

# Pitlochry Conservation Area Appraisal



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The Environment Service



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# INTRODUCTION

## 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 designation

2.1 The essentially Victorian town of Pitlochry is a superb example of a Highland holiday resort developed mainly during the last half of the nineteenth century. Good quality stone masonry work and decorative architecture are in evidence from this period throughout the town centre and surrounding, lower density area of villas and extensive gardens. Various architectural revival styles of the Victorian period abound.

2.2 Pitlochry's townscape is of a high quality and represents an important economic asset as well as having visual and amenity benefits for residents. Pitlochry is a tourist town and its economic vitality relies on the tourist trade to a large degree. The economic value of the heritage asset is significant and the quality of the asset must not be eroded.

2.3 The principle of a conservation area designation has already been established through the Local Plan consultation process. The Highland Area Local Plan indicates that the Council will designate a conservation area including Pitlochry town centre and adjoining areas containing large Victorian villas, utilising where appropriate the assistance of local bodies. The Council will also investigate and progress where appropriate an enhancement scheme for the area. The village of Moulin to the north of Pitlochry has an existing conservation area designation. A separate conservation area appraisal will be carried out for Moulin. Local Plan policy indicates that there will be a presumption against development which would harm the character or appearance, or which would not preserve or enhance the conservation areas.

## Purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal

2.4 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

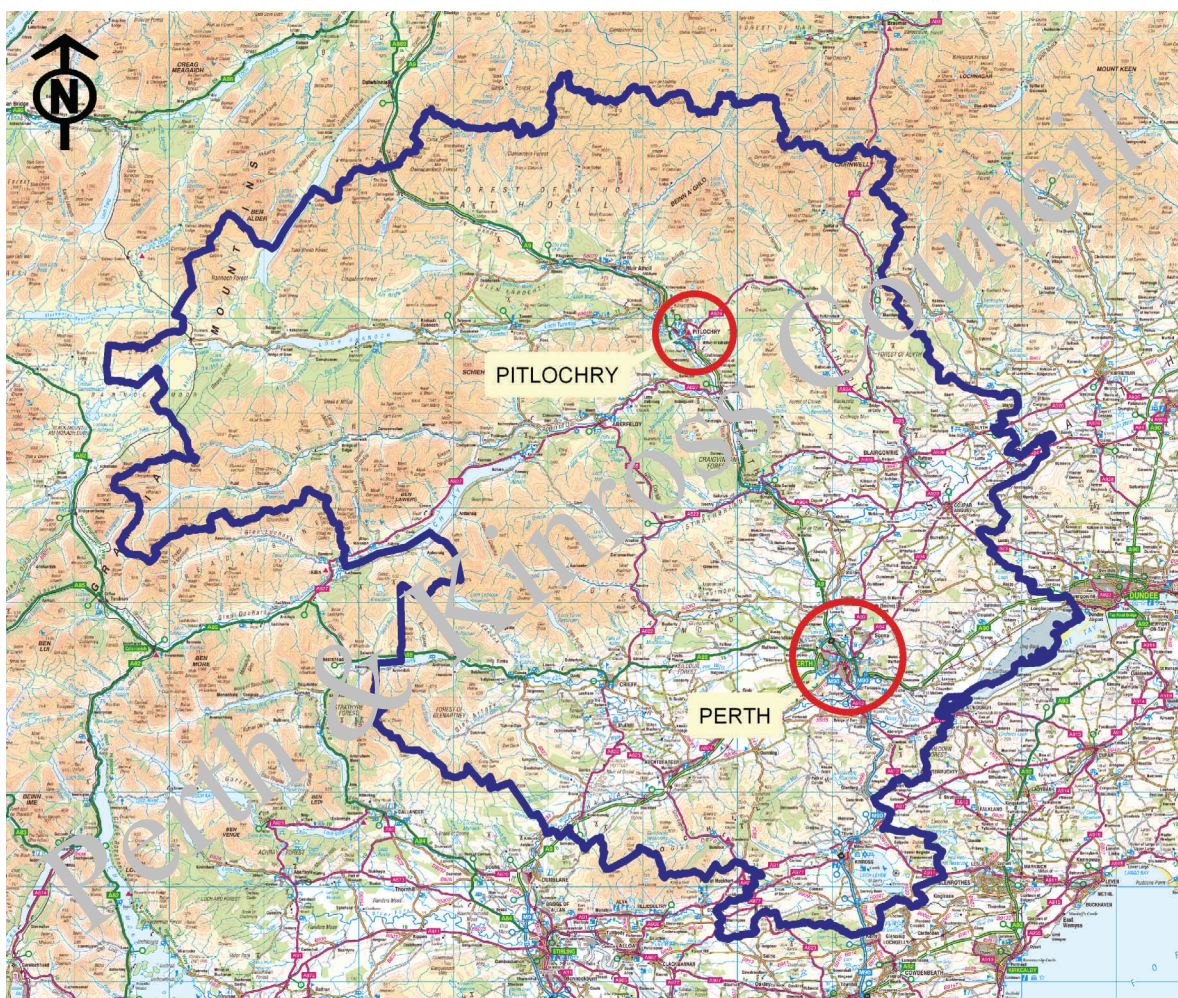
compatible with the sensitivities of the historic area and can enable the local authority to fulfil its statutory duties to protect and enhance that particular area.

2.5 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.

## CONTEXT AND SURVEY

### Regional and local context

Map 1: Location of Pitlochry within Perth & Kinross



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3.1 The parish of Moulin is situated in the north of Perthshire and has an area of nearly 45,000 acres or over 180km<sup>2</sup>. It includes the burgh of Pitlochry, of which the village of Moulin is part. The rivers Tummel and Garry flow through the parish. The village of Moulin, from which is derived the name of the parish, is about a mile from Pitlochry railway station and at a higher elevation (around 50 metres) than Pitlochry. A level portion of very fertile arable land adjoining the village of Moulin is known as the Howe of Moulin. Loch Faskally is the only large expanse of water and it was formed in 1950 by the building of a dam at Pitlochry across the river Tummel as part of a scheme to obtain hydro-electric power.

3.2 The village of Moulin is an ancient settlement of the Tummel valley and its importance for some 2000 years was the result of its 'carfax' or convergence of routes position. Replacement of

the earlier north road from Dunkeld by the road through Pitlochry constructed by General Wade in 1728 led to a decrease in the importance of Moulin and an increase in activity at Pitlochry, accelerated by the construction of the Perth–Inverness railway in 1863.

3.3 Pitlochry has for more than a century attracted great numbers of tourists, due to its situation in the lovely wooded valley of the Tummel, its proximity to many beautiful examples of Highland scenery and its healthy situation and pleasant climate. Many handsome villas were built to keep pace with the steadily increasing number of visitors.

3.4 Pitlochry was declared a burgh in 1947. The present population of Pitlochry is around 2500, compared with 291 in 1841. The last decades of the nineteenth century were marked by an increase in urban population in Pitlochry, which continued to grow fairly rapidly until the 1920s when it reached approximately its current levels.

### **Geology and topography**

3.5 The burgh of Pitlochry lies on the left bank of the River Tummel. The burgh is spread over the south-west facing slope of the valley and thus obtains the maximum amount of sunlight and warmth while it is sheltered from the north and east due to the hillside topography.

3.6 The present-day landscape is, to a large degree, the product of glaciation. A large glacier came down the strath of the Tummel from the immense ice fields of Rannoch Moor. To the west of Pitlochry the glacier's face must have been nearly 300 metres high and the ends of its moraines are still visible today. Other signs of glacial movement can be seen in Pitlochry as natural terracing along the valley sides, such as at Lower and Higher Oakfield, created by the action of a loch of glacial meltwater backing up from Dunkeld.

