Conservation Guidance Notes

CGN Series

Introduction

These Conservation Guidance Notes are a series of guides developed by Scotland's Garden & Landscape Heritage through the Glorious Gardens Project to assist land owners and land managers in conserving the historic designed landscapes, in this case of the Falkirk Council Area.

The Falkirk Council Area is characterised by settled landscapes from low hills to coastal flats with frequent designed estate landscapes that were improved or developed during prosperous times of mining and industry in the 18-20th centuries.

Conservation Guidance Notes have been prepared for:

1. Industrial Heritage in Designed Landscapes
2. New Uses for Old Landscapes
3. Funding and Resources

This series considers key issues for this area. It is not exhaustive, and other relevant generic guidance notes are available and include:

- Historic Environment Scotland: Inform guidance series
- Historic Environment Scotland: Managing Change in the Historic Environment series
- Forestry Commission Research: Best Practice Guidance series
- Other internet sources

These Guidance Notes have been produced alongside the Conservation Strategy for the Falkirk Council area, which sets out a recommended approach to prioritising conservation works in the area.

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CGN 1

Industrial Heritage in Designed Landscapes

The industrial past of the Falkirk Council Area is an essential part of its heritage. Many of the historic designed landscapes were developed using the wealth that local industries created.

Industrial activity and mineral extraction were at their most vigorous in the 18-19th centuries, with coal mining, ironworks, brickworks, potteries and fire clay works, brewing, distilling, alum works, bleaching, dying, and printing. This led to wealth, but also to changes to the landscape. Industries needed factories, and furnaces, located either at the source of raw materials, or close to transport links. Products needed to be moved from the area via transport routes. Therefore canals, ferries, railways and latterly roads were built to cater for increasing movement of materials from source to manufacturing sites and distribution points at ports on the Firth of Forth, or to Edinburgh and Glasgow via the Forth and Clyde, and Union Canals.

The Bo'ness railway museum

Disused railways can make attractive paths

Some estates in the Falkirk Council area were designed before wide scale industrial changes in the landscape occurred, and have been affected by fragmentation, mining, transport links or large scale development. Others, however, were designed in the context of active industrial landscapes. Many estates therefore contain industrial heritage features such as disused railways, former works buildings, or materials such as iron, and coal, and local facilities for the manufacture of bricks and tiles.

With an understanding of the value of our industrial heritage, it is important in the Falkirk Council Area to recognize that although some industrial activities in the past were detrimental to historic designed landscapes, the designed landscapes in the area were supported or enabled by these industries.

Conservation of designed landscapes should therefore respect the interventions of industry, and put value on research, interpretation and conservation of industrial heritage features within the designed landscapes. Industrial heritage will be of particular interest if:

- Industrial heritage is linked to the social and cultural life of the area in the 18th and 19th centuries
- Local industries can be linked to former residents, events or places
- Routes such as disused railways cross estates and can be used as recreational routes
- Particular features within the landscapes were made using examples of local materials or by local manufacturers

The Forth and Clyde Canal

Conservation of industrial heritage features should focus on the preservation of valued elements. Priorities may include (depending on the current status of the features):

- Recording extant features using maps, drawings and photographs, to preserve information
- Refurbishing features, notably ornamental metalwork such as drinking fountains, railings and gates
- Consolidating buildings and walls to make them safe and preserve against further degradation, through removal of vegetation and consolidation of stonework, or removal of unsafe structures
- Consolidating steep slopes such as former railway embankments or canal banks to avoid collapse

Opportunities for industrial heritage assets could include interpretation, preservation, restoration or repurposing:

- Provide interpretation as to the nature and history of the feature, as well as the significance of the feature (and the industry it was part of) to the history and prosperity of the estate
- Preserve features in their current state and consolidate unsafe structures
- Repurpose industrial buildings for enterprise, taking advantage of the existing structures and setting.
- Encourage tourism and recreation that can support heritage features and raise awareness of their regional and local importance.

Zetland Park fountain, foundry unknown. Original park features included seats, bandstand, railings and flagpole.

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New Uses for Old Landscapes

Many of the designed landscapes in the Falkirk Council Area no longer function as intact estates. Irrespective of whether they do, it is an essential part of responding to modern economic pressures that buildings and land may need to change in function or use.

