

Crieff Conservation Area Appraisal



February 2009

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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 designation

2.1 The centre of Crieff retains a strong architectural and historic character which demonstrates its evolution and creates a unique, high quality environment. This character is important for the quality of life and economic health of the town, in the present and the future.

2.2 The principle of a conservation area designation has already been established through the Local Plan consultation process. The Strathearn Area Local Plan 2001 indicates that the Council will designate a conservation area in Crieff. The Council will also investigate and progress, where appropriate, enhancement schemes for the area including an environmental improvement scheme for the High Street.

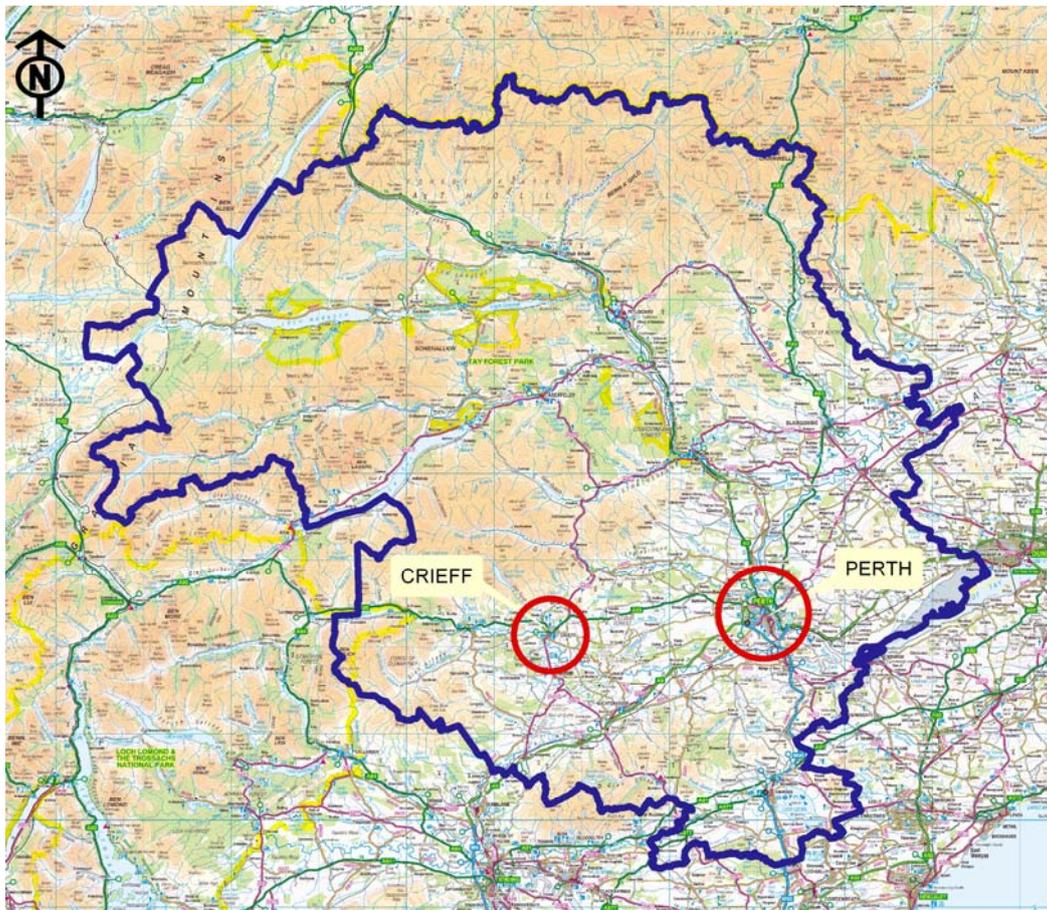
2.3 Local Plan policy indicates that, within the conservation area, new development will only be acceptable when it is compatible with the character and density of the surrounding area and it does not result in the loss of amenity.

Purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal

2.4 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.

2.5 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.

Map 1: Location of Crieff within Perth & Kinross Council boundary



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CONTEXT AND SURVEY

Location, History and Development

3.1 Crieff is located in Strathearn in an area of transition between the landscapes of Highland and Lowland Scotland. Modern Crieff is predominantly a holiday resort and local service centre, but developed as an industrial town and key trading centre, principally for cattle, at the crossing point of north-south routes.

3.2 Various theories exist to explain the placename Crieff, including derivations from *craobh*, the Gaelic for "among the trees"; *Crubha Cnoc*, the settlement on the haunch of the Knock; or *Crioch*, the settlement on the frontier.

3.3 Crieff was granted its Charter in 1218 and became a Burgh of Barony in 1672. The River Earn at Crieff was bridged around 1700, but this was destroyed by retreating Highlanders after Sheriffmuir in 1716 and had to be rebuilt. Following these events, military roads began to be planned to move government troops into and around the Highlands, overseen by General Wade from 1724. During the 1730s and 1740s roads were built between Crieff, Tummel Bridge and Stirling. Later roads creating proper links between Perth and Comrie were built under the Statute Labour and Turnpike Acts.

3.4 Crieff exploited its position between the cattle-rearing areas of the Highlands and the markets for beef and hides in the south to become the predominant cattle market in Scotland. In 1723 30,000 cattle were sold at one great fair, many of which may have come from Caithness or the Isles and ended up as far south as Smithfield in London. Although cattle markets continued in Crieff until the 1950s, the huge annual Michaelmas Sale, the Tryst, moved to Falkirk in 1770.

3.5 In 1731 James Drummond, 3rd Duke of Perth, laid out Crieff's central James Square and established a textile industry with a flax factory. Between 1746 and 1785 the Drummond estates were forfeited to the Crown and the flax factory was destroyed (now the site of the public library). However after 1746 Crieff continued to develop as an industrial centre based primarily on hand loom weaving. Tanning, bleaching, brewing, paper making, distilling, cotton weaving and garment making developed in the area. In 1770 the hand-loom weavers organised themselves into a Society and in 1786 a Weaver's Hall was erected in Commissioner Street.

3.6 The growing industrial sector in Crieff encouraged population growth and new streets such as Commissioner Street and King Street were feued on the forfeited estate of the Dukes of Perth. Lord Perth continued to feu between Mitchell Street and Comrie Street after the estate was restored in 1785. Burrell Street, Burrell Square and the villas north of Comrie Street were feued on Drummond Estate lands from 1809.

3.7 Mains gas was supplied in Crieff from 1842, and mains water was laid from 1872. The railway arrived in Crieff in 1856 from Perth, through Crieff and Comrie to Lochearnhead. Services were cut from the 1950s onwards and the line closed in 1964. The site of the station and sidings now houses a hospital, health clinic and supermarket.

3.8 Two major foundations established in Crieff during the 1860s continue to have a major impact on the character and activity of the town. Thomas Morison, originally from Muthill, left money for an academy to be built in either Edinburgh or Muthill, although this was not achieved until 1860, and in Crieff. Morrison's continues to this day as an independent school.