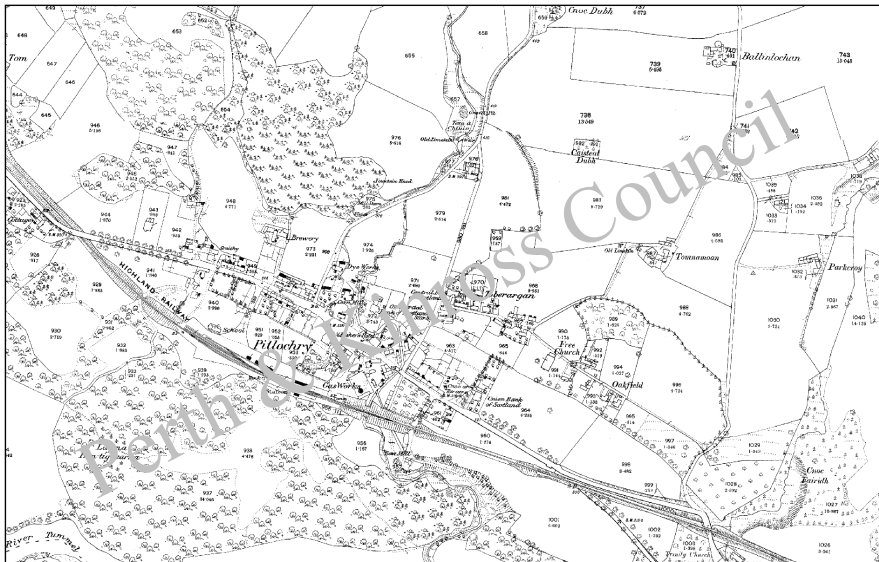
3.7 After the glaciers receded for the last time, the climate became more temperate and was generally warmer than it is now. Trees such as oak, hazel, elm and Scots pine were able to grow freely at higher elevations than at present. However, Pitlochry's relatively low elevation from sea level means that it is still an ideal environment for trees.

### **Reasons for location and settlement development**

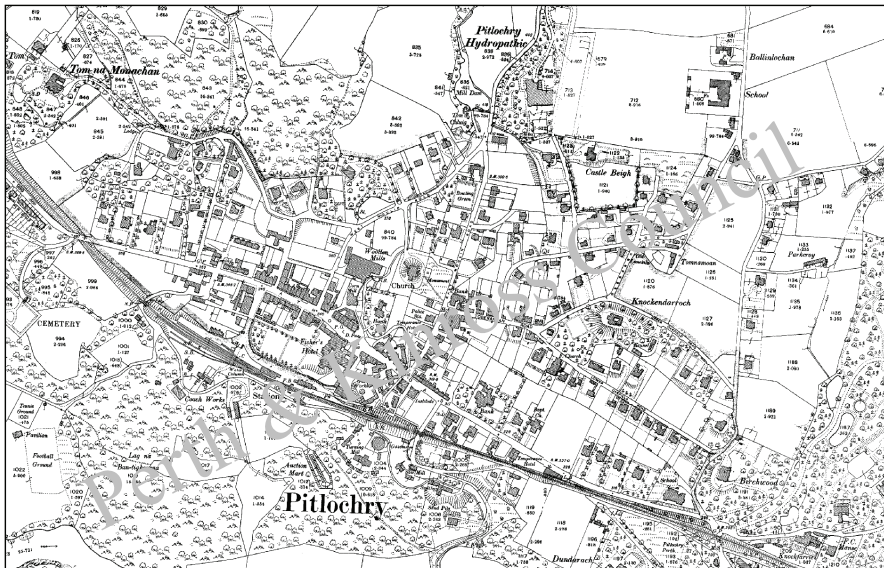
3.8 The name Pitlochry was thought to be a corruption of Pit cloich aire ('place of the sentinel stone'), a name tracing back to 208 AD, when Emperor Septimus Severus led his forces across Scotland. Whilst some commentators do not believe that the Romans penetrated Highland Perthshire, there has been a legend locally that the Romans did have a camp on the north bank of the River Tummel, now submerged under Loch Faskally, on what was the old recreation ground and which was called Dalchampaig ('field of the camp'). The resident Picts from Moulin were said to have responded to this Roman threat by positioning their own sentinel behind a large boulder, possibly situated where Tigh-na-Cloich ('house of the stone') Hotel now stands in Larchwood Road, so as to keep watch on the Romans in the camp below. Another theory is that the town's name derived from the Pictish word 'pet' (place or piece of land) and the Gaelic words 'cloich riach' (stones cutting the surface).

3.9 Before Pitlochry was established as a village, it was three separate hamlets. The westernmost was in the area of Larchwood Road. Sunnybrae, the stone cottage with a red corrugated iron roof which sits at the bottom of Larchwood Road, is said to be the oldest building in the town and formerly part of this hamlet. The middle hamlet was situated near what is now the centre of Atholl Road, on both sides of the Moulin burn. This hamlet consisted of two rows and a small square of thatched cottages. The third hamlet was a little higher up the hill to the north-east of Bonnethill Road, at Toberargan, and was probably the oldest of the three. Toberargan refers to a well and it was here that the early Celtic Church held its services.

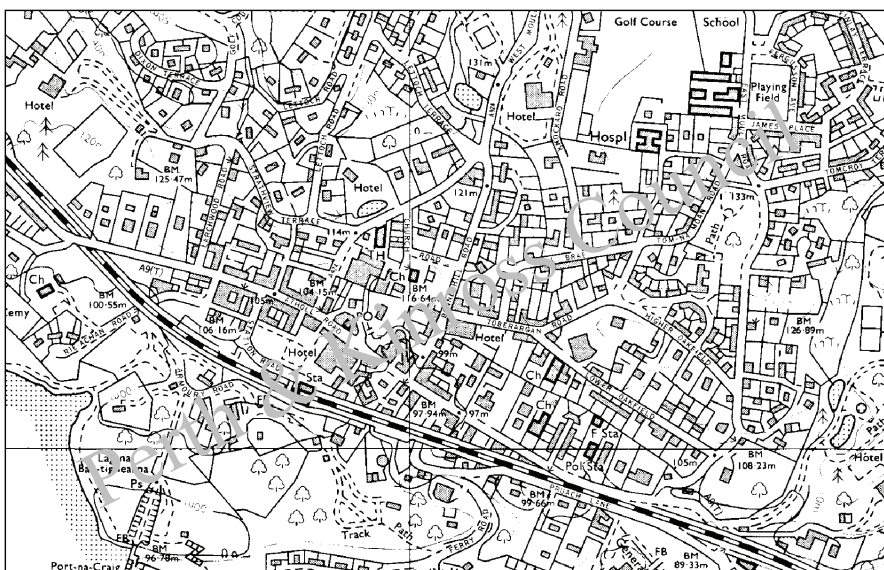
# Settlement Development



Map 2: c.1867



Map 3: c.1900



Map 4: c.1978

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**Right: Sunnybrae Cottage**

3.10 General Wade's Great North Road of 1728 was constructed right through the middle of two of the three hamlets from which Pitlochry grew. The road was sited at the bottom of the strath instead of following the previous route at a higher elevation through Moulin. The three hamlets amalgamated rapidly to form the nucleus of today's town.

3.11 The major growth of Pitlochry dates from about 1845, when Queen Victoria visited Blair Atholl. Sir James Clark, the royal physician, formed such a high opinion of the air and climate that he began to prescribe that his patients should holiday in the area. The Fisher's Hotel, the first hotel to be built in the village, was completed by the 1840s. At this time the growing village was still relatively small although the Statistical Account of 1845 makes mention of persons already holidaying in the area. The Highland railway line came through in 1863. In the second half of the nineteenth century a great amount of building work took place, including the Atholl Palace and Pitlochry Hydro Hotels, Alba Place, the town hall and a number of villas with extensive grounds.

3.12 A number of industries were carried out in the parish during the latter half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries but, with a few exceptions, these enjoyed a brief period of prosperity and were then discontinued. These included smithies, a brewery, dye and woollen mills north of Atholl Road; a coach works and bobbin mill which existed behind the station; a lemonade factory in Bonnethill and a sawmill and gasworks off Ferry Road. All have been demolished except for one smithy building. The Blair Athol distillery, on the south-east outskirts of the town, is over two hundred years old and is still in operation today.



