

# Rait Conservation Area Appraisal





## CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE and JUSTIFICATION | 1  |
| Conservation areas                                | 1  |
| Reason for conservation area review               | 1  |
| Purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal        | 1  |
| Chapter 2 CONTEXT and SURVEY                      | 2  |
| Location, history and development                 | 2  |
| Chapter 3 TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS                      | 7  |
| Setting and topography                            | 7  |
| Activity and movement                             | 7  |
| Street pattern and topography                     | 9  |
| Building and townscape                            | 11 |
| Materials and finishes                            | 15 |
| Spaces  | 15 |
| Trees and landscaping                             | 17 |
| Areas in need of attention                        | 20 |
| Buildings by building analysis                    | 21 |
| Buildings at risk                                 | 21 |
| Public realm audit                                | 21 |
| Surveys of specific issues                        | 22 |
| Roofscapes  | 23 |
| Doors and windows                                 | 24 |
| Materials, decoration and detail                  | 25 |
| Boundary treatments                               | 26 |
| Sensitivity analysis                              | 27 |
| Setting of the conservation area                  | 27 |
| Gardens and Designed Landscapes                   | 27 |
| Archaeology                                       | 28 |
| Development pressures                             | 28 |
| Character areas                                   | 28 |
| Assessment of significance                        | 28 |
| Chapter 4 CONSERVATION STRATEGY                   | 30 |
| Using the conservation area appraisal             | 30 |
| Monitoring and review                             | 31 |
| Chapter 5 PROPOSALS                               | 32 |
| Opportunities for development                     | 32 |
| Conservation area boundary                        | 32 |
| Effects of permitted development                  | 32 |
| Advertisements                                    | 33 |
| Trees   | 33 |
| Opportunities for enhancement                     | 33 |
| Pathway routes                                    | 34 |

|            |                                  |    |
|------------|----------------------------------|----|
| APPENDICES |                                  | 36 |
| 1)         | Tay Landscape Partnership Scheme | 36 |
| 2)         | Article 4 Direction              | 37 |

## MAPS

|        |  |    |
|--------|--|----|
| Map 1  | Location of Rait within the Perth & Kinross Council boundary | 2  |
| Map 2  | Rait, surrounding settlements and landscape                  | 2  |
| Map 3  | Threipland Estate map, 1784                                  | 4  |
| Map 4  | Extract plan of Rait, 1807                                   | 4  |
| Map 5  | 1st OS map, c.1893   | 5  |
| Map 6  | 2nd OS map, c.1901   | 5  |
| Map 7  | OS map, c.1966   | 5  |
| Map 8  | Townscape analysis   | 14 |
| Map 9  | Green areas  | 19 |
| Map 10 | Fingask Castle Garden and Designed Landscape                 | 27 |
| Map 11 | Conservation area boundary                                   | 29 |
| Map 12 | Potential enhancement sites                                  | 35 |

## **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 Rait in July 1973 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 reassessment of the Rait Conservation Area reflects local interest in a review of the area, the opportunities presented by the forthcoming Tay Landscape Partnership Scheme and the fact that a substantial period of time has passed since the original designation (see Appendix 1 for further information on the Tay Landscape Partnership Scheme).

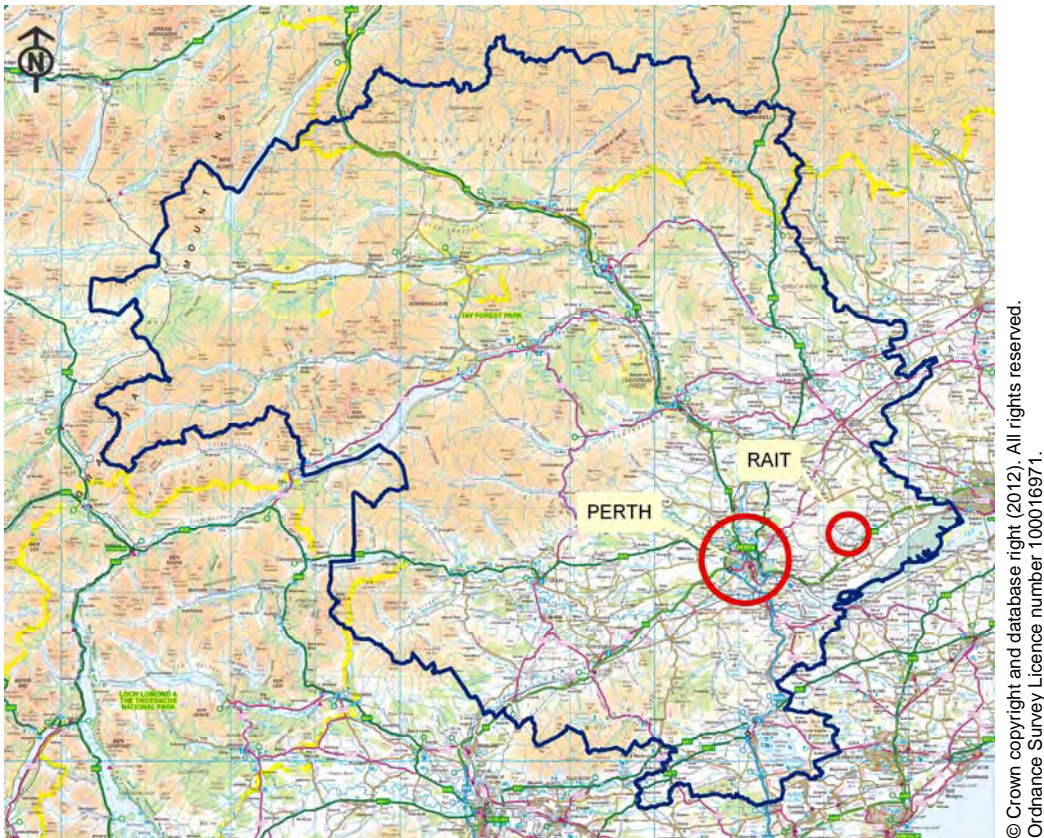
### **Purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal**

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

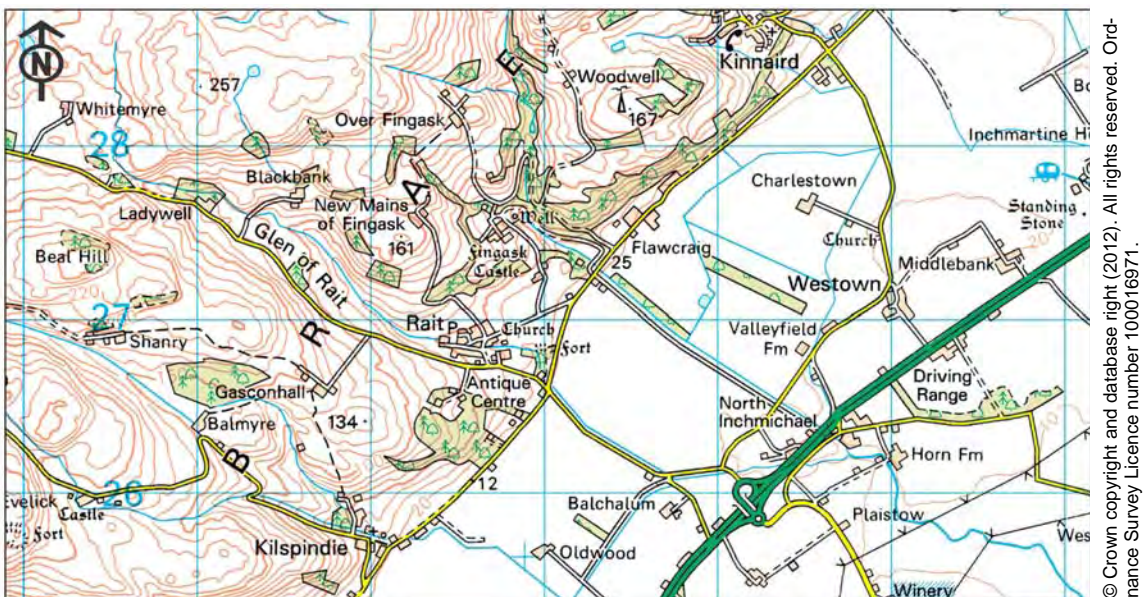
Map 1: Location of Rait within the Perth & Kinross Council boundary



### Location, history and development

3.1 Rait is located between Perth and Dundee in the Braes of the Carse, an area of gently rising land between the fertile floodplain of the Tay known as the Carse of Gowrie and the higher slopes to the north rising into the Sidlaw hills. Rait was one of a number of small settlements strung along the original Perth to Dundee road which hugs the contour line at the western edge of the floodplain. This was replaced by a turnpike road further east in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century which eventually transformed into the modern A90 trunk road.

