



CULROSS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL
and
CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

REVISED FINAL DRAFT

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1.1 Introduction, Purpose and justification

1.1.1 Date of appraisal

This appraisal was carried out between November 2008 and February 2009.

1.1.2 Purpose of appraisal

A Conservation Area appraisal is being prepared to support the development of future planning policies and to update Article 4 Directions, whereby permitted development rights have been removed in order to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the buildings within the Conservation Area. The appraisal will contain guidance notes to protect and ensure sensitive long term management of the town. The existing Conservation Area Boundary, drawn more than 30 years ago, will be reviewed. The appraisal and subsequent management plans will be used to inform and educate local people and visitors to the town as well as supporting the development of heritage-related projects.

1.1.3 Date and reason for designation

Culross Conservation Area was designated in 1971. It is of great significance to the historic built environment of West Fife, and has been designated Outstanding by Historic Scotland.

1.1.4 Location of Conservation Area

See Appendix I, BMI 04 and 05, for maps showing the location.

1.1.5 Boundary map

See Appendix I, BMI 02 for boundary map.

1.2 Location, History and Development

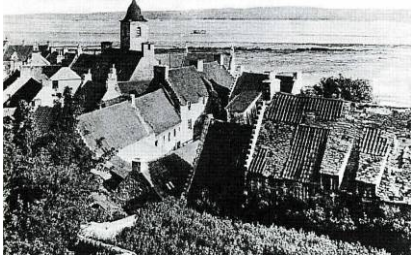
1.2.1 Location

Culross is on the hilly north bank of the upper Firth of Forth and is one of several small villages on this coastal strip west of Rosyth, such as Newmills, Charlestown and Limekilns. It is seven miles west of Dunfermline and the Kincardine Bridge lies 4 miles to the west, giving access across the Forth to Falkirk and the Central Belt. The Forth Road Bridge is some twelve miles to the east. The main east-west trunk road, the A985, is north of the village, well outside the Conservation Area. The coastal road which runs through the village, the B9037, is part of the Kindgom of Fife Tourist Route West.

Culross is in the parish of Culross and has its origins in Culross Abbey, founded in 1217 by the Cistercian Order. The monks began mining coal, which, from 1575, was

turned in to a lucrative export industry by Sir George Bruce, third son of Edward Bruce of Blairhall, and around which the town grew. Decline began when the mine flooded in 1625 and by the late 1700s very little industry existed there. However this ensured the almost intact survival of the 17th and 18th century town, restored from the 1930s onwards by the National Trust for Scotland, and nearly the whole of the settlement is included in the Conservation Area.

To the east of Culross is the Torry Bay Nature Reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The two are separated by Preston Island, where the Prestons of Valleyfield mined coal to supply salt pans during the 17th century. Sir Robert Preston developed a mine complex here around 1800. Salt works declined following the repeal of salt duties in 1823. The old salt pans are now being filled by an ash slurry from Longannet Power Station as part of a land reclamation project.



View across rooftops c. 1920 to Firth of Forth (Simpson & Robertson). Note roof of the Palace to RHS prior to restoration by the National Trust for Scotland in 1930s.

1.2.2 Population

Noted in 1755 as 1,695 and in 1801 as 1,502, it had fallen considerably by 1881 to 373. In 1991 it was recorded as 460 and is estimated to be 399 by 2007.

1.2.3 Geology

This area of Fife has a rich geology. The rocks are mainly carboniferous, with a rich but deep seam of coal, extensively mined in the late 16th and 17th centuries. Ironstone also exists in the district in thin seams between beds of clay slate, and was used in the making of the renowned Culross girdles. The ironworks were fuelled with local coal. The extensive seam of limestone found here was also worked for lime used in the ironworks and for agriculture.

1.2.4 Topography

The Conservation Area slopes gently up from the shore to the bottom of Tanhouse Brae, approximately 10m above sea level. It then rises steeply up Tanhouse Brae and Kirk Street to the Abbey Church nearly 40m above sea level. Most of the Conservation Area properties are on a gentle incline within 10m above sea level.

1.2.5 Historic Pattern of Land Use

The original Abbey lands around Culross had clay/loam soils, favourable to agriculture and the south-facing slopes gave high yields of arable crops. Mining the rich coal seams underground has left some surface scars; there was a shaft near the early 17th century Abbey House. Salt-panning in large iron trays took place on the shore; the reservoir at Pond Cottage built in late 1790s held water for salt panning. Fishing for herring, garvies and salmon brought revenue for Culross as the cruives were owned by the Abbey, but they were placed just off shore at Kincardine and Longannet. Buildings were erected on each side of the lower end of the path that led down from the Abbey to the shore, and then continued along the original shoreline to east and west, Low Causewayside and Sandhaven. The location and shape of the shoreline has changed over the centuries to accommodate the needs of various waterfront activities. The infill at the Sandhaven gave a large public space and road in front of the Town House, and the angular coastline formed by the garden walls of the 18th century houses to the south of Low Causewayside (see OS map 1858 adjacent and in Appendix I) suggest some land reclamation here. The 17th century Old Pier and the New Pier (1860) were constructed to aid the transport of goods such as coal and salt. And finally there was further infill of the Old Harbour to accommodate a railway along the coast, opened in 1906, for transport of goods and passengers as the roads were so slow (see OS map 1915, Appendix I, BMI 17).

1.2.4 Historical Development of Settlement

Early settlement

By the sixth century Culross was already an important religious centre and legend has it that the monks rescued the disgraced Princess Thenew, daughter of the King of Lothian who had cast her adrift on the sea. Her son Mungo was born in Culross and educated there by St Serf before heading west to found a religious community of his own, which became Glasgow. In 1503 the first Archbishop of Glasgow, Robert Blackadder, built a chapel dedicated to St Mungo on the supposed spot where Thenew came ashore and he was born.

In the C8th St Serf of Dysart founded a church at Culross. In 1217 Malcolm, Earl of Fife, founded a great Cistercian monastery, bringing monks from Kinloss Abbey in Grampian. The abbey of St Mary and St Serf was known as a centre of learning – it had a school attached – and of ecclesiastical calligraphy – the fifteenth century Culross Psalter is extant and it is known that the abbey supplied an Antiphonal to the Chapel Royal in 1538-39. Originally the abbey was a foundation of choir-monks and lay brothers, for whom the nave was built, but by the late 15th century it was reorganised to be choir-monks only. Consequently the nave became redundant and was demolished c. 1500. The monks began an activity which was later to prove the foundation of Culross' prosperity; they mined coal. This provided the fuel for another local industry, salt-panning, where sea water was run in to large, shallow iron pans and evaporated by heat from the fires of poor quality coal.

In 1484 James IV of Scotland made Culross a Burgh of Barony, dependent on the abbot of Culross Abbey, the major landowner. Culross could now hold a weekly market and an annual fair. The town aspired to be a Royal Burgh as then it could benefit from the lucrative import and export trade. After the Scottish Reformation in 1560 the Abbey and its lands passed to Sir James Colville of Cleish in 1569, and it is assumed mining had resumed a little as by 1574 Culross had 7 salt pans.

The 16th and 17th centuries and prosperity

In 1575 the lay commendator, who administered the Abbey's estates, sold the lease of the Abbey's coal mines to Sir George Bruce (1550-1625), third son of Edward Bruce of Blairhall, who had gained technical experience during travels on the Continent. He overcame the problems of the depth of the coal, ventilation and drainage to realise a very successful undersea mine, bringing him and Culross great wealth and status. Sir George invented the 'Egyptian Wheel,' turned by horses and raising and lowering 36 buckets on

a chain to drain the mine. Whereas the monks had mined coal 30ft down, Sir George made it possible for men to work coal 240ft down. The Castleland mine eventually ran a mile out under the sea where a shaft rose to an outlet at the surface on a tidal island in the Forth where it was protected by a circular thick strong stone wall.

Sir George persuaded King James VI to make Culross a Royal Burgh in 1588. This would increase the royal coffers through customs dues, and allow an export trade in coal, taken into ships from a pier on the island where the mine shaft rose. Trade was mostly with Scandinavia and the Low Countries, and ships would often return with red pantiles as ballast, which were then used for roof coverings in Culross.

In the 1590s salt from Culross comprised 89% of Scottish salt exports. Coal exports were second only to Leith. By 1618 Bruce's employees produced up to 100 tons of salt per week in over 40 salt pans. The town's importance in the coal trade is shown by the name of the standard Scottish measure for weighing coal, a 'Culross Chalder,' established in 1663.

Coal was needed in the manufacture of the wrought iron baking girdle, used for toasting oatcakes. The Culross girdlemakers applied to extend an ancient monopoly on their manufacture, and this was granted in a letter from James VI in 1599. It lasted until well into the 1720s.

Sir George amassed a vast landward estate, later becoming known as Lord Bruce of Carnock. He served as a member of the Scottish Parliament and was one of the commissioners who arranged the terms of the Union of the Crowns of Scotland and England in 1603. Between 1597 and 1611 he built a fine town house, known locally as The Palace, whilst other townsfolk built themselves stone houses. In 1608, Edward Lord Bruce (Sir George's older brother), Commendator of Kinloss Abbey, used the stone of Culross Abbey to begin his great Abbey House next to the abbey church. It had hanging gardens descending down to the Forth. A third storey was added in 1830 by the then owner, Sir Robert Preston, but this was removed in 1953. Culross was described by Rolland and McAlpine in the Statistical Account 1791-99, thus: *Almost every garden has a house with fruit trees belonging to it. The town altogether, especially in the approach from the harbour, has a very picturesque and magnificent appearance.*

Gradual Decline

The gradual demise of Culross' economy came with the flooding of the undersea coal mine in a great storm in 1625, and Sir George's death soon afterwards. This was the end of mining on any large scale for Culross. Stone from the wharf was taken to Leith to build the pier



Culross Abbey House showing 3rd floor, from *Theatrum Scotiae* by Captain John Sleezer (National Library of Scotland)



The Tron c. 1900 (Simpson & Robertson)



Railway line to Culross seen from Low Valleyfield, c.1910. Culross station to left. (Simpson & Robertson)



Culross railway station near Pond Cottage c. 1910, now demolished. (Simpson & Robertson)



The Cross area in 1894 (Simpson & Robertson)

there. However, the town council were able to afford a Town House, constructed in 1626, with a tower added in 1783.

Large quantities of salt were still exported in the 1640s, but by the 1660s panning had declined due to cheaper and purer foreign imports of salt. Merchants began a boot and shoe industry in the town, and the tanner's house was at the top of Tanhouse Brae, to which it gave its name. The shoemaker's cottage was a few doors' down. The products were shipped in large quantities to the American colonies via Glasgow, but after the 1776 American Revolution, the Culross shoe industry went in to decline.

The hammermen of Culross who produced the wrought iron girdles lost their trade to the cheaper mass produced cast iron ones made at the Carron Iron Company in Falkirk which opened in 1760.

Roy's Military Map (1747-56) does not show a harbour (there were two piers by the late C18th) or any mining activity, although it was not until the late 19th century that the harbour was filled in to create the Sandhaven. In 1758 the Bruce family inherited the Earldom of Dundonald, and in 1768 a post office was opened. A ferry to Bo'ness existed in 1791.

The square reservoir next to Pond cottage was constructed in the late 1790s to serve 5 salt pans. The last significant industry in Culross was a works established to distil tar from coal set up by Lord Dundonald in 1781, but the coal rapidly became exhausted. R. Heron noted in the late 1790s that '*the Royal Burgh of Culross contains upwards of 1000 inhabitants but has little or no trade.*' In fact the population dropped from a peak of several thousand in the 17th century down to a lowly 578 recorded in 1951.

Some employment was available in the Blair quarries west of Culross, and stone from here was used in the New Town of Edinburgh and for the Drury Lane Theatre in London, but production had ceased by 1888.

In 1889 Culross was moved from Perthshire and became part of Fife.

In 1906 the North British Company opened a coastal railway and station at Culross, but this did not bring prosperity and the passenger service was withdrawn in 1930.

The Valleyfield Collieries commenced operations in 1906 and brought some prosperity and employment to Culross. Latterly owned by the Fife Coal company, along with the Torry Colliery, they supplied coal for naval steam ships. Despite attempts to rejuvenate the mine in the 1950s and 60s, Valleyfield was closed in the early 1980s.



The Palace c. 1900 in need of repair. (Simpson & Robertson)



Back Causeway c. 1910. (Simpson & Robertson)



The Town House and Sandhaven, c. 1922 with modern housing built after WW1 above the old village. (Simpson & Robertson)



Tanhouse Brae c.1950 once restoration of the little houses had begun. (Simpson & Robertson)

Restoration and a new future

In 1909 Jessie M. King published *Dwellings of an Old-World Town* illustrated with her drawings of Culross' buildings in romantic decay, if not actual dereliction. Sadly, this publicity did nothing immediately to halt the decay. Then, in 1932, Dr James S Richardson, the Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Scotland, encouraged the newly formed National Trust for Scotland (NTS) to acquire Culross Palace, then under threat of demolition. This it did for £700, nearly half its first legacy. The following year NTS bought a further ten 16th and 17th century buildings in the town's centre, and by 1939 and the outbreak of war it owned over 20 properties.