**Atholl Road in the past c.1895**



**Same view today**

3.13 A key innovation in the parish was undoubtedly the construction of the hydro-electric works by the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board as a major part of the Tummel-Garry scheme. The scheme was opposed initially, concerns having been expressed for the future of Pitlochry as a holiday resort. After a local inquiry the scheme was approved and commenced in 1946, consisting of a dam and integral generating station. The construction of the dam meant flooding a considerable area of land on the banks of the river, including the recreation ground. The dam was

completed in 1950 and the new Loch Faskally was formed. The Pitlochry works have become something of a showpiece and thousands of visitors annually visit the dam and fish ladder provided for salmon making their way upstream to spawning grounds.

3.14 Pitlochry has in recent times become the administrative centre for Highland Perthshire and is also a centre for shopping, building trades and transport contracting. Most labour is employed in distributive trades and in the tourist industry. As well as the several purpose-built hotels such as the Atholl Palace, Fisher's and the Hydro, many large houses or villas have been converted into hotels or guest houses. The dam, fish ladder and the Festival Theatre, established in 1951, have added considerably to Pitlochry's attraction as a tourist destination.

3.15 The town by-pass was opened in 1979, enabling the removal of heavy lorries and fast moving traffic from Atholl Road. The economic prosperity of the town centre did not appear to suffer unduly and the local Tourist Association took the view that the attractiveness and amenities of the area could now be fully appreciated.

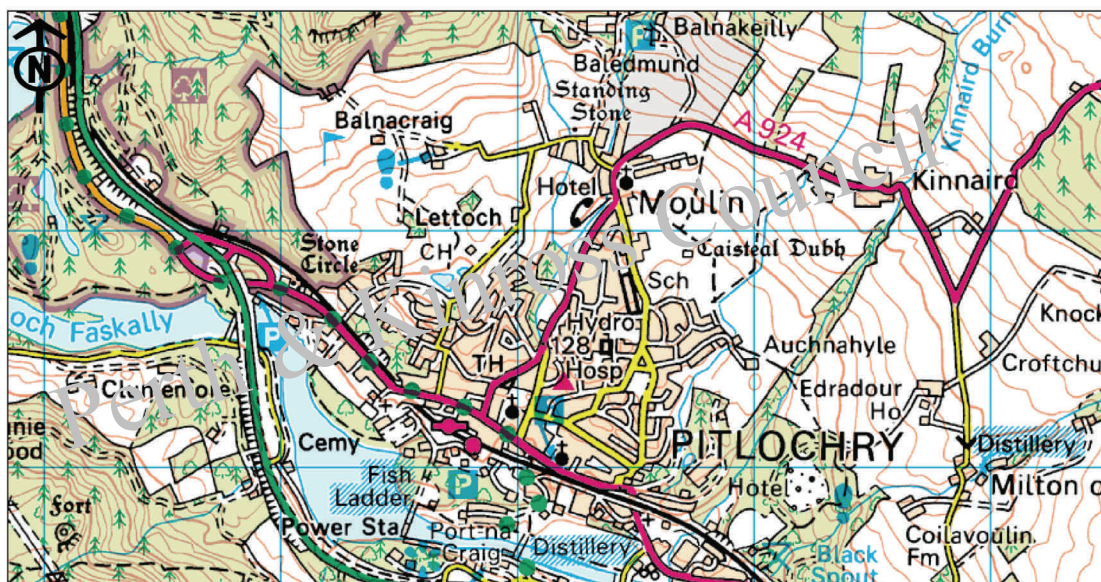
3.16 The district has experienced a steady rate of incomers since the middle of the nineteenth century, owing to its established reputation as a resort. New houses have been built at a significant rate throughout the post Second World War period, with many now being owned by people of retirement age.

3.17 By contrast the 20-30 and 30-50 age groups are proportionally the smallest in the area. In common with many areas of Scotland it has become increasingly difficult for the district's young to find satisfactory employment within the area and also to afford the prices of housing. The Local Plan identifies various housing development sites in the northern part of the town, with clear indication that a large proportion of dwelling units must be low cost or affordable housing.

## TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

### Setting

Map 5: Pitlochry, Moulin & Loch Faskally



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4.1 The conservation area incorporates the town centre and residential areas to the north and north-west of the centre. The main street, Atholl Road (General Wade's road), runs on a north-west/south-east axis. The land slopes downwards from north to south. Areas of Victorian suburban expansion flank the north and west of the centre. Beyond the town centre to the north

and east are areas of more recent residential development. The southern boundary of the town centre is flanked by the railway line. The River Tummel and Loch Faskally are around 300 metres further south of the railway. The conservation area will therefore sit at the core of the town in this valley landscape, framed by the hillside to the north and the railway and river to the south.

4.2 As one approaches Pitlochry on the main road from the east and west there are substantial areas of mature and semi-mature trees on both sides of the road. These approaches provide a 'tree-lined avenue' effect which creates an attractive entrance and a sense of visual enclosure and frame to the town from within.



**Approach from the West**

4.3 Significant views within, into and out of the town are indicated on maps 7 and 8. Open views across the town are significant when at a higher level above the main street, particularly around Strathview Terrace, the Church of Scotland (West Church) and Toberargan Road. A variety of roofscapes and landmarks are evident as one looks south from these vantage points, as are the substantial areas of trees in the middle distance just south of the railway and forested hills beyond. Views into the conservation area from its periphery and further, such as from the A9, highlight the importance of the principal hotels and their wooded grounds as landmarks. Views towards the Church of Scotland situated on a knoll above the town centre, are also important.



**Looking S-East from Strathview Terrace**



**Looking South from Strathview Terrace**

### **Activity and Movement**

4.4 Commercial activity, including shops, guest houses and restaurants, is concentrated in Atholl Road. Volumes of vehicular traffic are high here during the day, particularly during the main visitor season between May and October. Although levels of traffic drop during the winter months there is still a relatively active tourist market in the low season, particularly at weekends. Some of the pavements in Atholl Road have been widened recently to cater for the large numbers of

pedestrians. There is particular pedestrian/vehicle conflict at Fisher's Hotel where there are bus stops on both sides of the street. During the evenings the levels of vehicular traffic reduce. The main street becomes a more pedestrian friendly environment and is popular with pedestrians walking to restaurants and cafés or window shopping. Several shops are open for business in the evening.

4.5 Since the 1950s, when nearly all shops were locally owned, Pitlochry's main street has been transformed commercially. By the 1990s, local businesses owned fewer than half the shops. Many of the incoming purchasers are part of national shop chains with corporate identities and shop signs.

4.6 There has been some investment made in the town's recreational facilities and indoor amenities recently, but there is still a possible lack of wet weather facilities. There is however a library, an indoor curling rink and a leisure and fitness centre. One supermarket is located within the town centre, in warehouse buildings (former woollen mills) on a site behind the Old Mill and below the Town Hall, with its own large car parking area.

### **Street Pattern and Topography**

4.7 Fragments of two of Pitlochry's original hamlets remain today in the form of terraced rows of single storey cottages and Sunnybrae Cottage. The rest of the town was not formally planned but steadily developed up the hill to the north along the West Moulin Road, leading to Moulin village, and Bonnethill Road, which originally served the hamlet of Toberargan. Other streets in the conservation area are narrower and predominantly serving residences or guest houses and some hotels. There are a few semi-pedestrianised lanes, such as Mill Lane and some very narrow, streets which are not pedestrianised but very much pedestrian friendly, such as Church Road.

4.8 The southern extent of the Victorian town centre is bordered by man-made topography in the form of the railway line. Development between the railway and the river is generally of more recent construction. Station Road is an important route for pedestrians and for many this is their first impression of the town.



**Route from Railway Station into town centre**



**Church of Scotland (West Church)**

4.9 The glacial origins of the local topography have a significant effect on the character of the town. Moraines or drumlins create raised features in the townscape, the most significant being the knoll on which the Church of Scotland (West Church) stands, a distinct landmark from all directions. Glacial terraces also dictate some of the area's character, with rows of development stepping down the face of the slope following the lines of the terraces.