Morrison's Academy

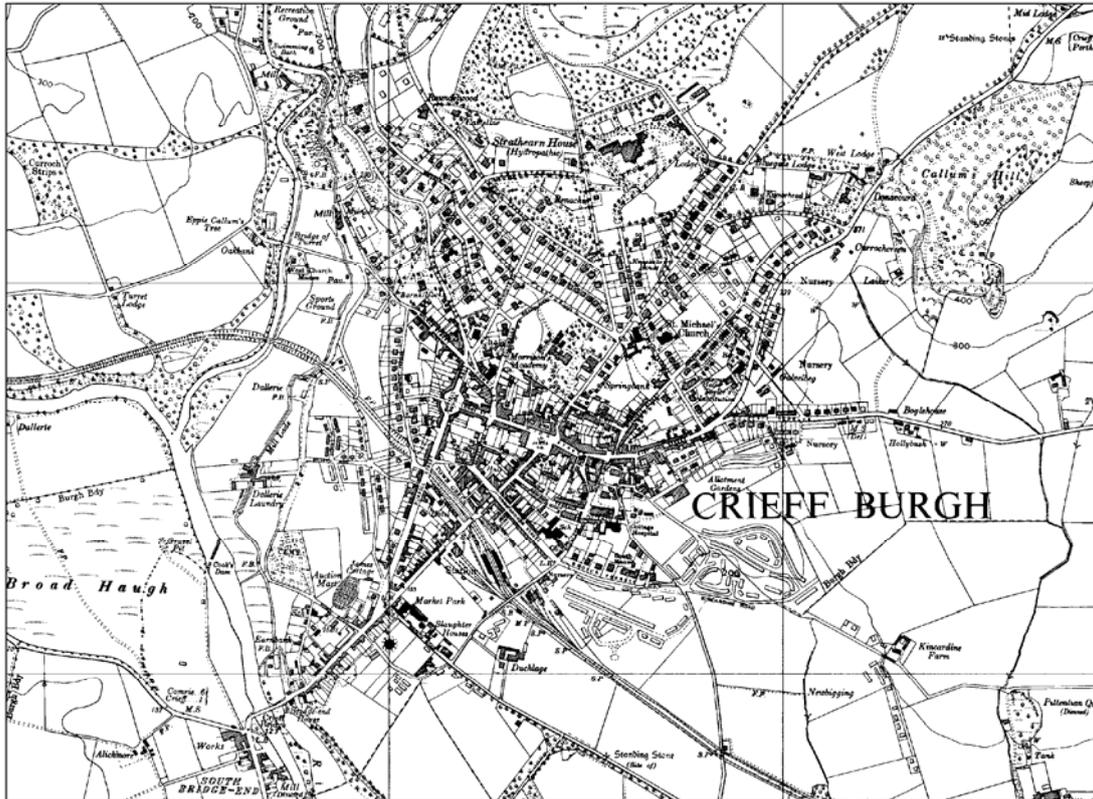


Crieff Hydro

3.9 In 1868 a large Hydropathic Establishment opened in Crieff, designed to provide Victorian city-dwellers with a healthy vacation for body and soul, founded on religious and Temperance principles. Today Crieff Hydro is a quality family hotel with extensive leisure facilities and is the largest employer in Crieff.

3.10 Crieff had always been a popular holiday destination owing to its perceived healthy climate, and was described in the eighteenth century as 'the Montpellier of the North'. The town grew as a fashionable tourist resort during the nineteenth century. Hotels, large villas and fine public parks were developed, catering for wealthy industrialists from the booming central belt.

Map 4: c.1959



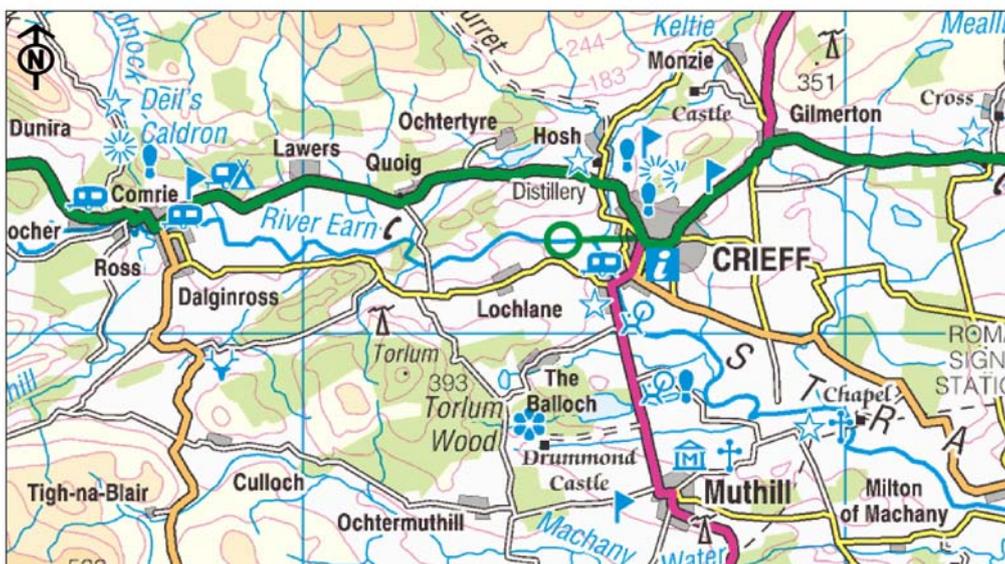
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CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

Setting and topography

4.1 Crieff is located on a slight rise above the flat valley floor of Strathearn at a point of contrast between Highland crags to the north-west and the more gentle, open strath and Ochil Hills to the south-east. The Highland Boundary Fault running north-east – south west across Scotland lies just a few miles away to the west. As a result the area has become known for its geological and seismological interest, particularly in nearby Comrie where Earthquake House, an early scientific measuring station, is located.

Map 5: Setting



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Activity and Movement

4.2 Crieff is the third largest town in Perthshire with a population of around 6000. It is located on the main road through the Strathearn valley (the A85) between Perth and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. Relatively large volumes of tourist and commercial traffic pass through Crieff's high street on this east-west route. Crieff also forms one end of the Perthshire Tourist Route which runs north through Aberfeldy to join the A9 at Ballinluig. The principal route south is the A822 which connects with Dunblane and Stirling.

4.3 The last passenger trains ran from Perth to Crieff in 1951. Rail buses operated for a while but in 1964 the railway line closed down completely, a victim of the 'Beeching Cuts'.

4.4 Traffic through the narrow high street of the town centre can cause congestion at peak times and in high season. However this has probably protected the commercial viability of the town centre to a large extent. Local Plan policy indicates that the Council will undertake traffic management studies of Crieff. Any traffic management works will need to be integrated with enhancement measures which work with and strengthen the town's local distinctiveness.

Street Pattern and Topography

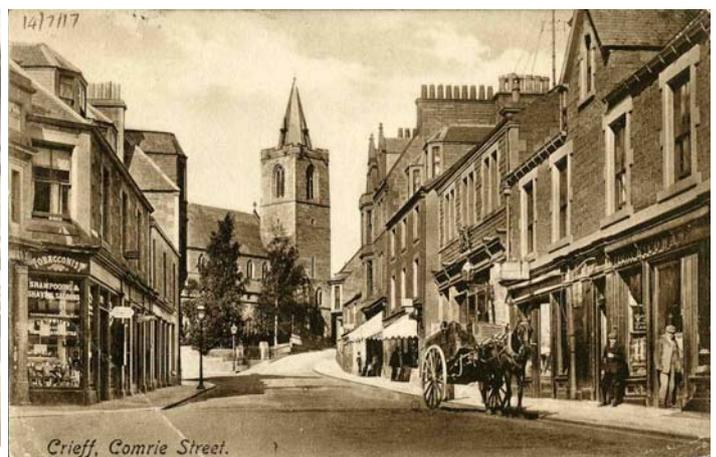
4.5 Crieff is formed around a hybrid radial/T-shaped plan with the principal routes east-west between Perth and Comrie and south through Muthill and the Drummond Estates. The central core of the town is formed along the organically curving high street with lanes, often too narrow for vehicular traffic, branching off at right angles to reach the historic backland areas. Many of these wind picturesquely to negotiate the steep hill on which the centre of Crieff sits. Historically the wider centre of the High Street west of Church Street held the market place and Tollbooth.

