

Comrie Conservation Area Appraisal



PERTH &
KINROSS
COUNCIL

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The Environment
Service



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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE and JUSTIFICATION

Conservation areas

1.1 Conservation areas are crucial to the conservation of our built environment. There are over 600 conservation areas in Scotland. They contain groups of buildings extending over areas of a village or town and can also include public parks, woods and historic land. To safeguard them for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations any new development should preserve or enhance their varied character. The local planning authority is required to determine which parts of its area are of special architectural and/or historic interest. It may propose and designate these as conservation areas. The public will be consulted on any proposal to designate conservation areas or change their boundaries.

1.2 Conservation areas must be safeguarded and enhanced. This is defined through:

- Defining the character that merits protection, including the space between buildings;
- Use of appropriate controls over development, demolition and advertising;
- Financial assistance, where appropriate, for works of repair and restoration;
- Protection of trees;
- Interpretation schemes, through leaflets or exhibitions;
- The implementation of enhancement schemes based upon a conservation area appraisal.

1.3 Designation as a conservation area does not place a ban upon all new development within its boundaries. However new development will normally only be granted planning permission if it can be demonstrated that it will not harm the character or visual quality of the area. New development should also positively enhance the area through good design rather than just create a neutral effect.

Reason for conservation area review

2.1 A conservation area was first designated in Comrie in 1979 in recognition of its special architectural and historic character. The Council is required to review its conservation areas from time to time and update the conservation area appraisal and management proposals on a regular basis. The review of the Comrie Conservation Area reflects the fact that a substantial period of time has passed since the original designation and it responds to local community interest in the area's heritage and sustainable development.

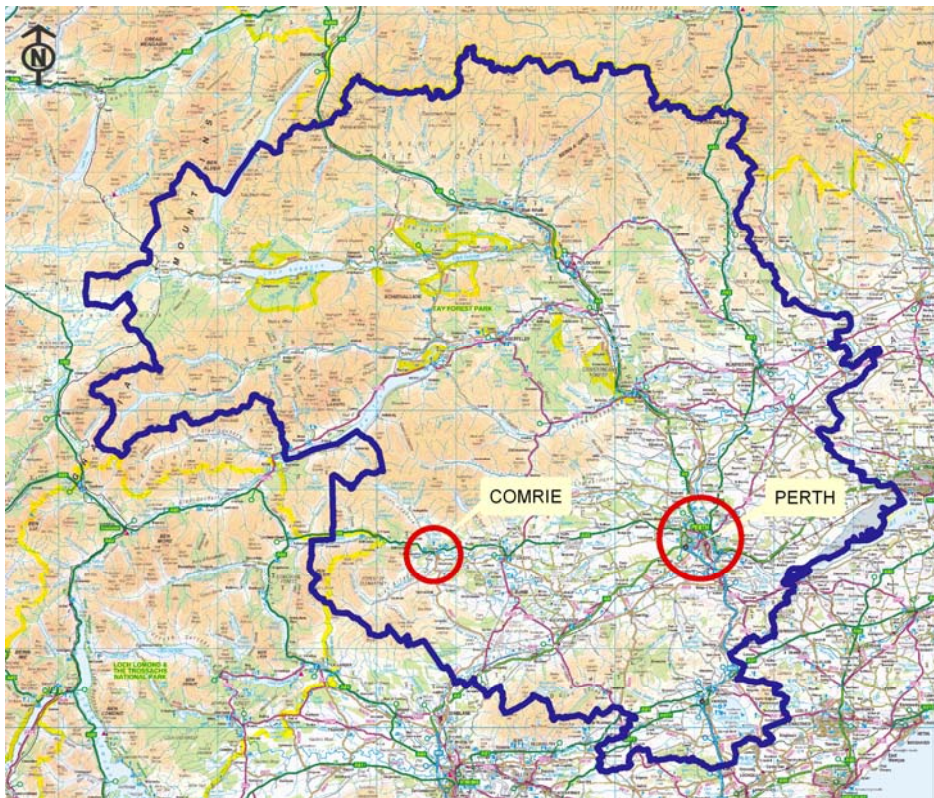
Purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal

2.2 A Conservation Area Appraisal is a management tool which helps to identify the special interest and changing needs of an area. It serves as supplementary planning guidance to the Local Plan. The appraisal provides the basis for the development of a programme of action that is compatible with the sensitivities of the historic area and can enable the local authority to fulfil its statutory duties to protect and enhance that particular area.

2.3 Appraisals also assist development control and management. They provide the opportunity to inform residents about the special needs and characteristics of the area and help developers identify and formulate development proposals. If a conservation area's special interest has been clearly defined and published in an appraisal then this definition will help those thinking to invest in the area and can be used to guide the form and content of new development.

Chapter 2 CONTEXT and SURVEY

Map 1: Location of Comrie within the Perth & Kinross Council boundary



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Location, history and development

3.1 The name Comrie is derived from the Gaelic 'Comhruith' meaning confluence, recognising the village's geographical location on an important junction of trade and drove roads and on the meeting of the waters of the Earn, the Ruchill and the Lednock.

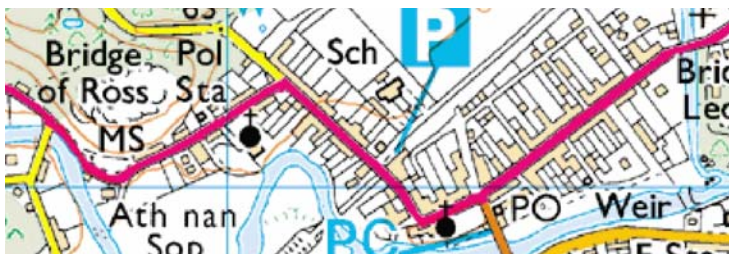
3.2 The significance of the confluence of waterways and routeways is mirrored in the density of archaeological remains within the vicinity of Comrie, with prehistoric settlement, funerary monuments, stone circles and standing stones recorded to the south, east and west. These include the tumuli at Cultybraggan and on the Carse of Lennoch, two stone circles south of Dalginross and a third at Tullybannoch, and a chambered cairn at Kindrochet. The Romans located a 'glenblocker' fort at Dalginross in the 1st century AD. A second fort was constructed on the same site during the Antonine period in the 2nd century AD. The earthworks of these forts and a larger temporary camp have been ploughed down over the past two centuries however aerial photographs indicate a wealth of archaeological information survives beneath the ploughsoil. Dundurn, a fort to the west of Comrie, and a motte on the eastern bank of the river Lednock illustrate continued settlement of the area in the early historic period.

3.3 The settlement appears as 'Combre' in Joan Blaeu's Atlas of 1665. From about 1740 onwards Comrie village and Dalginross became firmly established as home weaving centres, a trade which had been carried on in the area from at least 1600. Hand loom cotton weavers were employed by houses in Glasgow and Perth. To allow families to provide for themselves during the three months of winter when work was not easily obtainable, it was stipulated by the feudal superiors that houses should be south facing

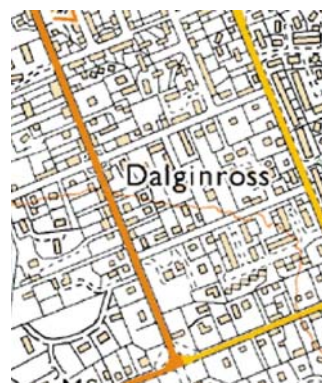
and have an acre of ground which would allow potatoes to be grown and pigs to be grazed.

3.4 Dalginross was laid out from 1740 on the old town muir (common grazing/open space), on a grid pattern with two small squares, Upper and Mid, on the main axis. The present core of Comrie, in Melville Square and Drummond Street, were laid out on a linear plan by James Drummond of Strageath, and built from 1782 onwards. The Bridge of Ross was built in 1792 connecting the Ross with the Crieff-St Fillans road.

Map 2



Map 3



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Above and right: The linear 'z' plan of Comrie, north of the River Earn and the grid-iron layout of Dalginross, south of the river

3.5 The Ross started life as a clachan, a small agricultural community without its own public or commercial facilities, and was recorded as being in existence before 1600.

Present day



Early 1900's



Earthquake House, The Ross

Photograph courtesy of A.K. Bell Local Studies, A.K. Bell Library

Settlement development

Map 4: C.1865-1898



Map 5: C.1900



Map 6: C.1978



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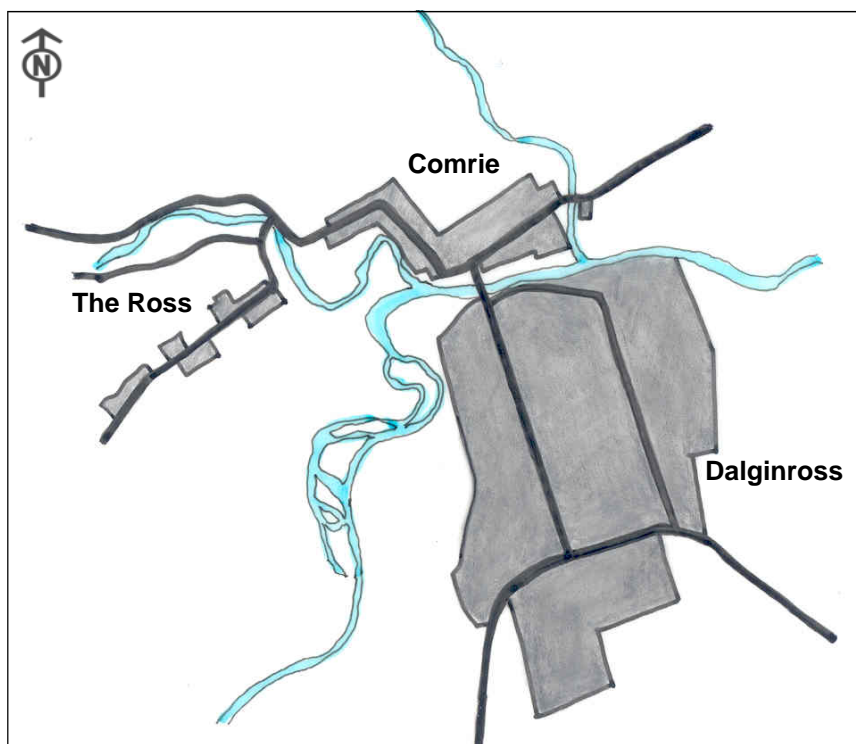
3.6 Comrie's position on the Highland Boundary Fault has resulted in a long association with earthquake activity and its measurement. Earthquake House, a small square rubble building, was erected in 1875 to house one of the earliest seismic recording instruments able to record the force and direction of shocks. The establishment of this instrument followed a particularly violent spate of tremors. The first written account appeared in 1794 and described the series of shocks of 1789. Of the subsequent shocks, that of 1839 was probably the most serious and resulted in "thrown down stone dykes, walls of houses rent and chimney stalks shattered". Earthquake House is now listed, category C(S).

Chapter 3 TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

Building and townscape

4.1 Comrie divides into three distinct areas, effectively three loosely connected settlements: Comrie itself, north of the Earn, formed around the elongated Z-shaped street plan of Burrell Street, Dundas Street and Drummond Street flanking the Earn; Dalginross, south of the Earn, a linear planned crofting settlement; and the Ross to the west of Comrie, a weaving clachan between the Earn and the Water of Ruchill.

Map 7: Three distinct areas of Comrie, divided by river courses



Comrie

4.2 The layout of the central village of Comrie is linear in character with one, two and three storey buildings lining the main route. Buildings generally rise directly from the pavement line and have long, narrow rear plots extending back from the street frontage. Narrow, straight lanes run parallel with these rear plots creating short breaks in the dense street frontage and allowing for glimpse views across rear gardens and to the surrounding landscape. Key views are also afforded of the Viscount Melville monument to the north. Immediately to the north lies the mature parkland surrounding Comrie House, while to the south lie the open banks of the Earn.



Aerial photograph of Comrie in the late 1970s, early 80s. This picture clearly demonstrates the linearity of Drummond Street; densely built, tight to the pavement edge with long, narrow plots extending back. The variety of rooftops is also clearly demonstrated here.



Viscount Melville monument to the north, with mature parkland surrounding Comrie House in the foreground



Open space of the banks of the River Earn



St. Serf's Church, Station Road



Bridge of Lednock

4.3 The eastern entry into the built-up area of Comrie is low density in character with St Serf's Church, Inglewood Rectory and terraced houses set back from the road before crossing the Lednock Bridge which provides views of the densely-wooded banks of the Lednock. An area of villas and modern bungalows marks the east end of Drummond Street.



Mixture of commercial and residential properties in Drummond Street, with many original shopfronts, as shown above

4.4 In Drummond Street west of Nurses Lane, where the majority of the commercial buildings are concentrated, the built form adopts a variety of heights, roof forms and chimneyhead details giving the street, and especially its roofscape, a varied, picturesque quality. Drummond Street also has a very rich surviving group of Victorian shopfronts in timber and cast iron. Modern signage and decoration generally respects and enhances the historic details of the shops.

4.5 The key focal point of Comrie is located at Melville Square and the junction of Dunira Street, Drummond Street and Bridge Street. Melville Square is the only significant urban open space, formed by the elegant facades of the Royal Hotel and 1 Dunira Street (designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh). The 1805 White Church at the south-west corner of this space forms the key landmark within the built form of Comrie. Its elevated position and striking, simple form dominate the river crossing at the Dalginross Bridge. The setting of the church is enhanced by the contrast between its built backdrop of Dunira Street, and the open space of the graveyard and the wider foreground formed by the

picturesque, sinuous channels and tree-lined banks of the Earn and Ruchill. Key views extend southwards over the Dalginross Bridge along the linear vista of the main street through Dalginross and from the bridge environs along the river course to the wider landscape beyond.



Melville Square



Picturesque setting at The White Church, on elevated ground beside the River Earn

4.6 Dundas Street, set almost at right-angles to Dunira/Drummond Street, is characterised by villas at its south end and becomes more densely lined with terraced buildings to the north. These terraces generally have a lower scale, are more uniform and more domestic in character than those of Drummond Street. Lanes leading down from the west side of the street create characteristic townscape gaps allowing glimpses of the riverside and the monumental viaduct of the former Crieff, Comrie and St Fillans railway line. The north end of Dundas Street is enclosed by the rising topography and woodlands, leading into Glen Lednock and the River Earn National Scenic Area.



Glimpse views from Dundas Street through to former railway viaduct



Variety of dense housing in Dundas Street

4.7 Burrell Street, creating the western arm of the Z-plan street form, is more varied and dispersed in character. Its key buildings are the imposing Comrie and Strowan Parish church and the neighbouring former Public Hall/Free Church, now partially converted to dwellings. The more open character of the street allows broad views across the river valley to the south, while the rear plots of the buildings on the north side are enclosed by dramatic wooded cliffs.