Restoration of these dilapidated buildings was carried out with the help of the architect Ian G Lindsay. The conservation principles used were much debated – a lot of original material was removed internally, including structural timbers, and a uniform look was applied to all the exteriors, that is, lime harl and pantile roofs. A section of Bishop Leighton's House was lifted to even up the roofline and in another case, windows openings were changed to make them symmetrical. Nonetheless, Ian Lindsay defended his approach, saying, "Our remoter ancestors were no fools about building, for their harling and lime wash was a skin which preserved the stone from weathering and decay just as our skins protect whatever is underneath from undue damage." (Watters & Glendinning, 31.) Whatever the merits of the debate, the resultant collection of related vernacular buildings from the 17th and 18th centuries set in its paved, sometimes steep, streets is one of the best examples of a small Scottish burgh and is of national, if not international, importance.

Royal Burghs were abolished in 1975 by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and Culross Town Council ceased to exist. It gave the Town House to the National Trust for Scotland, who turned it in to a visitor centre to inform and educate the large number of people who brought a successful new industry to Culross, tourism.



The Palace in 2008

2.0 Assessment of Significance

2.1 Location and Setting

Culross Conservation Area is situated on the north coast of the Firth of Forth. This marine setting is visually and sensually dramatic, providing unimpeded views as well as awareness of tides, winds and weather. This coastal zone of invertebrate-rich, tidal mud and sandflats is of major significance in terms of geology and wildlife, especially bird species and is designated a Ramsar site,¹ a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Protected Area. The bay at Culross and the Valleyfield ash lagoons immediately east of the Conservation Area form part of Torry Bay Nature Reserve. Culross Conservation Area has the privilege and responsibility of a long boundary on this unique natural environment, which in itself is of international significance.

Most of the landward setting of Culross is in agricultural use and so open, south-facing fields provide a peaceful backdrop for the Conservation Area. There are some tracks for machinery/ pedestrian access. Vehicle traffic is confined to the few roads and the A985 is sufficiently distant for it to have little impact here. This is a tranquil rural location forming an important protective zone around the Conservation Area.

2.2 Historical Significance

The historical significance of Culross reaches far beyond its confines. Firstly it has ecclesiastical significance, being the reputed birthplace (sixth century) of Mungo, patron saint of Glasgow and the location of an important Cistercian abbey from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. Secondly it has significance in terms of early industry. The abbey established Culross as a monastic centre, with traditional activities such as education and the production of illuminated manuscripts (eg. the Culross Psalter), but the monks also pioneered the development of coal-mining, using shafts up to 30 feet deep. This in turn led to another early industrial activity in Culross – salt panning on the foreshore (the coal being used to heat the pans).

Culross' significance in the history of mining further increased with the major innovations brought about by George Bruce from 1575 – a much greater depth of working thanks to the Egyptian wheel method, improved ventilation and the development of the world's first undersea mine in the bay at Culross. Royal Burgh status, with favourable monopolies, enabled international coal and salt exports to flourish in the early seventeenth century as well as iron girdles (slightly later), to such an extent that the burgh was a major centre of trade in early industrial Scotland. However, decline in coal

¹ Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The Convention was signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 and ratified by the UK government in 1976.

came after the mine flooded (1625). The salt trade was badly affected by cheaper and purer imports (1660s) and the girdle industry waned in the 1720s when machine-produced girdles became available from the Carron Iron Company. Investment in the burgh ceased and so buildings and streets were left 'unimproved,' allowing the survival and later restoration of what we see today.

The medieval and early modern history of Culross has outstanding significance.

2.3 Architectural Significance

Culross has an extraordinarily intact core of historic buildings, recognised by the statutory listings and Scheduled Ancient Monument status. Among the many important sites are the Mercat Cross, St Mungo's Chapel, the Abbey and graveyard, the Palace, the Study, the Town House, Abbey House and 5 and 7 Mid Causeway (Bishop Leighton's House). These are all of very high architectural significance. They are also important historically on a national and regional level.

The first two of these derive significance from their setting and site – the Mercat Cross in the market square, both typical in that it is formed at the meeting of several roads, and particular in that it is shaped by the topography and texture of Culross; St Mungo's Chapel being on the traditional site of his birth.

The layered architectural history of the Abbey complex stretches over seven hundred years and is of very high significance. Of the west choir, only the south wall remains. The east choir was incorporated into the Parish Church, later modified and restored. The Bruce vault (1642) is an elaborate example of a tomb recess and aedicule, with highly accomplished stone sculpture. The sixteenth century tower is a landmark on the skyline above Culross. Fragmentary remains of the frater and dorter contain quadripartite vaults with carved mouldings. The Manse (1637) was constructed on the site of the west range.

The Palace '*... is an excellent example of a 16th century town mansion*' (List Description). It was in very poor condition when acquired by the National Trust in 1932 and the details of its (still ongoing) restoration reflect the changing philosophies of conservation over the decades since then. The significance of this building and of the Study derives in part from interior details such as painted ceilings and fireplaces. Externally the scale and massing of these grand merchants' houses contrasts with the modesty of the one- and two-storey dwellings. The Study is named after Bishop Leighton of Dunblane who on his diocesan visits to Culross used the high lookout room as a study. The Town House (1626) has significance as the historic centre of civic administration – including the council chamber, the court,

prison, store for the burgh records and customs and excise collection. Its clock tower is a landmark on the skyline and its double forestair (added, with the tower, in 1783) indicates the building's importance in the public space of the Sandhaven.

Abbey House, with its landscaped gardens, is of major significance:

'Compared to his brother's house (Culross Palace) which was begun only 11 years previously to Edward Bruce's, Culross Abbey is of a much more advanced design and it illustrates the influence of Edward's lifestyle as a member of the Royal Court...Of outstanding interest, Culross Abbey House is one of the earliest classical houses in Scotland.'

(List Description)

5 and 7 Mid Causeway may have been one dwelling originally, dating from about 1600. Details include an internal stone stair (thought to have been an external forestair at one time), very thick walls, chamfered arrises to the windows, and a partly jettied section to no.7. Bishop Leighton is said to have stayed here in the 1660s.

The dwelling houses of Culross are of very high significance, on an individual basis but also collectively. The townscape of Culross derives from their scale, materials and detailing and many are representative of a particular approach to architectural restoration which is of interest in itself.

'This large collection of related vernacular buildings dating from the 17th and 18th century is one of the best examples of a small Scottish burgh and is of national importance.'

(List Description)

Culross' relationship with the National Trust for Scotland and the work of Ian Lindsay is also important, part of the history of conservation not only in Scotland but in the UK.

'The history of conservation and restoration at Culross during the twentieth century is of high significance ... Priority was given to conserving the exteriors of the houses and thus the townscape of Culross. For example additions or alterations were only made to the rear of the houses. However, inside, priority was given to providing modern living conditions...'

(NTS, *The Royal Burgh of Culross, Property Statements 2006-9*, 9)

The streetscape comprises a balance between variety (textures, colours, details such as forestairs, uses) and unity (scale, volume, materials and finishes). Crowstep gables, red pantile roofing and white harled walls form the basis of a common architectural language. The effect has been termed 'quaint'. Regrettably, the number of buildings in commercial use has been diminishing in recent years, altering the meaning attached to them.

The fact that so many Culross properties – currently twenty-nine, including two Scheduled Ancient Monuments and five

category A buildings - are owned by the National Trust for Scotland is a further element of their significance. In view of the Trust's statutory duties the potential for co-ordinated conservation and management is greater as a result. Care extends beyond the buildings themselves to the extensive lands and gardens surrounding them. These form an integral part of the character of Culross.

2.4 Landscape Significance

Almost one third of the surface area of Culross Conservation Area is part of a Designed Landscape attached to Abbey House. As such it is recorded by Historic Scotland as being of national importance and deemed to have outstanding historical and horticultural value and high architectural, scenic, nature conservation and work of art value. Its visual importance is especially noticeable from Low Causeway and its role in nature conservation makes a vital contribution to the character of Cat's Close.

The woodland on the slope behind Balgownie House, subject of a Tree Preservation Order, makes a significant contribution to amenity and nature conservation values on the west of the Conservation Area. The north-south boundary here, on the path known as Slate Loan, is greatly enhanced by these trees.

2.5 Archaeological Significance

Much of the Conservation Area is of high archaeological significance, including parts of the Abbey, the Mercat Cross, St Mungo's Chapel and Lord Elgin's Hospital.² Hidden archaeology is likely to be present under most of the burgh. The pier, now partly ruined, but exposed at low tide, has central importance in Culross' economic history.

² Lord Elgin's Hospital is C(S) listed. It is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument, under the name 'Lord Bruce's Hospital' (HS Index no. 850).

3.0 Character and Appearance

3.1 Setting

3.1.1 Assessment of the landscape and surroundings

The setting of Culross, “nestling in a nook on the slope of a hill” (Beveridge, 4), on the northern edge of the Firth of Forth is intrinsic to its character. The A985 is sufficiently distant that traffic noise does not impinge on the village. The aural character of the Conservation Area is defined rather by seabirds on the tidal flats. The dynamic character along the water’s edge (changing weather, skyscapes, tides) is strongly contrasted to the fixed definition of the railway line and the coastal path.

3.1.2 The area in relation to its form and function

The Conservation Area covers the built-up centre of the settlement, the shorefront and significant large tracts of green space around the village. Proportionally, the latter comprises over half the Conservation Area, much of it in private ownership.

3.1.3 Significance of views into, across and from the Conservation Area

As the Conservation Area is large, views of the entire area are only available from the water, some distance out from the shoreline. Significant views can also be had from the coastal path, across the playing field and, most importantly, up towards The Abbey House, more visible in winter when the trees are bare. The vantage point at Hagg’s Wynd gives spectacular views across the centre of the village and across the Firth of Forth. The Longannet chimney and the billowing smoke of the Grangemouth refineries present a striking image of modernity, contrasting with the historic fabric of Culross. The northern reaches of the Conservation Area has characteristic views into the surrounding fields and lanes with almost no building in sight.



View from Hagg’s Wynd, with Culross pier in the mid distance and the Grangemouth refineries in the background.



View south from Tanhouse Brae



View north from the car park on Low Causeway. The Abbey Church and Abbey House are visible on the brow of the hill.

3.2 Activity and Movement

3.2.1 Direction, mode, volume, circulation and levels of activity

Vehicle use is mostly in the east-west direction, along the B9037, winding along Low Causewayside and Sandhaven. Visitors' coaches and local transport buses must use this route, narrow as it is at the bottom of Mid Causeway. Access to/ from the north is more difficult, along the narrow, cobbled Back Causeway/ Tanhouse Brae/ Kirk Street route. Alternative vehicle access to the Abbey Church area involves taking the other fork of the B9036 at High Valleyfield. That said, these narrow routes are customarily used for residents' access. There is much better provision for pedestrian movement. Culross has an intricate network of connecting wynds and paths, both along the contours and up the slope. The coastal path is one of the Kingdom of Fife Millennium Cycleways, part of a circular route linking Torry Bay, Cairneyhill and Culross.

3.2.2 Day and Night Variations

Culross is quiet both during the day and in the evening. Evening activity is centred mainly around the one pub/bistro and in summer, recreation on the coastal path.

3.2.3 Seasonal Variations

Culross has a significant tourist influx between approximately April and the end of September. Visitors are mainly daytrippers. Activity during the winter is reduced, arising mainly from residential use.



View from the car park on Low Causeway with the Ailie Rocks stretching south-west beyond the railway line.

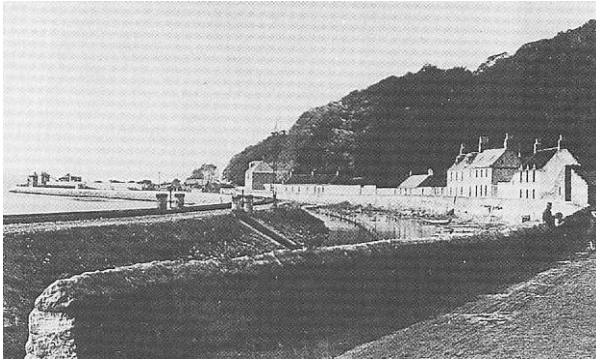
3.3 Street Pattern and Topography

3.3.1 Changes to previous street patterns and surfaces

The ancient street pattern of Culross remains unchanged. However the edge of the burgh with the Forth has been radically altered, as can be seen from the historic maps. Firstly, a large section of land was reclaimed south of Low Causeway in the mid nineteenth century (now the playing fields and car park). Secondly, the construction of the railway (1906) led to further reclamation at Sandhaven (now a grassed area, playground and the Memorial Garden). Whereas the gardens on the south side of Low Causeway previously had retaining walls to the water's edge, now they lead to the coastal path and railway line.

The two historic photographs below illustrate these changes. In the image on the left, Culross railway station is in the distance, on the extreme left, next to the water. The building no longer exists but the name of Station Path recalls its location. Next to the station is a pond, built in the late 18th century to serve five salt pans. This is extant, behind Pond Cottage. The embankment had a number

culverts and bridges to allow tidal ebb and flow. It has since been filled in and built up. The image on the right shows the village before Sandhaven Green was formed. Note the direct visual connection between the Town House and the water, as well as the sea wall at the back of the Low Causeway houses.



View from just outside the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area, toward the Pond. (Simpson & Robertson,)



View from Culross Pier, showing the village before the reclaiming at Sandhaven. (Beveridge, frontispiece)

Traditionally Culross had very distinct paving details, including setts set high in the centre of the causeway, with stone drainage channels at the side and in some places a raised footpath of irregular coloured stones. Paving setts have been preserved or restored on many streets, but lost on others, such as Kirk Street, now asphalted. More recent building, eg. on Barbara Stocks Lane uses concrete paviors and paving bricks. Other than paving with setts, Culross, in common with other villages in the area, has a tradition of 'soft' surfaces eg. grass on Cat's Close and fine gravel on Hagg's Wynd.

3.3.2 Ways in which streets and buildings relate to ancient, man-made and landscape features

Historic features – religious and commercial - partly define the street pattern of Culross, ie. the Abbey connected to the Mercat Cross, a meeting point of several streets, the Cross linked to the trading area around the Tron and the coastal strip. However these features are an earlier response to the natural setting, topography and geology. At 50m above sea level the Abbey is in a strategically elevated but sheltered position, near the extensive coal mine that occupied the early monks and overlooking the harbour. Low Causeway follows the original coastline and streets such as Erskine Brae and Hagg's Wynd follow higher contours.

3.4 Buildings and Townscape

3.4.1 Scheduled Monuments

Culross Conservation Area includes five Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

- Lord Bruce's Hospital, scheduled in 1937. (This is also

C(S) listed, as Lord Elgin's Hospital.)

- Culross Market Cross, scheduled in 1953
- St Mungo's Chapel, scheduled in 1975
- Culross Palace and Gardens, scheduled in 1992. It includes the three blocks that make up the Palace and Bessie's Bar, all the courtyards, the gardens to the north and the boundary walls.
- Culross Abbey, scheduled in 2000. This includes the remains of the Cistercian Abbey and the existing boundary walls. The Abbey Church, being in use as a parish church is excluded.

3.4.2 Key Listed and Unlisted Buildings

The Scottish Ministers' List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest contains no less than one hundred and sixteen items in Culross Conservation Area. Of these, nine are A listed, eighty-four are B listed and twenty-three are C(S) listed. As A listed buildings are "of national or international importance", B listed are "of regional importance" and C(S) of "local importance," most of the buildings in Culross could be termed 'key.' A few will be highlighted here. For fuller background and information the reader is referred to the comprehensive List Descriptions prepared by Historic Scotland.

In addition, the following properties are held by the National Trust for Scotland:

- Culross Palace
- The Town House
- The Nunnery
- The Ark
- Bishop Leighton's House
- 5 and 7 Mid Causeway
- The Tron House
- 14 Sandhaven
- 16 Sandhaven
- Bessie Bar House
- St Mungo's Chapel

The NTS Property Statements 2006-2009 give information regarding the conservation and management of these historic building.

The following key buildings are highlighted:

The Mercat Cross, category A, Scheduled Ancient Monument

The Mercat Cross is located just below the 10m contour, in an irregularly shaped open space at the meeting of four streets. The octagonal base of the cross and the tiered steps are original, from the 16th century. The shaft and head are replacements, from 1902, designed by J W Small and executed by Alexander Neilson. The capital has dentils, acanthus leaves and fluted details. The faces of the head show carvings of the Burgh arms, the provost's initials and a monogram of King James VI with crown. The unicorn at the top was a gift of a local laird to



The Mercat Cross, seen from the north side



The Palace, with front garden and boundary wall to Sandhaven

commemorate the coronation of King Edward and Queen Alexandra.



Crowd scene at the unveiling of the Mercat Cross following restoration in 1902 (Simpson & Robertson, 60)

Culross Palace, category A, Scheduled Ancient Monument

The earliest part is a three-storey, T-plan house in the west range, its carved wallhead dormers bearing the 1597 and the initials of George Bruce, the owner. It is thought that this was a reconstruction and extension of an already existing two-storey house. The entrance door and platform is at first floor level, reached by central stone steps. An L-plan wing is attached on the west side. A further block, separate, was added to the NE, dated 1611, also three-storey, with a two-storey section to the east (stables). The wall extending from the west elevation conceals the Bessie Bar Well, built by order of the Burgh Council in 1598. The south elevations of the blocks are unified by pedimented dormers and regular window openings at first floor level of the 1611 range. The detailing includes crowstep gables, rounded window margins and decorative carving to the dormers, including projecting scrolls, pediments, a shield and thistle finial. All the buildings have steeply pitched clay pantiled roofs and yellow harled sandstone rubble.

The front garden gatepiers are ashlar, with ball finials and iron gates. The boundary walls are sandstone rubble with flat copestones and include re-used 17th century carved dormerheads inserted in the wall and above three niches in the middle terrace wall.

The Palace was sold by the Earl of Dundonald to the NTS in 1932. It was then handed over to the state for safekeeping. In 1991, the state returned it to the NTS.



The Study, south-east elevation

The Study, c.1610, category A

This is a three-storey, five-bay, L-plan house, harled with stone margins. The SW jamb is taller, with a corbelled turnpike stair and upper stage containing the actual study. The elevations are irregular, with catslide dormers. The roofs are of clay pantiles and there are crowstep gables to the stair tower, coped stacks to the main block, with a finial on the north gable end. The glazing is particular. On the south-facing sash and case windows there is lattice leadwork on the upper sash, timber shutters below. The east windows (to the Cross) are 4, 12 and 16-pane timber sash and case.

The Study was built as a merchant's house, the grandest in Culross, apart from the Palace. The building is said to have been used by the prominent ecclesiastic, Bishop Leighton of Dunblane. The Study was acquired by the National Trust for Scotland in the 1930s and renovated by Ian G. Lindsay and Partners in 1959, winning a Civic Trust Award in 1962.



The Town House at Sandhaven

Culross Town House, category A

Built in 1626, this five-bay, two-storey with attic house was the burgh's tollbooth, jail and council meeting-place (replacing an earlier council building). The front elevation is of ashlar sandstone with rusticated quoins. Both gables are crowstepped. The rear is harled. The building has various decorative and commemorative features: 'Anno Domini 1626' over the left door (front), a plaque on the forestair with the name of John Alistair Erskine Cunninghame of Balgownie, Provost of Culross, the Culross arms in glass above the main door.

By the early 17th century it was considered an obligation of every burgh to have a clock to call meetings and public events and to mark rising time and curfew (RCAHMS). The Culross clock mechanism was made by Laurence Dalglish, 1783. At this time, the double forestair [and] clock tower ... were added.

(List Description)

The ogee tower with its prominent cornice is a landmark on the skyline of Culross. The bellcote is on the north-west gable apex, though the bell is missing. The Town House was refurbished by Ian Lindsay & Partners in 1957-59.

The Tron, category B

This is an ashlar pedestal on which is fixed a central wooded shaft which would have supported the weigh-beam. It is possibly a reconstruction of the medieval tron. On this were weighed export goods such as coal and salt and taxes calculated accordingly. The Culross weights are stored in the Town House. The original tron would have been nearer the Forth, before the reclamation at Sandhaven.



The Tron



View of the Abbey Church tower from the west

Culross Abbey Church, Churchyard and Boundary Walls, category A, Scheduled Ancient Monument

This multi-layered complex contains

- remains of the 13th century Cistercian foundation, (partly ruinous), including vaults and undercrofts
- the 15th century tower, built over the earlier rood screen, pulpitum and side walls by Abbot Mansoun, 1498-1513
- the Bruce vault (1642), containing an effigy of Sir George Bruce, his wife and eight children
- modifications by William Stirling, 1824, including replacement of the saddle-back tower roof with crenellation
- extensive restoration by R. Rowand Anderson (1905-6).

The Parish Church was formed east of the tower in 1633 and is still in use.

The graveyard contains a watchman's bothy in the east corner. Many of the 18th century tombs have interesting carvings depicting the profession of the deceased, including the royal warrant of the Hammermen of Culross, with a hammer below a crown.



View of Abbey House from the south
(Crown Copyright: RCAHMS)

Abbey House, category A, (B group listing with the Policies, Garden House, Stables and East and West Lodges)

The history of the house has several phases. It was originally built in 1608 for Edward Bruce of Clackmannan, brother of George Bruce who built Culross Palace. It began as a two-storey, thirteen-bay L-plan house with short projecting wings. A third storey was later added and the wings made into four-storey ogee-roofed towers, seen in Slezer's engraving (left). The house passed through various families and by 1800 was roofless. Sir Robert Preston re-constructed the house in the 1830s, replacing the west wing and adding his coat-of-arms above the door. However, over the next century the house reverted to the ownership of the Earls of Elgin and again fell into disrepair. In 1952 it was re-modelled by Robert Hurd & Partners - the upper storey removed, the thirteen bays reduced to nine, the end towers reduced to single-storey pavilions and wings added (garage and kitchen court). Three windows from the towers were re-inserted as dormers on the south elevation.



Detail from Slezer's *Theatrum Scotiae* (1697), *The Prospect of the Abby of Colross* (Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

Compared to his brother's house (Culross Palace) which was begun only 11 years previously to Edward Bruce's, Culross Abbey is of a much more advanced design, and it illustrates the influence of Edward's lifestyle as a member of the Royal Court. Although altered a number of times since its beginning, the house maintains some of its original splendour. Of outstanding interest, Culross Abbey House is one of the earliest classical house in Scotland.

(List Description)



Houses on Tanhouse Brae



The house known as the Haven (at the Cross) terminates this view up Mid Causeway.



Housing by Wheeler and Sproson on the site of the former McDonald's Building, Back Causeway

3.4.3 Buildings considered to be of townscape merit

Almost the entire village is a set-piece of townscape. In several areas the houses (nearly all listed) lining the streets are essential to the character of the routes:

Tanhouse Brae and Kirk Street.

In a few areas the houses are clustered round an open space, adding interest and inviting pause:

- Back Causeway, Mid Causeway, Wee Causeway, around the Mercat Cross and Low Causeway as far east as the school;
- Sandhaven, in front of the Town House
- Sandhaven, behind the Town House
- West Green and in the vicinity of Bessie Bar's Hall.

Although these houses are from different periods, they respond to the context sympathetically in terms of scale, volume, materials and detailing. Quirky irregularity eg. roof pitch, is counterpointed by regularity eg. window openings in neighbouring houses. There is variation within a shared language but it is the play and tension between the variants that produces interesting townscape. These buildings and their linear plots express a coherent relationship to the street.

Unlike some coastal villages, most of Culross' houses have their principal elevation to the street. Where there is an outshot gable this gives variety to the roofscape. The tenement blocks by Wheeler & Sproson off Back Causeway successfully introduce a new typology and massing and make good use of the slope. The development won a Saltire Society Award for Good Design in 1970.

Buildings which are not 'little houses' are few in number so give relief in the townscape. Even though some have been converted to other uses, externally they are relatively unaltered:

- Bessie Bar's Hall, B listed, 1776, formerly a two-storey malthouse, restored in 1971 by Ian Lindsay & Partners.
- Cunningham House, C(S) listed, formerly the Free Church (1846). Its tooled coursed grey sandstone, quoins and ashlar eaves course set it apart from the harled houses nearby. It was converted to four flats in 1983 by Robert Hurd & Partners. Its companion building, Stephen Memorial Hall (1883), also C(S) listed invites a turn into Little Causeway.

3.4.4 Distinctive architectural style and detailing

The history of the conservation of Culross means that there is a characteristic palette of materials and detailing on the houses that make up the vast majority of the

building stock. The 'little house' style, usually a small, restored late 17th century or early/mid 18th century house, is visually dominant. There are later houses but these are restrained in style, sitting quietly near their older neighbours.

Roofs

Roofs are typically pitched, most with clay pantiles, some of these with slate easing. Natural slate is also used. Ashlar courses, some with cavetto moulding, are found at the eaves. Interest is added to the rooflines by gable chimney stacks and skews.

Dormers

Dormers are common in Culross, taking their cue from two of the most prestigious buildings, namely the Palace and the Study. The latter has catslide dormers, the Palace has pedimented dormers. Both types have their windows on the same plane as the other windows but are partly located in the roof, breaking the eaves line.



Undercliff, West Green, has several typical elements of roof detailing.



Catslide dormers in the Study

Chimneys and chimney cans

The details of chimneys form a distinct part of the skyline in the Conservation Area, especially on gables. Many are still in stone block or harled (the latter may have been rebuilt in brick). The copes vary from plain, to flush with a blocking course on the chimney head and moulded. The examples of cans (pots) include plain, tapered, tapered with air inlets, or octagonal, some in the traditional buff fireclay.