4.6 Onto this basic plan more formal, geometrically-planned spaces and extensions were added during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including James Square, King Street, Burrell Square and Burrell Street. As Crieff increased in popularity as a leisure resort, large areas of villas in substantial gardens were developed around the town centre, utilising sites across the lower slopes of the Knock to exploit the spectacular views to the south and west. The route westwards to Comrie and beyond follows a contour along one steep edge of the Knock, creating a picturesque entry into Crieff from the west along a winding, tree-lined route with views over into Macrosty Park and the hills beyond.



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

High Street in 1956



Looking up Comrie St from West High St, c.1917

Buildings and Townscape

4.7 The rich diversity of Crieff's townscape has evolved from different phases in the town's development. The town centre is the earliest part, with its high density buildings and narrow streets and plots in and around the High Street. The planned expansion area of the 18th and early 19th centuries is located mainly to the south of the High Street, the principal streets in this area being Burrell Street and Square, Commissioner Street and King Street. The last key phase is the mid to late 19th century areas of Victorian villa development to the north of the town centre, further up the slopes of the valley. This is a low density area with expressive architectural styles and extensive, landscaped gardens.

Town centre

4.8 Approaching the High Street from the Perth Road views are afforded of the Strathearn valley. The road then narrows after the junction with Dollerie Terrace and gradually curves into East High Street. The curvilinear nature of the street, the gradual decline in gradient and the general increase in scale all add to the sense of movement and invitation towards the heart of the town. An important landmark and entrance feature to the town centre is the Tower Hotel with its steep pyramidal roof. East High Street continues to curve into High Street and the tower of the town hall with its pyramidal spire comes into view and draws the eye further into the heart of the town centre. There are glimpse views south of the valley at narrow street junctions, enhancing the townscape experience. Buildings in East High Street are generally two or three storey in height, some buildings rising to four storey in High Street as one approaches the Town Hall and James Square.



View into East High Street with Tower Hotel



East High Street with Town Hall

4.9 The High Street is essentially Victorian, with commercial architecture of the later 19th century prominent. Interesting building features are pyramid and pavilion roofed towers, conical spires, oriel windows, crow stepped gables and wide chimney stacks. A variety of revivalist architectural styles are displayed on key commercial buildings of status, including Scots, Jacobean and French Renaissance, Baroque and Scots Baronial. The predominant building material is sandstone. Key commercial buildings of architectural interest are the Post Office, the former British Linen Co. Bank, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Drummond Hotel.

4.10 The narrow High Street widens west of Cornton Place and then opens out into the formal, terraced space of James Square, flanked by the grand scale of the Drummond Hotel and Royal Bank on the north side of the street. This is the main public space and core of the town centre. The focus of the square is the Murray Fountain and the beautiful cast iron, dolphin entwined lamp standards on either side. The land slopes steeply south of the square and there are fine views of the valley looking down King Street and also through the south-west corner of the square, although the view here is interrupted by a visually obtrusive mobile phone mast. The buildings surrounding James Square are mainly Victorian, except on the east side where there is a 1960's building with a rather blank and bland façade.



Drummond Hotel & The Royal Bank of Scotland James Square

4.11 West of James Square the street narrows again re-forming a sense of movement and exploration. At the end of West High Street on the north side is Servite House, built in the 1990's with a corbelled out-tower making full use of the street corner and a prominent entrance feature to the town centre when viewed from the west. Diagonally opposite is the late 19th century Bank of Scotland building, in Scots Baronial style with a tall conical-roofed spire, again providing visual strength to this street corner. At this crossroads there are views up the hill, the vista here framed by the former Crieff Free Church, and also views down the steep gradient of the wider Lodge Street to Burrell Square.



View up West High Street

West High St with the prominent Bank of Scotland

4.12 Over the entire length of the High Street there are unfortunately some buildings which have been clad in various forms of cement render or ashlar and there are some examples of poor quality window replacements. Some shop front fascias are particularly jarring and the use of colours on facades is not always harmonious with the traditional streetscape. These issues are addressed in the opportunities for enhancement section.

18th and early 19th century expansion area

4.13 In contrast with the narrow enclosure and organic form of the town centre this area has planned, wide streets and designed terraces or groups of residential buildings. Burrell Square, formerly known as the Octagon, is a distinct formal square of considerable quality and a key feature of the town. The wide, straight avenue of Burrell Street, running downhill to the south, is lined with handsome two-storey terraced housing, the continuous step-down of building heights adding interest to the roofscape. The vista up Burrell Street is framed by the former West Church (now the St Ninian's Centre), a large prominently sited building in a variation of Gothic style.



Burrell Square



View up Burrell Street with West Church

4.14 Commissioner Street is again straight and wide with predominantly three storey buildings along the northern section and two-storey terraced houses beyond the crossroads with King Street further south. At the crossroads there are views north to James Square and the landmark Drummond Hotel, acting as a vista, and south down the steep gradient of King Street to the countryside beyond. On the north-west corner of King Street and Commissioner Street is an Edwardian Free Style building of considerable interest with a domed corner turret and a round arched first floor window fronted by an Art Nouveau iron balcony. On the north-east street corner there is a Victorian shop front of exceptional merit.



Opposite corner buildings on Commissioner St & King St

4.15 Key buildings of merit in King Street are the former Unionist Club (nos.37-41), with its corbelled cornice and oriel windows, and the Police Station, an example of the Scots Jacobean style. Further south in Commissioner Street is the mid-19th century Crieff Primary School, the earliest part designed in a plain Gothic style. At the southern end of Commissioner Street fine views are afforded southwards of the countryside and hills beyond. To the north there is Duchlage Road, an attractive narrow lane with stone boundary walls on one side, its curvilinear nature inviting further exploration uphill towards the town centre.

Mid-late 19th century Victorian residential area

4.16 As Crieff became a popular holiday resort and residential destination for industrialists the town expanded mainly to the north of the town centre, up the lower slopes of the Knock and also along the Perth Road. This area is characterised by large, well-spaced villas set back from the street in often generous grounds with coped boundary walls, railings and gate-piers. The principal streets are generally long and straight, although unlike Burrell Street or Commissioner Street they are not particularly wide. There is a sense of enclosure in these streets with visually strong boundary details and well established trees and shrubs.

4.17 The architecture is highly detailed with typical Victorian features such as ornamental barge boarding and chimney stacks, finials, balustrading, porches, bay windows and decorative variations on timber sash and case windows. The traditional building materials are sandstone and Scottish slate. A variety of architectural styles are on display including Gothic, Jacobean and Italianate. There are also some fine examples of the Arts and Crafts and Art Deco styles from the Edwardian period.



Victorian villa in Dollerie Road



Victorian villa in Broich Terrace

4.18 Morrison's Academy is located in secluded grounds, accessed off Ferntower Road. The main school building, constructed in two phases in the latter half of the 19th century, is a fine example of the Scottish Baronial Style. More recent late 20th century buildings, particularly two facing Ferntower Road, are not so visually successful. Other key public buildings nearby of considerable interest and presence are Crieff Parish Church (St Michael's) and Crieff United Presbyterian Church (now the Parish Church St Andrew's Halls), both located in Strathearn Terrace.