Burrell Street with impressive spire of Comrie and Strowan Parish Church in background

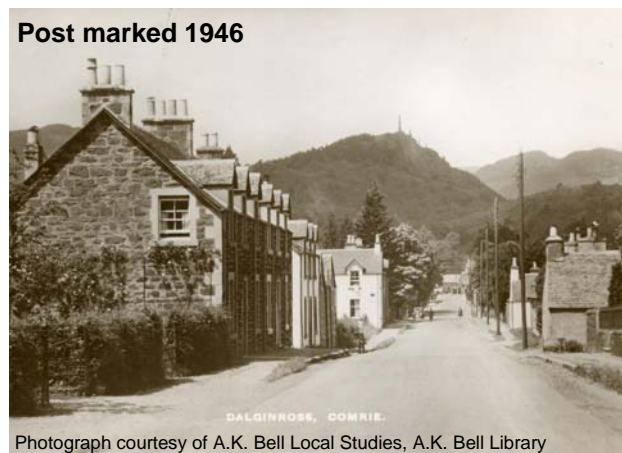


Comrie and Strowan Parish Church

4.8 Continuing westwards the village's character becomes even more dispersed, characterised by individual cottages or small groups such as Glasdale. The open spaces between these properties and the banks of the Earn, on the south, and the steep slopes and wooded areas to the north, create a notable sense of entry at this end of the village. This area also acts as the gateway to the spectacular scenery of the Earn valley and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park to the west.

Dalginross

4.8 From the southern end of Dalginross the eye is drawn along the linear vista north to the Dalginross Bridge which opens out onto Comrie at Melville Square. Throughout Dalginross the focal feature is the Melville Monument and its dramatic setting of hills and woodlands.



Similar view, Dalginross looking north with Melville Monument, an eye catcher on the hill

4.9 Dalginross is an interesting mixture of late 18th century crofting cottages, facing south, and larger terraced houses or villas of the Victorian era facing the main thoroughfares. The older structures are generally single-storey, in very simple, linear, pitched roof forms. The Victorian developments break away from this vernacular form with 1– to 2 –storey villa forms, often standing within generous grounds set back from the road and characterised by more elaborate or decorative detailing to windows, stonework, eaves and bargeboards, and chimneys.



Victorian villa facing road, Dalginross



18th century crofting cottage facing south

4.10 The north end of Dalginross is slightly more urban in character, more akin to Comrie north of the Earn, with terraced or grouped forms lining the street, rising directly from the footway and with some interesting roofline features such as turrets and wall-head gables. This group is generally taller than the majority of the rest of Dalginross, creating a slightly constricted sense of approach to the Dalginross bridge from the south.

4.11 Of particular importance to Dalginross is the informal mixture of property boundaries comprising fences, walls and gate piers or mature hedging and the relationships these

create across the width of the streets. Some fine mature shrubs and many varieties of mature trees also make a considerable contribution to the amenity of the area.

The Ross

4.12 The Ross is connected to the main road and Comrie by the picturesque Bridge of Ross, dating from 1792. The entry into the Ross from the bridge passes the relatively grand villas of Craiggvannie and Oakleigh and loose terraced cottages flanking the road. The road then kinks before opening out into another straight vista lined with a highly varied assortment of building groups, terraces and detached villas in generous grounds, most significant being Drumearn and Auchenross. The groupings of former service buildings, walled gardens etc for these large houses contribute to the character of the main route through the Ross. A few small, modern houses have been inserted at the eastern end but these remain neutral in effect and have not significantly altered the character of the townscape. The significant open space surrounding the Earthquake House, and views of and from this important historic structure, are key elements in the character of the Ross.



Above & clockwise:
Late 18th century
Bridge of Ross;
looking over River
Earn to Rossit
Cottage and House on
left and Craiggvannie
on the right; open
space surrounding
Earthquake House,
The Ross



Oakbank, mid 19th century in present form but may have an older core



Collection of structures under the name of Viewfield

Old Photographic Record

Looking over to Dalginross Bridge and The White Church
c.1905



Drummond Street, postcard on left post marked 1925 and on right in c.1940. Note changes to buildings in foreground.



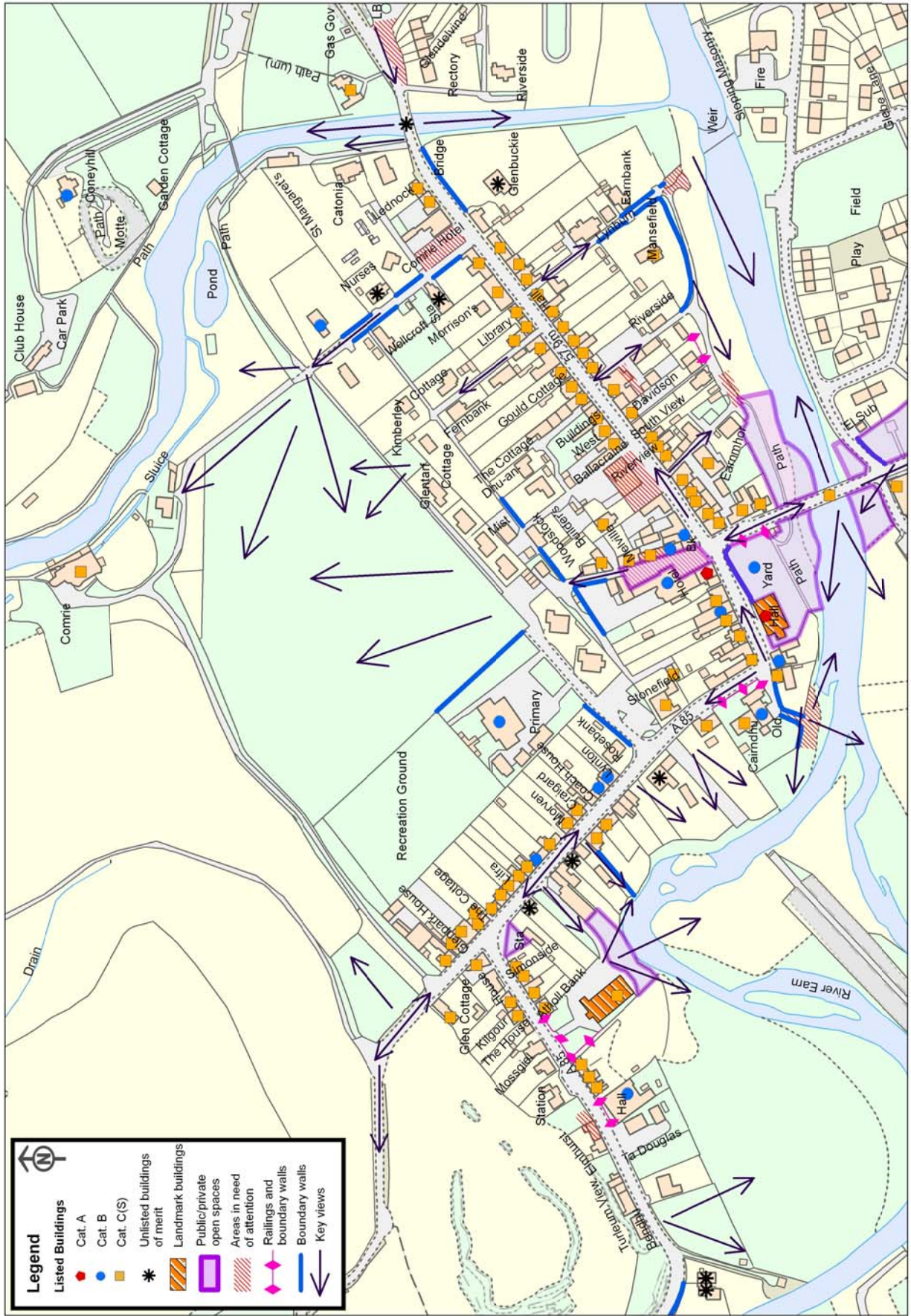
Postcard of Dundas Street, post marked 1934. Photograph shows the railway line crossing the street at high level.

