

Community and Enterprise Resources

Douglas conservation area



Douglas Conservation Area

Definition of a conservation area

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 sets out the current legislative framework for the designation of conservation areas, defining conservation areas “as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” Planning authorities are required to periodically determine which parts of their district merit designation as a conservation area.

What does conservation area status mean?

Designation of a conservation area does not mean development is prohibited. However, when considering development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to its character and appearance. Greater control over development is available to us as a planning authority within a conservation area. The designation of Douglas not only reflected the quality of its individual buildings, many of which are listed, but the relationship of the buildings to each other and to spaces (streets, closes, public parks) in which they are contained or help to form. The purpose of this is to protect and enhance the character and unique identity of Douglas, from taking care with the treatment of details to the larger scale of requiring new extensions or buildings which are sympathetic to their surroundings.

General description

The main feature of Douglas is the organic street pattern, with numerous streets and closes running at various angles to both the Main Street and Ayr Road. The Main Street is deceptively long and is revealed gradually owing to a series of changes in level, width and direction. It is flanked by two rows or groups of tightly knit buildings built hard onto the edge of the road. These are mostly houses, two-storeys, some single, built of stone and slate, often with shops below.

At various points the street is punctuated by a series of through views to streets or closes running off the main thoroughfare. The Ayr Road is by contrast flanked by a series of villas set in substantial gardens and also passes the only significant stands of mature trees in the conservation area. At its eastern entry into the conservation area, the road end affords a commanding view of the tightly knit cluster of houses around St Brides's Church, then drops sharply in height to effectively bypass the historic heart of the village.

The buildings we see today largely date from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although Douglas has also been subject to some housing redevelopment in recent years. The older buildings have a squatter appearance, reflecting the lower ceiling heights, than those of the Victorian era but are all characterised by the use of slate and stone in their construction. The later buildings are of obvious quality and are distinguished by the greater use of exposed semi-dressed stonework with detailing on window and door surrounds. Douglas is, however, notable for the number of surviving relics from earlier ages which includes St Brides, the Old Tolbooth and St Sophia's Church.

The architecture and buildings of Douglas are far from identical, yet most buildings have certain important characteristics which help to bind them together to form a pleasing townscape and individual detailing which should be safeguarded.

History

The history of Douglas is strongly tied with the Douglas family, a powerful Scottish mediaeval family with power bases throughout southern Scotland. In later years, their descendants, the Home family were to exert a powerful influence. Douglas was also strongly associated with Covenanting activity and the resultant ties with the former Cameronians Regiment.

The creation of a nucleated settlement or burgh is, however, directly linked to the Royal Charter of 1458/9. Douglas was one of many Burghs of Barony created in the late fifteenth century and this status allowed certain privileges and restrictive practices, although trading rights were more restricted than that of a Royal Burgh such as Lanark.

The prosperity of the village was closely tied to the castle and its estate. The village today is not only a reflection of the wealth created by the eighteenth century agrarian revolution, but also the particular prosperity accrued at the end of the nineteenth century through the growing wealth of the landed estates. Many public works and endowments date this period. From 1914 onwards, this relationship with the Home family began to weaken with the development of the mining industry based on the coal seams in the Douglas basin. In 1938 the imposing Douglas Castle was demolished and today only the landscaped parkland and ruined tower at the 'foot of the village' provides visible evidence of the former wealth. With the closure of the last pit in 1967, the village is again dependent on the surrounding countryside, locally based industries and as a commuter village.

Building characteristics

Whilst it is important to conserve the best buildings, it is also important to respect details and the common factors which give Douglas its identity. Douglas not only has many interesting buildings, but also a wealth of detail that should be safeguarded and reinforced where applicable.

Roofs - the use of Scottish slate is common place. This roofing material came into common usage at the end of the 18th century and a typical pitch of the roofs is 45 degrees, steep by modern standards. Slate is unfortunately no longer quarried in Scotland and the main source is therefore second-hand from building demolition. Slate has many qualities, both as a roofing material and visually through different sizing and grading, to a subtle variation in colours from grey to purple. The treatment of gables; eg skewes; cast iron gutters and downpipes; chimney stacks often with moulded copes and fireclay cans and traditional dormer windows, also individually and collectively make a contribution to the roofscape. Roofscape is particularly prominent in Douglas owing to the changes in levels and viewpoints throughout the conservation area.

Stone – until the First World War, most buildings in Douglas were constructed of stone, with the use of sandstone predominant. Not only does the stone provide a variety of colours, but in Douglas, there is tremendous variety of stone masonry and detailing, from the earlier

random rubble and coursed rubble with dressed stone around windows and doors, to the later use of smooth polished and squared stonework known as ashlar.

Many of the earlier buildings in particular are finished in a render called stucco which is scored to simulate ashlar stonework. The variety of textures is increased by the occasional use of traditional wet dash harling. There are only one or two instances where the inappropriate modern dry dash or chip type of render has been used.

Texture and colour – the variation in texture and colour in Douglas has been reduced by the common use of paint. Whilst some buildings have been sympathetically treated, there is further scope for colour schemes designed not only to respect the architectural character itself, but to complement or reinforce an effective grouping of buildings. The painting of previously unpainted stonework will not generally be encouraged.

Windows - the role of sash and case windows must be emphasised. In general, the openings did increase in size from the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century, but still retained the essential vertical emphasis and proportions.

The development of window styles reflected changes in glass technology, but the method of construction and opening essentially remained the same.

Detailed guidance on what is likely to be acceptable is found in our guide, 'Windows and doors for listed buildings and conservation areas' which is on the Council website at: http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7633/windows_and_doors_for_listed_buildings_and_conservation_areas

As a general principle affecting all public elevations in the conservation area, we would encourage owners to replace their windows in a style and configuration appropriate to the age and style of the building. In practice, this will generally mean timber sash and case, with the correct number and layout of panes of glass and the correct detail of mouldings on the glazing bars and frame.

Doors – these also are often overlooked and the relationship of fanlights misinterpreted when replacing doors. Traditional doors are timber, solid with the emphasis changing from Vertical lined boards to four or six panelled doors, often double opening. Replacement doors should be of a traditional type, appropriate to the age and style of the building.

Shopfronts and advertisements

In the Main Street and Ayr Road with their commercial properties, the role of traditional shopfronts and sympathetically designed advertisements all have their part to play.

Further information and guidance on the historic environment

South Lanarkshire Council's adopted local development plan (2015) contains its policy on the historic environment:

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7600/south_lanarkshire_local_development_plan_proposed_may_2013

South Lanarkshire Council has also prepared supplementary guidance on the natural and historic environment:

http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9921/natural_and_historic_environment

Historic Environment Scotland has a series of guidance notes which provide advice on best practice on how to make changes to listed buildings or to properties in conservation areas. They cover a range of topics including extensions, interiors, roofs, windows and shopfronts. They can be viewed or downloaded at:

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/managing-change-in-the-historic-environment-guidance-notes/>

Permissions and procedures

The following summarises some of the types of development which require planning permission in a conservation area.

Alterations to houses

If your property is within the conservation area, you will require planning permission from the Council before making alterations to your house, including:

- the erection of any extension or porch
- the erection of sheds, garages, greenhouses, huts or decking etc if they have a floor area exceeding 4 square metres
- adding to or altering the roof of your property, including the formation of dormer windows and rooflights, or changing the roofing material
- the erection or construction of any access ramp outside an external door of your house
- replacement windows or doors, installation of solar panels, flues, satellite dishes etc
- any building, engineering or other operation
- provision of a hard surface in your garden ground
- the installation of a freestanding wind turbine or air source heat pump
- the installation of CCTV
- changing the walling material (eg from stone to roughcast), stonewalling or painting the exterior of the house

Alterations to flats

If you live in a flat in a conservation area, there are no permitted development rights and you will require planning permission for any external alterations or development.

Walls and fences

You need planning permission if you want to erect any gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure.

Demolition

Complete or substantial demolition of any unlisted building within the conservation area requires permission from the Council called 'Conservation Area Consent'.

Trees in conservation areas

Trees in conservation areas which are already protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) are subject to the normal TPO controls. The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) 1997 as amended also makes special provision for trees in conservation areas which are not the subject of a TPO. Anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree in a conservation area is required to give the Council six weeks prior notice. The purpose of this requirement is to give us an opportunity to consider whether a TPO should be made in respect of the tree. Any notified works must be carried out within two years from the date of the notice. Failure to give notice to the Council render the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a TPO.

Shops and offices

The extension or external alteration of a shop or financial or professional services establishment needs planning permission in a conservation area.

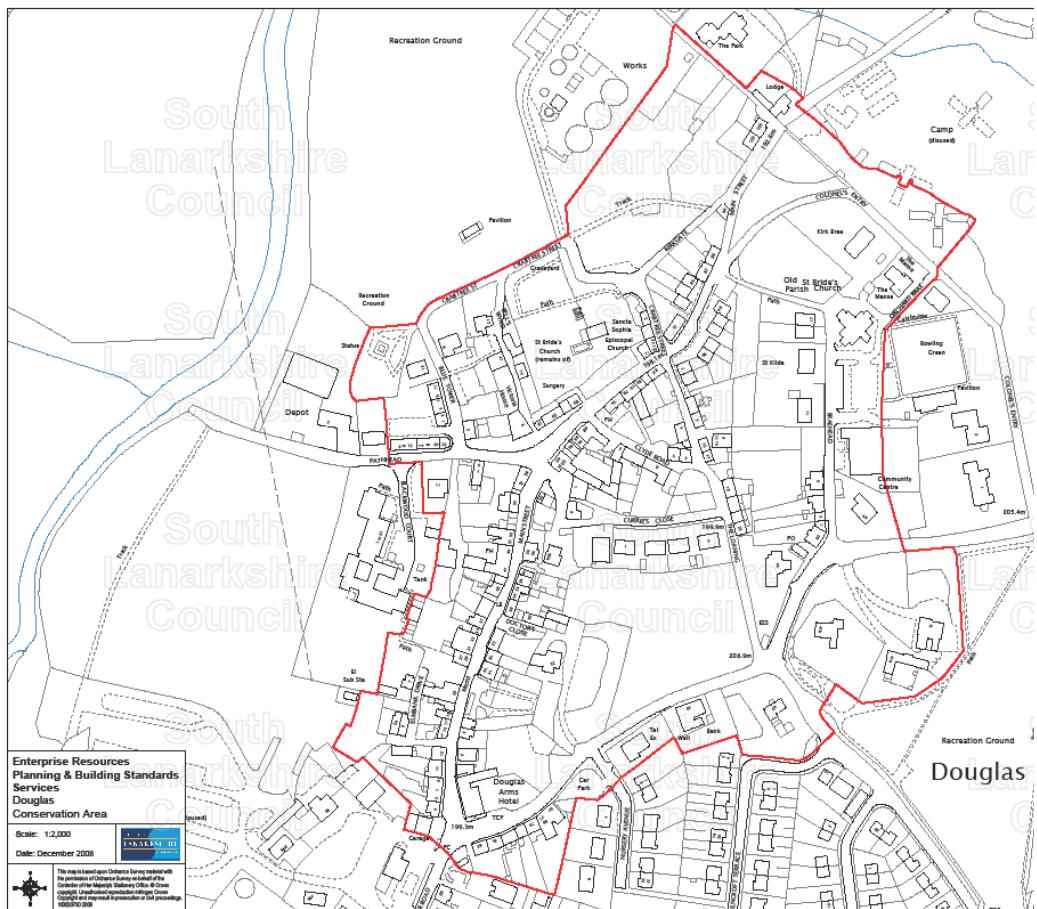
Listed buildings

Listed building consent is required for any works that affect the external or internal character of a listed building. You can check if your property is a listed building on the Historic Environment Scotland website: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/>

Contact

Address	Planning and Economic Development Montrose House 154 Montrose Crescent Hamilton ML3 6LB
Phone	0303 123 1015
Planning email	planning@southlanarkshire.gov.uk
Building Standards email	buildingstandards@southlanarkshire.gov.uk
Opening times	Monday to Thursday 8.45am – 4.45pm; Friday 8.45am – 4.15pm
Disabled access	Parking bays for disabled users to front of building. Ramped access to automatic door. Lift and toilet facilities for disabled users

Douglas conservation area boundary



If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone 0303 123 1015 or email: equality@southlanarkshire.gov.uk