Crowsteps, skews and skewputts

The Scottish tradition of the building gables in crowsteps is distinct from the European tradition. The putt projects at the bottom and is often treated ornamentally, mediating the transition from the vertical plane of the elevation to the inclined plane of the roof. Culross has several examples, the most known being that at the Nunnery, which gives its name to the house. Skewputts sometimes have a carved date, as at The Haven, Low Causeway - 1623. Many houses have plain skews finishing in ogee moulded skewputts.

Other gable types include open verges and bargeboards, though these are much less common, and the unique (in Culross) 'Dutch' gable on Parley Hill House.



Crowsteps and skews at Tanhouse Brae seen against the smoke of Grangemouth.



Chamfered corner on Mid Causeway

External Walls

The walls of the majority of building stock in the village are traditionally constructed of sandstone rubble, most of them protected with a thick coating of lime harl and limewash. Later buildings with aspirations of prestige are in ashlar, eg. Park House (coursed droved), St Kentigern's (polished), Balgownie House (rendered). Decorative work on the principal elevations includes ashlar eaves courses, string courses, quoins, margins, pilasters, carved pediments and finials. Variety and interest is added by the use of jetties (upper levels), chamfers and quoins (at corners).

Doors

Timber panelled or boarded doors are traditional and double-leaf entrance doors are found in many of the small houses in Culross. Many doors have ornamental lintels, giving a date or the initials of the owners. Laigh doors are also found in several houses, allowing basement access for a house built into the slope, eg at Tanhouse Brae, Old Shoemaker's House and Forth View. Some doors have a narrow fanlight.



A typical double-leaf timber door at 4 Tanhouse Brae



The lintel of the laigh door at Old Shoemaker's House, has a carved shield and inscription 'HH BD 1669'.

Windows and Glazing

A two-storey three-bay arrangement is typical of many houses in Culross. Window openings are generally relatively small in relation to the area of the elevation, though some were enlarged during the NTS restoration to provide more light. Extra openings were also sometimes added, eg. to the Ark, Mid Causeway (see List Description). Tiny openings high up in external walls are also found, a traditional response to climate and materials. Gable windows also function to animate the streetscape (see below, Low Causeway).

Frames are timber, most are sash and case, with or without horns, set back several inches from the face of the wall. The number of panes varies. Six-over-six is common. The dormers of The Cross (now The Mercat Gallery, List item no. 103) are six-over-two. Lying panes are also found, as in the ground floor of the house on Low Causeway (left).

Many houses have dressed stone margins – where these existed at the time of restoration they were retained at the edge of the harling. The arrises are often chamfered,



House (D Morgan), Low Causeway



close-up of window of House (D Morgan)

aiding water run-off. Upper level windows are typically tucked up under the eaves (example at Caldervale).



The Mercat Gallery, The Cross



Caldervale, West Green



Examples of gable windows on Low Causeway.



Rowanbank, Back Causeway, showing the single storey back jamb.



Rowanbank, Back Causeway, showing the front jamb, formed with a catslide roof.

Porches and Extensions

Traditionally houses in Culross have been extended by the addition of jambs, to form an L- or Z-plan. An interesting example is seen at Rowanbank, Back Causeway, originally a rectangular plan house. Lean-to extensions are also common at the back or gable. In some cases a little extra space was added by jettied out an upper level. More recent flat-roof extensions are found, but these are generally less than sympathetic to the historic main building.



Left: Jettied upper level at The Study, chamfered corner on 6 The Cross. Right: jettied upper level at 7 Mid Causeway.



Tanhouse Brae

Forestairs

A few examples of traditional forestairs remain in Culross, at Bessie Bar's Hall, 3 Tanhouse Brae, 18C Low Causeway, 9 Back Causeway, 10 Back Causeway, Little Sandhaven on Back Street. The 1930s tenement at Blackadder Haven also uses this traditional means of access.



Carved plaque at 4 Tanhouse Brae

Decorative Items

It is common in Culross for houses to have decorative items, such as carved lintels or plaques bearing initials or a date. The best known examples are found on Tanhouse Brae, at no.2 (Greek inscription), no.4 (meat cleaver and steel, initials IS/IL, 1664), Old Shoemaker's House (see photograph in 'Doors' section above) and Snuff Cottage (motto on window frame). There is also a prominent example at House (J Robertson) at Sandhaven, where a sundial is mounted at first floor level. Pear Tree Cottage has a horizontal sundial on an ashlar baluster pedestal in the garden, with the initial RM /AL, (see List Description).



Wall at corner of Back Lane and Erskine Brae, with inscribed lintol, probably from Clifton House (now demolished).

Rubble boundary walls

These are mostly high walls formed of large sandstone blocks with half round or flat copings pointed with lime mortar. Corners are swept, eg. from Back Causeway to Hagg's Wynd. Several of these walls contain blocked doorways from earlier buildings. Boundary walls form part of the listing of many houses. Several walls bounding causeways are themselves listed (List Item 109).

Street paving

Historic paving patterns were repaired and restored in several of the main streets in the 1950s (see List Description for Item no.14). Typically blue and red cobbles are laid in an irregular pattern, with stone sett drains at the edges, and larger stones in the centre of the camber (the 'crown o' the causie').



Traditional (restored) paving on Mid Causeway



Plaque on Back Causeway

Commemorative Plaques

Small round blue and white metal plaques with the logo of the National Trust for Scotland are affixed to the front elevation of those buildings repaired and restored by the NTS. Some buildings have a plaque denoting an award of the Saltire society. A few have plaques giving generally information about the opening and date of the building. Generally these are well-designed and unobtrusive with appropriate colour and lettering. The durability of the materials is to be noted, though minimal maintenance should be considered. These plaques are a discreet but important reminder of the various milestones in the recent history of the burgh.



Plaque on Low Causeway

3.4.4 Building Types

Culross Conservation Area consists mainly of one- and two-storey 18th century adjoining houses (restored in the 1950s). Twentieth century housing is found at Blackadder Haven and on Back Causeway, both two-storey tenements, at Erskine Brae (two-storey houses) as well as a couple of single houses on Low Causeway, east end. The north of the Conservation Area has several large villa type dwellings in extensive private grounds. Limited retail activity in Culross operates from converted houses.

There are two church buildings, one still in use as such (the Abbey Church) and the former Free Church on Low Causeway, now converted for residential use. Otherwise there is one school (1961), and one former civic building, the Town House.

3.4.5 Materials

The extent to which the external materials used in the 1950s restoration programme were 'original' or 'authentic' has been much debated. For example, roofs now pantiled would have been originally thatched. Nevertheless, lime harl, slates and pantiles are also traditional. The following typical materials are to be seen in Culross:

Roofs: clay pantiles, natural slate

Chimneys: dressed stone or harled stacks, occasionally brick; where cans exist: clay cans, round and polygonal

Rainwater goods: cast iron

Walls: sandstone rubble, lime harl render; dressed stone, polished and tooled ashlar, all with lime mortar, coloured lime wash, some brick (usually hidden)

Doors: timber panelled, two-leaf doors

Windows: timber sash and case, external timber shutters, leaded lights;
Paving: blue and red whin setts (rounded and flat), stone slabs drains.



4 Tanhouse Brae (the Butcher's House), on the left of this view

3.4.6 Past and Current Uses

The majority of buildings in Culross are now in residential use. Several of these previously had commercial uses on the ground floor, often recorded in the name or on carved insignia or other decorative features – eg. 4 Tanhouse Brae, known as the Butcher's House and Snuff Cottage, Tanhouse Brae.

Remaining commercial use is confined to four buildings:

- the Pottery/ Gallery/ cafe (formerly the Tron Shop), behind the Town House
- the Red Lion public house, Low Causeway
- the Post Office/ convenience shop, Low Causeway
- The Mercat Gallery at the Cross.

Several buildings and spaces are in use for heritage purposes: the Palace, the Study, the Abbey ruins. Two buildings are in use for services: 22 Mid Causeway, formerly a small house, now an electricity substation and the Boathouse of Balgownie, B listed, now a bin store.

3.4.7 Orientation and Density

The Conservation Area is situated on the southern slope of a hill. There are relatively few buildings above Erskine Brae. Most of these face south or south-east, with hardly any shading from surrounding buildings. Back Causeway, Mid Causeway, Tanhouse Brae run south-west/north-east, with the houses oriented accordingly, in linear plots. Sandhaven and West Green run east-west, almost at sea level, giving very bright conditions on the principal elevations. Low Causeway is also east-west but partly built up on the south side so that the houses cast long shadows on the street for much of the day in winter. Culross is a low density settlement, most buildings being one or two storey with large gardens.

3.5 Spaces

3.5.1 Types of public and private open space

1. The streets and wynds of Culross are its main public open spaces.
2. The coastal path alongside the railway is a major recreational amenity space. It can be accessed through the various wynds off Low Causeway.
3. There is a large playing field on reclaimed land at the east end of Low Causeway.
4. Green space exists at West Green. This is grassed, with a low level wooden fence.
5. There is a small War Memorial garden and children's play area in front of West Green. Culross Old School Yard community garden is located on

the north side of Low Causeway.

6. There are two car parks, one west of the War Memorial, with toilets, and one on Low Causeway east of Orchard View cottage.
7. The main civic spaces are at the Mercat Cross (though this has no facilities for gathering or lingering) and in front of the Town House.
8. Several tracts of large open in the Conservation Area are private. Some are partly accessible, through woodland or along an edge, eg. Slate Lane. Some are set behind high boundary walls with limited entry points.



Sandhaven: the classic view of Culross.



Two views in Cat's Close

3.5.2 Characteristics of each area of open space

1. The streets and wynds are characterised by their narrowness, texture and sinuous lines. The wynds are particularly narrow in the vicinity of Bessie Bar's Hall. The sense of enclosure is emphasised by high rubble walls, eg. on Kirk Street. The texture varies between tarmac, historic cobble paving, (some renewed, see 2.4.6), grass/unpaved (eg. Cat's Close), gravel (Hagg's Wynd, Hagg's Steps) and recent setts (Ailie's Vennel). The streets and wynds generally follow a curvy route, which helps in terms of townscape, offering glimpses and pulling the eye forward. The vennels south of Low Causeway are different – these are fitted in beside linear gardens to lead to and from the sea. The best of them is Strynd Vennel (though in need of maintenance), giving a slot view towards the water, with a strong sense of enclosure from the gardens on either side.

2. The coastal path has a tarmac surface and is well used by walkers and cyclists. Views are long and open.

3. The playing field is situated behind a stone retaining wall on the line of the Mean High Water Springs. Apart from a changing block, there are no buildings nearby and with ponds on the east and west sides and the mudflats

beyond, this is a peaceful open space surrounded by natural habitats. There are clear views across to the built-up hinterland of Bo'ness and Grangemouth.

4. The green enhances the setting of the two B listed houses, Undercliff and Caldervale. There is a central flowerbed but no path or seats. An evergreen hedge at the east of this patch prevents visual connection with the houses near Bessie Bar's Hall.

5. The area gives good views to Balgownie House and the houses at West Green and across the water towards Grangemouth. The timber clothes line uprights recall its use as a drying green. The start of the old pier has been left visible above the new ground level, with an anchor set in it, a reminder that the area used to be part of Culross harbour. There are some seats and picnic benches. Along with the toilets, this is a reasonably well provided amenity space. The community garden shows evidence of much creative input. There is a variety of surface textures, edges, levels and types of planting. The location is relatively sheltered and seats and information boards are provided. This is a pleasant space and an valuable amenity.



View of the remains of the early pier



View north from the east car park. Abbey House is on the hill in the distance.



Footpath, with indicator, along the edge of a field, on the north boundary of the Conservation Area, just beyond West Lodge.

6. The east car park has 59 spaces plus 3 coach spaces. Edges are marked with shrub planting. There are several panels describing the history of Culross, all in need of renewal, litter bins, signs and clear access to the coastal path. Although there is a clear view up to Abbey House, the Abbey church and the wooded slopes and terraces in front, the space feels somewhat vast and remote from the village. The west car park has 105 car spaces. In comparison with the other car park it has easier visual and pedestrian connections to the village. It too has noticeboards and panels, all in need of renewal. Edges are marked with low rubble walls. Caravan parking is forbidden (displayed on a sign) in both car parks.

Of the two civic spaces, that at Sandhaven is larger and more easily accessed. The architectural quality of the space is high and because the public realm has received some attention it feels the most inviting place to pause in the Conservation Area. There is some provision of information and seating, as well as a bus stop and a sandwich board indicating the nearby café/gallery.

A significant amount of private open space is visible from many parts of the Conservation Area because of the topography. The high rubble walls are characteristic of the streets on the edges of these spaces, contrasting a sense of enclosure. It has amenity value

3.6 Trees and Landscaping

3.6.1 Tree Preservation Orders

There is one Tree Preservation Order for Culross, affecting the woods surrounding Balgownie House. However, under section 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act (1997), all trees in a Conservation Area are protected and the Council must be notified six weeks in advance of any intention to cut, lop, top, uproot or fell any tree. This gives time for the planning authority to consider making a Tree Preservation Order.