Photograph shows the dense foliage surrounding the Bridge of Ross, in the middle ground, and Glasdale, in the background. Postcard undated.



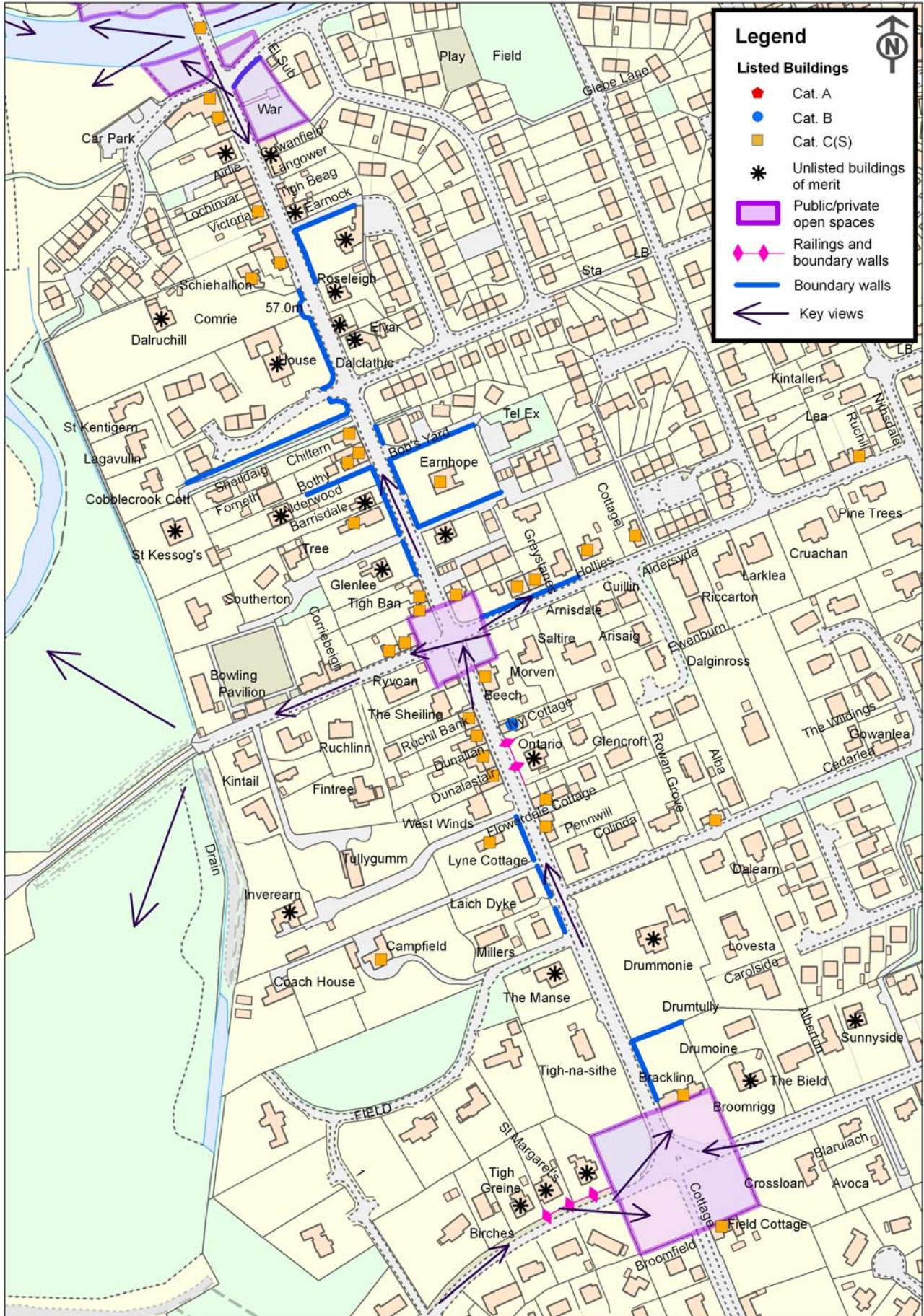
Photographs courtesy of A.K. Bell
Local Studies, A.K. Bell Library, Perth

Map 8: Townscape analysis - Comrie



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Map 9: Townscape analysis - Dalginross



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Building materials and finishes

4.12 Traditional roof materials throughout the village are Scottish or Welsh slate. Some roofs display decorative timber bargeboarding. Stone chimney heads and stacks are important feature of the townscape. Traditional rainwater goods are painted cast iron and there are some fine examples of decorative brackets to downpipes and rainwater heads (hoppers). Wall materials are whinstone or sandstone, usually constructed in random or square and snecked rubble, often with ashlar dressings. Some buildings or building groups are wet harled and a few are painted masonry. Windows are predominantly timber sash and case, in a variety of astragal patterns. Examples of the building materials, decorations and details found in Comrie can be seen on pages 30 and 31.

Activity and movement

4.13 The village boasts a wide variety of businesses including local food and gift shops, hotels, cafes and restaurants, local service industries and a large range of tourist accommodation. The Comrie area is also notable for its range of active community groups.

Spaces

4.14 All spaces, regardless of ownership and accessibility (i.e. public and private spaces) contribute to the amenity and character of the area, as indicated in the Scottish Government's Planning Advice Note 65, 'Planning and Open Space'. The term 'open space' covers green space consisting of vegetated land or geological feature in a town and civic spaces including squares, market places and other paved or hard landscaped areas.

4.15 In the heart of the village there is a concentration of varied public spaces. The semi-formal layout of Melville Square is the one significant urban space, contrasting with the dense street frontages of Drummond Street and Dunira Street. The space is predominantly vehicle orientated, being used as a parking and loading area for the Royal Hotel. Immediately to the south-west of the square the kirkyard of the White Church is a publicly accessible space and provides a green edge to the corner of Dunira Street and Bridge Street. There are further landscaped green spaces on either side of Bridge Street next to the riverbank. The public garden adjacent to the churchyard connects through a path under the bridge to further landscaped green space along the north bank as far as the south end of Commercial Lane.

4.16 Near the south bank of the Earn, on the corner of Dalginross and Strowan Road, is the attractive War Memorial Garden, formally laid out with tree, shrub and flowerbed planting. Other public green spaces of note in the village centre are the Millennium Garden on the corner of Dundas Street and Burrell Street and the landscaped grounds of Strowan Parish Church, overlooking the river. Mid Square and Upper Square are relatively small-scale public areas, landscaped with shrubs and flowers, creating stopping-points along the long straight route through Dalginross.

4.17 Private gardens, although physically inaccessible to the public, can contribute significantly to the amenity of the townscape. Along the main streets of the village centre there are glimpse views of the long and narrow rear garden plots which provide attractive frames to the lanes leading off Drummond Street. In the lower density areas of Dalginross and in the Ross there are examples of expansive, mature gardens of detached villas fronting the road.

4.18 Key spaces within the conservation area are indicated on maps 8, 9 and 10.

Character areas

4.19 As identified in the Townscape Analysis, Comrie divides into three distinct character areas, effectively three loosely connected settlements: Comrie itself, north of the Earn; Dalginross, south of the Earn, a linear planned crofting settlement; and the Ross, a weaving clachan between the Earn and the Water of Ruchill.

Map 11: Character areas



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Trees and landscaping

4.20 Trees and landscaping are important features of the Comrie townscape. Woodlands, tree groups, individual trees and boundary treatments all make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and its wider setting.

4.21 The main road routes into the village from the east and west are framed on both sides with mature tree groups providing attractive entrance features and enhancing the experience of the introduction to the townscape. The banks of the River Earn running through the village are an important green artery of mature tree belts. Further green arteries exist along the banks of the tributaries of the Earn: the River Lednock at the north-east edge of the village and the Water of Ruchill joining the Earn from the south near the centre of the village. There is also substantial, predominantly broadleaf woodland on higher ground above Burrell Street which provides a distinctive visual frame to the north-west edge of the village.

4.22 Smaller mature tree groups are evident in various, expansive mature gardens and open spaces, predominantly in the Ross and Dalginross areas. Fine individual specimens exist throughout the village. In the village centre there are certain specimens which add a particularly positive dimension and foil to the higher density built environment of the village centre.

Garden plots returning onto river banks from Dundas Street



Mature grounds of Mansefield

Well maintained garden ground on banks of River Earn, across from Dunfallandy, Hillcote and Alanna

Formal garden enhances the villa, Dalginross



Open space at Mid Square

4.23 Significant tree species within and around the edge of the village are oak, beech, lime, maple, alder, willow, ash, rowan, cherry, Scots pine, cypress and larch.

4.24 Ancient woodlands surrounding the north of Comrie and along the South Crieff Road create a dramatic backdrop and views out of and around the village. The Upper Strathearn Oakwoods are protected by designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).



South-east entrance to Dalginross



Permanent planting to entrance of village from south-west, Dalginross



Mature trees along banks of River Lednock



Entrance to Drummond Street from east

4.25 There are no existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within the conservation area or its immediate setting. Key trees, tree groups and woodland areas within the conservation area are indicated on maps 12, 13 and 14. Any proposals to fell, top or lop trees within the conservation area are subject to controls under the Town and Country Planning Act (explained further at para. 14.11 and 14.12).



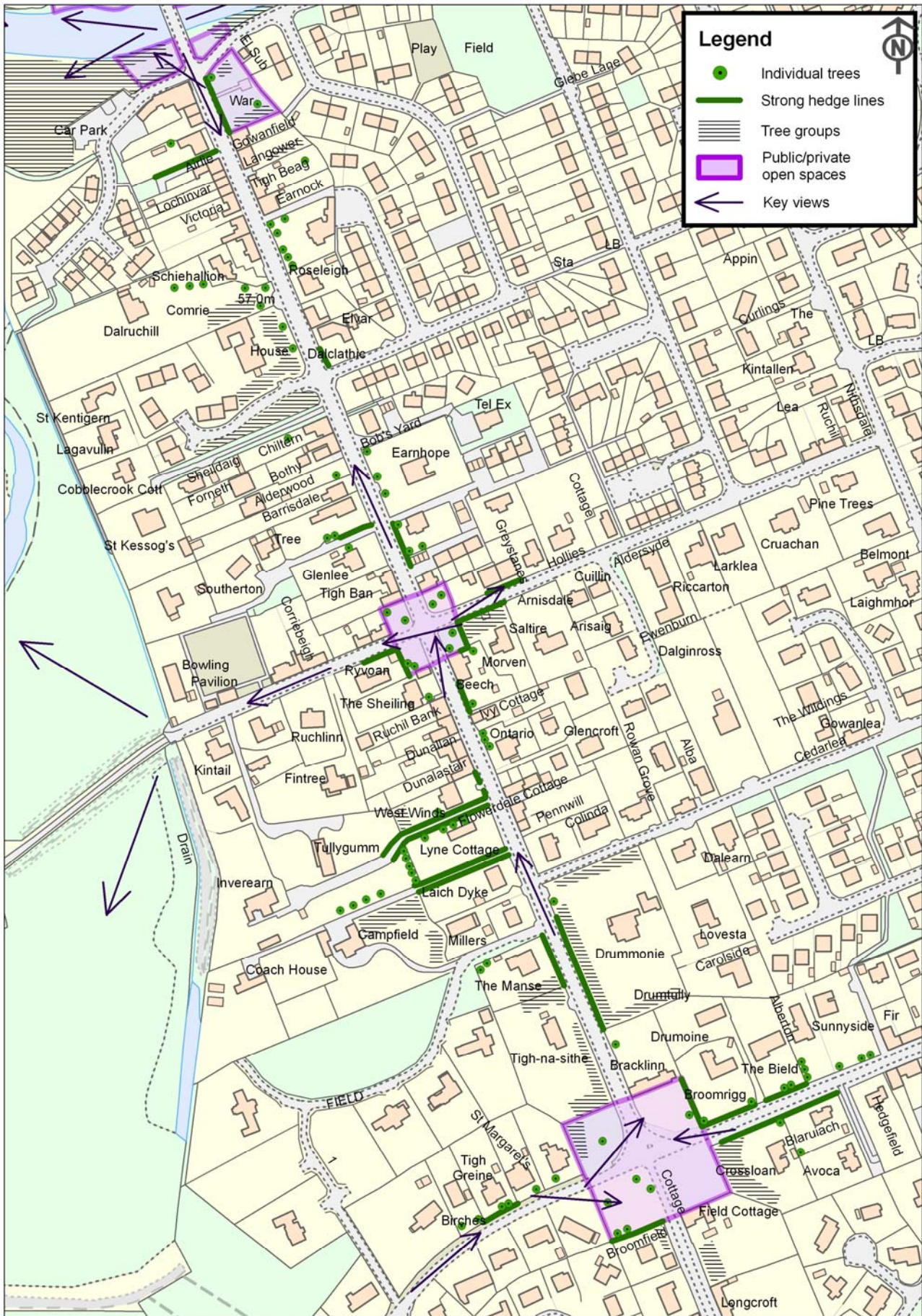
Display of mature trees found at the entrance to The Ross, Bridge of Ross



Striking individual trees found in The Ross

4.26 Tree Preservation Orders will be considered for trees and tree groups which are considered important to the setting of the conservation area and are under threat.

Map 13: Green areas - Dalginross



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4.27 Boundary treatments such as walls, railings and hedges are important elements of the townscape. Traditional rubble walls, stone gate piers, decorative cast iron railings and gates and substantial lengths of hedges feature throughout the village. In some cases boundaries consist of a combination of low stone walls with hedging or decorative railings above. Some back lanes in the village are edged with well established, high hedges, providing a sense of enclosure and seclusion. Where there are remnants or evidence of original decorative railings or hedges previously removed it would be desirable to restore these features wherever possible.



Above & clockwise:
Dramatic individual tree in the grounds of Mansefield; original railings and low boundary wall with hedging set behind in Dalginross; mature tree groups and sweeping boundary walls in Dalginross.

4.28 Other examples of boundary treatments can be found on page 32.

Negative factors

5.1 There are a number of negative buildings, facades or ill-defined spaces which detract from the quality of the townscape. These areas of poor visual quality have been identified in the townscape survey, shown on maps 8, 9 and 10. There may be the potential to enhance these areas and opportunities for enhancement are discussed further in paragraphs 15.1-15.5.

Burrell Street

5.2 Opposite the Burrell Garage and former Free Church there is a shed and partially fenced off storage area. Both the building and the timber fence are in poor condition. The overall effect, including views of the stacks of material stored, is one of poor visual quality.



Shed and storage area in Burrell St

5.3 The category B listed former Public Hall/Free Church in Burrell Street would also benefit from the completion of the unfinished project for its conversion to residential units.

Melville Square

5.4 Melville Square is a vehicle-dominated space with a combination of tarmac and concrete monoblock surfacing. These materials are not conducive to the setting of the Royal Hotel, a listed building. The poor condition of the storage building on the east side of the square is also a concern.



Storage building, Melville Square

Comrie Hotel, Drummond Street

5.5 The parking area next to the hotel, viewed from Drummond Street and Nurses Lane, is ill-defined. The surfacing of the car park and the non-traditional boundary fencing has an adverse impact on the setting of the hotel and on the village townscape.



Car park, Comrie Hotel

Ancaster Lane

5.6 The rear façade and backlands of Ancaster House are of poor visual quality.

Gap site in Drummond Street

5.7 The site of a former garage was until recently surrounded by solid high fencing. This site has planning consent for a housing development.



Former garage site, Drummond Street

Paths and lanes

5.8 There are some sections of public paths or lanes which are ill-defined and suffer from poor surfacing and definition:



Entrance area to Comrie Holiday Park

The lanes running off Drummond Street are in general in poor condition, exacerbated by pressure for access and parking. The entrance area to the Comrie Holiday Park; path to the riverbank at the south end of Manse Lane; the south end of Commercial Lane; the path to the riverbank between The Old Jail and Dunearn also need attention.

5.9 There are several examples of traditional Victorian or Edwardian shopfronts in the village centre with elegantly designed fascias, console brackets, pilasters and stallrisers. There are however some shopfronts which have been significantly altered in recent times and which have rather standardised fascias or obtrusive projecting signage. There are examples of colours, lettering styles and illumination which are at odds with the traditional character and human scale of the streetscape. Unsympathetic signage can have an adverse visual effect on neighbouring, traditional or well designed shopfronts.



Internally illuminated box signage



Blacked out windows with posters and multiple projecting signs

Buildings at risk

6.1 There are no buildings in Comrie currently included in the Scottish Civic Trust's Buildings at Risk (BAR) Register. There are no known buildings 'at risk' at the present time but the situation will be monitored at regular intervals.

Public realm audit

7.1 Street furniture in most areas of the village is generally of a standard 'off-the-shelf' design, such as lamp standards, bollards and litter bins. Most of the lamp standards have been modernised to avoid light spillage. More traditional looking lamp columns and lights, painted black, have been erected relatively recently in the public open space areas on the north bank of the Earn, at either side of the Dalginross Bridge.



Traditional looking lamp columns and lights in open space on north banks of River Earn and standard public benches



Standard litter bins, Dunira St

7.2 See also 5.8. The surfacing material for lanes leading off the main streets is generally tarmac. Some surfaces of lanes are in poor condition. Street footpaths are either tarmac or concrete pavers. A public parking area has been formed in Dundas Street recently which, although tarmac surfaced, has well defined edges with attractive soft landscaping.



Soft landscaping to car park, Dundas Street



Mixed surfacing in Melville Square

7.3 Melville Square is a combination of tarmac surfacing, loose gravel and an area of concrete setts. Some rather obtrusive bollards of a non-traditional material and standardised design have been installed along the east edge of the square.

7.4 Some road directional signage has been rationalised recently and generally road signage and traffic engineering is not overly obtrusive in the Comrie townscape. However there are some possibilities for improvement, particularly at Upper Square at the south end of Dalginross, where the road islands and their concrete paviour surfacing, the glass reinforced plastic (GRP) bollards and spaces between pole mounted chevron plates create a cumulative adverse impact on the surrounding green spaces and townscape.

7.5 Several original 'K6' telephone boxes exist in the village, including one at the corner of Burrell Street and Monument Road. It is important that traditional features such as red telephone and pillar boxes are retained.



'K6' telephone box & pillar box, corner of Burrell St & Monument Rd

Surveys of specific issues

8.1 All conservation areas contain streetscapes, building types, architectural details, materials or other features which are unique to that area and a result of their historical development. These features contribute to an area's local distinctiveness, the characteristics that lend it a unique sense of place. Some of these characteristics are general or intangible, but others can be quite closely defined.

8.2 The following is not an exhaustive list and will be augmented in the future. It identifies the most important types of features and elements of the townscape which help to shape its identity, but which may be most at risk of incremental erosion. A full survey of each category will be undertaken as part of the building analysis survey. This will provide example images which may be referred to when new development, alterations and extensions are proposed in the area.

**Surveys of specific issues:
Windows and doors**



Roofscapes



Materials, decoration and detail



Materials, decoration and detail



Boundary treatments



Shopfronts and signs



Sensitivity analysis

Setting of the conservation area

9.1 The edges of the conservation area can be sensitive to potential development. It is important to preserve or enhance the setting of the conservation area and the design, scale and landscaping of any development must not adversely affect this setting. Existing tree belts should not be adversely affected.

9.2 The special character of the wider landscape setting, particularly to the west of Comrie, is recognised by the River Earn National Scenic Area between Comrie and St Fillans, leading into the eastern edge of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. The importance of the woodland setting of the village is described at 4.24.

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

9.3 The Aberuchill Castle Garden and Designed Landscape is in close proximity to The Ross and includes Ross Wood which provides a significant, attractive visual frame to the old clachan settlement. Aberuchill is a 19th Century designed landscape with historical connections to the Scottish plant hunters. The parkland and woodland makes a major contribution to the surrounding scenery and the setting of the Comrie Conservation Area. It also provides the setting for a category A listed building.

9.3 Development affecting the settings of both the designed landscape and the conservation area are material planning considerations for any planning applications submitted. Historic Scotland must be consulted on any development proposal potentially affecting the setting of the designed landscape.

Archaeology

9.4 There are no Scheduled Monuments in the conservation area but there are several sites of local archaeological importance within and around the village. Information on non-designated monuments can be found in the Perth & Kinross Historic Environment Record (HER). Enquiries should be directed to the Heritage Officer at Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (www.pkht.org.uk). Information from the HER can be viewed online via Pastmap (www.PASTMAP.org.uk).

9.5 For any development proposals a programme of archaeological works including an initial evaluation to assess the significance of any deposits may be required in order to protect and record any archaeological remains impacted upon by the development. Depending on the results of the initial evaluation, the programme of archaeological works may include measures for the preservation in situ and preservation by record, through excavation, analysis or publication.

9.6 Two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) are within the setting of the conservation area: the Dalginross Roman fort and camp and stone circle, off the Braco Road, and the Dunmoid stone circle, off the South Crieff Road. Historic Scotland must be consulted on any proposals potentially affecting scheduled monuments or their setting.

Assessment of significance

10.1 Comrie is important historically as a trading centre at the confluence of three rivers. Being made up of three highland villages of different layout and character informally linked together, it has a rich diversity of townscape. The Earn and its tributaries enhance this townscape experience. The village setting is magnificent, with a backdrop of woodlands, glens and wild mountain scenery.

Chapter 4 CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Using the Conservation Area Appraisal

11.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) provides a sound basis for development management and for initiatives to promote environmental and economic improvements. Key issues and features that contribute to the character of Comrie are addressed and proposals will be put forward for enhancing the character of the area. This will be done through local consultation with amenity groups, businesses and other community organisations. Public meetings and exhibitions will also be arranged.

11.2 The CAA provides a framework for on-going management of the conservation area in the medium term as well as the near future. The key objectives are:

- To ensure maintenance of the integrity of the conservation area;
- To prevent erosion of character through small-scale change;
- To enable future evolution and change as long as it is appropriately controlled.

11.3 Implementing these objectives will depend on a number of factors:

- Development proposals must be in accordance with current development plan policies relating to conservation area status and special character of the historic buildings, open spaces and tree groups;
- Design, materials and detailing will require to be in accordance with design guidelines prepared by the local planning authority;
- Development proposals should demonstrate a sustainable approach, including use of materials and sustainability of use;
- Adaptive re-use of buildings and mixed use projects to ensure a reverse in physical, visual or economic decline will be positively considered subject to compatibility with neighbouring property and uses;
- The potential for economic regeneration will be considered as a positive factor, subject to compatibility with neighbours.

11.4 Whilst current Development Plan policies provide a framework for protection of the conservation area, it is important to ensure implementation and enforcement where necessary. A combination of guidance, information and planning tools will be used in this management role, as indicated below:

- Conservation area guidance: design advice covering conservation areas in general will be provided for owners and occupiers of residential and commercial property with regard to building alterations and improvements, and there will also be advice for any new build site infill in conservation areas;
- Grant aid: the local planning authority will provide information regarding what grant schemes may be available from partnership agencies and other organisations for certain types of repair or enhancement works;

- Enforcement action: the planning authority will assess any unauthorised works within and adjacent to conservation areas with a view to taking enforcement action where feasible;
- Article 4 Directions: the planning authority is committed to establishing this additional planning tool within the conservation area in order to bring certain classes of permitted development under planning control (as described in paras. 12.7, 12.8 and 12.9).
- Repairs Notices: the planning authority will seek to work with owners of listed buildings but will take action in terms of undertaking urgent works or requiring repairs where owners allow buildings to fall into disrepair;
- Compulsory Purchase orders: the planning authority will exercise its rights to acquire buildings in disrepair to assist their repair and conversion in partnership with other agencies;
- Education and training: the planning authority is in the process of establishing links with Historic Scotland, business and enterprise bodies and construction skills providers to facilitate conservation training programmes for building contractors and other interested parties or private individuals. Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust has an ongoing interpretative and outreach education programme in conjunction with other agencies which includes events linked with conservation areas.

11.5 There is a firm commitment from the planning authority to ensure the protection and enhancement of Comrie Conservation Area and to use statutory planning powers when these are required. The importance of public consultation with local civic amenity and community groups and local businesses is fully understood and this will continue after the conservation area has been designated and established.

Monitoring and Review

The conservation area will be monitored through:

12.1 Photographic surveys: a detailed survey of all buildings and open spaces within the conservation area has been undertaken as part of the appraisal and will form a basis for monitoring further change;

12.2 Observation: officers from the planning authority will visit the conservation area at regular intervals and check on the progress of any restoration and enhancement schemes and also observe any other works occurring which may be unauthorised;

12.3 Liaison: officers will liaise with local amenity groups, the public and other interested parties as necessary;

12.4 Review: the Conservation Area Appraisal will be monitored and reviewed from time to time depending upon budget constraints and other priorities.

Chapter 5 PROPOSALS

Opportunities for development

13.1 The 2001 Strathearn Area Local Plan identified areas for housing development at the edge of or in proximity to the conservation area: Field of Refuge, The Paddock in Barrack Road and Campfield. These sites have now all been developed. There are no large-scale sites within the conservation area apart from the former garage site in Drummond Street, which has planning consent for a flatted residential development.

13.2 The Local Plan indicates that there may be some scope for infill development, particularly for affordable housing, but only where this will not adversely affect the density, character or amenity of the village. Applications for consent in principle within the conservation area are unlikely to be acceptable without further detail of the layout, massing, scale, proportions and landscaping of the proposed development.

13.3 Major areas of open space and recreation identified in the Local Plan, such as the school playing fields and the woodland on the south bank of the Earn and Water of Ruchill, will be retained. Any development proposals that would erode these areas will be resisted.

13.4 The Local Plan also states that the existing pattern of main street uses within Comrie (including retailing and other commercial uses) will be protected. Encouragement will be given to additional uses that would enhance the vitality and viability of the village.

13.5 Other development sites outwith the conservation area may be allocated for housing or other uses in future Local Development Plans. It is important to preserve and where possible enhance the setting of the conservation area. The design, scale and landscaping of any development must not adversely affect this setting.

Opportunities for planning action

Conservation area boundary

14.1 The conservation area was first designated in 1987 and predominantly covers Comrie village. During the current re-appraisal and review larger areas of Dalginross and The Ross have been considered for inclusion in the boundary. Dalginross and The Ross settlements have been identified as distinct character areas linked to Comrie itself and important areas in terms of the historical development of the whole village we see today. These areas are considered to meet the criteria for special architectural and historic interest and are proposed for inclusion.

14.2 It is proposed to extend the existing boundary as far south as Upper Square and west to near Earthquake House.

14.3 The appraisal and conservation area boundary will be kept under review in future re-appraisal cycles.

Effects of permitted development

14.4 Alterations to listed buildings are covered by listed building legislation and the need to obtain listed building consent, but unlisted buildings, of which there are many in Comrie, are not covered by this legislation.

14.5 Small scale developments or alterations to unlisted buildings or open spaces may not be significant individually but cumulatively can erode the visual fabric of the townscape and there is the potential, without development management, for such developments to appear.

14.6 The existing conservation area is covered by an 'Article 4 Direction' which removes certain permitted development rights under the General Permitted Development Order 1992. This existing Article 4 Direction needs to be reviewed to take account of the proposed extension to the conservation area.

14.7 Classes of development which require planning permission under an Article 4 Direction include removal of stone walls or railings; small extensions or some types of alterations to the exterior of houses, including replacement windows; small buildings or alterations within the curtilage of houses; some satellite dishes; repairs to private streets; caravan sites; some forms of telecommunications development; some types of development by statutory undertakers (water, gas, electricity, road transport, post office and sewerage) and certain types of development by local authorities, including lamp standards and street furniture. In Comrie the townscape is particularly vulnerable to some if not all of these classes of permitted development, for example, window and door replacements; developments within the curtilage of gardens and possible loss of trees; the alteration of stone boundary walls or decorative iron railings; visual clutter of telecommunications and electricity apparatus on or near buildings, and alterations to roads or parking areas.

14.8 Under Article 4 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, the local planning authority can seek the approval of the Scottish Ministers for Directions that restrict permitted development rights. Development is not precluded, but such alterations will require planning permission and special attention will be paid to the potential effect of proposals. In order to maximise the benefit of the conservation area designation it is considered that an updated 'Article 4 Direction' should be drafted for Scottish Ministers approval (Draft Article 4 Direction shown in Appendix 1).

Advertisements

14.9 There are certain types of advertisements which do not require advertisement consent under the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984. It is possible for a local planning authority to propose additional advertisement controls through regulation 11 of the 1984 Regulations and seek the approval of the Scottish Ministers. A Regulation 11 direction controls normally permitted forms of 'minor' advertisement which can have an impact in areas of environmental quality. Certain types of advertisements, such as shop or business signage, can have a significant impact on historic building frontages and on the overall quality of the townscape. Usually Regulation 11 advert controls are only approved in conservation areas.

14.10 The quality of commercial signage in the centre of Comrie is predominantly good, but there are examples of particularly obtrusive or poorly designed signage which has significant and adverse visual impact on traditional shop fronts and the wider townscape. Additional advertisement controls would be a useful development management tool and should therefore be drafted for consultation and Scottish Ministers' approval. Classes of permitted advertisement proposed for removal under Regulation 11 of the Control of Advertisements Regulations 1984 are shown in Appendix 2.

Trees

14.11 There is a case for Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to be formulated within the setting of Comrie if there are trees which are important to the setting of the conservation area. The Council will consider serving TPOs if any important tree belts in these areas are under apparent or potential risk.

14.12 Any proposals to fell, top or lop trees within the conservation area will be subject to certain planning controls under the Town & Country Planning Act. Under this Act the local planning authority must be given six weeks notice of the intention to uproot, fell or lop trees. The planning authority then has the opportunity to discuss suitable management of the tree(s) with the owners, such as thinning rather than lopping. The planning authority would also have the option to propose protection by Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Failure to give notice of intention to fell, top or lop trees within the conservation area will render the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a TPO, which could involve a fine not exceeding £20,000 per tree.

Opportunities for enhancement

15.1 Individual sites which may be opportunities for enhancement are identified in the 'Areas in need of attention' section and the Townscape Analysis maps. These include some buildings or backland elevations of poor visual quality and condition, spaces or routes which are ill-defined or poorly surfaced, and particularly obtrusive signage.