Crieff Hydro Hotel



Parish Church St. Andrew's Halls

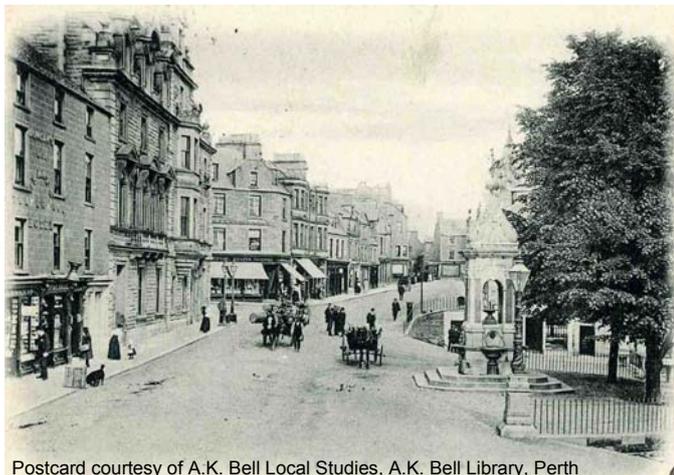
4.19 At the northern end of this Victorian residential area and further up the slopes of the Knock is the Crieff Hydro Hotel with its formal landscaped grounds. The original 19th century building is large in scale, designed in a Scots Jacobean style. The hotel has been extended several times and there are now various 20th century additions within the grounds. The overall impression is a certain degree of visual clutter. It is important to preserve the landscape quality and the setting of this historic, landmark building.

Spaces

4.20 All spaces, regardless of ownership and accessibility (ie. public and private spaces) contribute to the amenity and character of an area, as indicated in Planning Advice Note 65, 'Planning and Open Space'. The term 'open space' covers green space consisting of any

vegetated land or geological feature in a village and civic space including squares, market places and other paved or hard landscaped areas.

4.21 The main public open spaces in the town centre are James Square and Burrell Square. James Square is roughly rectangular in plan and laid out in a semi-formal manner with terracing making use of the steeply sloping site to create parking and pedestrian areas. James Square is the visual focus of the commercial centre of the town and links with the main streets running east, west and south. The key hotels, town hall and library, and tollbooth are all arranged around or close to its perimeter. The main feature in the square is the Murray Fountain and flanking cast iron lamp columns of 1893, erected in recognition of the contributions of the Murrays of Ochertyre to Crieff.



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



James Square from 1902

Same view today

4.22 Burrell Square in contrast has a quieter, more residential character. It has an unusual octagonal form (referred to in its earlier history as 'The Octagon'), laid out diagonally to the lines of Burrell Street and High Street. The square is lined with handsome, two-storey terraced dwellings and has formal tree planting and railings marking out the four triangles formed by the intersection of the octagon and the crossing of routes through the space.

4.23 Formal green spaces are located to the west of the town where the extensive Macrosty Park occupies the water meadows and lower slopes of the Knock alongside the Earn. To the north of the town centre lies the Knock, the low, wooded hill on which Crieff was founded and which provides a crucial amenity to the town and surrounding area.

4.24 Outwith the denser core of the town centre there are large expanses of mature and attractive gardens of Victorian villas which are of high amenity value and enrich the townscape setting.



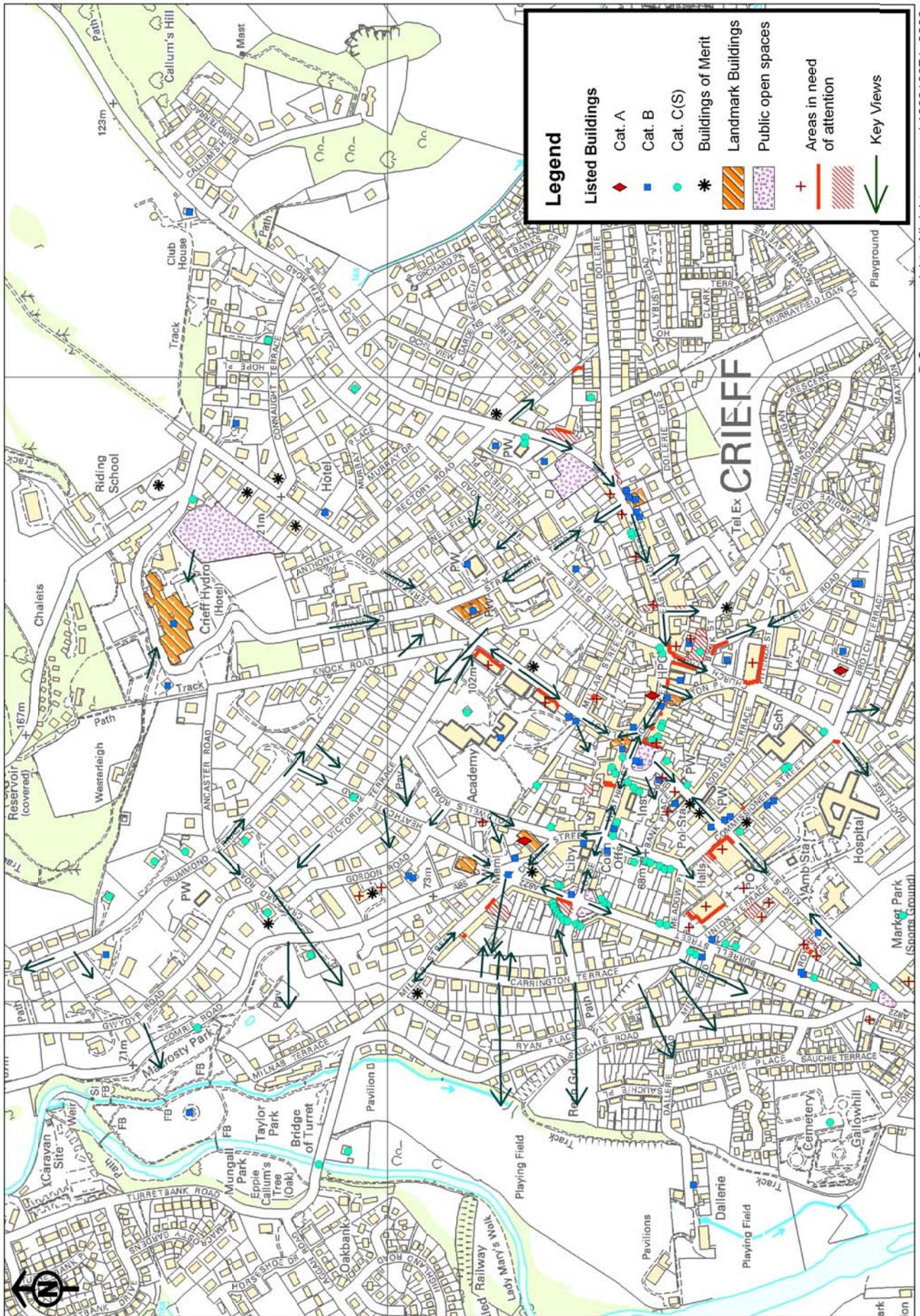
Macrosty Park



Victorian villa garden

4.25 Key buildings and spaces within the town are indicated on map 6.

Map 6: Townscape Analysis



Trees and Landscaping

4.26 The wooded hill of the Knock to the north, the beech lined avenue running alongside the River Earn and the picturesque Macrosty Park with its fine collection of mature specimen trees all make an important contribution to the setting of Crieff. The main road routes into the town from the north-east, north-west and south are all framed on both sides with mature tree groups providing attractive entrance features and enhancing the experience of the introduction to the townscape.