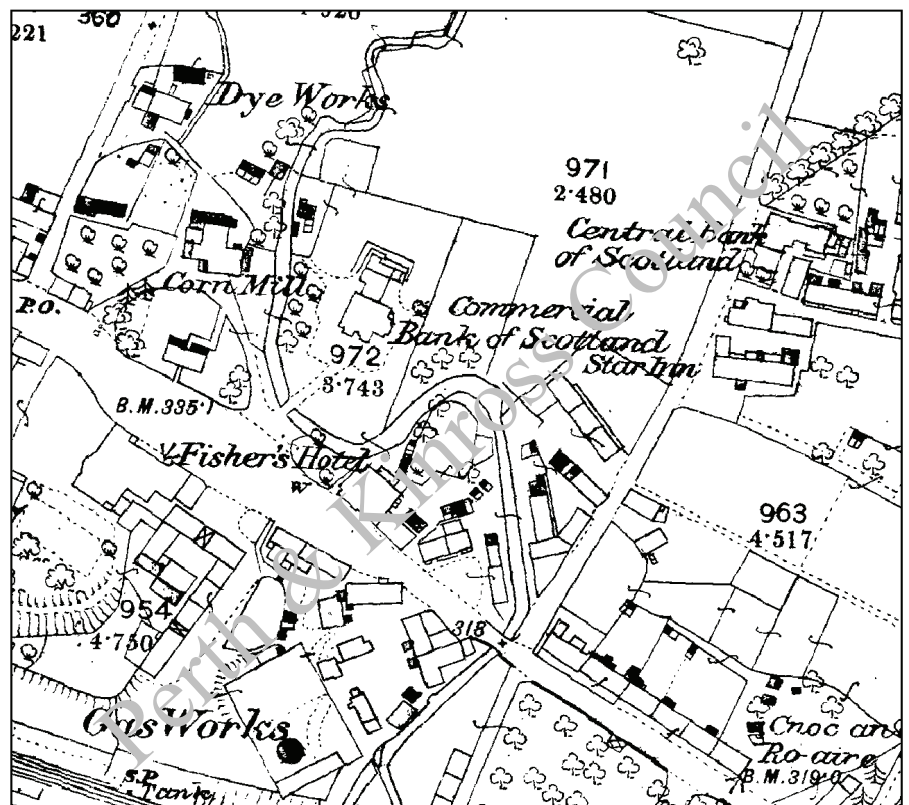
## Buildings and Townscape

4.10 Key buildings and spaces within the town are shown on map 7, which indicates scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings of all grades and unlisted buildings of merit. (Further information in the Appendices).

4.11 The earliest banking and hotel premises opened in Pitlochry in the 1830s, including Fisher's Hotel which became a major coaching establishment. Towards the end of the nineteenth century a great amount of building work took place in Pitlochry, together with a much improved water supply and the establishment of a sewage disposal plant. Commercial and public buildings began to make a major mark on the townscape, including churches, hotels and hydropathics, banks, the town hall as well as numerous smaller shops along Atholl and Bonneathill Roads. An additional church, now known as the Church of Scotland or West Church, was built in Pitlochry in 1884 to accommodate the large number of summer visitors who could not be seated in the Moulin Kirk. Owing to its situation on a knoll, the Church of Scotland is also called 'Mount Zion'. A United Free Church, an Episcopal Church and a Baptist church were also built in the town during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

4.12 The majority of the buildings of central Pitlochry are of two storeys, with some one-storey buildings of vernacular origin surviving in places from the earlier phases of the town's development. Fisher's Hotel is partly of three storeys, increasing its prominent effect on Atholl Road. Most building is in local whin and sandstones, largely obtained from a quarry at Aldour, which ceased production at the beginning of the twentieth century. The mid- to late-Victorian phase of major expansion has led to a predominance of revivalist styles of architecture. Gothic and Baronial details in particular make a major contribution to the character of the conservation area with many buildings distinguished by picturesque, multi-gabled roof forms, bargeboards, bartizans and turrets, brattishing and finials.

**Map 6: Map illustrates Banks and Hotels in c.1867**



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**Atholl Road looking West c.1900**

**Same view today**

**Spaces**

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

4.14 There are many private green spaces in Pitlochry, most of them being well established, large gardens of Victorian villas. There are small public parks within the conservation area, one between the Church of Scotland (West Church) and Bonnethill Road and another at the west end of town, between Atholl Road and the railway.



**Strathview Terrace**



**War Memorial Gardens**



**Park at West End**

4.15 In terms of civic spaces or squares, there is a focus of pedestrian activity in front of the Bank House in Atholl Road and to a lesser extent directly opposite this area in front of Fisher's Hotel. The set-back of the building line behind the formal street frontage here creates a more generous pavement area. The space on the north side of the street is a combination of hard and soft landscaping with street furniture and town sculpture and is bordered by the trees and gardens of the Bank House and the mill burn. Also located in Atholl Road, on the east side of the former Institute, is the war memorial, set back from the street with attractive, formal gardens behind.





## Trees and Landscaping

4.16 Important tree groups and landscaped spaces within the conservation area are indicated on map 8. Pitlochry is located within 'big tree country' with various waymarked trails and the town is framed by substantial tree groups and forested areas beyond. These tree groups are a very important feature and make a positive contribution to the setting of the town, providing a backdrop and visual enclosure. There are substantial areas of natural oak woodland and some fine examples of groupings of mature Scots pine and beech.

4.17 There are significant groupings in Atholl Road such as the area in front of the Bank House and the knoll to the west of the library. Villa gardens often display substantial groupings of mature trees of various species, both broadleaf and conifer. Tree groups and lines of trees or treebelts on one or sometimes both sides of a street or lane add an important dimension to the townscape experience, particularly when walking along Larchwood Road, Strathview Terrace and West Moulin Road near the Pitlochry Hydro Hotel. There are also tree lined corridors as one approaches Pitlochry by road from the east and west and from the railway station to the south.



**Approach from the East**



**Beeches at the Railway Station**

4.18 Further south of the railway line there is a substantial area of wilderness known as the Armoury area which has been identified as an opportunity site for small scale residential or mixed use. It is important that the tree cover, walks system and character of the area are retained and where possible enhanced in any development scheme. This area of tree cover is predominantly a mature, natural oak woodland, and therefore of paramount importance in terms of biodiversity. It is a key element in the views out of the town, providing a natural foil to the boundary and restricting views of the A9. This area is also an important natural feature in views towards the town from the Pitlochry Festival Theatre on the south bank of the river.



**Tree belt on the southern edge of the Railway Station**

4.19 Most of the areas mentioned above will be within the conservation area. Any proposals to fell or lop trees within the conservation area will be subject to certain planning controls under the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (see fuller explanation of this at Appendix 7).



**View of the Armoury area**



**West End park and view to West**

4.20 Further areas of important tree cover on the edge of town include the tree belt and Armoury area south of the railway line. This woodland could be vulnerable to development pressures and it is important that substantial `holes' do not appear. Important individual trees exist in the area on the north side of Lower Oakfield, including a mature oak to the rear of the Curling Rink in the grounds of a hotel, large spruces and beeches in house gardens and fine conifers and an oak in the grounds of the Poplars Hotel. Tree Preservation Orders will be considered for trees in these areas owing to their importance in the conservation area setting.

## Negative Factors

### Advertising and signage

5.1 In Pitlochry's main street there are many signs competing with each other to attract the attention of motorists and pedestrians. These signs consist of advertising fascias and projecting signs for a variety of attractions and commercial premises; directional signs, fingerposts and roads authority signage; information boards and advertising 'objects' such as casks, sandwich boards etc. Signage generally has little co-ordination and demonstrates no particular relationship to the distinctive features of the townscape. This has led to visual clutter often spoiling the architectural character of building groups and public realm areas. In some cases the height of the sign on a building is above the traditional shop fascia level and the height of the lettering is excessive for the scale and proportions of the building.