View on Low Causeway looking east.
The Abbey House woodland is visible in the distance.

3.6.2 Extent of tree and hedge cover

There is considerable mature tree cover, mostly deciduous, at the edges of the Conservation Area – around Balgownie House and up Slate Loan, on the north of the parkland of Park House, near West Lodge, on the south slopes of the grounds of Abbey House, though not on the terraces directly in front of the house. Individual houses such as Park House and Park Steading are surrounded by trees except on the front elevations.

Trees also give significant cover and soil protection on the steep slopes behind the Town House, west of Tanhouse Brae and north of Low Causeway. There are some significant instances of recent linear tree planting: the lime tree avenue east from Abbey House and on Low Causeway. There is hedge planting in the car parks, at West Green and along the coastal path.

3.6.3 Landmark trees

The trees on the slopes of Abbey House have high visual significance on the skyline.

3.6.4 Parks, gardens and designed landscapes

There is extensive green space within the Conservation Area. Most of this is privately owned – open fields and wooded ground to the west, parkland around Park House between Erskine Brae and Kirk Street and land north of the Abbey Church.

The gardens and parkland of Abbey House, approximately 45 hectares, are included in the Historic Scotland Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes and classed 'Outstanding' in terms of historical and horticultural value. The historic terraces and the shrub rose collection (planted by Lord and Lady Elgin in the 1950s) are particularly significant. The lime trees on the avenues and the largely undisturbed woodland have High Nature Conservation value in the Inventory. Documentary evidence for the site is provided by Slezer's perspective view (1693), the writings of Lord Kellie (1664) and the first edition O.S. map (c.1850).



John Slezer, *The Prospect of ye House and Town of Colross* (1693) (National Library of Scotland)

3.7 Character Areas

3.7.1 Within the existing Conservation Area

Two character areas are readily distinguishable:

1. the Abbey area

This includes the Abbey Church and ruins, the Manse, Abbey House including West Lodge and the Stables Cottage, Parley Hill House, Geddes House, Park House including Park Lodge, Jenny Pate House and Park Steading. The area is characterised by large fields and tracts of woodland dotted with the above buildings. It includes a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Designed Landscape. Only one building is not listed – 3 Kirk Street. Public space – Kirk Street, the unnamed tracks on the north, Newgate and Cat's Close - is defined by stone boundary walls. In places these are low enough to give long views down to the harbour and across the Forth. In other parts they are up to 10 feet tall, giving a particular sense of enclosure. Outside of church service times and peak visitor season at the Abbey the area is peaceful. Cat's Close and Newgate (B listed, the original entrance route to the Abbey) are a valuable amenity, offering an unusual historic and natural environment to walkers.



View south on Kirk Street, in the strong shadows of a December morning.

2. the centre of the village

This includes the central streets and buildings described elsewhere, with their particular textures, form and details. This is postcard Culross, instantly recognisable, even by touch (various shape of cobble, lime harl) or aurally (the sound of waders on the mudflats).



View looking west along the coastal path near Station Path

A third character area may be discerned though it is less coherent: the area of St Mungo's Chapel. This includes two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (St Mungo's Chapel and Lord Elgin's Hospital) and the listed pond and walls of Pond Cottage. These have high archaeological and historical significance but the setting, rather far from the village, gives them an isolated feel, detached from the context that would help their interpretation. There are three very strong east-west linear routes in the area – the road (with footpath) and the coastal path, connected by Station Path and the railway. These tend to focus attention on the destination at either end rather than on any stopping point along the way. The woodland around the Hospital and Chapel is steep and somewhat inaccessible.

4.0 ANALYSIS

4.1 Building by Building Analysis

The table and photographs below summarise findings based on external observation in Culross Conservation Area. Maintenance issues are noted. Alterations to traditional buildings involving the introduction of non-traditional materials are also noted. This is not merely a question of aesthetics. Non-traditional materials (eg. cement) behave differently to traditional materials (eg. stone, lime-based harl and washes) so their presence in a building fundamentally affects its condition. Cement and any other non-breathable materials are particularly damaging as they can cause moisture build-up within the masonry.

	Chimneys, wallheads, roofs, rainwater goods	Wall types and finishes	Windows, doors
Original	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stone or harled chimney stacks, stone or lime mortar copes Stone wallhead copes Original was probably thatch, later, red clay pantiles or Scotch slate Dormers: pediment or catslide, restrained in proportion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lime-based harl render Lime mortar Rubble Limewashed rubble Polished and tooled ashlar Dressed stone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timber sash & case windows, set back within the opening Small glazing panes Timber boarded or panelled doors
Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete tile roofing Cementitious render on chimney stack Large box dormer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cementitious mortar Cement render Dry dash Covered in creeping vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uPVC replacement windows, some with sandwich astragals Replacement set too far forward in opening, changing the planes within the elevation Replacement doors of inappropriate design

Other issues

- Paving repairs
- Soil vent pipes on front elevations
- Satellite dishes and alarm boxes
- NTS plaques, poorly maintained



Replacement windows, uPVC, set far forward in the opening












Injected damp-proofing



Missing ventilation grille

 <p>Vegetation sprouting from a skew</p>	 <p>Soil vent pipe on the front elevation, B listed house</p>	 <p>Concrete roof tiles</p>
 <p>New timber sash-and-case window, poorly detailed - pane divisions, size of astragals, sill disproportionate to window margins, unsuitable sill type.</p>	 <p>Rubble wall in poor condition, with missing cope stones and cement repairs</p>	 <p>Missing iron balusters and hinges, paint needed</p>
 <p>Inappropriate patch repairs to traditional surface</p>	 <p>A selection of replacement doors</p>	 <p>Non-traditional replacement door</p>
 <p>An unsympathetic flat-roof extension to a late 19th century C(S) listed building.</p>	 <p>Soil vent pipe on the front elevation</p>	 <p>Unsympathetic position for alarm box</p>

		
<p>Satellite dish on a category B street</p>	<p>Satellite dish and alarm box on the gable of a B listed cottage</p>	<p>Heavy vegetation on the listed walls of the pond (Low Causeway)</p>
		
<p>Cementitious repair to rubble wall</p>	<p>Box dormer in need of maintenance</p>	<p>Cement render to chimney stack</p>
		
<p>Plaques needing appropriate maintenance.</p>		

Culross is one of only a few burghs in Scotland that retain so many high quality historic buildings, largely a result of the intervention of the NTS and especially of Ian Lindsay. The restoration programme was so extensive that more recent alterations are still relatively few. Some of the issues highlighted above occur in single examples. Nevertheless care must be taken so that unsympathetic changes do not have an incremental affect. Repairs and ongoing maintenance also need to be planned (see Chapter 5). Materials to be avoided included synthetic stone and roofing, dry dash, cement pointing, non-breathable paints. Where the opportunity arises, traditional materials should be re-instated.

4.2 Negative Factors

It is evident that much effort has been invested in the restoration and care of Culross Conservation Area. The overall impression is positive. The negative aspects highlighted in the following sections have a cumulative effect. Left unchecked this tends to be even more noticeable.



View of a prominent gable at Erskine Brae



View of a prominent elevation



Example of curtilage surface treatment



These 20th century additions seem haphazard and detract from the streetscape.

4.2.1 Condition of houses at Erskine Brae

These houses are in a location of key significance on the crest of the hill overlooking the west part of Culross, visible on all sides from several distant points and forming the backdrop for the Palace. They are adjacent to category B Hagg's Wynd and the listed boundary walls on Erskine Brae (east side). In theory buildings on such a site should be of the highest quality and maintained to the best standards. These semi-detached houses are of a standard design and layout, acceptable for a standard location but not particularly suitable in this overly visible context. However, given that the houses are now established, maintenance is critical. The condition of the houses should be ascertained and a programme of upgrading devised. The following elements need investigation for their condition:

- the external dry dash and patch repairs on all elevations
- pointing of exposed brickwork.

The following elements detract from the overall appearance of the houses and give a sense of haphazard change:

- the wide range of replacement windows and doors, both uPVC and timber
- the varying range and quality of curtilage treatment eg. wire fencing, original railings (varying states of repair), concrete paviors, masonry walls, decorative masonry
- roof ventilators
- satellite dishes
- the variety of garages, extensions and sheds, using a wide variety of materials.

The site is highly sensitive so these factors need to be very carefully considered. Some screen planting could be considered in the vicinity of these houses. This would provide a wind break on the exposed site and soften the visual impact of the houses.

4.2.2 Inappropriate Extensions

Some properties in Culross have had back extensions that detract both from the original building and from the surrounding streetscape. These extensions are often visible from vennels and wynds – there are few hidden places in the street pattern and topography of Culross. Volume, roof profile, materials and detailing all need to be carefully thought out as well as the scale of the new in relation to the existing and to the available plot size. The historic houses of Culross have had extensions in the past (see 2.4.4), so some new extensions should be possible. However they should enhance their setting and over-development should be avoided.



This house on Mid Causeway does not match traditional detailing in several aspects – treatment of the gable, window and door openings and margins, colour, external fixtures, treatment of curtilage.

4.2.3 Design Quality

There are only a few recent buildings in Culross but in general the design quality does not match the quality of the historic buildings. Ill-informed attempts at reproducing traditional detail give a clumsy result, painfully noticeable in such a unified architectural context. At best the newer buildings are standard design, eg. the school, functionally adequate but not such that they enhance this highly significant architectural context. Prominent sites such as on Low Causeway call for a sensitive and informed design response. Although Culross as a whole is of the highest historical and architectural value many individual buildings are modest within the townscape. New design needs to take cognisance of this and respond accordingly.

Within the historic core of Culross, development will be supported only if it can be demonstrated that it will contribute to the maintenance, preservation, reinstatement, safety, improvement, enhancement or interpretation of the historic built environment. Development likely to irreversibly damage the setting, character or appearance of the historic core will not be supported.

(West Villages Adopted Local Plan, Policy BE9)



House on Low Causeway. The site is elevated and highly visible. Its backdrop is the garden of Abbey House.



Replacement windows on Low Causeway. It is unfortunate that this elevation is the visual stop at the end of a wynd.

4.2.4 Replacement Windows and Doors

There has been quite a lot of window replacement in timber, reasonably successful in terms of detail and appearance. (However, the new astragals often do not match the originals profiles and are too thick.) There are just one or two very poor examples and these jar within the high quality streetscape. Enforcement of planning controls should be considered in such cases, as these windows seriously detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

There has also been quite a lot of door replacement, with varying results. Even in timber, Victorian detailing (eg.raised panels) or large areas of glazing are not traditional in this context and have a negative visual impact on the building elevation and the streetscape.



Protrusions on the roof of a front elevation, Low Causeway



Example of dry dash applied to one face of rubble wall, likely to disrupt the normal processes of moisture movement through the wall



Heavy vegetation growing on one of the (listed) boundary walls of the Abbey graveyard

4.2.5 Roofscape

While unsightly intrusions are not yet a serious problem in Culross, care should be taken that unnecessary extract pipes and vents not be allowed to protrude through roofs, especially on front elevations. Many of Culross' buildings are also visible from the back and sides so finding a hidden location for vents can be difficult. Roof ventilation can now be managed by the use of a good breather membrane laid on the sarking boards when re-roofing.

4.2.6 Repairs and Maintenance

- Cement mortar

Some of the masonry walls in the Conservation Area have been patch repaired in cement mortar. This has the effect of trapping water at the very point where it should be able to escape. Water is then forced through the stone causing delamination and decay of the primary element of the wall. Repairs should involve raking out the cement and re-pointing in traditional lime mortar, which will allow the evaporation of moisture from the wall.

- Impermeable finishes

Cement-based renders, dry dash and non-breathable paints all result in a 'sealed' surface from which moisture cannot evaporate. Some external walls in Culross have been finished in this way, mostly where an extension has been added. It is most likely that damp problems will result and decay of these buildings accelerate. Breathable paint or lime-based harl render should be substituted.

- Vegetation and coping to rubble walls

Vegetation is to be seen sprouting on quite a few of the rubble walls in Culross. Root systems penetrate the mortar, eventually loosening it and causing the cope stones to topple off. In turn the wall without its copes is more vulnerable to water penetration, leading to damage eventually collapse. Vegetation and overgrowth should be removed regularly, taking care to disturb as little of the mortar as possible.

- Injected DPCs

There are a couple of examples where damp-proofing has been injected at the base of a wall. As well as being unsightly, chemical damp-proofing of a hydrophobic (water-repellant) substance into natural stone is generally regarded as a short-term solution and unlikely to be effective. Instead, the cause of the damp should be investigated. Internal alterations such as a new floor with a damp proof membrane will affect how moisture evaporates. Changes in the external ground level can block ventilators. The source of any extra moisture should be minimised and passive moisture sinks provided at the base of the wall. Permeable surfaces should



Roofscape at West Green: left, historic clay pantile, middle, modern pantiles, right, concrete roof tiles.



