mainly of one and a half storeys, with gabled dormers. Ard Choille and Craigdarroch are more fully 2-storey. Slate roofs predominate and walls tend to be squared whin rubble many with sandstone dressings, the painted Ard Choille being a notable exception. Features such as conical corner towers, cast iron finials, stone gate piers, fine cast iron railings and decorative gates all contribute to the richness of the architectural character. Almost every house has at least one chimney and chimney-pot, which, with the variety of dormers and gables, contribute significantly to the variety and interest of the village roofscape. Many of the large villas retain original outhouses,

The Drummond Arms Hotel dominates the village centre due to its size and Italianate belvedere tower. The survival of substantial coach house and stables to the rear of the hotel contributes to its architectural significance within the village. Opposite, and to the east of the hotel, the simple sweeping lines of the metal pedestrian bridge provide access to the south bank of the river,

contrasting with the more solid appearance of the 18<sup>th</sup> century stone bridge linking South Shore Road with the A85.

The white rendered Four Seasons Hotel dominates the western approach but has been considerably altered over the years with window openings enlarged and the building extended.

The former school and school house is traditionally constructed and detailed with rubble walls, red ashlar dressings and slate roof. Its domestic scale means that it blends in to the residential character of the surrounding area.

The churches are of individual design, each contributing to the streetscape of St Fillans.

“Dundurn Parish Church is a picturesque ...carefully detailed church ...distinctive because of the vivid red bargeboarding and yellow dressings against the dark whinstone of the walls. ....An ashlar plaque to the upper central gable is inscribed, `ERECTED/1878' The gable is topped by a small, square plan bell-cote, with slatted timber sides and a piended roof with weather vane. ....The use of colour is very important to the architecture of the church, allowing the design to remain very simple yet still striking.” (Extract from Historic Scotland’s Statutory List Description)

The gothic former Free Church (now converted to a house) is boldly detailed with gablehead bellcote, and large skewputts. The principal openings have chamfered corners. Due to its elevated position above the main road it commands a prominent position within the village

St Fillans railway heritage is well preserved with the former station buildings located around the remnants of a disused platform including single-storey booking office with half-timbered walls on brick base, double gable and decorative cast-iron brackets supporting corrugated iron canopy, Italianate signal box with round-arched windows and deep eaves; timber waiting room; and channelled concrete retaining walls to station entrance.

The use of corrugated iron can also be found on a number of buildings and roofs around the village.

The simple design of the public toilets building at Tarken is enhanced with by the stone wall detailing.

On the loch side, the visual impact of the Hydro- electric Power Station is minimised due its location within the hillside.

## **Public Realm**

Late 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the village indicate loosely bonded aggregate surfaces rather than setts or stone paving with no street lighting or other street furniture apart from a water pump. The modern road and pavement surfaces are of tarmac, and the village is lit from end to end along the A85, partly by freestanding lighting columns and partly by combined power and lighting poles. Not all roads are adopted by Perth & Kinross Council and some remain unsurfaced. Signage is not intrusive.

Extensive areas of guard rails and gabions are located in the vicinity of the Hydro Electric Power Station on the western approach to the village. Gabions are also located various points along the loch shore in an attempt to halt erosion.

Public car parking within the village takes the form of lay-by’s located along the south side of the A85. Not all have a tarmac surface. Seating and rubbish bins are prominently located on the lochside.

## Townscape Detail

The following contribute to the enrichment of the Conservation Areas character :

- Windows - A large number of buildings retain their original timber sash and case windows,
- Doors - Traditional panelled and tongue and grooved timber doors survive, Some retain original door furniture, such as door handles, letterboxes, doorbell pulls and key plates.
- Rainwater goods -Many buildings retain original or early cast-iron rainwater goods, some of which are decorative.
- Slate Roofs – The high proportion of buildings retaining traditional slate roofs is an important feature of St Fillans and contributes to the special historical character of the area.
- Rosemary Tiles – small red tiles contrast with the predominate slate and can be found on the Station booking office and occasional residential property.
- Crowstepped gables – found on boat house at Craigdarroch with stone ball finial
- Decorative Cast Iron – Fine original decorative cast-iron boundary railings survive, notably at Achray Cottage and Wellandura. Decorative finials on roofs and dormers are also important roofscape features.
- Boundary Walls and Gatepiers – rubble walls of varying heights are found throughout the village, some reinforced with hedging. Gate piers mark the entrance to the larger properties.
- Timber fencing – low vertical timber fencing can be found along the frontage of properties to the main road.
- Dormers – vary in design and size and are an important characteristic of properties in the Conservation Area
- Porches – various styles include those with pitched slated roofs and tree-trunk supports to pitched slated roofs, glazed with masonry walls or glazed timber lean-to's .
- Victorian Post boxes and lamps
- Decorative bargeboards are distinctive features on some properties
- Towers and turrets provide features of interest and clearly identify buildings of townscape significance
- Bellcotes – bells are visible at both church buildings
- The movement and sound of running water created by burns running off the hillside, the River Earn and the Loch.