Trees in Perth Road



View of Knock Hill from Drummond Castle Keep

4.27 Individual trees or tree groups within the town centre add a positive dimension and foil to the high density built environment. The lime and cherry trees at Burrell Square are of high visual amenity from all directions and are an integral part of the visual experience of this formal space. James Square was enhanced in the mid-1990's with a terraced hard and soft landscaping scheme. The trees planted in this scheme, silver birch and rowan, have established well and are a key feature of the main town square and focus of the high street.

4.28 Boundary treatments including walls, railings and hedges are an important element of the townscape. Much original, decorative ironwork in boundary railings survives. The areas of Victorian villa development to the north of the town centre are characterised by substantial, mature gardens with cast iron railings and gates, stone walls, hedges and mature trees. Tree types are a variety of native and some exotic species. The grounds of the Crieff Hydro are a designed landscape of high quality which should be preserved as a heritage asset and not compromised by any inappropriate development.



Boundary treatments in Ferntower Road

4.29 There are four existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) in Crieff: at Oakbank House, Callum's Hill, Murray Park Hotel and 'Woodlands' in Murray Place. Of these four, two are located within the proposed conservation area, namely Murray Park Hotel and Murray Place. There may be a case for more TPO's to be formulated for tree groups around the edge of the conservation area which are considered to be under threat and make an important, positive contribution to the setting of the conservation area.

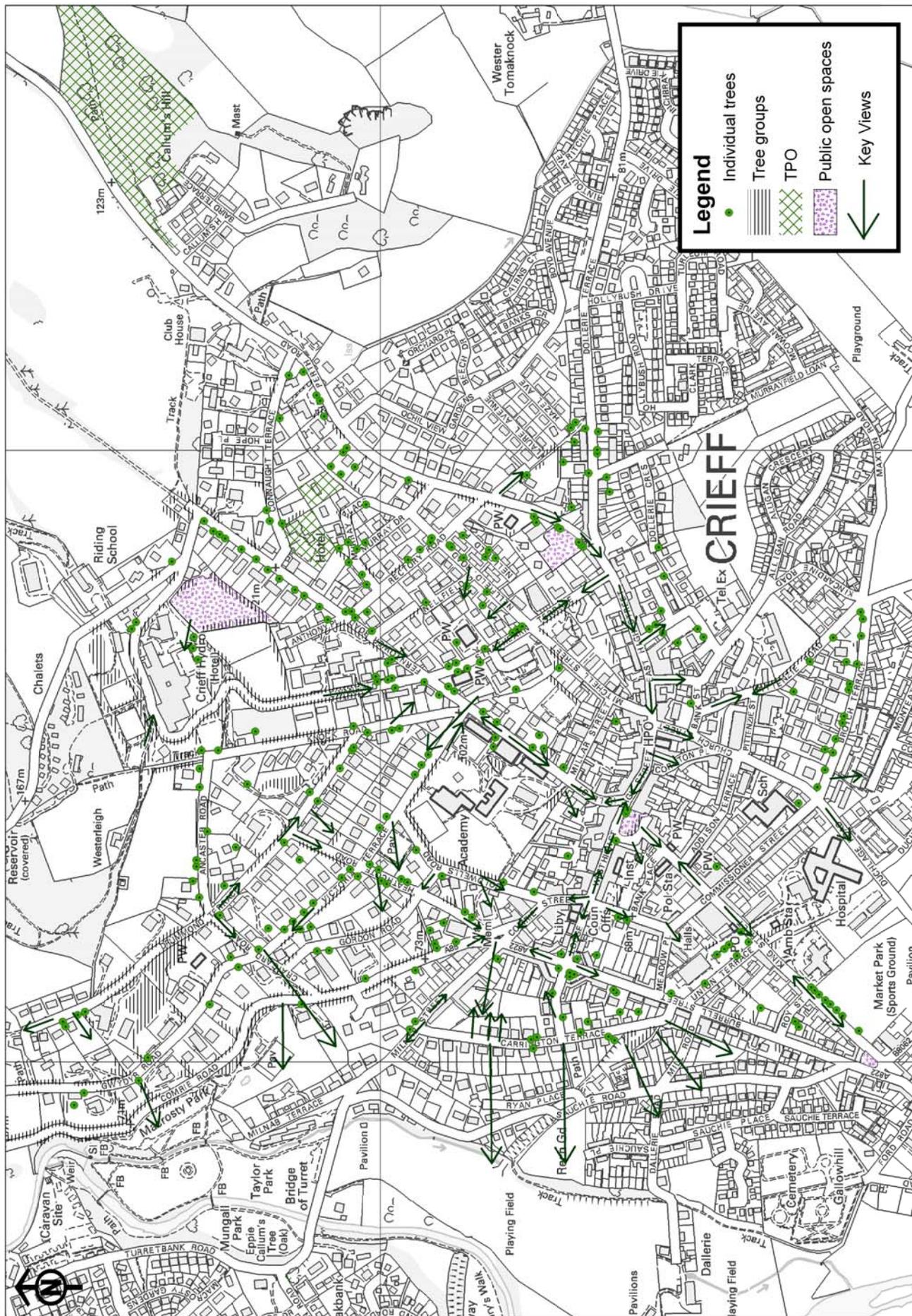


Tree Preservation Order at Murray Park Hotel

4.30 Any proposals to fell, top or lop trees within the conservation area will be subject to certain planning controls under the Town & Country Planning Act. (These controls are explained further in the Opportunities for Planning Action section of the Appraisal).

4.31 Significant tree species within the conservation area are oak, silver birch, lime, cherry, rowan, maple, ash, wych elm, beech, hawthorn, whitebeam, holly, larch and cypress. Trees and woodland areas within the town are indicated on map 7.