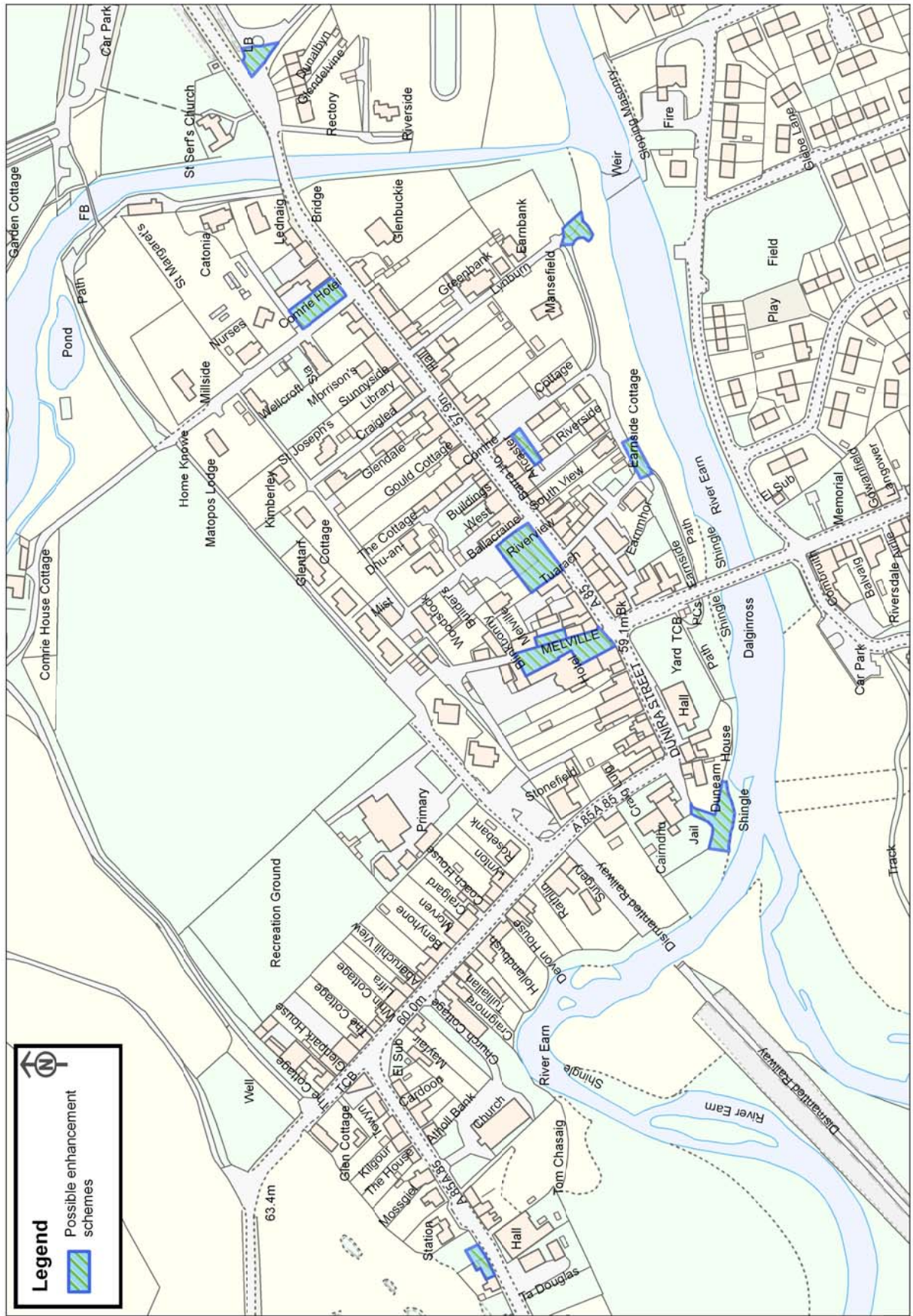
15.2 An enhancement scheme for the village centre could be considered, which would comprise public realm and streetscape works (hard and soft landscaping, improving surface treatments and street furniture such as bollards) and also facade and shopfront restoration projects.

15.3 The management of the conservation area provides an opportunity for the development and enhancement of path networks through Comrie and around the local area. The draft Core Path Plan identifies key routes around the village linking to wider networks allowing access throughout the area. There may be scope for improving or extending routes along the riverbanks.

15.4 Please note that these represent initial ideas for potential projects. There will be early consultation with the local community, including the Community Council and other local groups, before any firm proposals are developed further.

15.5 Enhancement of the conservation area will be achieved through a variety of agencies and routes: through schemes promoted by the local authority (Perth and Kinross Council) in partnership with local or national agencies, through private business enterprise and development or via conditions or legal agreements attached to planning consents. Funding may be available from a variety of sources including Perth and Kinross Council; Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust; Historic Scotland or the Heritage Lottery Fund, depending on these organisations' priorities and resources at the time.

Map 16: Potential enhancement sites



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APPENDICES

1) Article 4 Direction

**Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
Form of Direction by Planning Authority under Article 4(8)
Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)
(Scotland) Order 1992**

Comrie Conservation Area

**The Perth & Kinross Council (Restriction of Permitted Development)
(Comrie) Direction 2010**

Perth & Kinross Council in terms of article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (SI 1992/223) being satisfied that it is expedient that all or any development comprising:-

- Class 1 - the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse;
- Class 3 - the provision within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse of any building or Enclosure, swimming or other pool required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse, or the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of such a building or enclosure;
- Class 6 - the installation, alteration or replacement of a microwave antenna on a dwellinghouse or within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse;
- Class 7 - the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure;
- Class 16 - the use of land, other than a building, as a caravan site;
- Class 27 - the carrying out on land within the boundaries of a private road or private way of works required for the maintenance or improvement of the road or way;
- Class 30 - the erection or construction and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration by a local authority;
- Class 38 - water undertakings;
- Class 39 - public gas transporters;
- Class 40 - electricity undertakings;
- Class 41 - tramway or road transport undertakings;
- Class 43 - universal service providers; and,
- Class 43A - sewerage undertakings;

should not be carried out within the Conservation Area of Comrie (area of land as described in the Schedule hereto) unless permission is granted on an application in that behalf, hereby directs that the permission granted by article 3 in respect of:-

Classes 1, 3, 6, 7, 16, 27, 30, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43 and 43A, as described above, shall not apply

This direction may be cited as the Perth & Kinross Council (Restriction of Permitted Development) (Comrie) Direction 2010.

Signature

Designation

Chief Executive's Service – Legal
Perth and Kinross Council
2 High Street
Perth PH1 5PH

SCHEDULE

The area of land hatched in red on the plan annexed and executed as relative hereto, in the district of Perth & Kinross Council.

Note: The plan annexed to the Direction should be executed in the same way as the Direction and duly docquetted with reference thereto.

2) Classes of advertisements proposed for advertisement control under Regulation 11

Description of Advertisement
Class II (3): Advertisements relating to any institution of a religious, educational, cultural, recreational or medical or similar character to any hotel, inn or public house or hostel, situated on the land on which any such advertisement is displayed.
Class III (3): Advertisements relating to the carrying out of building or similar work on the land on which they are displayed, not being land which is normally used, whether at regular intervals or otherwise for the purpose of carrying out such work.
Class IV (1) Advertisements displayed on business premises wholly with reference to all of the following matters; the business or other activity carried on, the goods sold or services provided, and the name and qualification of the person carrying on such business or activity or manufacturing or supplying such goods or services on those premises.
Class IV (2) Advertisement displayed on any forecourt of business premises wholly with reference to all or any of the matters specified in Class IV (1) .

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