Pink gravel next to the public pavement on Low Causeway



Decorative walling to B listed house

be maintained beside buildings.

- Replacement roofs

Many of Culross's houses were traditionally roofed with pantiles. Historic clay pantiles are now a finite resource and should not be discarded unless broken. Individual replacement tiles should be sought from second-hand salvage if possible, though this may prove difficult. Modern replacements are available but may not match the older in size or colour. Concrete tiles should not be used to replace pantiles. Not only is their appearance less pleasing, but they are heavier and place extra weight on the roof structure. In some cases the underside of pantiles was protected with lime 'torching'. If this is to be renewed, it should only be renewed using lime. The introduction of cement is inappropriate, being heavier and less breathable.

4.2.7 Treatment of curtilage

There is evidence that homeowners in Culross are conscious of the value of their surroundings and make good efforts to care for their property. However, in some cases the treatment of curtilage – eg. boundaries, surfacing, lighting - detracts from the value of the building and the streetscape as the choice of materials and their application can seem somewhat random. Textures, colours and forms should be chosen to match with the existing historic fabric. Local and natural materials are preferable to the mass-produced and synthetic. This does not preclude the use of well-crafted contemporary elements, where these have been designed in response to this context.

'Period' features, seen in the curtilage of some properties, are unnecessary and incongruous. Modern reproductions of Victorian urban features such as streetlamps bear little relation to the historic context of Culross. Simpler, well-crafted contemporary designs are more appropriate.

4.2.8 Communication

There are several stakeholders in Culross – the residents, the National Trust for Scotland and Fife Council but there appears to be a gap in communication, to the detriment of future planning for the burgh. Residents appear to be well-organised and motivated, with a very active Community Council, as well as other civic groups such as the Culross Development Trust and the Garden Committee. Serious concerns are felt for the future development and viability of the village, including its building stock. The National Trust, for its part, is at somewhat of a remove from the local scene, but is currently engaged in a review of its property portfolio and assessing how it may best exercise its duty of care for so many highly significant buildings. Its Culross Property Statements include as a Guiding Principle that *relations with tenants, the local residential community and local businesses will continue to be enhanced.*

(The Royal Burgh of Culross Property Statements 2006-2009, 11)
Fife Council meanwhile has a statutory duty of protection and

enhancement:

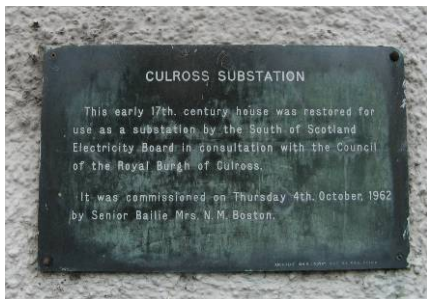
The character, appearance and setting of designated built or cultural heritage sites will be protected from harmful development.

(Finalised Fife Council Structure Plan 2006-26, ENV5)

Within the historic core of Culross, development will be supported only if it can be demonstrated that it will contribute to the maintenance, preservation, reinstatement, safety, improvement, enhancement or interpretation of the historic built environment. Development likely to irreversibly damage the setting, character or appearance of the historic core will not be supported.

(Fife Council West Villages Adopted Local Plan BE9)

Poor communication and possibly the lack of a structure for co-operation seem to be negative factors with regard to the built environment in Culross at the present time. Issues on which all stakeholders need to co-operate if Culross is to do well in the future include street lighting and maintenance of the causeway paving. Uncertainty regarding the ownership and maintenance of the Mercat Cross needs to be resolved. Maintenance of buildings and monuments such as Balgownie Boathouse, St Mungo's Chapel and Lord Elgin's Hospital is important to everyone in that these form part of the burgh's cultural wealth. Clarification of the role and intentions of the National Trust with regard to their properties will be welcome. A shared approach to management and development of the burgh would be very desirable.



Example of information plaque on Low Causeway

4.2.9 Lack of interpretation of major monuments

The lack of information or any type of sign at several highly significant sites is a negative factor. If awareness of the history and meaning of a monument or building is lost then its maintenance is more likely to slip. Examples are St Mungo's Chapel (signplate has been removed, no other information available) and Lord Elgin's Hospital (almost invisible with overgrowth, no sign). All the major buildings or areas of Culross would be enhanced by sensitive provision of an interpretation panel/ short history nearby. This should not be pedestal-mounted as on the coastal path as this would obstruct the narrow causeways. A cast iron plaque with a well written text would be more appropriate. A good example is shown here (left).



View across the railway towards the foreshore.

4.2.10 The railway

It is unfortunate that the rail line cuts off the village from direct access to the foreshore. Like all the villages on this coast, Culross' history is intrinsically linked to the Forth. Although the path alongside the railway is an asset and limited access is available at a few rail crossing points, it is a real shame that the only connection to the rocks, the mudflats and the water is a visual one.

4.2.11 Public Realm

See 3.4.



Lord Elgin's Hospital. The ruin is almost completely covered in thick ivy.



View of the back of the Dundonald Arms. Broken window panes, failing rainwater goods and growth of vegetation indicate decay as a result of being unoccupied.



The Mercat Cross

4.3 Buildings at Risk Survey

4.3.1 Vulnerable Buildings

The following buildings are in a vulnerable state, even as ruins:

- St Mungo's Chapel, a Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Lord Elgin's Hospital, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, C(S) listed.

Some other buildings are vulnerable to decay through being unoccupied:

- 6 and 7 The Cross
- Wee Causeway House
- The House, West Green
- The former Dundonald Arms, Mid Causeway

These last four are properties of the National Trust for Scotland. One of those at The Cross has been unoccupied for approximately ten years and is in a derelict state. The other is currently in use for storage. A study is currently underway with a view to making recommendations for the future of these NTS properties and a decision on the recommendations is expected to follow within the next few months.

In February 2008 planning permission was granted to Ryce Ltd for the conversion of the Dundonald Arms (4-6 Mid Causeway) to two flats and one single-storey dwelling. It is understood that the NTS has been working with the developer to consolidate their respective properties and enhance the surrounding buildings. The NTS recommendation that the lean-to at the back of the hotel be saved for its historic value resulted in the plan for its conversion. Negotiations are currently underway for the NTS to buy a small part of the hotel which is attached to 6 and 7 The Cross, to enable these properties to be slightly enlarged and made into more viable accommodation. It is to be hoped that work proceeds as soon as possible, as the property has now been vacant for a few years and the longer it remains so, the more its structure and fabric will deteriorate.

The Mercat Cross, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is in need of maintenance and basic repairs. Ownership of mercat crosses in Fife, as established by Fife Council, lies with the Council. Repair costs come under the common good fund. In order to trigger a release of monies for this purpose, a community group or a section of the Council should apply to the common good fund. Historic Scotland should be approached for assistance with the planning and execution of repairs.



View inside Lord Elgin's Hospital

4.3.2 Additions to the Buildings at Risk Register

Unfortunately, Lord Elgin's Hospital is in a most serious state of dereliction due to vegetation and trees growing within the structure. There may be scope for positive management and remediation works on the site, in consultation with Historic Scotland. As the building is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Historic Scotland policy deems that it cannot be considered for inclusion on the Buildings at Risk Register. The adjacent rubble walls are also seriously eroded.



Left: view inside the building. Right: decayed rubble wall.

4.4 Public Realm Audit

4.4.1 Appropriateness and condition of paving

Much care was given to the renewal of historic paving in the 1950s. More recently some of the paving has been renewed in the vicinity of the Town House. Different areas of use have been delineated in various colours and patterns of natural stone. There are perhaps too many types of stone and fan patterns are not traditional in Scotland. However, the overall impression is quite pleasing. It is unfortunate that concrete paviors still remain (eg. near the Cochrane monument), some of them loose and broken. Their textural quality and durability does not match that of the natural paving.

The causey paving needs a certain degree of ongoing maintenance. Sett paving on back areas, eg next to the coastal path, at the end of the Low Causeway wynds, should not be forgotten. Modern asphalt surfaces need renewal in places, eg Back Street.



Pavement setts laid in a traditional manner on Low Causeway



Asphalt in poor condition on Back Street

Buff paving bricks laid in a herringbone pattern are used at the small War Memorial. The colour is rather bright against the grey monument and the pattern overly strong. Grey bricks or natural stone laid in rows would be more suitable.



A sunken section of causeway paving is to be seen at the top of Mid Causeway near the Mercat Cross.



This area of garages and sheds next to the coastal path appears rather haphazard and informal but in fact the area has good setts.



Cobbles visible under worn asphalt on Low Causeway



Two images of paving near the Town House



Seat and litter bin near the Abbey Church



The handrail on Hagg's Steps needs maintenance or renewal.

4.4.2 Appropriateness and condition of street furniture

Renewed provision in front of the Town House has been quite successful - seating (several timber benches and a long stone seat near the Cochrane Monument), timber bollards, linear tree planting and flower tubs are in good condition. The timber elements, like the Tron itself, have weathered to an attractive grey. The street lamps here are recent and of a suitable classic but fairly unobtrusive design.

Street furniture elsewhere is of a variety of standard designs, with elements such as litter bins painted metallic blue. It appears to be in reasonable condition though rather tired. The prominence and significance of the locations, eg. in front of the Abbey would suggest that renewal should be considered. A classic range, well executed and sufficiently durable, would be appropriate.

Further provision of seats should be considered along the coastal path, making the path more usable for all ages. These should be set back in the verge so as not to obstruct the path.

4.4.3 Appropriateness and condition of signage

There are various standard signposts on the approaches to Culross and then several information boards in both car parks. However, all are in poor condition and some are illegible. There appears to be repetition of material, though some of the information may be out of date. This creates a very bad impression for visitors. A planned approach should be taken to complete renewal of signage and interpretation for Culross (see chapter 5).



A lone cycle rack and some information at the east car park.



4.4.4 Effect of traffic engineering

There are speed cushions on Low Causeway, at the end of the forty-mile speed zone. The footpath at this point exists on one side of the road only and the bollard forming part of the bump occupies a disproportionate amount of it.



Gable at 26 Back Causeway

4.5 Sensitivity Analysis

4.5.1 Vulnerable areas, buildings and issues

- **2-26 Back Causeway**

Maintenance at these tenements is overdue. The outer skin of dry dash, now over thirty years old, is failing, leaving the brick exposed. This is unsightly but will also lead to accelerated decay of the wall and possible damp problems internally.

- **Long gardens on Low Causeway (south)**

The long gardens to the back of the houses on Low Causeway (south) might suggest the possibility of extensions or even new-build houses, accessed off the vennels. Every effort should be made to ensure the best possible standards of design. The sites are highly visible from the coastal path and the demands of modern housing have to be balanced with visual amenity and response to this protected context. The result should be of the highest quality, allowing a sense of place to emerge, which in time would add to the significance of Culross.

- **Garages, Bins, Parking**

While facilities for storage and parking are clearly both necessary and difficult in this setting, every effort should be made to plan and manage them as well as possible. Occupants should be encouraged to store wheelie bins in back yards rather than in public areas and wynds. One or two areas could be allocated for village centre residents' parking and suitably landscaped, including permeable paving. The small linear site, used as a pedestrian thoroughfare between 3 Mid Causeway and Low Causeway would seem suitable, though this is currently in private ownership. Some such arrangement is preferable to allowing hard standing for parking in front gardens.

Standard up-and-over garage doors do not enhance the causeways of Culross and when the opportunity arises owners should be encouraged to replace these in timber panel or timber boarded doors.



A modern garage door on Mid Causeway.



- **Commemorative monuments**

The Cochrane monument has several elements: a bronze bust on a stone plinth with a bronze plaque, carved flagstones, and two flagpoles. Its location between the Palace and the Town House and in view of several listed houses is very sensitive. If any further monuments are proposed for Culross in the future, caution should be exercised – in the choice of site and the elements and materials selected. It is important not to overload the open space as Culross has a careful balance of buildings and streetspace. Within this some buildings are outstanding and their setting should be protected. In general figurative public monuments are not traditional in West Fife villages. Rather, commemoration of persons tends to be incorporated into the decorative features of houses, such as lintols and pediments, as described earlier, and public gathering points are marked with more abstract features such as the mercat cross or tron beam.

5.0 Conservation Area Management Plan

5.1 Introduction

Culross has a singular heritage in its built environment and is of national significance in several aspects. Great efforts have been put into its restoration in the past but it is important that continued preservation should not be taken for granted. For Culross to be maintained and developed, a vision for its future needs to be worked out. Issues regarding conservation of the historic fabric cannot be properly considered in isolation from issues such as housing and amenity provision, community facilities and the future viability of the burgh.

5.2 Strategies

The future of the Conservation Area relies on positive action, at the level of the village taken as a whole and in terms of individual streets and buildings. Doing nothing is in itself a negative action - neglect leads to decay and buildings are eventually altered beyond recognition or demolished. Minimal maintenance and uninformed repair gives only short term gains. It is preferable that a longer term strategy be adopted, for the benefit of all and as an exercise of statutory duty by owners and local authorities. The following strategies are recommended:

1. Conservation Strategy

Culross has a unique stock of historic buildings in a distinctive setting and streetscape. These need care if the character of the Conservation Area is to be sustained into the future. At present, on the whole, the standard of repair and maintenance is fairly good. It is important that this continue. Owners should be encouraged and kept informed of their responsibilities with regard to listed properties. Opportunities to offer grants to owners should be sought. The already-existing sense of civic pride should be supported by input, advice and possibly some funding. The National Trust could use its own properties and expertise to disseminate information locally on best practice with regard to repair of historic buildings. Opportunities for local training in traditional skills could possibly be organised in liaison with Historic Scotland and the Scottish Lime Centre at the Charlestown Workshops. Community involvement is already at a good level and this could be maximised and enhanced for the benefit of the whole village. Close collaboration between all stakeholders is required – owners, tenants, the National Trust, Fife Council. For all properties, an annual programme of inspection and maintenance is recommended. Necessary repair work should be targeted following the inspection.

2. Heritage Management Strategy

A Heritage Management Strategy should elaborate a vision for the burgh in terms of identifying its significance and

heritage values and should set out a framework for the sustainable conservation, management and presentation of heritage assets. Cultural tourism would be included in all considerations. See 5.5 and 5.8. Within Fife Tourism Strategy 2007-2015 Culross is mentioned as follows:

Culross has a strong offering as a heritage site and is a significant element of the overall Fife product. However, the village now only has a limited number of commercial enterprises and the National Trust for Scotland has been faced with a number of challenges in terms of the sustainable management of its estate in Culross.

(Fife Tourism Strategy 2007-2015)

The quality of the built environment in Culross Conservation Area is very high. However other elements are not so clearly in place and visitor numbers to the NTS properties (the main destinations in the burgh) have been falling in recent years. Efforts should be made to develop facilities at Culross in terms of the 'Strategic Themes' in the above-mentioned document. The following are relevant:

- Theme Two - Fife's Coastal Fringe – a Quality Experience
- Theme Three - Building an Exceptional Visitor Experience
- Theme Four - Fife's Quality Food, from Produce to Service
- Theme Six - Fife: Complimenting and Capitalising on Edinburgh's Success
- Theme Seven - Developing the Cultural and Heritage Potential of Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy. (Culross is mentioned in this section).

Culross undoubtedly has potential to increase its tourist numbers and this would benefit the local community both in economic and cultural terms. However, if this potential is to be realised, a concerted effort, involving the NTS, the community and regional tourism representatives, is needed.

3. Public Realm

The public realm is key to the character of Culross and the setting of its buildings. A programme of improvements and renewal should be carefully undertaken, area by area, with a view to enhancing this character. A suggested list would include the Abbey area, the coastal path, Hagg's Wynd and West Green. New features should aim to be classic contemporary, understated rather than showy. Imitation period designs are not necessary. The existing high quality elements such as the stone paving should be maintained and properly repaired (not cement patched) as a matter of course, not only when a serious problem arises.

4. Excellent Design Standards

Design for proposed new development or 'intervention' in historic buildings should be of the highest standard. Design

guidance should be prepared for any sites identified for possible development. Such sites should be very carefully considered and only permitted if they fit within the typical pattern (or 'grain') of the streets and wynds of Culross.

5. Control and Enforcement

In the first instance, measures should be taken to make sure that owners and occupiers are clear about the issues regarding building repair and maintenance in a Conservation Area, including work to the curtilage and window and door replacement. The procedures for Conservation Area Consent and Listed Building Consent should be clearly set out, along with a list of guidance and information available through the Council as well as from bodies such as Historic Scotland. This advice could be in the form of leaflets, readily available, free, possibly through local shops or by annual postal distribution. The church, local schools and the nearest library would provide another possible point of contact.

Repair notices and enforcement procedures should be followed where necessary.

"Local authorities should consider a more proactive approach including monitoring development activity and ensuring compliance with the terms of planning permissions. A positive and active approach to enforcement will help to reduce the number of contraventions and secure sustained improvements in environmental quality."

(PAN 71, 7)

5.3 Opportunities for Development

5.3.1 Opportunities in the development plan

Housing land requirements under the Fife Structure Plan 2006-26 are currently being reviewed.

5.4 Opportunities for Planning Action

5.4.1 Effects of Permitted Development

Several General Permitted Development rights under Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 are restricted in Conservation Areas, either through an exclusion clause in Article 3 or through Article 4 Directions of the local authority.

There are a few examples of Class 7 Permitted Development (alteration of a boundary fence to more than one metre height within twenty metres of a road), carried out in a way that is detrimental to the house itself and to the setting. An Article 4 Direction should address this issue.

There are several satellite dishes (microwave antennae) fixed to listed buildings in the Conservation Area, creating a poor visual effect especially in the vicinity of highly

significant sites. These are not Permitted Development (Class 6 exclusion) so residents need to be kept informed and statutory controls enforced.

5.4.2 Review of Article 4 Directions

An Article 4 Direction has been in effect in Culross since 1971. This needs updating to include more recent designation of classes.

The following classes are unnecessary for inclusion in an Article 4 as they already carry an exclusion of permitted development in conservation areas:

Classes 1-6, 9.

The following classes do not carry special provision for conservation areas and it is recommended that they be included in an updated Article 4 Direction:

- Class 7 (the erection, maintenance or alteration of fences, walls etc);
- Class 8 (formation of access to a road);
- Classes 10-13 (Changes of Use)
- Class 27 (Repairs to Private Roads and Private Ways)
- Class 69 (Amusement Parks).

Provision might be refined so as to include other relevant classes, eg. classes 37 - 40, undertakings related to harbours, gas suppliers and electricity undertakings. In practice statutory undertakers consult the Council regarding works in a conservation area and it is a generally agreed principle that planning permission is required for all changes to the external building envelope or hard surfaces or to means of enclosure within a conservation area.

An amended Order, concerning domestic microgeneration came into effect in March 2009, containing special provision for the erection of microgeneration equipment on buildings, under Class 6. Certain exclusions are already included for conservation areas (ie. if the equipment is visible it is not permitted).

5.4.5 Design Guidance and Training

A good start has been made in the publication of several documents of design guidance by Fife Council.

- Creating a Better Fife: Fife Urban Design Guide (Dec 2005)
- Fife Masterplans Handbook (2007)
- St Andrews Design Guidelines (2007)

Many of the principles identified in these documents – eg. concerning character, identity, high quality new development - are applicable also to a historic maritime burgh such as Culross. However considerable skill and judgement is needed to interpret the application of these principles. As design is now a material consideration

training in design is essential for those who guide and make local planning decisions. The provision of such training is national policy:

“Local authority officers need to become more skilled and more aware of how design can help fulfil their corporate aims. A number of councils already support their staff in taking design courses. Every planning authority needs, ideally, to have an urban design team with a range of skills, including landscape architecture. At the least, it should have one member of staff with an urban design qualification or skills. Training should also be provided for councillors to help them become aware of the importance of design and the impact of their decisions.”

(Designing Places, a Policy Statement for Scotland, 2001)

5.4.6 Urgent Works, Building Repair, Amenity Notices

The poor condition of St Mungo's Chapel and the almost ruinous state of Lord Elgin's Hospital has already been noted (3.3.1). Of the unoccupied buildings, 6-7 The Cross is reported to be in poor condition internally and the former Dundonald Arms is showing obvious external signs of decay. It is understood that a decision regarding the future of the NTS properties will soon be reached. It is essential that the buildings at the Cross and any others currently vacant be repaired and inhabited as soon as possible, whether by the NTS or new owners. It is to be hoped that the conversion scheme for the Dundonald Arms can move ahead without further delay. In terms of building conservation action really needs to be taken sooner rather than later.

5.5 Conservation Strategy

The following series of actions is recommended:

1. Disseminate information regarding the need for repairs and maintenance of historic buildings, emphasising the importance and greater sustainability of keeping buildings in use. Aim at greater awareness of Conservation Area status. Ensure that owners of listed buildings are aware of their responsibilities and informed about where they can seek advice. It is important the owner/applicant's initial enquiry is directed to an informed, responsible officer of the Council. Comprehensive guidance on funding the repair of historic buildings is available at the Funds for Historic Buildings website, <http://www.ffhb.org.uk>. Set up an annual inspection and maintenance programme, perhaps over a designated weekend, possibly as a community event.
2. Emphasise the restoration of lost architectural detail in repair work, eg. new windows must be properly detailed timber sash and case. Make sure that this is carried out by competent professionals who are experienced in historic building work.

3. Raise awareness of best practice with regard to repair techniques and choice of materials. Local builders, construction professionals and Development & Environment staff at the Council should be targeted. Training initiatives should also be used as a means of building up skills and knowledge, eg. under the auspices of Historic Scotland. West Fife is very fortunate to have the expertise of The Scottish Lime Centre (the Charlestown Workshops) at hand. Locals should be encouraged to make good use of this national resource.

4. Exercise statutory controls over unsympathetic alterations or losses. Ensure that re-instatements are carried out by competent professionals experienced in historic building work.

5.5 Heritage Management Strategy

The following series of actions is recommended:

5. Increase awareness of Culross' heritage by developing signage and interpretation of the Conservation Area.. Collaboration with the National Trust for Scotland is essential. Statutory bodies such as Historic Scotland, Visit Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage could be asked to advise. The project should also be done in co-operation with the local community, eg. Culross Community Council, Culross Development Council, the local primary school, whose input should be sought and given serious consideration. The Culross Trail is already described in the well-presented NTS booklet but this could be further developed. Other means of providing information should be explored, perhaps using the model of the existing NTS plaques. The sensory qualities of Culross are particularly strong (distinct wall and ground surfaces, birdsong, a lot of green space and gardens, potentially aromatic) and this could be exploited to make a range of trails.

6. Improve extra provision of information for visitors to the area, in liaison with the National Trust, Visit Scotland and other relevant bodies. Ensure that maps, leaflets and other printed information are easily available at the local shops. Ensure that information about Culross is kept prominent and updated on the Visit Scotland website.

5.6 Public Realm

The following series of actions is recommended at Council level:

7. Investigate the ongoing difficulties regarding public lighting in the vicinity of NTS properties in Culross. Meet with the NTS and make efforts to find a long-term solution.

8. Assess the current condition of the public realm – pavement and road surfaces, crossing facilities, street lighting, public seating, bus stops, railings, litter bins, signage, planters etc. Repair elements worth retaining. Replace worn features. Choose natural materials over synthetic, locally sourced if possible. Ensure that new elements are chosen carefully, of consistently high quality, durable, easily maintained and that the design will enhance the Conservation Area. This must involve liaison between the Environmental Services and Community Services departments of the Council.

9. Monitor the condition of the public realm, especially paving, on an ongoing basis. Carry out repairs according to current best practice.

10. Assess residents' parking in the central area and how these can be most appropriately provided. Investigate the possibility of a central parking area which would remove the need for street parking on Low Causeway.

5.6 Monitoring and Review

A mechanism for a regular (perhaps two-yearly) review of the Conservation Area should be put in place, possibly under the auspices and guidance of the Built Heritage section of the Council but with the participation of the local community and the National Trust for Scotland and perhaps input from an invited conservation professional or representative from Historic Scotland. This would address the issues outlined in the strategies above. A regular review would help prevent matters being neglected.

5.8 Summary

PROJECT	LOCATION	ACTIONS
1. Conservation	Throughout the Conservation Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate information to owners and users about repairs to traditional buildings – advantages, duties, help available. Source grants and encourage take-up. Carry out an inspection and repairs audit of the Conservation Area, to be repeated on an annual basis. Follow up with a programme of targeted repairs. Implement controls regarding non-permitted development.
2. Heritage Management	Throughout the Conservation Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with all the partners: the NTS, the local community, Fife Council. Involve other interest groups and schools/ colleges. Assess heritage management issues as perceived by these groups. Include heritage interpretation in review of public realm. Upgrade and expand the provision of information for visitors.
3. Public Realm	Throughout the Conservation Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise between Fife Council and the NTS to resolve issues regarding street lighting in the vicinity of NTS properties. Apply to the common good fund for monies to repair the Mercat Cross. Plan the repairs and ongoing maintenance, with advice from Historic Scotland.
	Coastal Path, Hagg's Wynd, Abbey area, West Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit the condition of existing paving and street lighting. Repair carefully, if necessary, or renew appropriately. Ensure regular maintenance. Review requirements of seating, litter bins, planting and signage. Renew appropriately, especially in areas of highest visitor traffic. Liaise with those involved in Heritage Management. Set up a regular maintenance plan for the public realm.

APPENDIX I

List of Maps and Drawings

Drawing BMI 02	Culross with existing Conservation Area boundary and listed buildings
Drawing BMI 04	Culross in context
Drawing BMI 05	Culross and Kincardine Conservation Areas
Drawing BMI 10	Blaeu's map, 1654
Drawing BMI 11	Roy's Military Map, 1747-56
Drawing BMI 12	Ainslie's Map, 1775
Drawing BMI 13	Stockdale's Map, 1806
Drawing BMI 14	Thomson's map, 1832
Drawing BMI 15	O.S. 25" 1858
Drawing BMI 16	O.S. 25" 1896
Drawing BMI 17	O.S. 25" 1915

APPENDIX II

Selected Bibliography

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APPENDIX III

Useful References

The Planning Context

Scottish Planning Policy 8: *Town Centres and Retailing*
National Planning Policy 17: *Transport and Planning*
Scottish Planning Policy 20: *Role of Architecture and Design Scotland*
Scottish Planning Policy 23: *Planning and the Historic Environment*
Planning Advice Note 42: *Archaeology*
Planning Advice Note 52: *Planning and Small Towns*
Planning Advice Note 68: *Design Statements*
Planning Advice Note 59: *Improving Town Centres*
Planning Advice Note 71: *Conservation Area Management*

Building Our Legacy: Statement on Scotland's Architecture Policy 2007, at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/02/19145552/3>

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Technical information published by Historic Scotland

(See www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

The Repair of Historic Buildings in Scotland, Advice on Principles and Methods (1995)

Scotland's Listed Buildings: What Listing Means to Owners Occupiers (2006)

Looking after your Timber Sash and Case Windows: a short guide for homeowners

Technical Advice Note 1: *Preparation and Use of Lime Mortars*

Technical Advice Note 2: *Conservation of Plasterwork*

Technical Advice Note 7: *Access to the Built Heritage*

Technical Advice Note 10: *Biological Growths on Sandstone Buildings*

Technical Advice Note 11: *Fire Protection Measures in Scottish Historic Buildings*

Technical Advice Note 14: *The Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Historic Buildings*

Technical Advice Note 15: *External Lime Coatings on Traditional Buildings*

Technical Advice Note 19: *Scottish Aggregates for Building Conservation*

Technical Advice Note 22: *Fire Risk Management in Heritage Buildings*

Technical Advice Note 24: *The Environmental Control of Dry Rot*

Technical Advice Note 27: *Development and Archaeology in Historic Towns and Cities*

Technical Paper 1: *Thermal Performance of Traditional Windows* (November 2008)

Guide for Practitioners 6: *Conversion of Traditional Buildings*

Guide for Practitioners: *Conservation of Historic Graveyards*

Guide for Practitioners: *Stone Cleaning*

Guide for Practitioners: *The Conservation of Timber Sash and Case Windows*

The Inform guides are available free-of-charge and may be downloaded at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pubsforowners

Titles include:

Domestic Boundary Walls
The use of lime and cement in traditional buildings
Indent Repairs to Sandstone Ashlar Masonry
Maintaining a Pantiled Roof
Repointing Ashlar Masonry
Masonry Decay
Damp, Causes and Solutions
Maintaining Sash and Case Windows
Domestic Chimneys and Flues
Fires Safety
Roofing Leadwork
Finials and Terminals
External Timber Doors
Fireplaces
Timber Floors
Energy Efficiency in Traditional Homes
Maintaining traditional plain glass and glazing

APPENDIX IV

Schedule of Listed Buildings and Structures within Conservation Area

Property	Number	Street	Listing
Daisybank, including boundary wall	7	Back Causeway	B
	9	Back Causeway	B
Ferguson's House	10	Back Causeway	B
Hatta Cottage		Back Causeway	B
Rowan Bank		Back Causeway	B
Little Sandhaven, including Well		Back Street	B
Stephen Memorial Hall		Back Street	C(S)
Stone Cottage		Back Street	B
Balgownie House (Inchkeith School)			B
Balgownie House, garden building			C(S)
Balgownie House, boathouse			B
Balgownie House, boundary walls and gate piers			B
		The Causeways ; The Cross, Back Lane, Hags Wynd and Steps, Back, Mid and Little Causeways, parts of the Sandhaven and Aile's Vennel	B
	6 and 7	The Cross	B
The Ark		The Cross	B
Mercat Cross		The Cross	A
The Study		The Cross	A
Culross Abbey Church (Church of Scotland) including Churchyard and Boundary Walls			A
Culross Abbey House			A
Culross Abbey House East Lodge including Gatepiers and Walls			B
Culross Abbey House Policies, Garden House including garden walls, terrace, setts and seat			A
Culross Abbey House Policies, Stables and Gatepiers			B
Culross Abber House Policies, West Lodge including Gatepiers and Walls			B
Culross Manse			B
Culross Park House including Store			B
Culross Park Lodge			C(S)
Culross Park Lodge, Cottage			C(S)
Culross Park Boundary Walls at Gallows Loan, Kirk Street and Erskine Brae, including East and West Entrance Gatepiers			B
Geddes House including Garden Walls			C(S)

East Wall		Kirk Street	B
Coachman's Cottage		Kirk Street	B
Ark B		Little Causeway	B
Building		Little Causeway	C(S)
The Nunnery including rear Yard Walls and Fireplace		Little Causeway	B
Wee Causeway House including Boundary Wall		Little Causeway	B
The Neuk, The Neuk (top flat) and the Ridge	17	Low Causeway	C(S)
[including garden wall]	18C	Low Causeway	B
Abbey View and Post office		Low Causeway	B
Ailie House		Low Causeway	B
Algao Bay House including garden wall		Low Causeway	C(S)
An Cala		Low Causeway	B
Bandar Abbas and flat about		Low Causeway	B
Beechwood House		Low Causeway	B
Chamberlayne's House including boundary walls		Low Causeway	B
Cunnighame House		Low Causeway	C(S)
Ely House including garden wall		Low Causeway	B
The Haven including garden wall		Low Causeway	B
The Hollies including boundary wall		Low Causeway	B
House (J Laing) including garden wall and barn		Low Causeway	B
House (D Morgan)		Low Causeway	B
Lord Elgin's Hospital		Low Causeway	C(S)
Newgate House		Low Causeway	B
Orchard View, including garden wall		Low Causeway	C(S)
Pear Tree Cottage including Sun Dial and garden walls		Low Causeway	B
Pond Cottage, pond and walls		Low Causeway	C(S)
Red Lion Inn including boundary walls		Low Causeway	B
Rose Cottage		Low Causeway	C(S)
St Kentigern's		Low Causeway	B
St Mungo's Cottage including wall and outbuilding		Low Causeway	B
St Serf's including garden wall		Low Causeway	B
Thistle Cottage		Low Causeway	C(S)
Whitbank		Low Causeway	B
Williamton House		Low Causeway	B
Bishop Leighton's House including boundary wall	5	Mid Causeway	A
Bishop Leighton's House	7	Mid Causeway	A
	9	Mid Causeway	B
	11	Mid Causeway including garden wall	B

The Dundonald Arms Hotel including outhouse and rear wall	4-6	Mid Causeway	C(S)
	8	Mid Causeway	B
Electricity sub station	22	Mid Causeway	B
Cat's Close Walls		Newgate	B
Parleyhill House including boundary walls			B
	1c, 2c, 3c, 4c	Sandhaven	C(S)
	16	Sandhaven	B
Bessie Bar Cottage		Sandhaven	B
Culross Palace including courtyard walls, garden walls and Bessie Bar Well		Sandhaven	A
Culross Pottery and Gallery (Tron Shop)		Sandhaven	B
Culross Town House		Sandhaven	A
Dalmah		Sandhaven	B
Garage to north of house (R Milne)		Sandhaven	B
House (G Mackenzie)		Sandhaven	B
House (R Milne)		Sandhaven	B
House (J Robertson) including wall		Sandhaven	B
House (J Tarnawski)		Sandhaven	B
January House		Sandhaven	C(S)
Mint Lea		Sandhaven	B
Myrtle Bank		Sandhaven	B
Sandhaven House including garden wall		Sandhaven	B
The Tron		Sandhaven	B
The Tron House		Sandhaven	B
Tron House (Mrs Porteous)		Sandhaven	B
	2	Tanhouse Brae	B
	3	Tanhouse Brae	B
	4	Tanhouse Brae	B
	5	Tanhouse Brae	B
Forth View		Tanhouse Brae	C(S)
Little Haven and The Cross including rear wall		Tanhouse Brae	C(S)
Old Shoemaker's House		Tanhouse Brae	B
Preston View		Tanhouse Brae	C(S)
Snuff Cottage including garden wall		Tanhouse Brae	B
Tanbrae House		Tanhouse Brae	B
The Tanhouse including adjoining walls on Erskine Brae and Tanhouse Brae		Tanhouse Brae	B
Walls bounding back causeway, Hagg's Wynd, Hagg's Steps, Back Lane to ERskine Brae and Bessie			B

Bar's Hall and Ailie's Vennel		
Caldervale including walls	West Green	B
Honeysuckle Cottage including garden walls	West Green	C(S)
The House	West Green	B
The House at West Green	West Green	B
The Old School House including garden walls	West Green	C(S)
Undercliff including garden walls	West Green	B
Weavers Cottage including boundary walls	West Green	C(S)
Westerlea including boundary walls	West Green	B
Wrights House	West Green	B



Fife Council
Culross Conservation Area
BMI 04

Culross: Regional Context

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**Culross and Kincardine
Conservation Areas**

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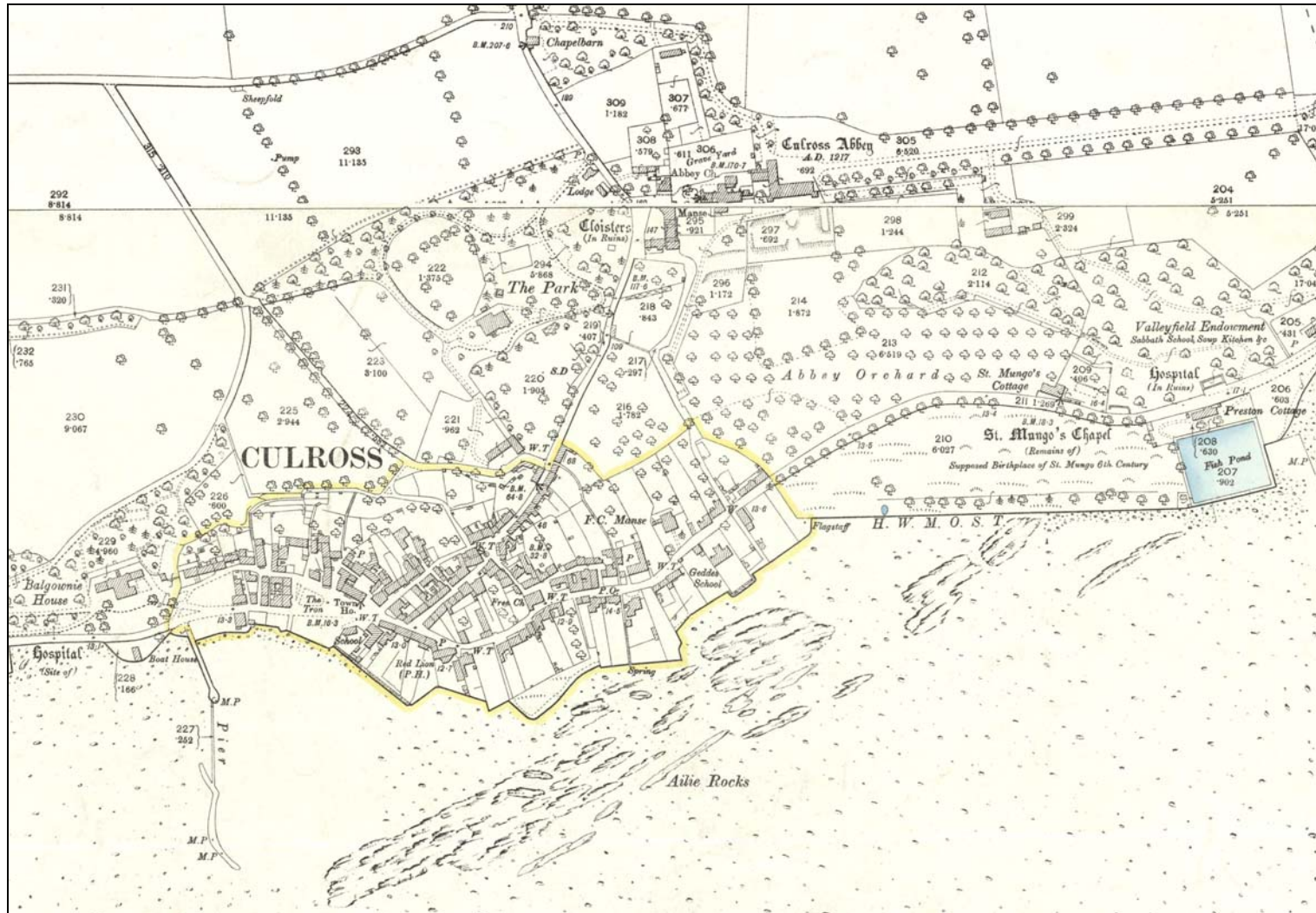


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