



Community and Enterprise Resources

Leadhills conservation area



Leadhills 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 purpose of this is to protect and enhance the character and unique identity of Leadhills, 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

Leadhills has a unique sense of place. Apart from the consistency of vernacular detailing, the layout of the village, with its long rows of one, to one-and-a-half storey miners cottages built into the hillside and its landscape setting in the Lowther Hills, creates a distinctive townscape, which apart from neighbouring Wanlockhead, is unique in Scotland.

It is a combination of these characteristics, the historical associations with the mining industry, the landscape, scale, materials and detailing of the buildings that gives Leadhills its distinctive character and appearance which it is considered desirable to preserve.

History

There are no records to determine accurately the antiquity of Leadhills, but it is likely that it did not exist until the early sixteenth century, when the village developed as a result of the discovery and subsequent mining of the rich mineral deposits in the area.

It is rumoured that the Romans were the first to utilise the mineral deposits. However, the earliest recorded mining took place in the thirteenth century. Initially, the search for precious metal would have taken place on an irregular basis, probably only “a few rude huts” (Irving and Murray 1864). However, by the mid-sixteenth century, the search for lead as well as gold had become more systematic and successful and the population of the area rapidly increased. Gold from Leadhills was of national importance and was used to form the Regalia of Scotland, which is now held for public viewing in Edinburgh Castle.

It was lead mining, however, that brought the area its prosperity and gave the village its name. In 1661 a grant of the mines under the Great Seal was ratified by Act of Parliament in favour of Sir James Hope of Hopetoun Estate. At the peak of the mining activity in the mid-eighteenth century, the population of Leadhills was estimated to be upwards of 1,400. The

relative prosperity of the area and the need to transport fuel and concrete concentrates encouraged the building of a light railway in 1900 from the main west coast line at Elvanfoot. This was short-lived, however, as during the 1930s, the prosperity of the mines declined due to low metal prices and world competition. The last operational mine at New Glencrieff closed in 1935 and in 1938 the railway was abandoned.

Over the next 30 years, the village of Leadhills declined and many of the miners cottages became vacant and derelict. Concern over the declining economic base, falling population levels and the deterioration of the housing stock led to the development of a number of initiatives by the Council. The designation of a conservation area at Leadhills was an integral part of that programme.

Building characteristics

Whilst it is important to conserve the best buildings, it is also important to respect the vernacular building tradition that gives Leadhills its identity. Leadhills not only has many interesting buildings, but also a wealth of vernacular detail that should be safeguarded and reinforced where applicable.

The basic cottage – in Leadhills, ‘the basic cottage’ is single-storey with low eaves, a single door and windows to either side. The door is usually asymmetrically placed. At first glance there appears to be a great variation in house types in Leadhills. However, the majority of these derive from the basic miner’s cottage; extended upwards to form one-and-a-half and two-storey types, or elongated. There are also a number of non-standard types, mostly nineteenth century, which do not fit into any particular category, some of which are even slightly eccentric.

Wall finishes – most properties in Leadhills are built of stone; this consists principally of random rubble walling, although there are isolated examples of coursed rubble. There are also a number of properties built using early concrete construction techniques – sometimes referred to as ‘no-fines’ concrete. Walls traditionally have been finished square at the ingoes to the doors and windows, and the less humble cottages incorporate dressed stone rybats and quoins.

The majority of cottages have a painted finish, either onto harling or smooth render, or in some cases directly onto the stone. Traditionally this would have been a limewash, although many properties are now painted with masonry type coatings. There are one or two instances where the inappropriate modern dry dash or chip type of render have been used. Paint schemes can and have been used (as for example at Symington Street) to enhance the architectural detailing of the properties or reinforce an effective grouping of buildings.

Roofs – the majority of buildings in Leadhills are now roofed in natural slate. Slate has many qualities as a roofing material which make up the distinctive character of Leadhills. They are generally small in size and mostly ungraded. The colour ranges from dark to light purple, through grey, to dark and light green, sometimes on the same roof. A particular feature of Leadhills is the use of decorative diamond or fishtail slating. The average roof pitch is a relatively steep 40 degrees.

The roofscape of Leadhills is characterised by its simplicity; the linearity of roofs of the single storey miners rows following the lines of the contours, the rhythm of detailing of dormers and chimneys, and the plainness of gables (skews are not a common feature).

Windows - the sash and case window remains the predominant type of window in Leadhills, although unfortunately there is a variety of unsympathetic modern replacements to be seen.

The most common subdivision of the traditional sash and case window in Leadhills is into two equal panes, with a single astragal in each sash. There are a few examples of 6-pane sashes which tend to be an earlier nineteenth century style, although it is likely that many such windows have lost their original astragals in the process of modernisation.

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 – the most common door type in Leadhills is the traditional framed lined and braced door, or in its simpler form, simply lined and braced.

The older original lined doors tend to have wider vertical boards. There are some two-leafed versions but the majority are single leaf. Many of the original doors have been modified with glazed panels in a variety of shapes. There are a minority of panel doors of either four or six panels. Fanlights, where they occur, are usually narrow in height and often with a single astragal in keeping with the windows.