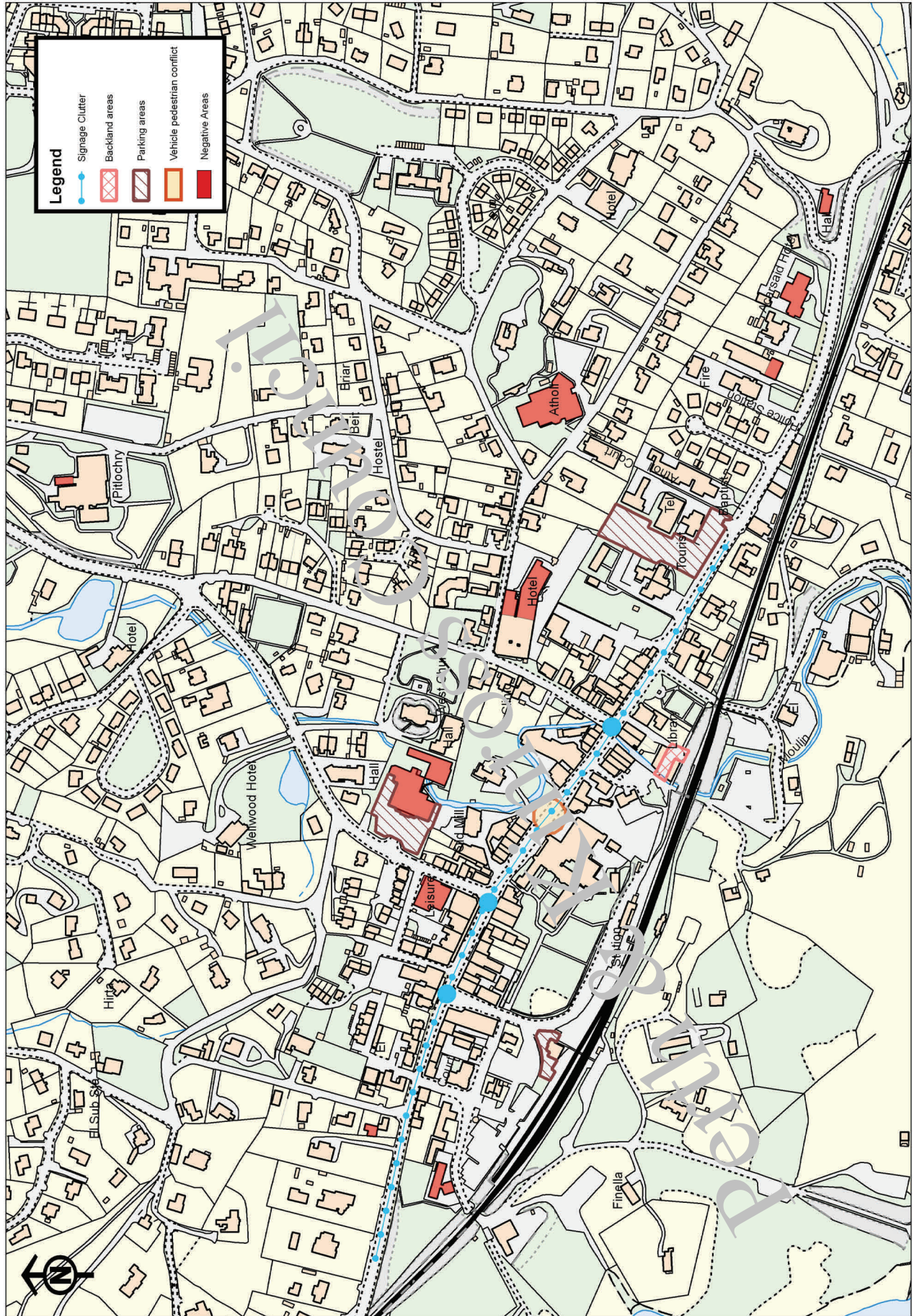


**Cluttered signage in Atholl Road**

### Built environment

5.2 Negative built features often relate to unsympathetic extensions and infill, generally dating from the mid-twentieth century onwards. The Atholl Curling Rink, supermarket and Leisure Centre, West Moulin Road are examples of large, warehouse-type developments inserted into townscape gaps with little regard for contextual design, or earlier buildings which have been extensively altered, obscuring their original character. Several hotels such as the Acarsaid and Scotland's have expanded significantly from their original, nineteenth century core and now have large, flat roofed, multi-phased extensions in unsympathetic materials enveloping and dominating the original building. These and similar examples have a consequential effect on the settings of adjacent buildings and spaces.

Map 9: Negative Factors



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**Warehouse buildings near the Church of Scotland (West Church)**



**Rear elevation of Scotland's Hotel**

## **Building by Building Analysis**

6.1 A comprehensive photographic record of all buildings in the conservation area will be undertaken and added as an appendix to the Appraisal document.

## **Buildings at Risk**

7.1 There are no buildings currently listed in the Scottish Civic Trust's Buildings at Risk register. There are no known buildings 'at risk' at the present time but the situation will be monitored at regular intervals. Some stonework on older buildings is showing signs of deterioration due to weathering.

## **Public Realm Audit**

### **Street furniture**

8.1 Photographs from the turn of the nineteenth century show several wrought iron arcades on both sides of Atholl Road, nearly all of which had disappeared until very recently, when an enhancement scheme was established to re-create a substantial length of Victorian-style arcade on the north side of the street. Street furniture in public open spaces is generally of standard, 'off-the-shelf' design, such as benches, litter bins, pedestrian fingerposts and bus shelters, although the area in front of the Bank House contains some examples of public art. The timber, rustic style 'picnic' benches in front of Fisher's Hotel and the Bank House in Atholl Road are considered to be particularly incongruous.



**Above: Atholl Road displaying original ornamental arcade  
Right: New arcading and finger posting**



8.2 Enhancement proposals for key locations within the conservation area will be drawn up as part of the management phase. Initial suggested locations and indicative ideas for discussion are detailed on Map 11, Enhancement Proposals, pg. 28.

## Signage

8.3 There is a proliferation of road traffic signage in Atholl Road, with often several sign plates on the one assembly. These road signs are competing with diverse commercial signage. With conservation area designation it will be possible to review the positioning of some of these signs on the face of buildings and/or reduce the standard height of lettering, thus reducing the overall size of the sign plate. However, this can only be achieved if the proliferation of advance commercial signposting is addressed as well.

8.4 A signposting audit has been carried out recently and efforts have been made to rationalise signage by using a tourist signposting policy. These efforts will be supported by further advertising management measures which are described further on p25 and at Appendix 8.

## Surfaces

8.5 There is a lack of good quality hard landscaping in the town centre, particularly in relation to public parking areas, all of which have black tarmac surfaces with little visual definition. Particularly disappointing areas of tarmac surround the library, council offices and tourist office. The parking area at the railway station is bordered by landscaping which softens the impact of the black tarmac to a certain extent, but the private open area of coach parking nearby has a negative impact on the station's setting. The car park serving the Co-op supermarket exacerbates the overall negative visual quality of this site. The general surfacing of public areas could also be improved, with little co-ordination of materials with the area's historic character evident or any sense of an overarching design for the town centre as a whole.

8.6 Natural stone materials should be used wherever possible, such as Caithness flagstone and granite setts. Good quality equivalents to natural stone will be considered. Soft landscaping will be encouraged in order to soften parking areas.

**Right: Coach parking and depot near the Railway Station**

**Below: Parking at the Library & Council Chambers**

**Below right: More parking outside the Tourist Info Centre**



## Surveys of Specific Issues

9.1 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.

9.2 The following is not an exhaustive list and may be augmented in the future. It identifies the most important 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.

### Shopfronts



**Good example of a traditional shop-front**



**Example of a shop-front with opportunity for improvement**

### Boundary treatments

9.3 Stone walls may be vulnerable to householders' permitted development rights. It is proposed to bring these important elements of the townscape under planning control using an Article 4 Direction.