## **Building Materials**

Traditional materials form an essential part of the character of the Conservation Area. Materials such as stone, lime mortar, slate and timber were often sourced locally and put together by local tradesmen and craftsmen in a way that is distinctive to the area. They also provide an insight into the technological and craft skills of previous generations. Using inappropriate materials to repair an old building can harm not only its visual appearance, but also its performance as a wind and watertight structure.

### Stone

Local whin stone laid as rubble courses with dressed stone detailing (lintels, cills, window mullions etc.), forms the principal building material in the village. A few houses are harled or rendered on top of the stone. The traditional method of bonding stone was the use of lime or earth mortars, and renders or harls could be made from similar sources. Lime mortars and harling allowed moisture in the building to evaporate out. Modern repairs using hard cement can trap moisture in the building and cause damage to the surrounding stonework.

### Slate

Roofs are generally pitched in form and slated. There are two principal ways of laying the slates: in regular courses from the bottom to the top of the roof pitch; or more typically in St Fillans in diminishing courses, starting with the largest at the bottom of the slope and the smallest at the top.

The former station buildings and a few villas are unusual in that they are constructed of brick and have rosemary tiled roofs.

## **Orientation and Density**

The main road, the A85, closely follows the shoreline of the loch and the north bank of the River Earn. The buildings along the A85 are located entirely on the north side of the road and are mainly oriented south to maximise the light and views. The south side of the main road along the loch is open in places, although there are some stretches of mature trees and planting between the road and shore. Further east, the area between the road and the river is wooded. At the centre of the village around the Drummond Arms Hotel the buildings lie at the front of the plots with gardens behind. Further west, beyond Ratherenn the houses are situated to the rear of the plots, providing large front gardens. The side streets are laid out at right angles to the main street and the buildings here are oriented either east or west.

Building density is highest on the main road to the east of Ardsheean, where the gaps between the villas are smaller.

## **Condition**

The local community and property owners clearly take great pride in their village with a high level of building occupancy and building maintenance. Repair/conversion work is currently underway at the former village school, and while Rose Cottage still remains unused, permission was granted in 2011 for its extension and renovation.well

## **Natural Heritage and Trees**

### Extent of tree and hedge cover

There are significant individual specimen and groups of trees that form an important part of the character of St Fillans. The approach from the west is heavily planted with a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, some of which relates to the Forestry Commission commercial conifer planting. Other groups of trees are a legacy of the development of the Victorian villas in large designed gardens. At the head of the Loch there are large open grown trees especially oaks which are legacy of policy plantings. The area around the River is more densely wooded and



links via bridges to the wooded southern edge of the Loch. There is a small group of mature cedar trees behind the former Church of the Holy Spirit. The route of the railway was initially planted to soften its impact, and some of these trees appear to survive. At the east end of the village the main road is lined on the north side with a beech hedge and the mature conifers in the garden of Cachnaba.

Nature of any dominant species

Within the proposed Conservation Area there is a good variety of planting with oak trees forming a significant proportion of the cover.

Tree Preservation Orders

There are no tree preservation orders in force within the proposed Conservation Area. However, trees in conservation areas are protected by the Town and Country (Scotland) Act 1972, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The National Park Authority must be given six weeks notice of the intention to uproot, fell or lop trees. Failure to give notice renders the owner liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a TPO.

## 8 CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

### Assessment of Buildings

An important part of character assessment involves the evaluation of buildings, identifying those that make a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

#### Listed buildings

Buildings that are 'listed' have already been assessed by Historic Scotland as being of special architectural or historic interest and are included on the Scottish Ministers Statutory List. Information on the extent of listing and the requirement for listed building consent can be obtained from the National Park Authority.

There are currently 9 listed buildings in the St Fillans Conservation Area, 2 at category B and 7 category C(S) reflecting the regional and more local importance of the architecture.