Map 2: Rait, surrounding settlements and landscape



3.2 The place name Rait is thought to derive from Picto-Celtic 'rath' (pronounced 'ra') indicating a defensive structure enclosed by a rampart or ditch. The remains of an Iron Age hill fort broadly fitting this description survives to the east of the village, one of a series scattered along the Braes overlooking the Carse from elevated viewpoints. The now fertile farmlands of the Carse have been gradually drained and improved from their original marshy, estuarine condition and one can appreciate the strategic significance of an elevated position on the edge of this once-difficult terrain. One of the most prominent and famous is the fort/earthwork at Evelick on the south slopes of Pole Hill, a landmark to the south-west of the village.

3.3 A chapel at Rait is recorded in the mid-1100s, held by charter of the Abbey of Scone. By 1491 this was referred to as the Parish Church, and was dedicated to St Peter. The parish of Rait was united with Kilspindie in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, at which point Rait church became redundant and gradually fell into ruin, although the graveyard continued in use. Its deterioration is said to have been accelerated by Cromwellian troops camped nearby prior to the sacking of Dundee in 1651. Within the burial ground there are a number of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century gravestones.



**Ruins of pre-reformation church and neighbouring gravestones**

3.4 The settlement formed along the Rait Burn at the mouth of Rait Glen where it opens out into the Carse. The local economy was based on farming and weaving, and the village developed at a point on the boundary of two neighbouring estates, Fingask to the north and Annat or Rait to the south, the dividing line between which was formed by the Rait Burn. Estate maps of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century show the village to have been largely established by this point and to survive remarkably unchanged in overall form and extent to the present.

## Settlement development



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

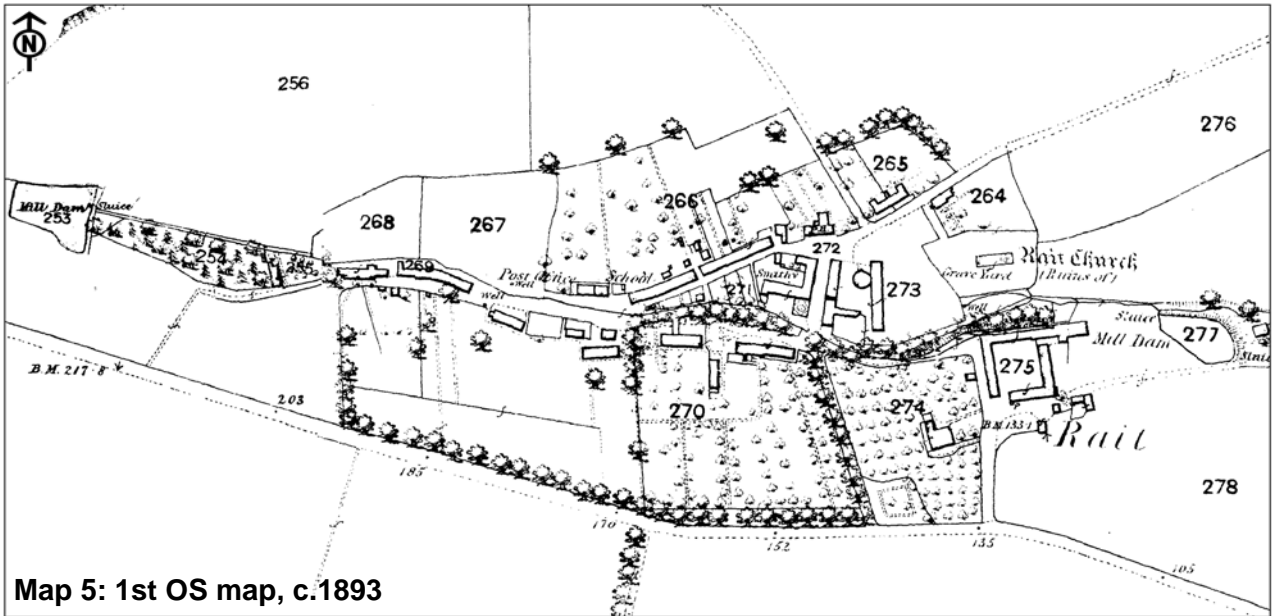
Map 3: Threipland Estate map, 1784



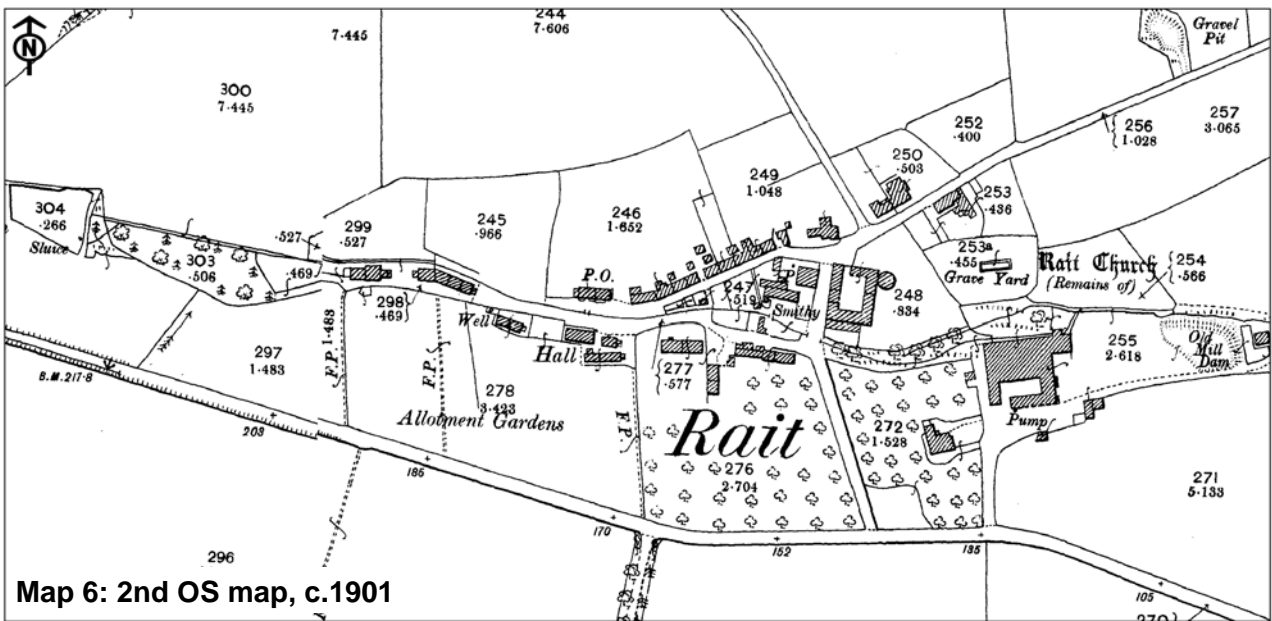
Map courtesy of A.K. Bell Local Studies, A.K. Bell Library, Perth