**Strathview Terrace**



**Golf Course Road**

## Roofscapes

9.4 Conical and pavilion roofs, polygonal towers, detailing and materials are often a distinctive feature, particularly at street corners.

## Doors and windows; materials; decorative details



Scroll bracket detail



Decorative wrought iron canopy



Ornamental chimney can

## Sensitivity Analysis

### Archaeology

10.1 There is one scheduled monument within the town, which is Sunnybrae Cottage, reputed to be the oldest building in Pitlochry. Other monuments are indicated in the Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust's historic environment record, including the old gasworks and General Wade's military road, ie. Atholl Road.

### Development pressures

10.2 Issues for the town centre may be large scale or single use commercial development pressures; vehicular traffic congestion and road signage, and competition for larger and brighter advertisements on buildings, posts or lamp columns.

10.3 A major pressure in the future could be on the setting of villas, garden space and boundary walls and the loss of mature trees through extensions to property or the erection of new developments within villa grounds. Some recent extensions are out of character with the architectural composition and materials of the original villas. In some cases, trees and garden space have been sacrificed in the process.

10.4 The 'Armoury area', indicated in the Local Plan as an opportunity site, is considered to be a sensitive area due to the visual and landscape quality of the tree cover (as mentioned earlier in the 'Trees and Landscaping' Section). Planning consent exists for a new medical centre on a small part of this site.

## Character Areas

11.1 The conservation area includes three areas of distinctive character, although the three are not rigidly separated. The first covers the town centre and consists of relatively dense development lining the principal route of Atholl Road and its offshoots, generally built up to the street edge and punctuated with the landmarks of public and commercial buildings and public





open spaces. The second comprises lower density areas of Victorian villas, particularly to the north-west of Atholl Road. These large villas are set in extensive, mature gardens where important tree groups, stone boundary walls and tree lined lanes are key features. The third is also predominantly a Victorian residential area of more modest character to the north of the town centre, characterised by suburban-scale plot divisions with good quality small villas and cottages arranged in picturesque groups. This area also includes the Pitlochry Hydro Hotel and its important tree-lined grounds. The conservation area boundary is shown on Map 10.

11.2 It should be noted that, where the conservation area boundary follows a property boundary, the boundary structure is included within the designated area except where the boundary follows only one side of a road (such as on the north side of Lower Oakfield), in which case the boundary follows the rear edge of the footway and excludes the adjacent boundary structure.

## **Assessment of Significance**

12.1 The stone built, Victorian townscape of Pitlochry is relatively unaltered since it was developed as a Highland holiday resort during the last half of the nineteenth century. There is both a variety and harmony of architectural styles, including Scottish Renaissance, Baronial and Victorian Gothic as well as more modest, vernacular buildings. Good quality stone masonry work and decorative features are in evidence from this period throughout the town centre and surrounding residential areas. Mature gardens and wooded areas contribute significantly to the townscape experience. The setting of the town, framed by forests and mountains beyond, is also visually enriching. In this context the conservation area and its setting are many ways unique. Therefore, in terms of importance, Pitlochry is not only regionally significant but also of national and European significance.

## **CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

### **Using the Conservation Area Appraisal**

13.1 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 Pitlochry 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.

13.2 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 they are appropriately controlled.

13.3 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.

13.4 Whilst current planning 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 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;
- 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 has produced an enforcement charter which will identify any unauthorised works within and adjacent to conservation areas as priorities for action;
- 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 (as described in para.13.3) under planning control. See 16.4 for further detail;
- 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 and Scottish Enterprise to facilitate conservation training programmes for building contractors and other interested parties or private individuals. PKHT has recently secured resources from the Heritage Lottery fund to develop an interpretive and outreach education programme in conjunction with other agencies to promote understanding and enjoyment of conservation areas.

13.5 There is a firm commitment from the planning authority to ensure the protection and enhancement of Pitlochry 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:-

14.1 Photographic surveys: a detailed survey of all buildings and open spaces within the conservation area is undertaken as part of the Appraisal and will form the basis for area-specific design guidance and for monitoring future change;

14.2 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;

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

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

# PROPOSALS

## Opportunities for Development

15.1 A site on Atholl Road to the west of the library and council offices is designated in the Local Plan as a town centre development site which may be suitable for a variety of town centre uses including shops, offices, restaurants, public houses, hotels and residential, subject to the design being compatible with the surrounding area.

## Opportunities for Planning Action

### Conservation Area boundary

16.1 This Appraisal covers the townscape within the conservation area and buildings or landscapes immediately outwith the area which are important to its setting.

### Effects of permitted development

16.2 There are examples in the town of development which would not have required planning permission (under the General Permitted Development Order 1992), called 'permitted development', but which in some cases, are not appropriate to the traditional character of the townscape. Alterations to listed buildings are covered by listed building legislation and the need to obtain listed building consent, but unlisted buildings are not covered by this legislation. 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 more of such developments to appear.

16.3 Classes of development which are usually 'permitted' include 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; construction or alteration of walls, fences or gates; 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 Pitlochry the townscape is particularly vulnerable to some if not all of these classes of permitted development. For example, developments within the curtilage of mature gardens and possible loss of trees; the alteration of stone boundary walls; visual clutter of telecommunications and electricity apparatus on or near buildings; alterations to roads, parking areas or hard landscaped areas, and visual proliferation of road signage.

16.4 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 a conservation area designation it is considered that an 'Article 4 Direction' should be drafted for Scottish Ministers' approval.



**From left to right:** Box dormers, Location of signage assembly masking attractive building, Contrast of traditional and non- traditional windows



**Large upper-case lettering**



**Traditional shop fascia**

## Advertisements

16.5 There are also 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 an Area of Special Advertisement Control and seek the approval of the Scottish Ministers. (Information on Areas of Special Ad-vert Control contained in Appendix 8).

16.6 The problems of visual clutter in Pitlochry's main street are highlighted in the public realm audit section of this Appraisal. The competition for business signs in Pitlochry's town centre is not going to diminish and may increase in the short to medium term. Special Advertisement Control status would be a useful development management tool and it is proposed to draft control measures for Scottish Ministers' approval.

## Trees

16.7 There is a case for Tree Preservation Orders to be formulated around the conservation area boundary if trees or groups of trees important to the setting of the conservation area are located outwith the boundary and therefore do not have conservation area protection. Existing TPOs covering the grounds of the Pine Trees, Torrdarach and Dundarach Hotels are shown on map 8. Two of these TPOs refer to the 1972 Planning Act, which has been superseded by the 1997 Act and therefore need to be updated to reflect current legislation.

16.8 The Local Plan indicates areas where the tree cover makes an important contribution to the character of Pitlochry, including the grounds of the Atholl Palace Hotel and adjacent Birchwood Hotel, the grounds of the Pine Trees Hotel and a related area to the east of the Pine Trees below Strathview Gardens. Local Plan policy states that any development proposals for these areas must not result in the loss of significant numbers of trees. The Council will consider serving TPOs if any important trees in these areas are under apparent risk.

### **Opportunities for Enhancement**

17.1 West Moulin Road: the supermarket buildings, car parking area and leisure centre façade require major visual improvement. A planning brief and/or design statement will be produced to encourage and guide appropriate development.

17.2 Atholl Road: hard landscaping and street furniture in the area around the Bank House and Old Mill would benefit from better design, materials and co-ordination. Footpath widening at Fisher's Hotel would also benefit the public realm in Atholl Road and reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflict. Bus stops should be re-located if possible and bus activity reduced to a drop-off point only.



**From left to right: Street furniture outside Bank House in Atholl Road; Atholl Curling Rink sits behind a listed building**

17.3 Atholl Curling Rink, Lower Oakfield: although outwith the conservation area boundary this has a significant impact on its setting and opportunities for replacement/improvement will be encouraged.

17.4 Sunnybrae Cottage (scheduled ancient monument site): this site would benefit from a soft landscaping scheme and improved interpretation panels, with the possibility of restoring the thatched roof in the longer term.

17.5 Car parks: a new hard and soft landscaping scheme for the library, council offices and the tourist office would greatly improve this part of the conservation area. Screening should be introduced between the railway station parking area and the private area where coaches are parked. Similarly the area of wasteland and derelict sheds on the landscaped footpath route between the railway station and the war memorial gardens should be addressed.

17.6 Scout hall: this relatively recent building comes into view immediately at the eastern approach into the conservation area. This is an opportunity for a façade and soft landscaping scheme to blend this site into its immediate environs.

17.7 Lighting scheme: a partnership scheme with the Pitlochry Tourist Lighting Committee is being progressed for the external lighting of key public monuments, spaces and tree groups within the town.

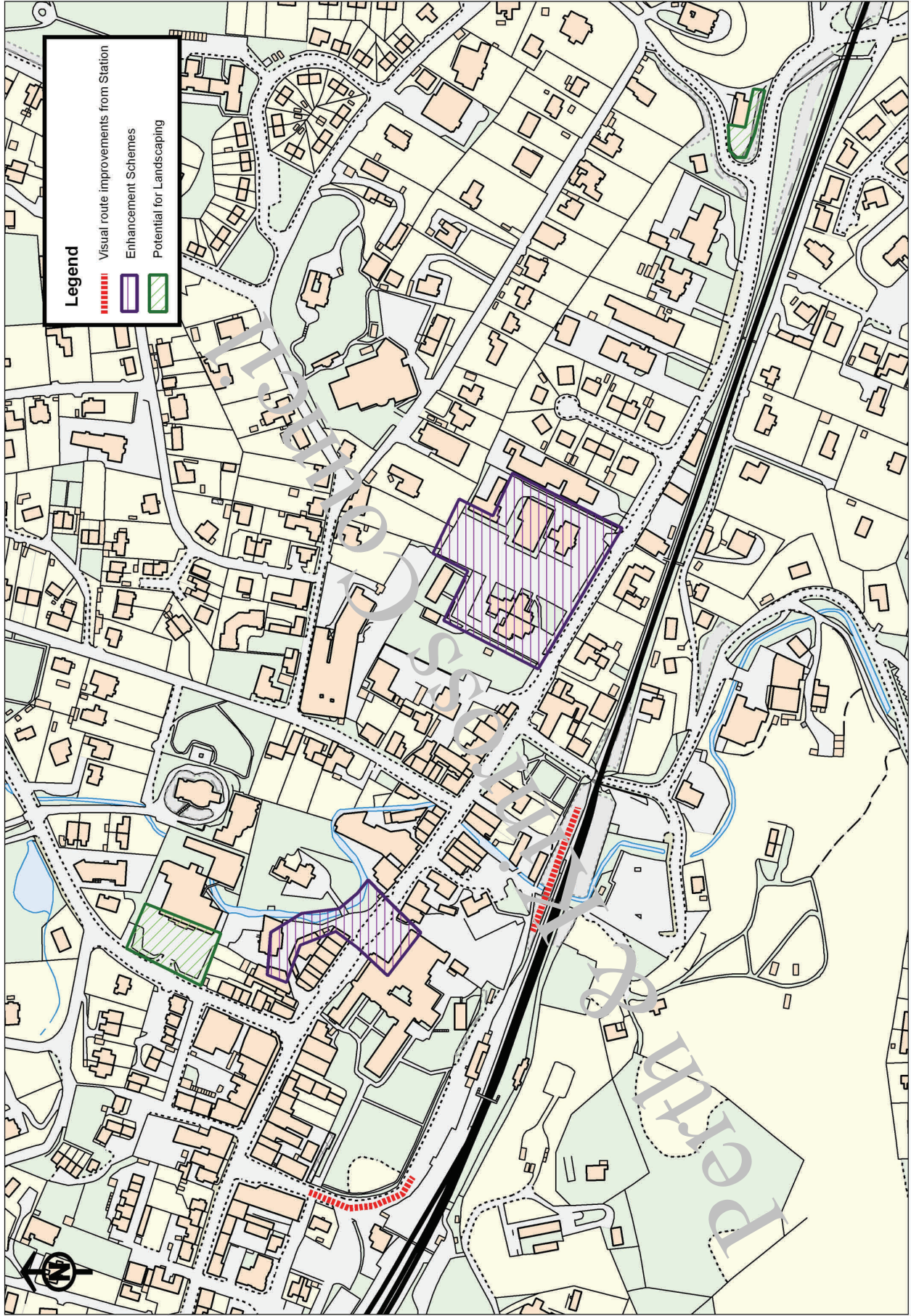


**Scout Hall**

17.8 Signage scheme: a partnership scheme with tourist operators will be promoted with the purpose of sharing sign boards and reducing visual clutter.



Map 11: Potential Enhancement Schemes

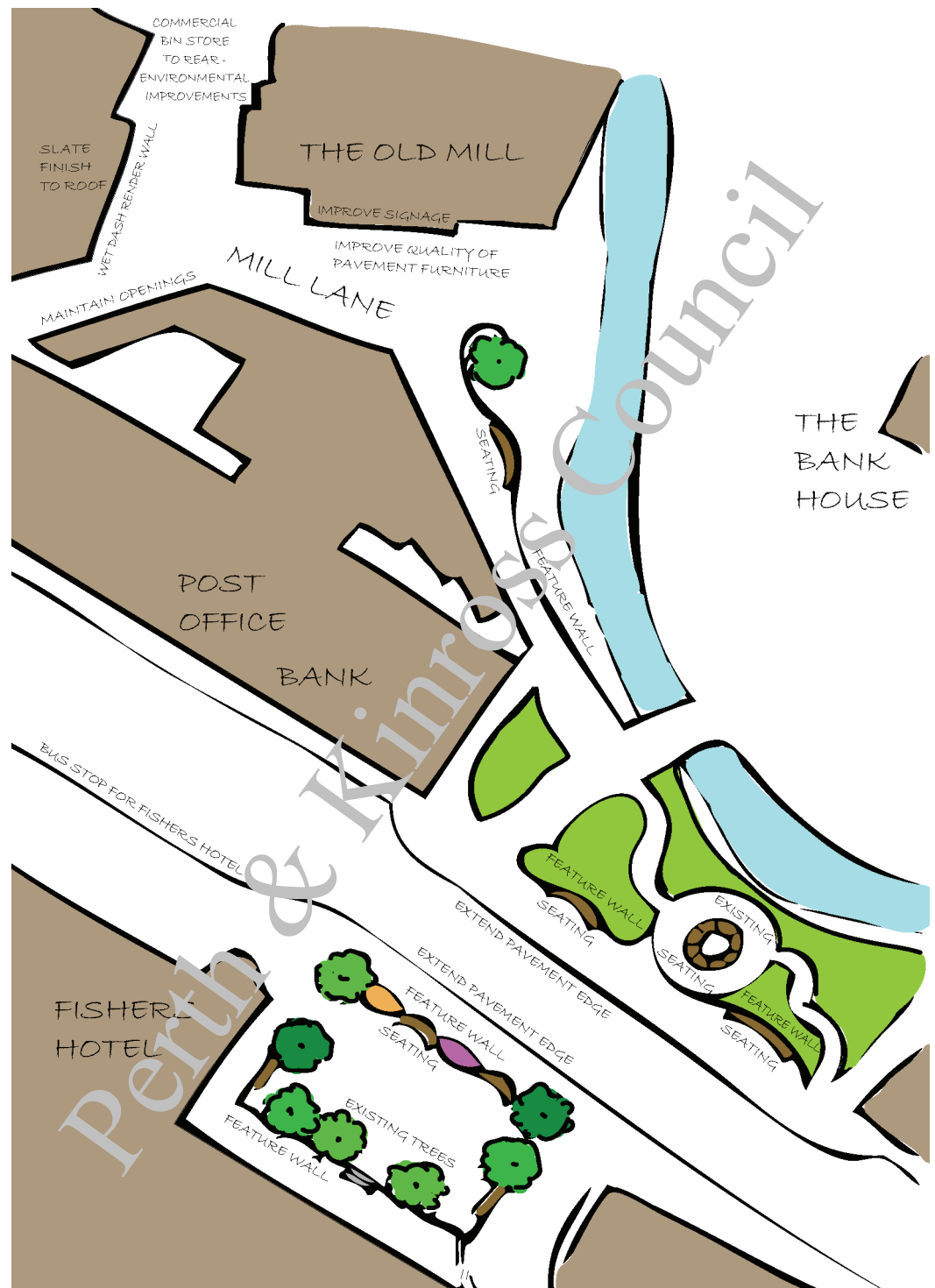


## Enhancement Proposals

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

18.2 Specific enhancement schemes are suggested for the following areas, to address the negative features and needs identified in the Appraisal. Please note these represent initial, indicative ideas for potential solutions. There will be early consultation with the local community, including the Community Council and the Civic Trust, before firm proposals are developed.