Map 7: Green areas



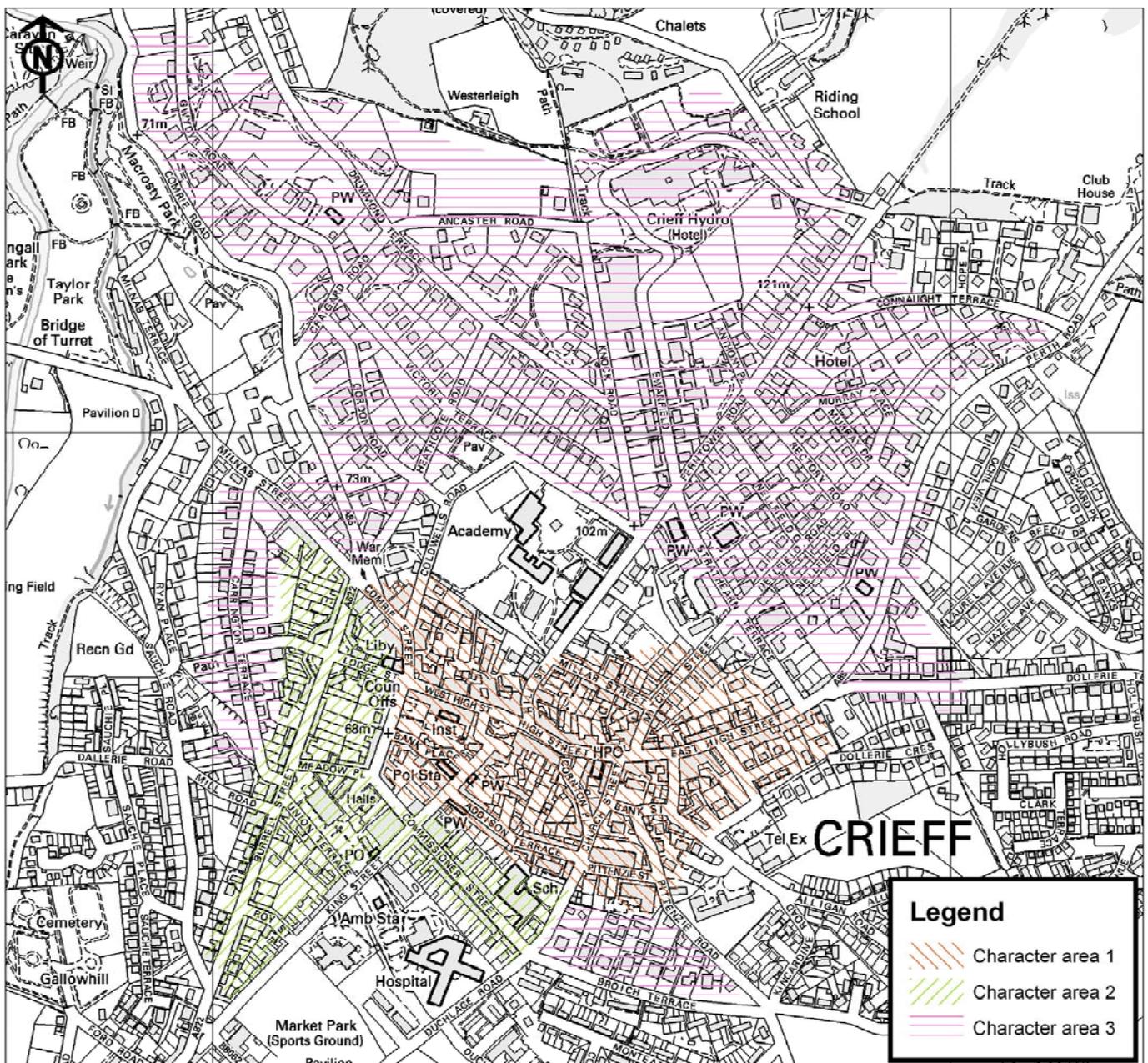
Character Areas

4.32 The townscape of central Crieff divides broadly into three areas of individual character, corresponding to different phases in the town's development:

- 1) The early core around the High Street, with organically evolved street form, narrow plots and lateral wynds;
- 2) The eighteenth-nineteenth century planned expansion to accommodate growing population, with some semi-formal or geometrical layouts in Burrell Street/Square, and many new areas built for hand loom weavers such as Mitchell and Millar Streets;
- 3) The mid- to later nineteenth century areas of villa development, including the Crieff Hydro site, exploiting the picturesque setting with expansive gardens and expressive architectural styles.

4.33 The different phases of the town's development are illustrated on map 8.

Map 8: Town development



Negative Factors

5.1 There are a number of negative buildings, facades or ill-defined spaces which detract from the quality of the townscape. These areas or buildings of poor visual quality are mostly concentrated in the town centre, in or near the High Street, and have been identified in the townscape survey. There may be potential to enhance or improve some of these areas in the short to medium term.

Perth Road

5.2 The home improvement/hardware centre, on the other side of the street from The Old Schoolhouse, is a relatively recent building of no particular architectural quality with dominant signage on its façade coupled with some signage clutter at the front of its forecourt. A tarmac-surfaced parking area and little definition to the street edge exacerbate the adverse visual quality of this site.



Hardware Centre Filling



Station

East High Street

5.3 There is a dis-used and overgrown area on the south side of East High Street at the junction with Dollerie Terrace. There is a lack of definition here to the street edge. Slightly further west the filling station on the north side of the street displays some stark signage. Moving further west there is a gap site between 30 and 36 East High Street which is used for vehicle parking and has an unkempt appearance.

5.4 On the corner of East High Street and Ramsay Street stands the now vacant Crown Inn Hotel which has a large, flat roofed extension to the rear. This extension, the access area and the three storey building further down Ramsay Street are of poor visual quality in terms of scale, proportions and materials. The timber hayloft building and its environs on the other side of this street are in need of attention.

5.5 The retail building facades at 1-5 East High Street have been much altered and appear to be in poor condition. The poor quality of architecture continues round into Church Street and the definition of this street corner is weak due to the degree of set-back, an incongruous looking shop extension to the gable end of no.2 Church Street and the contrasting cladding materials and colours.



Former St. Michael's Church Hall



Looking down Church Street

Church Street

5.6 Near the top of Church Street St Michael's Church Hall (former Crieff Parish Church), a

prominent listed building, is now dis-used and in urgent need of repair and enhancement. In the rubble walled graveyard several of the headstones have been removed. The site and industrial building immediately to the east of the church is also dis-used and in poor condition. On the west side of Church Street there are much altered brick and pebble-dashed building facades which detract from the street scene. These buildings were at one time part of the former Roxy Cinema.

5.7 The negative buildings and spaces described in the last three paragraphs are all situated in a small, concentrated area of the town centre. It is suggested that this concentrated area should be prioritised for improvements and possible enhancement schemes.

Academy Road

5.8 The lower half of this wynd, which connects with West High Street, is possibly one of the oldest areas in the town. The rubble-built properties on the east side of the wynd are in poor condition and there are more recent building facades and spaces between buildings of poor visual quality in need of attention.

Commissioner Street

5.9 The former George Hotel has been altered and extended in relatively recent times and its original character has been compromised as a result. The whole building's exterior is in a poor condition visually and its environs on the west side are ill-defined and have an untidy appearance.

Building by Building Analysis

6.1 A comprehensive photographic survey of all buildings in the conservation area has been carried out. This survey records architectural details, condition and alterations at this particular point in time, which will provide a valuable monitoring indicator and aid decision making.

Buildings at Risk Survey

6.2 There is one building currently listed in the Scottish Civic Trust's Buildings at Risk Register, this being St Michael's Church Hall (mentioned above and in the enhancement opportunities section of the Appraisal).

6.3 The state of repair of historic buildings in the area will be monitored and the Buildings at Risk Register will be updated as and when required.

Public Realm Audit

7.1 Street furniture in most areas of the town is generally of standard 'off-the-shelf' design, such as lamp standards and litter bins. The one exception is James Square, which has been refurbished in recent times with a hard landscaped scheme including specially designed cast iron railings, handrails, bollards and tree guards. The ornate cast iron lamp columns are a particular feature. Unfortunately the former red 'K6' telephone boxes have been replaced with characterless modern kiosks. There are pedestrian finger posts of a Victorian style design located at James Square and at various other locations in the town centre.



Street furniture in James Square



Tarmac corner of Burrell Square

7.2 Most of Burrell Square retains its grassed triangles with attractive soft landscaping and trees. One triangle however, the north-west segment, has been compromised by a tarmac surfaced parking area and poorly designed street furniture including standardised safety railings.



Traditional shopfronts in Comrie Street and West High Street

7.3 There are some examples of traditional Victorian or Edwardian shopfronts in the town centre with elegantly designed fascias, console brackets, pilasters and stallrisers. There are however several shopfronts, mostly concentrated in the high street, which have been significantly altered in recent times and which have rather obtrusive or standardised signage. Some modern fascias are totally out of scale with the façade and there are examples of colours and lettering styles which are at odds with the traditional character and human scale of the streetscape. Unsympathetic signage can have an adverse visual effect on neighbouring, traditional or well designed shopfronts.



Poor signage in King Street



Poor shopfront in West High Street

7.4 There is also a degree of visual clutter in the high street which comprises standard projecting shop signage, large window signs and road signage. Some road directional signage has been rationalised recently through the placing of two, sometimes three chevron signs on one sign-plate. Further opportunities for rationalising road signage should be examined.

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.

**Character Area 1: Early core
Materials and details**



Character Area 1: Early core Shopfronts



Character Area 1: Early core
Windows and doors



Character Area 2: 18th-19th century planned expansion

Materials and details



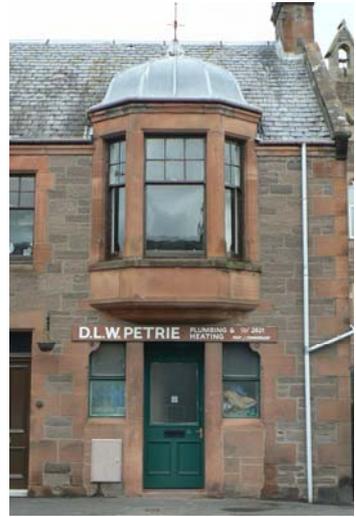
**Character Area 2: 18th-19th century planned expansion
Shopfronts**



Windows and doors



**Character Area 2: 18th-19th century planned expansion
Windows and doors (continued)**



Character Area 3: Later 19th century villa development
Materials and details



Character Area 3: Later 19th century villa development
Windows and doors



Character Area 3: Later 19th century villa development

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. Also, existing tree belts of high amenity value should not be adversely affected.



Views into conservation area from Comrie Rd



View out West from conservation area

Archaeology

9.2 There are no scheduled ancient monuments within the conservation area. There are several sites of local archaeological and historic interest and all non-designated monuments are indicated in the Perth & Kinross Historic Environment Record (HER), searchable at: <http://www.pkht.org.uk/HERSearchRecord.asp>

Assessment of Significance

10.1 The townscape of Crieff evolved in the middle ages as an important cattle market centre. Crieff then developed into an industrial and trading town and more recently as a tourism centre. These phases of town development are reflected in the three distinctive character areas identified. Important architectural and historical survivals from each of these phases are preserved, creating a rich diversity and at the same time a harmonious character and appearance to the townscape. The setting of the townscape is enriched by mature woodlands, Knock Hill, Macrosty Park, the River Earn and superb views of the Strathearn valley.

CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Using the Conservation Area Appraisal

11.1 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 Crieff 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.

11.2 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.

11.3 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.

11.4 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 produce an enforcement charter which will identify any unauthorised works within and adjacent to conservation areas as priorities for action;

- 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 14.2, 14.3 and 14.4).
- Repairs Notices: the planning authority will seek to work with owners of listed buildings but will 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 and Scottish Enterprise to facilitate conservation training programmes for building contractors and other interested parties or private individuals. PKHT has recently secured resources from the Heritage Lottery fund to develop an interpretive and outreach education programme in conjunction with other agencies to promote understanding and enjoyment of conservation areas.

11.5 There is a firm commitment from the planning authority to ensure the protection and enhancement of Crieff 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

The conservation area will be monitored through:-

12.1 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;

12.2 Observation: officers from the planning authority will visit the conservation area at regular intervals and check on the progress of any restoration and enhancement schemes and also observe any other works occurring which may be unauthorised;

12.3 Liaison: officers will liaise with local amenity groups, the public and other interested parties as necessary;

12.4 Review: the Conservation Area Appraisal will be monitored and reviewed from time to time depending upon budget constraints and other priorities.

PROPOSALS

Opportunities for Development

13.1 The Strathearn Area Local Plan identified some relatively small sites for new housing within the conservation area and some larger sites in close proximity to the conservation area. Nearly all of these sites have now been developed apart from a large site at Kincardine Road (possible 230 units). Other housing sites outwith the conservation area may be zoned in future development plans. 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.

13.2 The local plan identifies major areas of open (green) space and recreation that are to be retained. Any development proposals that erode these areas will be resisted. Key green spaces indicated are Macrosty Park, Taylor Park and the Recreation Grounds to the west of the conservation area and land to the south of Dollerie Crescent.



Taylor Park



Park to the south of Dollerie Crescent

13.3 The town centre area in the local plan covers West High Street, High Street, part of East High Street and the top end of King Street. In this area uses including shops, offices, restaurants, public houses and hotels are considered acceptable. Proposals for alterations to shop fronts and erection of signs in this area must be in keeping with the existing character of surrounding properties. The local plan indicates that the Council will continue to investigate and seek the implementation of an environmental improvement scheme for the High Street.

13.4 Opportunity sites identified within the conservation area are a): land between King Street and Duchlage Road, adjacent to Crieff Hospital, which is no longer required for a new primary school, and b): the former Free Church ('south church') on Comrie Street which is presently vacant.

13.5 The Crieff Hydro Hotel estate is identified in the local plan as an area for tourist accommodation uses: proposals for uses within and associated with the Crieff Hydro estate must reflect the high quality environment of the area particularly in terms of landscape and nature conservation impact. The majority of the grounds of the Hydro are included within the conservation area.

Opportunities for Planning Action

Conservation area boundary refinement

14.1 A draft boundary was identified in the Strathearn Area Local Plan of 2001. The boundary has been refined and extended to the south as part of the appraisal process. The town centre and the area of the 18th and early 19th century expansion have been included as these areas are important phases in the history of the town's development.

Effects of permitted development

14.2 There are examples in the town 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. Alterations to listed buildings are covered by listed building legislation and the need to obtain listed building consent, but unlisted buildings, of which there are many in Crieff, are not covered by this legislation. Small scale developments or alterations to unlisted buildings or open spaces may not be significant individually but cumulatively can erode the visual fabric of the townscape and there is the potential, without development management, for more of such developments to appear.

14.3 Classes of development which are usually 'permitted' include alteration or removal of stone walls or railings; small extensions or some types of alterations to the exterior of houses, including replacement windows; small buildings or alterations within the curtilage of houses; some satellite dishes; repairs to private streets; caravan sites; some forms of telecommunications development; some types of development by statutory undertakers (water, gas, electricity, road transport, post office and sewerage) and, certain types of development by local authorities, including lamp standards and street furniture. In Crieff the townscape is particularly vulnerable to some if not all of these classes of permitted development. For example, window and door replacements; developments within the curtilage of gardens and possible loss of trees; the alteration of stone boundary walls or decorative iron railings; visual clutter of telecommunications and electricity apparatus on or near buildings, and alterations to roads or parking areas.



Examples of permitted development causing erosion of original features



14.4 Under Article 4 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, 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. In order to maximise the benefit of a conservation area designation it is considered that an 'Article 4 Direction' should be drafted for Scottish Ministers approval.

Advertisements

14.5 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 through regulation 11 of the 1984 Regulations and seek the approval of the Scottish Ministers. A Regulation 11 direction controls normally permitted forms of 'minor' advertisement which can have an impact in areas of environmental quality. Certain types of advertisements, such as shop or business signage, can have a significant impact on historic building frontages and on the overall quality of the townscape. Usually Regulation 11 advert controls are only approved in conservation areas.