Designed landscapes were developed at a time when labour was cheap and plentiful, and owners could afford to have country mansions with stables, walled gardens, estate woodlands and estate farms. Even where estates are intact today, at least some buildings have uses other than for which they were built.

Airth Stables and domestic offices repurposed as a hotel and spa

Changes in agriculture and transport in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries brought about some of the biggest changes to functions on estates, with the move away from horse-drawn agricultural tools and carriages to motorised vehicles. Mechanised agricultural methods also meant that fewer farm workers were required – a trend that led to a hugely diminished agricultural population. Manufacturing industries and mining extraction during the 18-19th centuries led to numerous new buildings and industrial areas, which when industry diminished in the 20th century no longer had a use.

Repurposing of buildings provides the potential to bring in new revenue and can ensure the maintenance of otherwise unused buildings. Sensitive development of retail, hospitality, residential or industrial facilities should preserve the character of buildings and the spaces around them, whilst accommodating new opportunities.

Types of buildings that are candidates for repurposing include:

- Mansion houses that are no longer occupied

- Stable blocks, coach houses, farm buildings, gatehouses, potting sheds and barns
- Mills, and other buildings related to former industries
- Walled gardens
- Quarries and works yards

Kinneil Community Orchard with the Heritage Centre beyond

Repurposing of extant structures should aim to create viable functions, but should also respect the historical structures and setting around them:

- Repurposing buildings for enterprise or tourism should seek to preserve and protect the essential fabric of the buildings
- Development within walled gardens should respect the setting and structures of the walled garden and should avoid loss of the layout of the walls.
- Consolidating buildings and walls to make them safe and preserve against further degradation, through removal of vegetation and consolidation of stonework
- Consolidating steep slopes such as former railway embankments or canal banks to avoid collapse

Former farm courtyard buildings house a cafe with sheltered external space

Opportunities for repurposing could include:

- Hotel developments
- Small scale enterprise units, including community enterprise facilities, or small scale properties for industries such as bakery enterprises, craft breweries or distilling
- Horticultural uses for walled gardens, including orchards, community growing spaces or gardens for food production for local cafes or chefs
- Visitor facilities such as cafes, community hubs, interpretation/heritage centres and public parks

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CGN 3

Funding Sources

There are many potential funding sources that can be used to enable conservation actions for designed landscapes. Grants are often aimed at particular types of projects, so finding the right grant to apply for is the first step.

Designed landscapes were developed at a time when labour was cheap and plentiful, and owners could afford to have country mansions with elaborate, extensive and high-maintenance estates. As social and economic times have changed, that is no longer the case, and conservation proposals must consider the availability of resources – funding for capital works, skills and labour, and in particular the resources for ongoing maintenance.

Potential sources of funding are wide ranging but often have funding criteria to meet including some degree of public access. This ensures that funds go towards the types of projects that the funding body supports.

An exhaustive list of references is not provided here, as up to date guidance on which grants are available, for different types of activity, and how to apply can be found on the internet. However, useful websites to start with include the following:

- Historic Environment Scotland grants;
- Scottish Natural Heritage grants;
- Heritage Lottery Fund grants
- Rural Payments and Inspections Division (RPID)
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)
- Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS)
- Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS)
- Central Scotland Green Network;
- Paths for All;
- Inner Forth Futures;

- Landfill Tax;
- Scottish Wildlife Trust;
- Supermarket fundraising schemes.

Assistance can be sought from:

- Falkirk Council;
- Falkirk Development Trust;
- Friends groups;
- The Conservation Volunteers;
- The Scottish Prison Service supports community projects through providing labour as part of community service obligations.

Community conservation volunteers can help carrying out simple works

There are many sources of conservation guidance that deal with conservation of specific elements such as graveyards and stone work through to broad management principles. An exhaustive list of references is not provided here, as most sources of guidance can be found on the internet. However, useful websites to start with include the following.

- Historic Environment Scotland: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance.
- Historic England: https://historicengland.org.uk/advice.
- Scottish Natural Heritage: https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice.
- SRUC and National Farmers Union websites
- Scotland's Gardens and Landscape Heritage: www.sglh.org.
- Heritage Lottery Fund: www.hlf.org.uk

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