**Diagram 1:**  
The forecourt and public realm area between Fisher's Hotel/Bank House, Atholl Rd



**Diagram 2: The grounds, car parking and landscaping of the Library and Tourist Information Centre, Atholl Road.**



18.3 The local authority will recommend that Historic Buildings Grant and Façade Improvement Grant assistance is prioritised to the buildings most in need or where enhancement will have the most positive effects.

18.4 Other negative features in private ownership identified in the Appraisal will be prioritised for attention via development proposals; for example the Curling Rink, Lower Oakfield or the supermarket area, West Moulin Road. Appropriate proposals will be encouraged with planning briefs or design statements. The owners of individual buildings and sites wishing to improve their appearance will be given advice and assistance to achieve their aims where consistent with the findings of this Appraisal.

## APPENDICES

### 1) Key listed buildings

Pitlochry Railway Station: re-built circa 1890, the style of re-build is characteristic of the late Victorian period, crow stepped gables and tall chimney stacks. As well as the main station building the down platform building, footbridge, fountain and signal box are all of architectural merit and this whole group is category `A` grade listed.

Fisher's Hotel in Atholl Road: significant landmark in the main street. Three storey and attic, 6-bay hotel with pavilion roofs and crenellated stair tower, French Renaissance style. Not entirely sympathetic extensions to west and south.

Alba Place (78 – 104 Atholl Road and Mill Lane): three storey, 9 bay Renaissance style terrace of shops and later bank with flatted dwellings above, opposite the main street from Fisher's Hotel.

Public Library and Council offices, former Union Bank (26 Atholl Road): circa 1860, an attractive two-storey building in its own grounds comprising the former bank and bank manager's house; crenellated porch and decorative finials. Set back from the street, former front gardens are now a car park.

Former Institute, 51 Atholl Road: two storey building, ogee-capped corner towers, dated 1895. Originally housed a hall, public baths, refreshment room, billiard room and reading room. Used as a restaurant after WW2 and converted to offices in the 1960's. Until 1981 the town library was housed in the ancillary building.

Baptist Church: T-plan church with stair tower and belfry, later 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Atholl Centre was built onto the rear in 1971.

Church of Scotland (West Church), Church Road: situated on the top of a knoll, an unusual version of Romanesque architecture, built in 1884 and extended in 1996. A key landmark in the town. Category `A` grade listed.

Town Hall, West Moulin Road: two storey, piend roofed public hall in Scottish Renaissance style with Baronial features. Funds raised for the building by public subscription, constructed in 1899.

Bank House, Bonnethill Road: mid to later 19<sup>th</sup> Century, gabled former bank with conical-roofed entrance tower, now an annex of Scotland's Hotel.



**Town Hall**



**Bank House, Bonnethill**

## 2) Key monuments

There is one scheduled monument within the conservation area: Sunnybrae Cottage, possibly the oldest residential building in Pitlochry. It is also a category 'A' listed building. The red corrugated iron roof hides a much earlier thatched roof.

## 3) Key unlisted buildings

Scotland's Hotel, Bonnethill Road: large three-storey Victorian hotel with polygonal roofed tower at street corner with Toberargan Road. The hotel has a large extension to the rear which is not sympathetic to the original.

Former Free Church, now John Stewart Court: this former mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century church with steeply pitched roof and a belfry is located at a higher elevation to Atholl Road and is a significant landmark when viewing north. It has recently been converted into residential flats, in sympathy with the original architecture.



**Scotland's Hotel**



**Former Free Church**

Atholl Road street frontage: there are rows of two-storey, terraced buildings in the town centre, on both sides of Atholl Road near the junction with Station Road, which are not listed but contribute positively to the character of the streetscape (including no's. 106-112, 120-134, 138-142, 91-109, 111-119). The Old Mill building, behind Alba Place, has been greatly altered, but is still an important building historically and visually.

Larchwood Road villas: an area of unaltered Victorian villas, their large gardens framed with significant groups of mature trees.

## 4) Other buildings of townscape merit

There are no modern buildings within the Conservation Area considered to be of any significant townscape merit.

## 5) Parks and designed landscapes

There are no Designed Landscape designations in or around Pitlochry. There are some green open spaces for public use which are detailed in the 'Spaces' section. The landscapes at Delta Park and the Cuilc were both designed for public use, and were moraines.

## **6) Trees – important locations, examples and species**

Small groups and landscaped spaces within the town centre are in front of the Bank House in Atholl Road opposite Fisher's Hotel and between the Church of Scotland (West Church) and Bonnethill Road. The line of mature beech trees on Station Road are a magnificent introduction to the town when arriving by rail. Small groups of mature black pine between the tourist information centre and the Baptist church and some large conifers and broadleaves on a knoll just to the west of the library are also visually significant in Atholl Road.

There are also important groups on the edges of the conservation area. At the western end, along Larchwood Road and Strathview Terrace, there are several mature gardens of Victorian villas. There is a tree lined avenue effect on the approach into town from the west, with mature gardens and the superb grounds of the Pine Trees Hotel on the north side of the road and a small park with semi-mature trees on the southern side. The southern side of the railway track is lined with a tree belt and there are particularly attractive tree groups around a path to the east of the station which leads to Atholl Road. Entering Pitlochry at the east end of town there is extensive tree cover which provides a magnificent introduction to the town just after the road goes under the railway bridge. The grounds of the Birchwood Hotel are particularly significant to the edge of the conservation area. Further to the east the grounds of the Atholl Palace Hotel are also important. To the north there is substantial tree cover in the grounds of Pitlochry Hydro Hotel.

## **7) Trees in conservation areas**

All trees within a conservation area are covered by the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. 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 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.

## **8) Advertisements—Areas of Special Control**

Special Control status means that any advert with lettering height of more than 0.3 of a metre (rather than 0.75 of a metre without Special Control) requires advertisement consent. Also any sign on business premises which is above 3.6 metres from ground level (i.e. above the normal shop fascia level of between ground floor ceiling height and first floor) requires advertisement consent.

## 9) Article 4 Direction

### **DRAFT**

#### 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

### **Pitlochry Conservation Area**

#### The Perth & Kinross Council Restriction of Permitted Development Direction 2007

The Perth & Kinross Council in terms of article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (SI 1992/no.223, S.17) being satisfied that it is expedient that development comprising:-

Class 1 (2)(a), (2)(b), (2)(c), (2)(d), (2)(e) – 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 satellite 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 24 – development carried out on industrial land for the purposes of an industrial process;

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 - development by local authorities;

Class 38 - water undertakings;

Class 39 - gas suppliers;

Class 40 - electricity undertakings;

Class 41 - road transport undertakings;

Class 43- post office development; and,

Class 43A - sewerage undertakings;

Should not be carried out within the Conservation Area of **Pitlochry** (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 (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e), 3, 6, 7, 16, 24, 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) Direction 2006.

Sealed with the seal of Perth & Kinross Council and subscribed for and on its behalf  
on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

Seal of Perth & Kinross Council

#### SCHEDULE

The area of land outlined in \_\_\_\_\_ and hatched in \_\_\_\_\_ 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.



**Sources:**

Dixon, John H., *Pitlochry Past and Present*, 1925

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*The New Statistical Account of Scotland: The Part Containing the County of Perth*, 1837