Porches – porches have been added to many of the buildings in Leadhills. They are generally not an original feature, but have evolved, almost as a necessity, to provide some increased shelter from the rigours of the Leadhills climate.

There is a wide variety of types and size of porch, with very few identical, although many are based on the simple 'sentry box' design. Some incorporate particularly attractive detailing in the form of barge boards and moulded timber finials, as for example, the porch to the Ramsay Library.

Dormers – many properties in Leadhills incorporate dormer windows in a wide variety of style, character and ornamentation. Some common styles include the gabled dormer, wallhead dormer and the roof dormer. There are a significant number with decorative barge boards.

It seems that the original cottages were never intended to have attic accommodation and that this only developed later, probably in the mid to late nineteenth century as the one or two roomed cottages became inadequate for their occupants needs. Although the majority

of cottages have relatively steep roof pitches (around 40 degrees), the traditional one room narrow plan does not allow generous headroom and most attic bedrooms barely have any standing room. It is not always possible to extend upwards and use the roofspace with dormers, as care must be taken to avoid the property looking top heavy. They are best constructed to be smaller than ground floor windows, arranged symmetrically and aligned to symmetrically windows at ground floor level.

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), stonecleaning 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 or financial or professional services establishment needs planning permission in a conservation area.

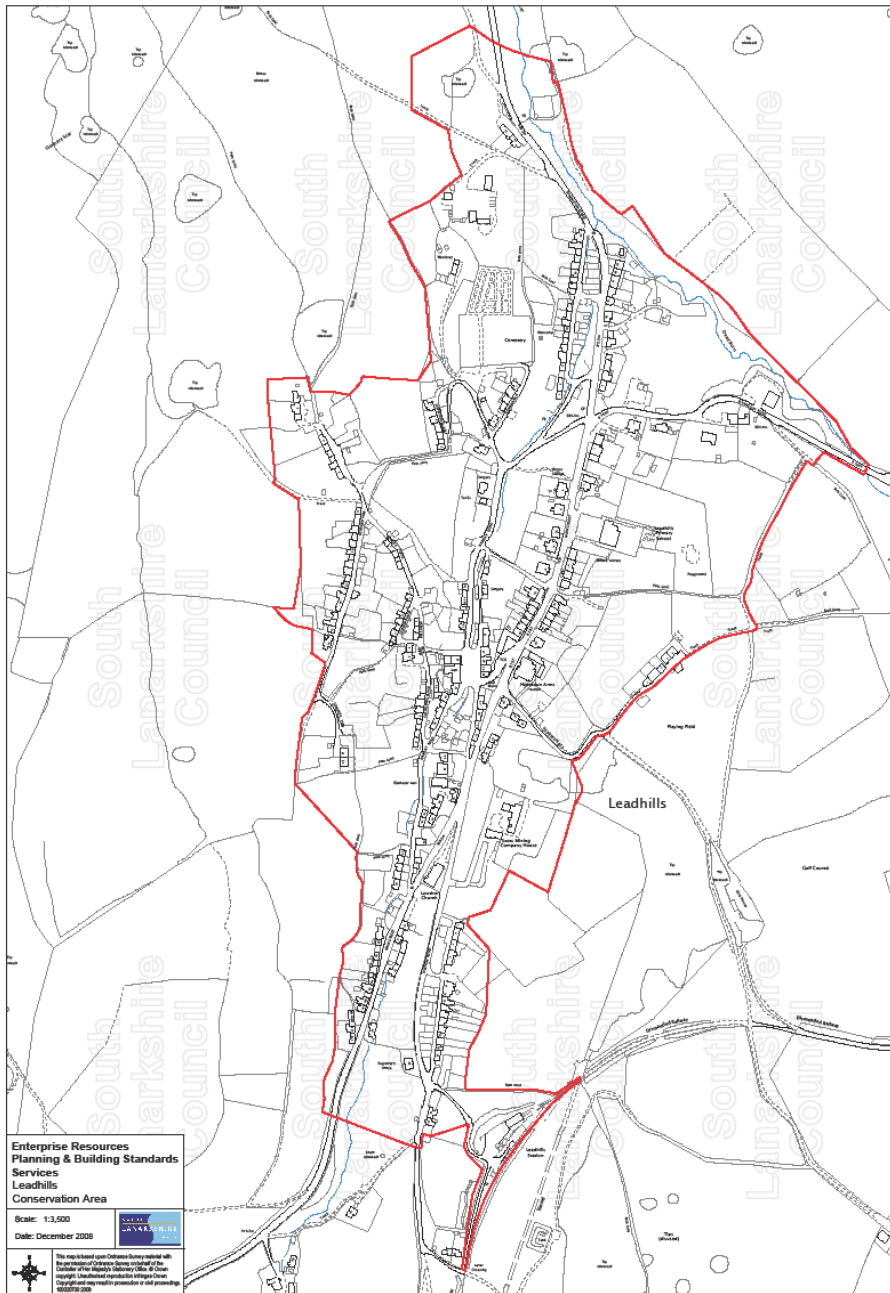
Listed buildings

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

Leadhills 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: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk