FALA DAM CONSERVATION AREA

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PREFACE

It is widely accepted that the historic environment is important and that a high priority should be given to its conservation and sensitive improvement. This includes historic buildings and townscapes, places important for their historic associations, parks, designed and other landscapes, archaeological sites and ancient monuments.

The historic environment has much visual appeal and gives local identity and civic pride. It is important for education, recreation, leisure, tourism and the wider economy.

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural and/or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and/or enhance. Under Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, Midlothian Council is required to determine which parts of their administrative area should be designated as conservation areas.

Character Appraisals are an effective tool in defining the character and appearance of conservation areas and their special interest. The appraisal informs planning policy and decisions and the preparation of enhancement proposals. It identifies where stronger controls are required over certain forms of development where these could have an adverse effect on the character of the conservation area. The character appraisal will be a material consideration when determining planning applications.

The effect of the designation of a conservation area is that the scope of development authorised by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 is reduced. Planning consent is therefore required for specific types of development that would not otherwise require this, for example, stone cleaning and external painting. Further controls may be imposed through Article 4 Directions as proposed for the Fala Dam conservation area.

When a conservation area has been designated, it is the duty of Midlothian Council to pay special attention to the character or appearance of the conservation area when exercising powers under planning legislation. In particular, Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of unlisted buildings including boundary walls and trees are protected from felling, topping and lopping. Where a party fails to give Midlothian Council six weeks notice prior to the commencement of works to a tree in a conservation area, that party may be liable to similar penalties as for contravention of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
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Fala Dam Conservation Area

1 LOCATION

1.1 Fala Dam is located on the lower slopes of the Lammermuir Hills, six and a half miles south-east of Dalkeith.

2 DATE OF DESIGNATION

2.1 Fala Dam conservation area was formerly designated by Midlothian County Council on 11 October 1972. Midlothian District Council reviewed the conservation area boundary through the Villages and Rural Areas Local Plan in 1996. On 28 March 1996, the Fala Dam conservation area was formally re-designated.

3 ESSENTIAL CHARACTER & ISSUES

3.1 Fala Dam conservation area comprises the hamlet of Fala Dam and surrounding woodland to the north-west, north and east.

3.2 The conservation area lies within an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

3.3 Fala Dam Character. The architectural and historic character of Fala Dam is generally well preserved. Fala Dam is a hamlet with buildings grouped around a narrow bridge over Fala Dam Burn. Key elements include a distinctive wooded location set in a deep leafy hollow; a straight sloping approach road from both sides of the bridge; and a loosely defined hamlet of two storey stone cottages with slate roofs and some small front gardens. These are essential factors to be taken into account when considering development proposals.

3.4 Fala Dam Issues. To maintain this character, the maintenance, repair and reuse of older buildings is the preferred
option. This does not mean that appropriate modern design will not be considered. In the alteration and extension of old buildings and works and in the construction of new buildings and works, careful attention must be paid to the sensitive use of materials, scale, proportions and details.

4 ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY

4.1 There are no Ancient Monuments or Sites in the Fala Dam conservation area.

4.2 Fala Dam takes its name from the dam that was situated in the Lakemuir Burn. The hamlet is an informal cluster of houses, which developed as a sheltered settlement around the crossing point of Fala Dam Burn.

Fala Dam Burn supplied water to the inhabitants of the hamlet and was a useful source of power to the former mill to the east of the settlement, now Fala Mill Cottage. On 3rd November 1745 Bonnie Prince Charlie stayed in the hamlet, when the Anderson’s of Whithburgh entertained him. Although the number of households has reduced from 21 to 10, the settlement has changed little since 1892. The hamlet has always been relatively small with a few cottages and the Old Mill, now converted to residential use.
5  **TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS**

**Setting and Views**

5.1 Fala Dam is an unspoilt hamlet set in a tranquil rural backwater. The hamlet is sheltered at the bottom of the Fala Dam valley, nestling in dense woodlands. Views to the east along the steeply ascending winding road out of the hamlet include an avenue of trees on one side and dense woodland on the other side with distinctive clipped beech trees outside the hamlet.

Views to the east out of the hamlet.

Views down the steep slopes into the hamlet are of two small clusters of cottages either side of the road in a sylvan setting. There are fine views from the bridge up the wooded, steep sided Fala Dam Burn. There are a variety of tree types with treebelts of conifers and woodlands of indigenous deciduous trees.

5.2 Fala Dam hamlet consists of buildings grouped around a narrow bridge over the Fala Dam Burn. To the east of the bridge, two-storey traditional properties form a short terrace. These buildings are rectangular in form with gabled roofs running parallel to the road. Some properties are set close to the edge and below the road with the bridge access whilst others are set back in gardens with stone walls.

Prospect showing the hamlet in sylvan setting.
Properties to the east of the bridge are close to and below the road. Across the road, a small triangular grassed area makes an attractive setting for these buildings. To the west of the bridge, buildings straddle randomly up the hill with some set back in gardens and others near the pavement edge. Falaburn House, by virtue of its substantial size and classical style is a key building in the street scene.

Buildings to the west of the bridge straddle up the hill.

Grassed area contributing to character of settlement.

Architectural Character

5.3 Walls are a mixture of harling and stone. The locally quarried sandstone varies in colour from yellow ochre to terracotta.

Many of the walls are random rubble or coursed rubble with squared, tooled quoins sometimes splayed. Some properties have large stones for opening surrounds or the
corner of buildings. Sandstone boundary walls give a sense of unity to the informal layout of buildings in the settlement.

5.4 **Roofs** are mainly gabled and finished in natural slate, apart from one asbestos slate roof. There are skewed gables. Some properties have gable dormers. Many cottages have retained their cast iron gutters. There are stone and brick chimneys with hexagonal pots.

![Terracotta hexagonal chimney pots on stone stack with droved squared stone.](image)

5.5 **Windows** are mostly timber sash. Many properties have retained their astragals.

![A gable dormer with sash & astragals.](image)

5.6 **Doors** are generally boarded on vernacular cottages and panelled on classical style houses.

![Traditional style boarded door.](image)

5.7 **Floorscape** is inevitably hard with tarmac and concrete kerbstones. The demolition of garden walls and formation of parking areas in gardens detracts from the character of the conservation area.

![Parking spaces replacing front gardens.](image)

5.8 A guide to listed buildings and building conservation principles in the Fala Dam conservation area are shown in Appendices A and B, respectively.
Landscape Character

5.9 The landscape of the North Lammermuir Platform, as defined by Scottish Natural Heritage, is characterised by unimproved pasture of good rough grassland on higher ground bordering the edge of the Lammermuirs merging with large expanses of arable fields on lower ground. On higher ground, field boundaries are marked by stone walls and fences changing to clipped hawthorn and beech hedgerows throughout arable land. Scrub, rough grassland and woodland dapple some of the steeper burn courses. Established coniferous and mixed shelterbelts occur throughout farmland.

CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

6.1 The conservation area boundary includes Fala Wood and Fala Dam Burn, which contribute to the landscape setting of Fala Dam hamlet. To the south, the boundary follows the road and open fields beyond and then tightly hugs the Fala Dam Burn. The conservation area boundary is shown in Appendix C.

PLANNING CONTEXT

7.1 The character appraisal is important to the formulation and information of planning policy, proposals and decisions for the conservation, protection and positive management of the natural and built heritage. Management is achieved through non-statutory and statutory planning policy, enhancement schemes and Article 4 Direction Orders.

National Guidance

7.2 National Planning and Policy Guideline 18: Planning and the Historic Environment requires conservation area character appraisals to be prepared when local authorities are reconsidering existing conservation area designations, promoting further designations or formulating enhancement schemes. Article 4 Direction Orders will not be confirmed by the Scottish Ministers unless a character appraisal is in place, (NPPG18, 1997, para.40).

Statutory Policies

7.3 The Finalised Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2015 (ELSP), which will shortly supersede the Lothian Structure Plan 1994, provides the strategic context for development until 2015 and contains a policy (ENV1D) that seeks to protect and enhance the character of conservation areas. Policy ENV1D states development affecting conservation areas or their settings will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the objectives and overall integrity of the designated area will not be compromised, or the social or economic benefits to be gained from the proposed development outweigh the conservation or other interest of the site.
7.4 **The adopted Midlothian Local Plan (2003)** seeks to guide development while protecting the environment. The Plan seeks to protect the character and appearance of the natural and built heritage (RP20-RP25). The Plan envisages no further development other than minor alterations and/or extensions to existing properties within the Fala Dam conservation area. The conservation area is covered by the Protection of the Countryside policy (RP1) which limits development and by the Areas of Great Landscape Policy (RP6). Other policies apply.

7.5 **Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)** may be designated under S.D.D. Circular 2/1962. The Fala Dam conservation area has been so designated.

8 **ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

8.1 Midlothian Council has a duty to draw up proposals for the preservation and/or enhancement of conservation areas. The Council may also take action to secure the repair of unoccupied and unlisted buildings within the conservation area.

8.2 A possible enhancement proposal includes the undergrounding of overhead wiring. This feature detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

8.3 The proposals are not exhaustive and require further design input, detailed costing and additional public consultation. An assessment of the conservation area has been carried out in order to ascertain the key elements that contribute to the character of the designated area and any enhancement opportunities that may exist. This is illustrated in Appendix D.

9 **ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION ORDER**

9.1 By making an order under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, Midlothian Council may direct that certain classes of permitted development rights shall not apply.

9.2 An Article 4 Direction covering Fala Dam conservation area was made in 1972. This removed a limited number of classes of development from permitted development rights. It is proposed to introduce a revised Article 4 Direction Order to cover Fala Dam conservation area for the following classes of development (as defined in the General Permitted Development Order 1992) and for the following reasons:

**Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse (Classes 1, 3, 6)**

The cumulative effect of new development and inappropriate alterations, even though each should be small in scale, could have a negative impact on the
architectural quality and character of buildings in the conservation area. Unlisted buildings provide a complementary backdrop for their listed counterparts and the removal of unifying features, such as doors, windows and detailed stonework, could detract from the architectural character of the conservation area.

**Sundry minor operations** *(Class 7, 8)*
Traditional means of enclosure to areas are crucial in establishing the character and appearance of a conservation area. Insensitive alterations or unsuitable new means of enclosure could visually damage large parts of the conservation area. A number of roads within the conservation area are unclassified. The use of inappropriate material for the construction of new accesses to these roads would be visually damaging to long-distance views over the conservation area.

**Caravan sites (Classes 16, 17)**
A caravan site, however small in scale, carelessly located and inappropriately landscaped could ruin the quality and rural character of the conservation area. Caravan sites are usually located on the edge or outside of settlements in the countryside.

**Agricultural buildings (Class 18)**
The conservation area includes an area of agricultural activity and therefore tends to be subject to development within this class. Examples include silos, large barns and storage sheds. Whilst it is recognised that prior notification procedures are in place, it is considered that these do not provide sufficient control over issues such as the siting, design and landscaping of development which can significantly affect the character and setting of the conservation area.

**Forestry buildings (Class 22)**
Forestry buildings and operations can have a significant impact on the rural setting and character of the conservation area. Buildings constructed for forestry purposes are normally in the countryside and therefore will affect the setting of the conservation area. Examples include storage sheds and enclosures for machinery. Whilst it is recognised that prior notification procedures are in place, it is considered that these do not provide sufficient control over issues such as siting, design and landscaping of development.

**Repairs to private roads and private ways (Class 27)**
The present appearance of private roads, lanes and paths is predominantly rural and in keeping with the surrounding historic buildings and rural character of the conservation area. Inappropriate repairs and surfacing of these traditional features could have a dramatic adverse impact on the visual amenity over wide parts of the
conservation area, for example, the replacement of a track with tarmac and concrete kerbstones. Control is therefore sought over private road and way repairs in order to avoid inappropriate scars on the landscape.

**Development by local authorities (Classes 30, 31, 33)**
There are a minimal number of public structures, such as tall lamp standards and a clutter of large road signs, in the village and rural parts of the conservation area at present. The introduction of such structures could visually intrude and incrementally erode the rural character of this conservation area. This should be as carefully controlled as any other form of development.

**Development by statutory undertakers (Classes 38, 39, 40, 41, 43)**
Development by statutory undertakers can be contemporary in nature and visually obtrusive. All such development should be sensitively sited. Examples include overhead wiring and inappropriate buildings in relation to the statutory undertakers’ needs.

**Mineral exploration (Classes 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 63, 64)**
The conservation area includes a large area of open land that is important to the rural setting of the village. Mineral exploration, development ancillary to mining operations and waste tipping at a mine could lead to large-scale spoliation of the rural setting of the conservation area.

**Development by the Coal Authority and its licensees (Classes 59, 60, 61, 62)**
Although there will be a presumption against opencast coal extraction outside broad areas of search identified in the Midlothian Local Plan (policy MIN1), development of this nature is not precluded and individual proposals will be assessed on their own merits. The conservation area includes a large area of open land, which is sensitive to spoliation by this type of development.
REFERENCES
### LISTED BUILDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fala Dam</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Crichton Parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fala Dam Bridge. 1850. Single span, segmental arched bridge in random rubble with lime mortar, ashlar, spandrels and abutments.</td>
<td>C(s)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Fala Dam, The Dam House. 18th century. Two storeys high constructed of coursed rubble and tooled ashlar, with quoins.</td>
<td>C(s)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Fala Dam, Laggan Cottage. 1851 Two storeys high. Formerly two cottages built in coursed rubble with ashlar surrounds and quoins.</td>
<td>C(s)</td>
<td>15</td>
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BUILDING CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

Well-designed buildings are evident in all ages. No one age has a monopoly of good building design.

Building within an historic context requires particular sensitivity. This sensitivity however, may be expressed through a number of different styles the appropriateness of which will depend both the quality of the design and its relationship to its setting.

As a general rule, old buildings should be conserved as found with original architectural detail respected. It can be hard to replace the design and building quality found in many traditional buildings. Old buildings and their surroundings have a great visual appeal and reinforce local identity. They are of immense importance for education, recreation, leisure, tourism and the wider economy. Equally, well-designed modern development forms an important part of our heritage.

A very large number of buildings in Midlothian were built in the 18th and 19th centuries. This is certainly the case within the many conservation areas. These buildings exhibit in the main the following characteristics. Which should be respected in all repairs, alterations and new buildings.

Masonry Walls

Masonry walls are important both in building and as space enclosures. They contribute to character and are difficult to replicate and should therefore be retained wherever possible. They are commonly of rubble (random or coursed), occasionally ashlar. Original masonry surface coverings such as harling should be kept. Pointing should be correctly carried out in lime mortar.

Doors

Original door openings invariably possess the correct proportions for a building and should be retained to preserve the architectural integrity of the building. Doors themselves should be repaired rather than replaced.

Windows

Original window openings invariably possess the correct proportions for a building and should be retained to preserve the architectural integrity of the building. Original mullions should always be retained. Additional window openings should be of an appropriate size and proportion and should not spoil symmetry. Timber sash windows can case windows and their astragals should almost always be retained.

Roofs

Roofs are dominant elements that give a building its profile. Original roof pitches and coverings should be preserved. Chimney stacks and pots should be retained. Dormers are often important features and new dormer windows should be carefully designed to relate to existing. The same applies to rooflights and skylights.

Details

A wide range of details contribute immensely to the character of a conservation area and, if its good appearance is to be retained, these must not be incrementally eroded. The loss of one detail may not make a substantial difference but the loss of many will. Important details include:
- external guttering and pipework, and finials;
- stone details including skews, door and window surrounds, cornices, balustrades and other ornamentation.

**Floorscape**

Original paving and other floorscapes should always be retained.

**Enclosures**

Stone garden and field walls, fences and railings should be retained.

**Street Furniture**

Street furniture including lampposts, telephone boxes, bins and benches should be retained where original and where new must be in character with the area.

**Further Advice**

Further advice on the repair and extension of buildings and new buildings within the conservation area is available from the Strategic Services Division of Midlothian Council.