The following are examples of listed buildings which contribute positively to the appearance of the Conservation Area providing points of interest and enriching the areas special character:

The following are examples of listed buildings which contribute positively to the appearance of the Conservation Area providing points of interest and enriching the areas special character:

- ***The Drummond Arms Hotel***, listed category C(S). The largest and most prominent building in the village. Developed from the village inn, it grew throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, incorporating the hall of the St Fillans Highland Society (formed 1819).
- ***Dundurn Parish Church***, listed category C(S). An appropriately picturesque "cottage" church with painted red bargeboards. Built in 1878 by the Drummond Estate architect, George T Ewing of Crieff, as a "quoad sacra" or supplementary church to the main parish church in Comrie. A separate Dundurn Parish was formed in 1895. Originally, the bell-cote had an unusual onion dome.
- ***Former Church of the Holy Spirit***, listed category C(S). Possibly designed by the leading Perth architects, Andrew Heiton Sr or Jr, in 1856 as a small gothic Free Church and later used as an Episcopal church. Now converted to a house.
- ***Bridge over the River Earn***, category B. This humped-back, 2-arch bridge probably dates to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- ***Former railway station, platforms, signal box and waiting room***, listed category B. Built for the Comrie, St Fillans and Lochearnhead Railway in 1901, and absorbed by the Caledonian Railway Company in 1902. Beautiful ornate cast-iron brackets support the platform canopy. A fine group of railway buildings marking a significant phase in the development of St Fillans.

#### Unlisted Buildings of Townscape Merit

These are buildings which although unlisted make a positive visual contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In St Fillans the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage style properties unify the townscape through their age, design and materials as well as maintaining the visual rhythm created by the doors, windows, chimney stacks domer windows and porches. Similarly the unlisted Victorian developments retain their original character occupying generous plots and well kept grounds reflecting the aspirations of the original Victorian designers.

## **Archaeology**

There has been no systematic archaeological investigation to determine the condition and extent of any surviving archaeological remains within the proposed Conservation Area. There are no scheduled monuments within the boundary of the proposed Conservation Area.

## **Assessment of Areas**

While buildings of various types dominate the Conservation Area they are interspersed with areas of open space and vacant sites. A few grassy sites have planning permission in place for residential development. These green, often wild and natural areas do not significantly detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

## **Assessment of Significance**

St Fillans is a, small planned estate village which has grown through tourist interest, but has maintained its picturesque character. It enjoys a spectacular landscape setting, and responds to the topography of its site in a sensitive and charming manner. Its main street is lined with a mixture of picturesque small cottages and later Victorian development with gabled fronts and decorative bargeboards, all of which are generally well maintained, set within well stocked gardens. There is a good representation of local architectural interest in the numerous buildings by George T Ewing, the Drummond Estate architect during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Historical figures, such as St Fillan and Sir Walter Scott, are associated with the village and the surroundings area, and are recognised as important in a national context. The Conservation Area 9 listed buildings. An overall assessment of St Fillans suggests a moderate regional significance.

## 9. KEY FEATURES AND KEY CHALLENGES

### The Key Features

Following an assessment of buildings, areas and significance it is now possible to identify the key features which define the special architectural and historic character of the Conservation Area. These are considered when determining development applications within the Conservation Area.

- Street Pattern – the long sinuous main road which closely follows the shore of the loch and course of the River Earn with minor roads and lanes branching off at right-angles.
- Plot pattern-variation in size and layout of plots depending on location within the village and age of property.
- Building Line – the older properties on the main road towards the eastern end of the village are built close to the pavement while the larger villas are set back from the street.
- Building Height- is generally defined by the original single, one and half and two storey buildings, with The Drummond Arms Hotel being the exception standing at 3 storeys plus tower.
- Water and Loch shore – in the form of Loch Earn, the River Earn and the Struie Burn. All contribute to the picturesque quality of the village.
- Vernacular Architecture- traditional stone built single and one and half storey cottages with sash and case windows, slate roof, cast iron rainwater goods, chimneys, dormer windows and porches dominate the eastern half of the village.
- Grand Villas – the Victorian villa developments are built on a grand scale within their own spacious grounds.
- Traditional Materials – traditional materials predominate including slate, the local whin stone, sandstone dressings, harling, timber windows and doors, contributing significantly to the character of the Conservation Area. Handcrafted natural materials have many merits including the variety and attractiveness of their appearance, longevity, sustainability, and good weathering qualities.
- Roofline – characterised by the varying heights of chimney stacks, dormer windows and gables, corner features such as conical roofs, bellcotes, finials, and the tower to the Drummond Arms Hotel
- Architectural details – many buildings retain original details such as sash and case windows, traditional timber entrance doors, decorative stonework, leaded glass and ironwork which contribute to the special character of the village.
- Green Character – The large mature villa gardens, the river banks, An t-Eilean, the trees along the route of the former railway line, hedging generally and the well stocked cottage gardens found throughout the Conservation Area play an important part in creating an attractive village setting.
- Boundary treatments including rubble walls of varying heights and timber fencing are important characteristics of the village.

### The Key Challenges

These are inappropriate elements which can detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area and provide opportunities for change;

- Loss of architectural detail - - Original architectural detail makes a defining contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Its retention and repair is therefore an important aspect of the areas preservation and enhancement. The pressure to replace, often in modern materials, rather than repair doors, windows, roofs gates and railings can lead to an erosion of character and this should be avoided if the quality architectural character is to be maintained.
- Use of inappropriate materials.- While the historic fabric is generally in a good state of repair with a limited introduction of modern materials, where it does occur, there is a loss of character. Examples include the replacement of original timber windows with modern plastic substitutes, and the removal of traditional boundary treatments

- Street furniture The provision, design and location of bins along the shore at the western approach to the village needs to be considered. Historically the character of the streetscape was basic, and it would not be appropriate to introduce very highly designed surfaces, furniture, lighting or signage to a rural village such as St Fillans.
- Loch Shore Management Care should be taken in works along the loch shore to prevent erosion. Use of gabion baskets without vegetation cover can affect visual appearance, especially cumulative impacts.  
Traffic - The speed of traffic on the main road can reduce pedestrian enjoyment of the area and needs to be addressed.
- Landscape Maintenance – Mature trees are an important element of the Conservation Area's landscape and make a positive contribution to its special character particularly in terms of amenity and environmental value. Their removal or unsympathetic pruning can have a negative impact on the area's character and biodiversity. Measures are required to ensure that the landscape is maintained, taking cognisance of 21<sup>st</sup> Century concerns.
- Vulnerable buildings No buildings that contribute to the character of the area appear to be seriously at risk and there are no structures on the Scottish Civic Trust's Buildings at Risk Register. Rose Cottage, listed at Category C(S), is currently boarded up, but consent for its renovation and extension was granted in 2011.

## 10. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

### **Maintenance**

The best means of preserving the character and appearance of any area is through the routine maintenance of buildings and landscape. Roofs, chimneys, windows, doors, guttering, stonework, entrance steps, need regular attention to prolong their life, secure the future of the building and enhance its setting. Regular coordinated maintenance programmes can help reduce costs in the long-term.

### **Development**

Minor works such as the removal of chimneys and replacement or alteration of traditional windows, and doors with modern styles and materials can have the cumulative effect of eroding character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Alterations including the erection of poorly designed new extensions and garages can have a similar effect.

The National Park Authority is committed to the preservation of the areas unique character through the application and enforcement of the Local Plans policies (National Park Local Plan 2011) It will seek to achieve high quality sustainable design while acknowledging the key features which characterise the Conservation Area.

### **Information and Advice**

Property owners, residents and businesses have a major role to play in the preservation and enhancement of the St Fillans Conservation Area. Information and advice explaining the implications of living in a Conservation Area can be obtained from the National Park National Park Built Environment Advisers, the NPA Callander Office, National Park HQ in Balloch and on the National Park Website. Historic Scotland's Inform Guides are also useful sources of advice and can be downloaded from [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk). Other useful names, addresses and contact details are listed at the end of this document.

The National Park Authority will continue to promote the importance of the built heritage, its protection and enhancement through various initiatives.

### **Public Realm**

The National Park Authority will continue to work with Stirling Council to improve the Conservation Area streetscape including the provision, design and location of bins in the conservation area.

### **Garden Development**

There is also limited pressure for development within gardens. Whilst many properties particularly have relatively spacious garden grounds, few have the degree of space to maintain the characteristics of the area by allowing a suitably generous setting to both the existing house and new development.



## **Tree Planting**

There is considerable scope within and around St Fillans to plant trees that compliment and enhance the character of the village and that once established will be the landmark trees of the future.

## **Permitted Development Rights and Article 4 directions**

Permitted development rights within the conservation area are restricted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992. In summary, planning permission is required for stone cleaning, external painting, roof alterations and the formation of hard surfaces within the conservation area. The area of extensions to dwelling houses which may be erected without permission is restricted to 16m<sup>2</sup> or 10% of the existing size, whichever is greater. There are additional controls over satellite dishes. For full details please see the 1992 Order and subsequent amendments.

Under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, the planning authority can seek approval of the Scottish Ministers for Directions that restrict permitted development rights. The Directions effectively control the proliferation of relatively minor alterations to buildings and the public realm in conservation areas that can cumulatively lead to erosion of character and appearance. Development is not precluded, but such alterations will require planning permission and special attention will be paid to the potential effect of proposals. This matter will be considered during the preparation of a Conservation Area Management Plan which will be prepared in consultation with the community.

## 11 FUTURE MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

It is recognised that St Fillans Conservation Area is a living place that will continue to change. It is intended to prepare a management plan to accompany the appraisal to ensure that change is managed to safeguard and enhance the special qualities, character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

A Conservation Area Management Plan for the Area will be prepared in consultation with the community in due course.

## 12 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Whilst it is difficult to establish a very precise picture of the condition of the Conservation Area, a number of indicators are suggested:

- Number of buildings included on the Scottish Civic Trust's Buildings at Risk Register.
- Review of types and numbers of planning applications, listed building consents and Conservation Area consents.
- Condition comparison against the survey photographs undertaken in March 2006 and the listed building resurvey in 2005.

A brief review of the above indicators should be undertaken on an annual basis, with a further in-depth review every 5 years.

# 13. BIBLIOGRAPHY. USEFUL INFORMATION, CONTACTS

## **Legislation and Statutory Instruments**

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas)(Scotland) Act 1997.(As amended by the Historic Environment (Amendment) Scotland Act 2011)  
The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953; (As amended by the Historic Environment (Amendment) Scotland Act 2011)  
The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; (As amended by the Historic Environment (Amendment) Scotland Act 2011)  
Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, (and subsequent amendments).

## **Policy context**

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) February 2010  
Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) July 2009.  
Planning Advice Note 71: Conservation Area Management  
Scottish Executive, Designing Places – A Policy Statement for Scotland (2001).  
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Plan (Approved 2007-2012).  
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Local Plan Adopted November 2011

## **Plans/strategies**

St Fillans Community Futures – Community Action Plan 2008 - 2011  
St Fillans – Community Profile – 2007

## **Historical Information Resources:**

A K Bell Library and Archives, Perth.  
Perth Museum & Art Gallery.  
Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (advice, Historic Environment Record), Perth.  
Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland [RCAHMS] - National Monuments Record of Scotland (photographic archive and library), 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh.

## **Books:**

First Statistical Account, volume 11, (1791-99), p178.  
New Statistical Account, volume 10, (1834-45), p578.  
Third Statistical Account, volume 10, (1950), p507.  
Francis Groome, Gazetteer of Scotland (1885).  
Alexander Porteous, Annals of St Fillans (1912).  
Bruce Walker & Graham Ritchie, Exploring Scotland's Heritage – Fife and Tayside(1985).  
Nick Haynes, Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland's Illustrated Architectural Guide to Perth & Kinross (2001).

## **Online**

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (planning policies and guidance)::  
[www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/)

Historic Scotland (Extensive guidance/advice available on the repair and maintenance of the historic built environment including INFORM Guides and Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes):[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/)

Scottish Executive (Planning policies and guidance)[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Planning](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Planning)

Perth & Kinross Council (Local Plan, library, archives, museum):  
<http://www.pkc.gov.uk/>

Scottish Civic Trust (Buildings at Risk Register):[www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/](http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/)

Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland [RCAHMS](photographs, books, plans, historic land use etc.):[www.rcahms.gov.uk/](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/)

Maps and details of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, designed landscapes, RCAHMS records, and Sites & Monuments or Historic Environment Records:[www.pastmap.org.uk/](http://www.pastmap.org.uk/)

National Library of Scotland (maps, books):[www.nls.uk/](http://www.nls.uk/)

National Archives of Scotland (documents, manuscripts, plans):[www.nas.gov.uk/](http://www.nas.gov.uk/)

SCRAN (photographs, maps):[www.scran.ac.uk/](http://www.scran.ac.uk/)

Statistical Accounts of Scotland:[edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot/](http://edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot/)

Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (advice, Historic Environment Record):  
<http://www.pkht.org.uk/>

## **Contacts**

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