Map 4: Extract plan of Rait, 1807

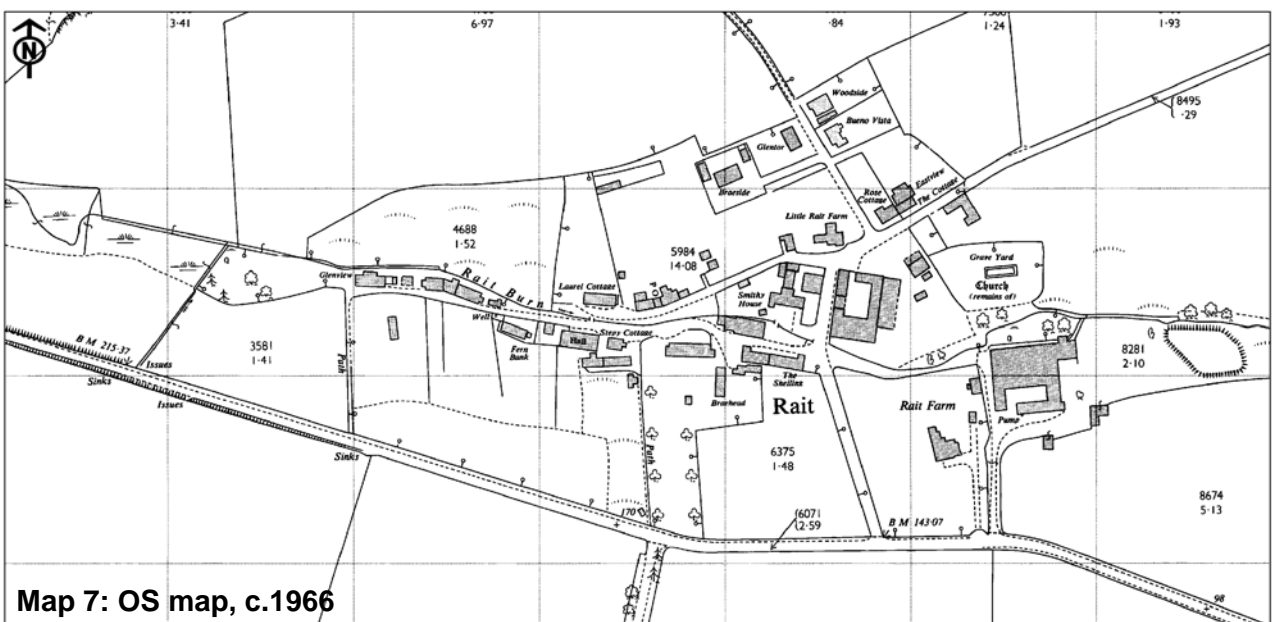




Map 5: 1st OS map, c.1893



Map 6: 2nd OS map, c.1901



Map 7: OS map, c.1966

3.5 These historic plans show cottages of linear form in terraces or small groups, aligned along both sides of the burn with a broad verge left along its banks to allow space for drying and bleaching. Rear ground is divided into smallholdings or gardens which were parcelled up in small, rectilinear plots, contrasting with the lang rigs common in planned settlements elsewhere (such as Abernethy or Scotlandwell). Farmhouses and their associated yards, steadings and courts dominate the east end of the village, while the west end is more dominated by weaving or farmworkers' cottages as well as a lint mill and its associated sluice and lade leading off the burn at the head of the village, descending from Rait Glen. A meal mill was located at the east end of the village. Orchards formed a prominent feature of the land use in and immediately surrounding the village.

3.6 Small-scale handloom weaving gradually died out from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards as it was superseded by large-scale, mechanised mills based in urban centres. Rait's lint mill was converted to residential use and eventually abandoned; it was the home of the Carse Poet Charles Spence for most of his life (1779-1869).

3.7 Historic village plans show the density of dwellings to be higher in the past than it is now, and the reduction in population as workers migrated to towns and cities led to some losses of cottages. However a large proportion survived, presumably because they remained useful for housing workers for farming and other estate functions. Many were 'modernised' or became dilapidated. Others were replaced with modern, detached houses which have eroded the historic grain of the village in a few locations. However a thatcher still lived in the village in the 1970s and, as interest increased at that time in the need to preserve our architectural heritage, many of the cottages were rehabilitated and re-thatched just prior to the village first being designated a conservation area. The special historic character of a number of the cottages was recognised by listing. The west end of the village is now especially notable as a rare survival of a 'fermtoun' or pre-Improvement agricultural settlement.



**Thatched cottages at Westend**

3.8 Important features in the village include Annat Hall, given by Lady Armitstead in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century for religious purposes. The Smithy (once far more extensive) and Smithy house are located prominently at the core of the village, adjacent to the two farms which would have provided the majority of their trade. Three veteran oak trees are striking features along the south bank of the burn in the middle of the village, and were immortalised in the painting “The Three Oaks” by Dundee-born landscape painter James McIntosh Patrick (1907-1998).



**Historic photo showing the Smithy (far left), Smithy House (central) and former Inn/Little Rait farmhouse in the background**

## **Chapter 3 TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS**

### **Setting and topography**

4.1 As noted above, Rait sits at the mouth of the Glen of Rait above the flood plain of the Carse of Gowrie, overlooking the Tay. The land rises more steeply to the north towards the Sidlaw Hills. As is characteristic of other settlements along the Carse, the village setting divides into two contrasting halves; the flat, fertile valley floor to the south and east used predominantly for agriculture, and rolling, partially wooded hillsides to the north and west. In geological terms this area is part of the Midland Valley Terrane, the rock being sedimentary of the Devonian period, mainly sandstone.

4.2 The village slopes gently upwards from east to west following the Rait Burn. At its east end two prominent knolls form local landmarks, capped by the ruined former parish church and the hill fort. Quarrying was an important local industry. The scars of recent sand and gravel extraction exaggerate the land-form at the eastern end of the village.

### **Activity and movement**

4.3 Rait's road pattern is effectively a cul-de-sac off a minor road leading up the Glen of Rait. It was once connected more closely to the old road network but gradually became divorced from it by the construction of turnpike and later trunk roads. The Perth-Dundee

railway passes along the flat Carse below but no station was built in the vicinity of the village. This quiet, slightly isolated character has probably helped to protect its character.

4.4 The centre, west and north of the village are predominantly residential in character, while the east end is dominated by the steadings and associated activity of Little Rait Farm and the successful antiques centre that has developed in the old steading complex of Rait Farm.



**Residential dwellings, west end of the village**



**Antiques Centre, converted steadings, east end of village**

4.5 In common with virtually all small settlements, Rait has over the years lost the majority of its small, local businesses and amenities. These once occupied many of the original cottages so that little evidence of the former uses remains in the form of shopfronts or other visible markers. However Annat Hall remains a focus of the village and supports a busy and diverse programme of community activities.



**Former Post Office, old slide, c.1986**

## Street pattern and topography

4.6 Approaching the village from the east, after a crossroads marking the position of the original Perth-Dundee road, the prominent wooded knoll containing the scheduled hill fort provides a dramatic entrance feature. The historic agricultural infrastructure of the village next becomes evident in the extensive steadings of Rait Farm, now the Antiques Centre, and Little Rait Farm behind it, across the burn.

4.7 The main road into the village heads north off the Rait Glen road, passing between two paddocks and dropping down towards the level of the burn. The streetscape opens out to right and left where the historic layout of the village becomes evident, following the banks of the burn. The lane on the north side branches away from the route of the burn, in front of Ardarroch, the former Little Rait farmhouse, and connects with the historic access heading north towards New Mains of Fingask.



**Looking north to Ardarroch**



**Looking west from same position**

4.8 On the south side of the burn, the lane leading west from the crossroads follows the burn up the glen and this linear route is punctuated by small footbridges in timber and metal. Towards the west end the lane veers away from the burnside and along the front of a row of three cottages and a single cottage (Westend Cottages and Weaver's Cottage) marking the end of the current extent of the village. Westend Cottages follows the natural curvature of the burn, while its eaves line gently follows the rising elevation of the lane, emphasising its linear character and adding to the picturesque quality of this end of the village.



**Westend Cottages, note angle of building footprint and natural fall in eaves level, mirroring fall in road**

4.9 Impressive views of Dundee in the distance are available from the centre of the village, as well as more picturesque views taking in the backdrop of agricultural land, hills and woods. Trees and hedges are important in almost all viewpoints through the village, enclosing boundaries and framing vistas.



**Framed views through to Dundee, between Ardarroch and Smithy House**



**Long views up the valley from western edge of the conservation area, Rait Glen Road**

## **Buildings and townscape**

4.10 The picturesque cottages flanking the burn from the centre to the west end of the village are an exceptional survival of a pre-Improvement fermtoun. The cottages are predominantly single-storey, and several are reed-thatched. The cottages are orientated with their 'fronts' to the south making the most of natural light, and their 'backs' to the lane and the burn. Westend Cottages is one of the most characterful of the surviving cottage groups, retaining reed thatch, small window openings demonstrating the thickness of the walls, and a bellied wall base which may be evidence for its original earth or boulder construction. The strong forms of the long roof planes and exposed, blank gable ends of the cottages receding in perspective along the lane are a key feature of local views from within the core of the village. There are gentle curves in the access road as well as the burn and the slight variations in the orientation of the individual buildings enriches the diversity of the visual experience. The curved, corrugated nissen-hut type storage structure just west of the hall adds a quirky feature to these views along the lane.



**South facing cottages with 'back' to burn**



**Picture shows slightly tapered walls and projecting stones**



**Small window opening, with frame set deep into the thick walls**

4.11 The village hall is located within this part of the village. Its tall windows and slightly larger scale provide a contrast with the older, single storey cottages and further interest to the street scene. Oakview, a two storey cottage with a single storey annex, has wide window openings in the annex, a visual reference to the former village shop and post office. Further east the Sheiling is an example of a slated cottage which was formerly thatched. The original thackstones on the chimney heads of this cottage can be clearly seen.

4.12 In the centre of the village are Little Rait farm, the Smithy and Smithy House. Little Rait is a courtyard steading arrangement, formerly the coaching stables for the inn. This area remains a focus of commercial and agricultural activity in the heart of the village. The long west elevation of the steading buildings provides visual enclosure to the street scene, and the surviving pinned rubble stonework of this wall is of particularly fine quality. The Smithy is presently dis-used and is in poor condition. Originally the Smithy was a longer building in an L-shaped floor plan. The Smithy House is also lying vacant. All of these buildings are of local historical interest. The large house of Ardarroch (the former Little Rait farmhouse and inn) provides the end feature of the vista between Smithy House and the Little Rait farm steadings. This unlisted building is unusually tall and imposing in

Little Rait farm steadings. This unlisted building is unusually tall and imposing in comparison with the majority of the built form of Rait and has significant architectural merit. Its historic boundary railings are also an unusual feature in the village. Turning east at the corner of the road in front of Ardarroch there is a wider space where several roads and access tracks meet. The centre of this space is a focal point for floral displays. A pair of 19<sup>th</sup> century, stone built cottages is located immediately to the east of Ardarroch.



**Long west elevation of steading range**



**Low stone boundary wall and railings, Ardarroch**

4.13 The north side of the burn - the historic Fingask estate side of the village – has been slightly more heavily eroded than the south. Modern replacement development has somewhat diluted the original grain and sense of enclosure to the north bank of the burn. Nevertheless it largely retains the essential character of its original layout with linear buildings following the alignment of the road and the burn. A modern, backland development on the northern edge of the village (Rozelle and Quilkies) has some merit as a contemporary interpretation of this traditional linear form, and harmonises well with its historic context. A further modern insertion at the east end of the village, Netherkirk, is an interesting historicist composition reminiscent of Arts and Crafts style architecture with excellent quality materials and detailing.



**Modern dwellings in the conservation area, Rozelle and Quilkies (above) and Netherkirk (right)**



4.14 On the eastern edge of the village are the churchyard and the remains of the medieval parish church. The church is situated on a knoll and there are superb long range views from here of the Carse of Gowrie and to Dundee beyond.





**Long views east from the churchyard across the Carse of Gowrie**

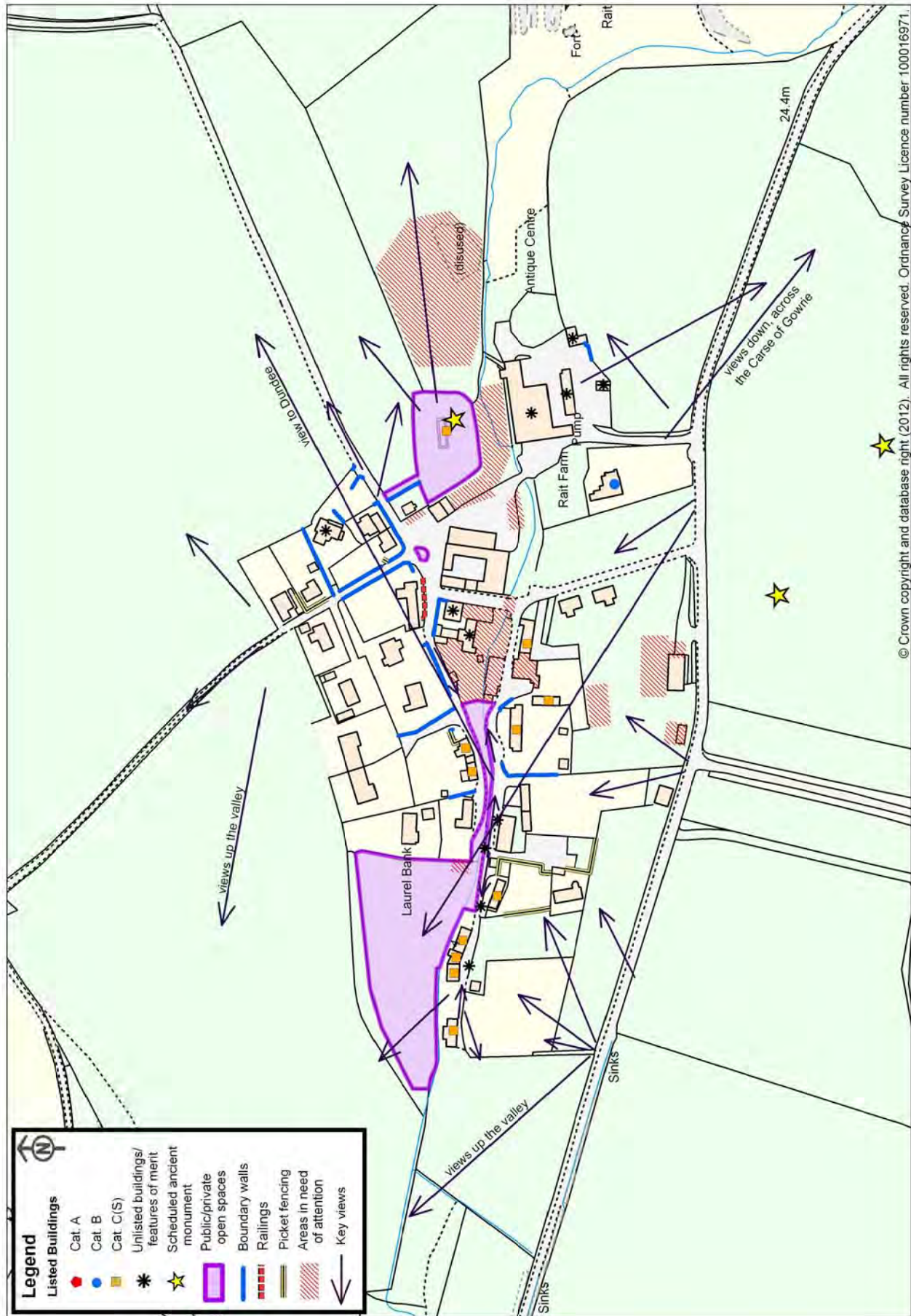
4.15 Also at the east end of the village, south of the churchyard, is the former Rait Farm, now the Rait Antiques Centre. This attractive group of buildings includes a piended granary range with elliptical-arched cartshed openings. The buildings have been converted and adapted in a sensitive manner, maintaining their essential character. The entrance to the centre is flanked by Rait House, the original farmhouse to the steading, a very elegant early 19<sup>th</sup> century composition with a Roman Doric pilastered doorpiece. This house and its landscaped grounds, situated between the antiques centre and the village, provides a fine entrance feature to both.

4.16 The road into the village is bordered on the west side by two houses of recent construction. These houses are one and a half storey height with steep pitched roofs. Any further development in this location would impact upon approach views into the village and the historical reading of the village entrance.



**Approach to village with recently built dwellings on the left**

Map 8: Townscape analysis



## Materials and finishes

4.17 Roof materials are traditional reed thatch, Scottish or Welsh slate and some concrete tiles on more recent properties. Most residential buildings have short chimney heads built in rubble sandstone or in several cases, replaced with Errol brick. Chimney pots are red or buff clay. Some chimneys retain their thackstones, showing the roofs were originally thatched. Roof surfaces are generally plain, with few dormers or roof lights on front roof slopes. One exception is the Smithy House with its later, incongruous dormer additions.



**Reed thatch**



**Scots slate**



**Brick thackstone**

4.18 Building walls are sandstone and some whinstone, either in random or coursed rubble construction. The oldest cottages are either simply whitewashed or are wet harled. The walls of most farm buildings, a few residential buildings and the village hall are unpainted, pointed stonework. A few buildings have dressed window surrounds and quoins.

4.19 Evidence of older construction techniques can be seen on one cottage, where large boulder base courses support lower walls which have a bowed profile, indicating the possible presence of earth or earth-cored construction. The prevalence of this technique, particularly in the Tay Estuary and Carse of Gowrie area, is just becoming more widely recognised.

4.20 Windows openings on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century cottages are relatively small. Many original timber windows survive and are predominantly sash and case. There are also some traditional casement windows. There is a rich variety of glazing patterns throughout the village: two, four, six, eight and twelve-pane designs. Unfortunately some original windows have been replaced in recent times with uPVC, flat profile designs.

4.21 Photographic examples of these materials and details can be found in the “Survey of Specific Issues” section, following on from paragraph 8.2.

## Spaces

4.22 All spaces, regardless of ownership and accessibility (ie. public and private spaces) contribute to the amenity and character of a settlement, as indicated in the Scottish Government’s Planning Advice Note 65: Planning and Open Space. Types of open space include public parks and gardens; private gardens; amenity greenspace; pathways; green corridors; natural or semi-natural greenspaces; allotments; civic spaces such as squares or hard landscaped areas, and churchyards.

4.23 The townscape of Rait is enriched by a variety of green spaces. The Rait Burn with its attractive landscaped banks and pedestrian bridges is a key feature of the village. Informal recreation and communal areas, private gardens and woodland also add to the diversity of the townscape.



**Rait Burn with its attractive landscaped banks and footbridges over**

4.24 The main open space for recreation in the village is a small field laid to grass behind the West End cottages on the north side of the burn. This is accessed by a wooden pedestrian bridge. The space is attractively framed with tree belts and shrubbery.



**Open space**



**Attractive private garden**

4.25 The meeting of four roads adjacent to Ardarroch and Little Rait creates a wide space which is like an informal village square. The centre of this space has been landscaped with planter pots and hanging flower baskets.

**Semi landscaped informal village square**



4.26 The churchyard is a secluded civic space where graves are still tended. The church and graveyard are in need of some attention. Conservation and repair works, including the stabilisation of the church structure, removal of ivy and re-instatement of the graveyard boundary, are proposed under the Historic Churchyards Project run by the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust. Tree management work within the church structure has already taken place.

4.27 There are some privately owned spaces in the village which are visually poor. These spaces are described in the 'Areas in need of attention' section.

### Trees and landscaping

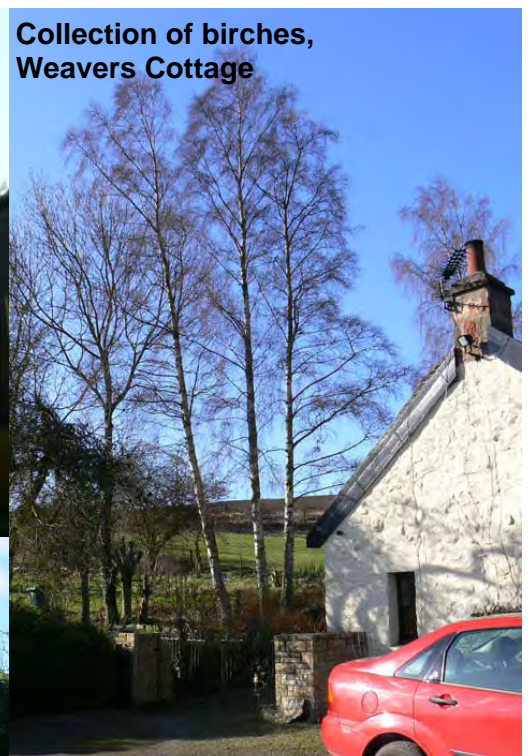
4.28 Trees and landscaping are significant and important features of Rait Conservation Area and its setting. Woodlands, tree groups, individual trees and boundary treatments all make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.29 There are attractive tree groups and gardens at the west end of the village, enhancing the setting of the fermtoun cottages. The burn is framed by mature tree belts immediately south of Little Rait Farm providing a sense of enclosure to the centre of the village. There are further tree belts along the burn framing the churchyard and providing a backdrop to Rait Antiques Centre. The garden grounds of Rait House are adorned with a variety of tree species. The large, mature trees bordering the access road to the antiques centre provide an attractive entrance feature.

4.30 Notable tree species within and around the edge of the conservation area are Oak; Cherry; Beech; Birch; Ash and Holly. Individual trees within the village of particular significance are three large oaks bordering the access road south of the burn adjacent to Cruikies Neuk cottage and a cherry at the corner of the road into the centre of the village next to The Sheiling.



**Three large oaks**



**Collection of birches,  
Weavers Cottage**



**Individual tree on boundary  
of burial ground**



**Cherry tree, The Sheiling**

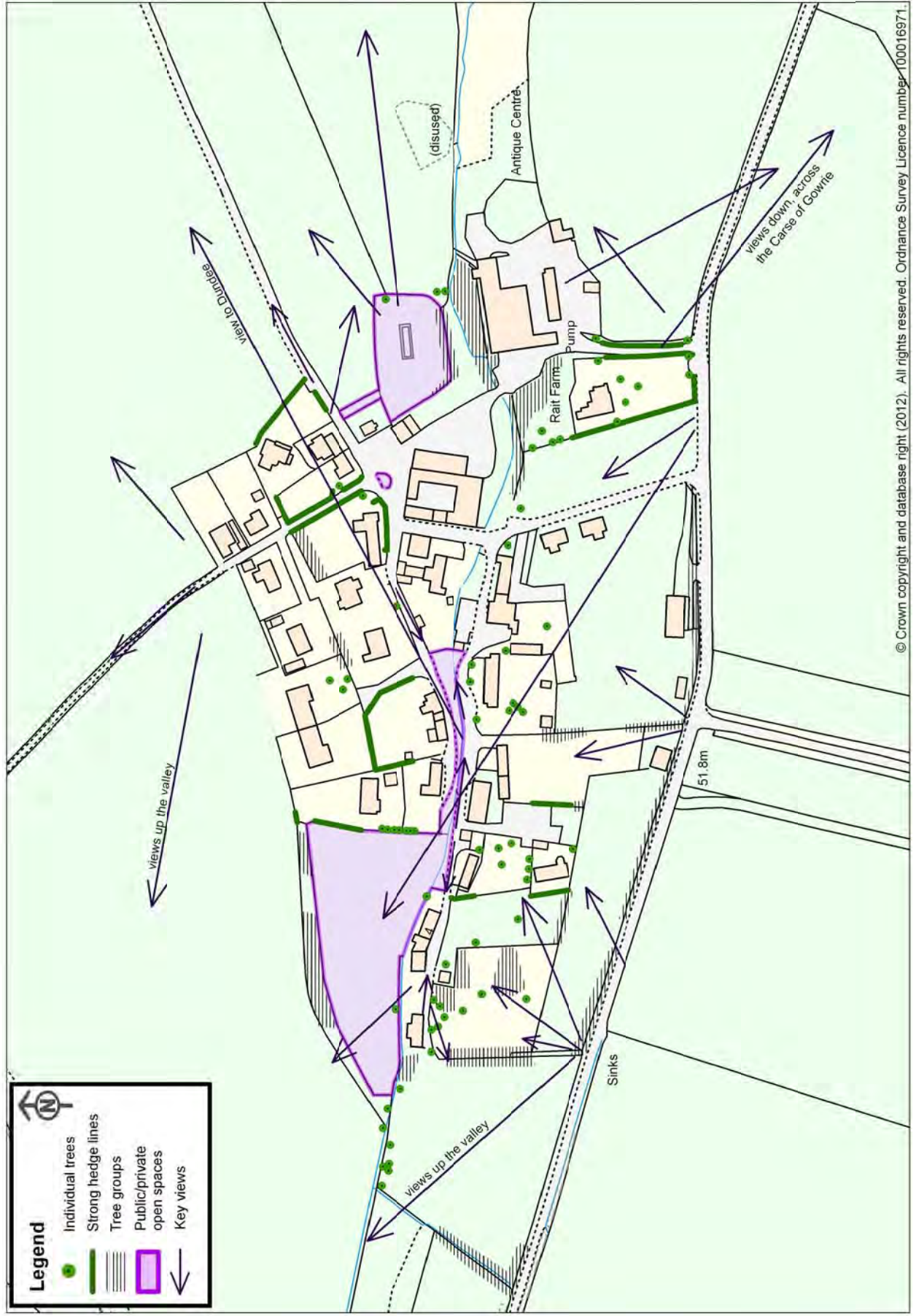


4.31 The edges of the conservation area are framed by tree belts to the north-west of the burn, along the north edge of the Glen of Rait public road and to the north-east and east following the burn and bordering the hill fort archaeological site. These tree belts make a significant contribution to the setting of the conservation area.

4.32 There are no existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) within the conservation area or its immediate setting. Significant individual trees, tree groups and woodland areas within and around the edge of the conservation area are indicated on map 9. Any proposals to fell, top or lop trees within the conservation area are subject to planning management under the Town and Country Planning Act. The Council must be notified of any proposals for tree works (explained further at para. 14.9).

4.33 Boundary treatments such as traditional walls, railings, hedges and hedgerows are important features of the village townscape. There are several hedges throughout the village, providing a very important ingredient to the distinctive character of this conservation area. Hedges are a variety of broadleaf species (such as beech) and evergreen, including laurel. The beech hedges bordering the grounds of Rait House and either side of the access road to the antiques centre are a very attractive feature at the entrance to the village. There are also several traditional stone walls. Decorative cast iron railings and gates are relatively rare. All of these original and landscaping features should be preserved.

Map 9: Green areas



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## Areas in need of attention

5.1 There are some buildings, areas 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 map 8. There may be the potential to enhance these areas and opportunities for enhancement are discussed further in paragraphs 15.1-15.4.

5.2 The unkempt area around the Smithy in the centre of the village is particularly prominent. This triangular piece of ground is bordered with unattractive wire mesh and security fencing and there is a dilapidated timber shed between the south road and the burn. The Smithy is in poor condition with the east gable requiring urgent repairs. The roof of the agricultural building adjoining the Sheiling is also in poor condition. The land has been used recently as a parking area for agricultural contractor's vehicles. Planning consent exists for development of this area including the refurbishment of the Smithy and the Sheiling and the replacement of the agricultural building beside the Sheiling with a new cottage. However, no work has taken place so far.



**Timber shed on edge of smithy site**



**Former Smithy and its environs**

5.3 The route from the village square floral display to the antiques centre past the east side of Little Rait farm is visually affected by various containers, stored vehicles and items which have spread to the north bank of the burn beside the churchyard. The pedestrian route from here west along the burn is also ill-defined. Various containers are also stored in the field to the west of the access road into the village and in a dis-used quarry viewed from the churchyard.



**Left, machinery and equipment stored at Little Rait Farm**



**Right, an example of an inappropriate replacement window**

5.4 In general there are some traditional cottages in the village which have been compromised by replacement windows in non-traditional materials, notably uPVC. These uPVC windows have an acutely two-dimensional profile and appearance.



### **Building by building analysis**

6.1 A comprehensive photographic record of all buildings in the conservation area will be undertaken and retained by the Council for potential future use.

### **Buildings at risk**

6.2 The Smithy, which is in poor condition, is listed on the official Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland. A planning application for development of this site, including the demolition of the Smithy and the Smithy House, was refused by the Council in 2009. A revised planning application involving the retention and extension of these buildings was approved in 2011. The Smithy has been marketed for sale recently.



**Former Smithy now a building at risk**

6.3 The condition of the Smithy will be monitored. Any other buildings which are or become vacant will also be monitored and proposed for inclusion on the register if considered appropriate. The Smithy House and the Sheiling are currently lying vacant.

### **Public Realm audit**

7.1 The public realm in Rait, ie. those areas of publicly-accessible roads, paths and open spaces, remain relatively informal and rural in character and have not in general been overly formalised or urbanised by the use of standard paving, tarmac surfacing, street lighting and street furniture.

7.2 The burn is the key open space feature forming the heart of the village. Its banks have in places been made up with rubble or dressed stone, and a single-slab stone footbridge survives alongside the smithy. Several small-scale, modern footbridges also feature along the burn. The burn is edged by unenclosed grass banks or verges, flanked in turn by roads/paths with whin dust surfacing and some gravelled areas. Low drystone rubble walls, often made up of rounded glacial field stones, enclose private garden areas adjacent to the burn which in many cases are raised above lane level.



**Low stone built retaining wall to sides of burn**

7.3 In terms of street furniture, a K6 red telephone box is located beside Annat Hall on the south side of the burn, and there are a few black litter bins of standard design. One or two historic streetlamps survive at the west end which are echoed along the burnside by modern lamps of replica historic design. However in general the level of undesirable street clutter in the village is very low. Its quiet location has meant that very few directional road signs or commercial advertising signs are required.



**Left, K6 telephone kiosk, now decommissioned**



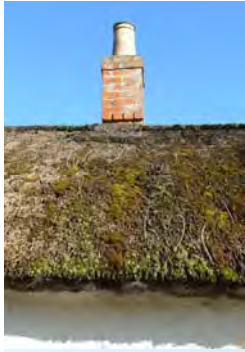
**Right, one of three surviving historic lamp standards**

### **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.

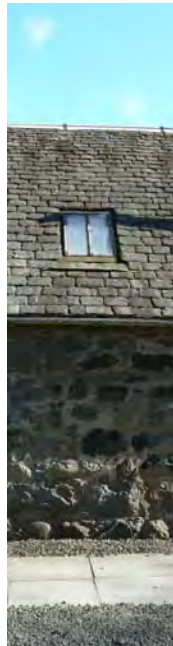
# Roofscapes



## Doors and windows



**Materials, decoration and detail**



## Boundary treatments



## Sensitivity analysis

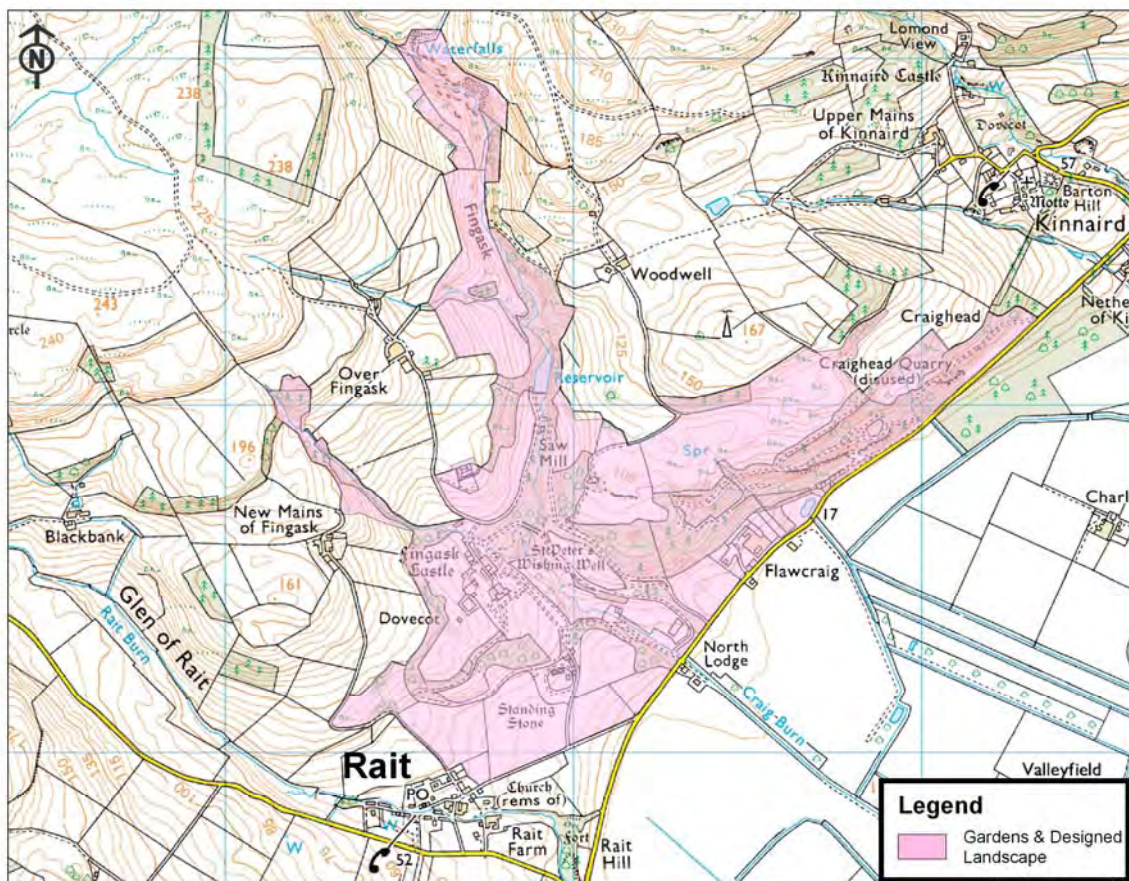
### Setting of the conservation area

9.1 The edges of the conservation area can be sensitive to potential development. It is important to preserve and enhance the setting of the conservation area and the design, scale and landscaping of any development must not adversely affect this setting. Views out of the conservation area to the rural landscape immediately surrounding it are particularly important to its character. Existing tree belts should not be adversely affected by development.

### Gardens and Designed Landscapes

9.2 The extensive garden and designed landscape of Fingask Castle adjoins the conservation area at its north-east corner. This landscape is included on the inventory of gardens and designed landscapes as one of the oldest gardens in Scotland. The terraces and woodland around the category A listed Fingask Castle date from the late 17th century, while the 19th century topiary and woodland gardens are of high artistic value.

**Map 10: Fingask Castle Garden and Designed Landscape**



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9.3 The designed landscape and conservation area designations complement each other, and each helps to contribute to and protect the other's setting. Development affecting the settings of both the designed landscape and the conservation area are material considerations for any planning applications in the area. Historic Scotland must be consulted on any proposal potentially affecting the settings of any gardens and designed landscapes on the Inventory.

9.4 The gardens and designed landscapes of Glendoick and Megginch are located around 1-2 miles to the south of Rait, and Rossie Priory c. 3 miles to the north-east. However these landscapes have a limited visual impact on the setting of the village.

## **Archaeology**

9.5 Within the conservation area, the remains of Rait Old Parish Church are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Rait Hill fort, just to the east of the conservation area, and souterrains and a ring-ditch in a field to the south are also SAMs. Historic Scotland must be consulted on any proposal potentially affecting scheduled monuments, category A listed buildings, or their settings.

9.6 There are also sites of local archaeological importance within and around the village. Information on non-designated monuments can be found in the Perth and Kinross Historic Environment Record (HER). Enquiries should be directed to the Heritage Officer at Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust ([www.pkht.org.uk](http://www.pkht.org.uk)). Information from the HER can be viewed online via Pastmap ([www.PASTMAP.org.uk](http://www.PASTMAP.org.uk)).

9.7 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.

## **Development pressures**

9.8 Rait is already developed to the extent that pressure for major new development within its core is minimal. However pressure for householder development such as extensions and alterations to roofs, elevations windows and doors; conversions or replacement of buildings for residential use, and infill development of single, new dwellings, is evident. Paddocks along the south edge of the village may come under pressure for larger-scale development in future and any such proposals must be carefully considered in order to protect the sensitive historic character, the setting, and views from, of and around the village.

## **Character areas**

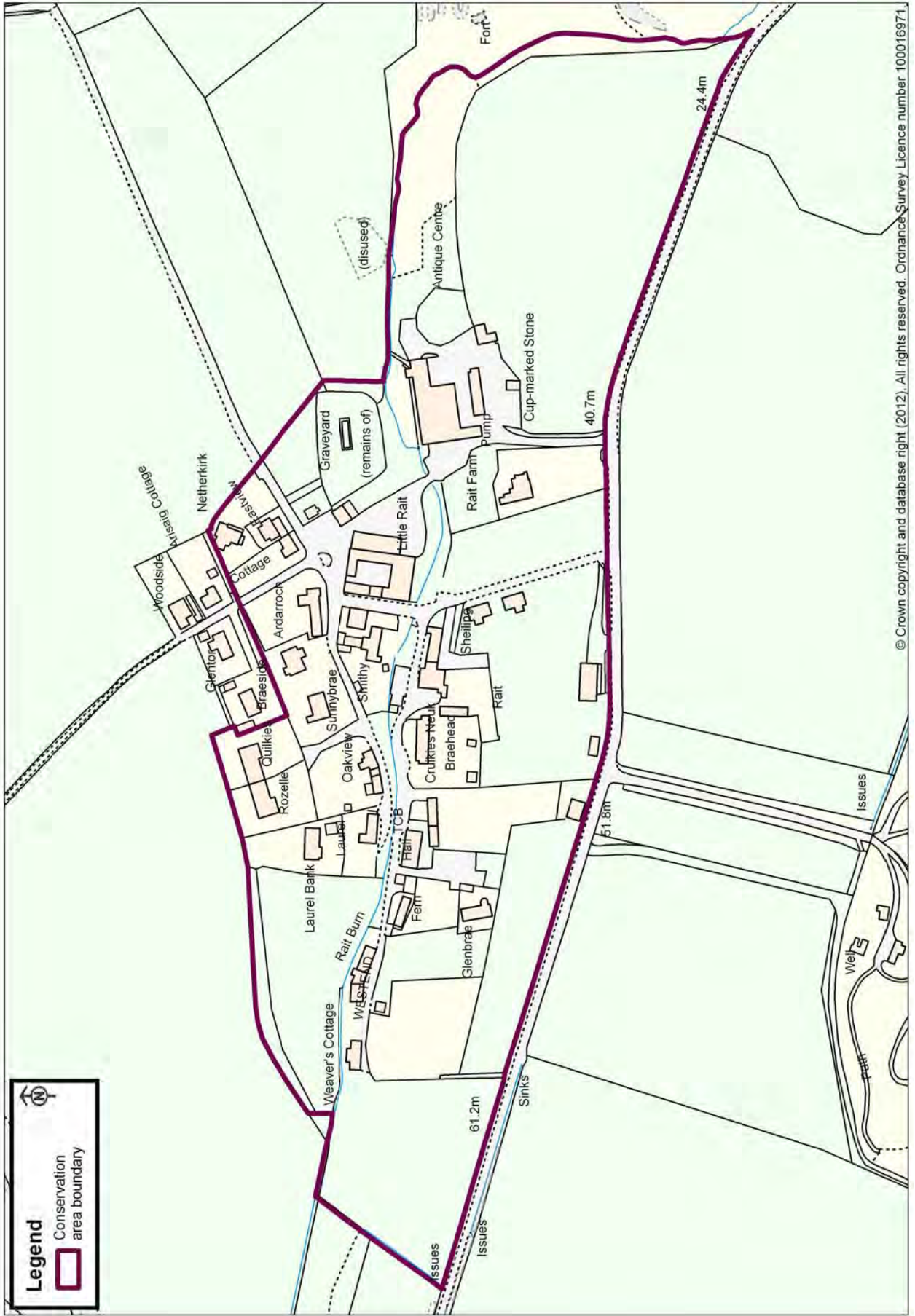
10.1 The small scale and pattern of development of Rait cannot readily be broken down into different zones or areas of separate character in a formal sense. However a contrast can be perceived between the fermtoun character of the centre and west of the village arranged in a linear fashion along the burn, and the area at the east end dominated by the buildings of Rait and Little Rait Farm and the Smithy.

## **Assessment of significance**

11.1 Rait is a significant example of a fermtoun, a pre-Improvement agricultural settlement centred around the Rait Burn and preserving evidence of the importance of farming and weaving in its development. The surviving group of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages are particularly noteworthy but also of importance is the group of two farms, associated steadings and smithy at the east end.



Map 11: Conservation area boundary



## **Chapter 4 CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

### **Using the conservation area appraisal**

12.1 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 Rait 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.

12.2 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.

12.3 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.

12.4 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 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. 14.4-14.6).
- Repairs Notices: the planning authority will seek to work with owners of listed buildings but may 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.
- There is a firm commitment from the planning authority to ensure the protection and enhancement of Rait 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**

12.5 The conservation area will be monitored through:

- 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;
- Observation: officers from the planning authority will visit the conservation area at regular intervals to check on the progress of any restoration and enhancement schemes and also observe any other works occurring which may be unauthorised;
- Liaison: officers will liaise with local amenity groups, the public and other interested parties as necessary;
- 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 Adopted Perth Area Local Plan 1995 did not identify specific sites for residential or commercial development within or near Rait. However Rait is identified as a small settlement and the conservation area, which covers a larger area than the settlement boundary, is also shown.

13.2 The Adopted Perth Area Local Plan indicates the need to protect the built and natural environment in the Perth area, balanced with the legitimate needs for development. Conservation areas need to be protected and enhanced (para. 3.39). Policy 24 and proposals map A identifies existing conservation areas and indicates that their architectural or historic character will be retained. Infill and other development will only be permitted where it would not affect the character or amenity of the conservation areas. Policy 25 indicates there will be a presumption against the demolition of listed buildings and a presumption in favour of consent for development involving the sympathetic restoration of a listed building, or other buildings of architectural value. This policy also states that the setting of listed buildings will be safeguarded.

13.3 The Council have recently published one single Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP), covering the whole of Perth and Kinross. The period for representations for the Proposed LDP ended on 10 April 2012 and the examination is currently anticipated in 2013. A tighter settlement boundary is identified for Rait to reflect its character and the conservation area boundary is also shown. No development sites at or near Rait are proposed in the LDP. A similar but updated policy framework relating to listed buildings and conservation areas applies (Policy HE2 and HE3).

13.4 It is important to preserve and where possible enhance the conservation area and its setting. The design and scale of any development must not adversely affect this setting.

### **Conservation area boundary**

14.1 The conservation area was first designated in 1973. Virtually the whole of the village (apart from some modern development to the north) and its immediate environs to the south, east and west are included within the conservation area boundary. During the current re-appraisal and review no modifications or amendments to the boundary are thought to be necessary.

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

### **Effects of permitted development**

14.3 There are examples in the village 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.

14.4 The Scottish Government has recently issued a new General Permitted Development Order (February 2012) which restricts householder permitted development rights in conservation areas, such as replacement windows and satellite dishes. However there are still types of development which are classed as "permitted development" such as the alteration or removal of stone walls or railings which do not bound the curtilage of a dwelling-house; some forms of telecommunications development, development by statutory

undertakers (water, gas, electricity, road transport, post office and sewerage) and development by local authorities, including lamp standards and street furniture.

14.5 Under Article 4 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 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. An Article 4 Direction is no longer needed for householder development. However, it is considered that an Article 4 Direction will still be required for certain types of development, including development by statutory undertakers and the local authority.

14.6 In Rait the townscape is vulnerable to some if not all classes of permitted development. In order to maximise the benefit of a conservation area designation it is considered that an Article 4 Direction for Rait Conservation Area should be drafted for Scottish Ministers approval (Draft Article 4 Direction shown in Appendix 2).

### **Advertisements**

14.7 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 in a conservation area through regulation 11 of the 1984 Regulations. Certain types of advertisements, such as shop, business or tourism related signage, can have an impact on the overall quality of the townscape. However, there are no commercial businesses in Rait apart from those based at the Rait Antiques Centre. It is therefore considered that additional advertisement controls are not necessary in Rait Conservation Area.

### **Trees**

14.8 There is a case for Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to be formulated within the setting of Rait if there are trees which are under threat and are considered to be of high visual amenity and important to the setting of the conservation area.

14.9 Any proposals to fell, top or lop trees within the conservation area will be subject to certain planning management 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 The unkempt area in the centre of the village around the Smithy would benefit from landscaping works including the removal of metal fencing and the improvement of boundary treatments and the environs around the burn. Planning consent was granted in August 2011 for the development of this site, including the refurbishment and extension of the Smithy and Smithy House and the erection of a dwelling-house to the west of the Smithy, subject to a detailed landscaping and planting scheme. So far no development has taken place. In the interim a visual improvement of this key area in the village should be carried out.



**Land associated with former smithy site**



**Containers and equipment occupying the field bordering the approach road into Rait**

15.2 An enhancement project including the rationalisation of machinery, containers and other stored or deposited items should be considered. Areas suggested for attention are the route between Little Rait farm and the churchyard and the field immediately to the west of the access road into the village.

15.3 A planting scheme to enhance the natural frame of the churchyard and stabilise the west and south slopes of the churchyard knoll would be desirable. Also, the former route west along the north bank of the burn could be improved as a pedestrian path with suitable surfacing in natural materials.



**Former route between Little Rait Farm and centre of village, former smithy site**

15.4 The bridge over the burn for the road into the village is in a state of dis-repair. Repairs in the short-term and an enhancement scheme for the long-term need to be considered.

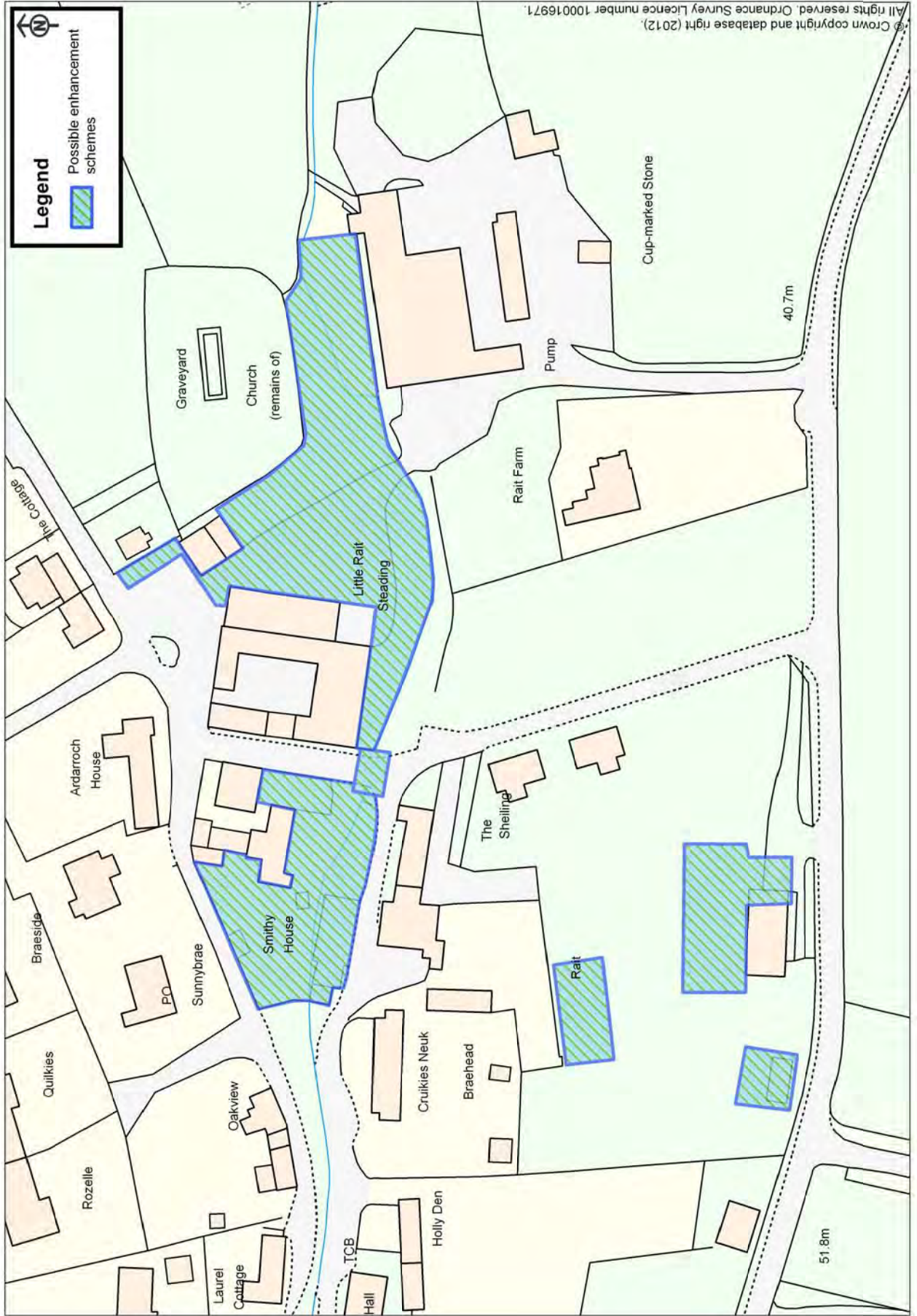
15.5 Please note that these represent initial ideas for potential projects. There will be early consultation with the local community, including the Community Association, Community Council and other local groups, before any firm proposals are developed further.

#### Pathway routes

15.6 The management of the conservation area provides an opportunity for the development and enhancement of path networks through Rait and around the local area. The 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 existing routes linking to the Core Path network and enhancing routes to historic features outwith the conservation area. The possibility of interpretation boards will also be explored.

15.7 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 12: Potential enhancement sites



## **APPENDICES**

### **1) Tay Landscape Partnership Scheme**

A Landscape Partnership Scheme, led by Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust and Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, has been developed to conserve and regenerate the environs of the River Tay and its confluence with the River Earn. It is proposed to develop a programme of reed-bed management, protect remaining orchards and conserve historic buildings and promote regeneration of historic settlements. Further access improvements to the river are proposed with new path networks and other initiatives so that people can get down to the river.

The environs of the Rivers Tay and Earn and the Carse of Gowrie, are rich in biodiversity, agriculture and history but are little appreciated or visited by the public.

The area contains the largest single area of reed-beds in the UK while the river contains the greatest volume of freshwater of any UK river. Its wetlands, drained by medieval monks, were the home of massive orchards which in more recent times have given way to Tayside's famous soft fruit industry. The area is also an important breeding site for rare birds.

The area has evidence of prehistoric human activity with several Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial sites. The Palace of Forteviot, dating back to the Pictish aristocracy of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, is the earliest identified royal centre in Scotland. It is considered the true 'Cradle of Scotland' as it was here that the Picts and the Gaels joined to form the medieval state of Alba. There is also one of the largest concentrations of temporary Roman camps in Britain, indicating that Tayside was one of the frontiers of the Roman Empire.

Proposals for the Landscape Partnership Scheme will be informed by a range of bodies including Perth and Kinross Council and the Community Council.



**2) 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**

**Rait Conservation Area**

**The Perth & Kinross Council (Restriction of Permitted Development)  
(Rait) Direction 2012**

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 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 Rait (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 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) (Rait) Direction 2012.

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 docketted with reference thereto.

## Sources

Abbott, D.M., *A Ramble in Rait*, revised 1999

Brotchie, Alan, *Old Carse of Gowrie – West with Kinfauns, Glencarse, Errol and Rait*, 2009

Gifford, John, *The Buildings of Scotland, Perth and Kinross*, New Haven/London 2007

Haynes, Nick, *Perth & Kinross, An Illustrated Architectural Guide*, Edinburgh 2000

Melville, L, *Fair Land of Gowrie*, 1939

Pride, Glen L., *Dictionary of Scottish Building*, Edinburgh 1996

### Web sources

Perth and Kinross Historic Environment Record, [www.pkht.org.uk](http://www.pkht.org.uk)

Rait Community Association website, [www.rait-village.co.uk](http://www.rait-village.co.uk)

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)

Canmore website [canmore.rcahms.gov.uk](http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk)

Documentary and image resources held by the Archives and Local Studies at A.K. Bell Library, Perth, are also gratefully acknowledged.

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