Examples of poor shopfronts (above & right) & signage (right)



14.6 The problems of visual clutter in Crieff's town centre are highlighted in the public realm audit section of this Appraisal. The competition for business signs is unlikely to diminish and may increase in the short to medium term. Additional advertisement controls would be a useful development management tool and should therefore be drafted for consultation and Scottish Ministers approval. (Classes of permitted advertisement proposed for removal under Regulation 11 of the Control of Advertisements Regulations 1984 are shown at Appendix 1)

Trees

14.7 There is a case for Tree Preservation Orders to be formulated around the edge of Crieff if tree belts or groups important to the setting of the conservation area are located outwith the boundary and therefore do not have conservation area protection. The Council will consider serving TPO's if any important tree belts in these areas are under real or potential risk.

14.8 Any proposals to fell, top or lop trees within the conservation area will be subject to certain planning 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 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 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 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 organisation's priorities and resources at the time.

15.2 Opportunities for enhancement identified through the conservation area appraisal process are suggested for the following key areas. Please note that these represent initial ideas for potential solutions. There will be early consultation with the local community, including the Community Council and local heritage society, before any firm proposals are developed further through planning briefs or design statements.

- The buildings behind the Crown Hotel near the top of Ramsay Street are in need of substantial façade improvement and/or redevelopment. The timber hayloft building on the west side of the street requires repair and refurbishment and adjacent space, used as a storage yard, would benefit from some landscaping and defined street boundary.
- Building facades at 1-5 East High Street and around the corner into Church Street are in need of improvement with external materials, finishes and colours conducive to the traditional character of the townscape. The wide junction at the street corner requires strengthening visually with better edge definition and a wider pavement area with robust hard landscaping should be considered. More recent and altered building facades on the west side of the top of Church Street would also benefit from façade improvement.



Buildings behind the Crown hotel



Top of Ramsay Street, behind Crown Hotel

- St Michael's Church Hall in Church Street is in urgent need of a repair and refurbishment scheme and a new use or uses compatible with its listed building status. The environs of the church are also in poor condition with stone boundary walls, gates and remaining gravestones in need of repair. Access to the church for pedestrians is difficult due to the sharp rise in ground level from the street. Ease of access will be a key design consideration.
- The oldest buildings in Academy Road, off West High Street, are at risk and require sensitive restoration. Building facades on the other side of the street and ground surface materials should also be improved as part of an enhancement scheme.



Academy Road

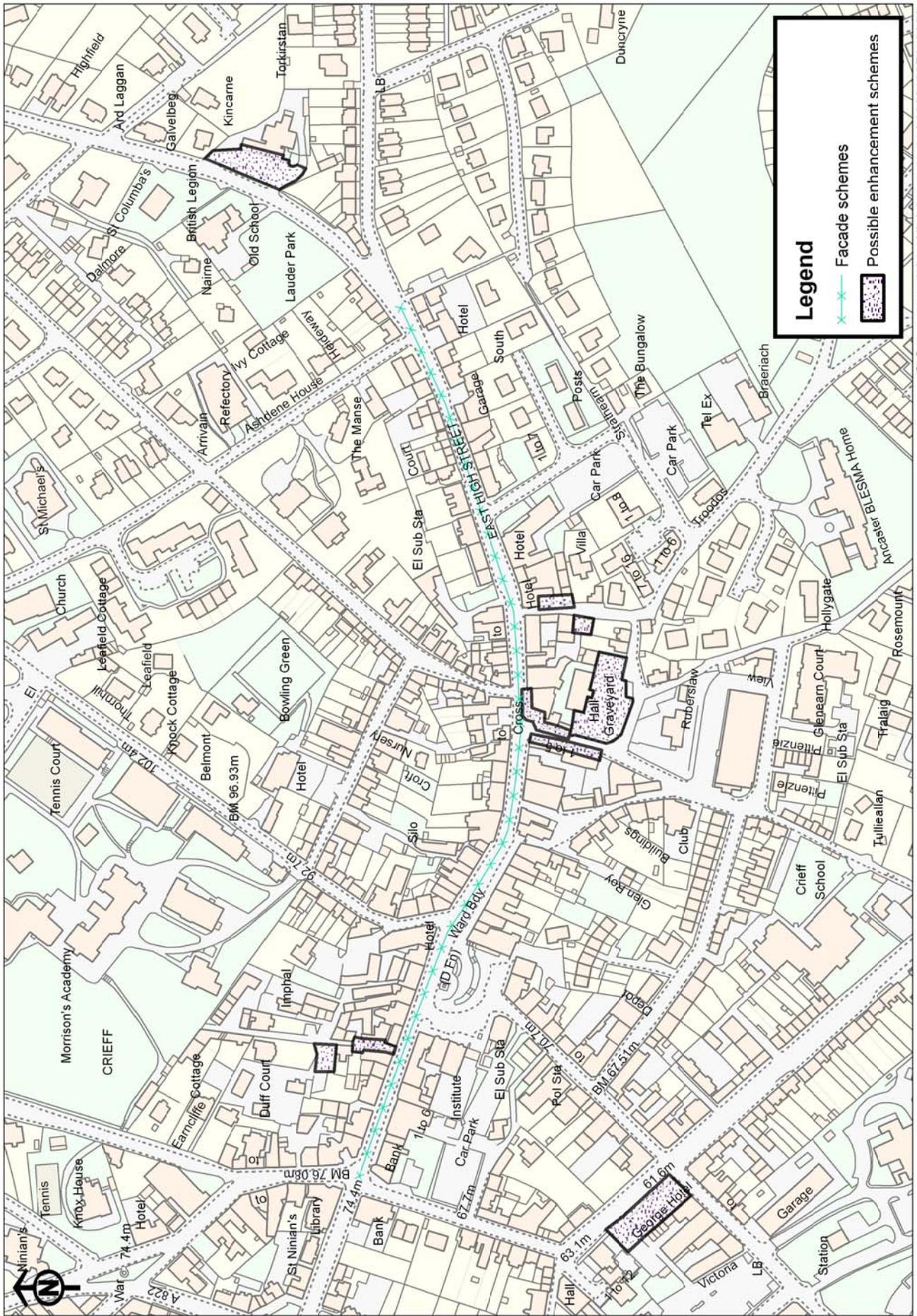
George Hotel, Commissioner Street

- The former George Hotel is in need of repair and facade improvements with external materials, colours and finishes more conducive to the traditional townscape of Commissioner Street. Its environs to the west also require a hard and soft landscaping scheme.
- The home improvement/hardware centre in Perth Road would benefit from façade improvement, removal of signage clutter and some hard and soft landscaping treatments to soften the impact of the forecourt.

15.3 A façade improvement scheme for severely altered and visually poor shopfronts and building facades in the entire length of the High Street will be promoted. Further town centre streets may be considered for such a scheme. A partnership scheme with tourist operators and local businesses will also be considered with the purpose of rationalising, enhancement and possible sharing of signboards.

15.4 Potential areas for enhancement are indicated on map 10.

Map 10: Enhancement opportunities



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APPENDICES

1) 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**

Crieff Conservation Area

**The Perth & Kinross Council (Restriction of Permitted
Development) (Crieff) Direction 2008**

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 1 - the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse;
- Class 3 - the provision within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse of any building or enclosure, swimming or other pool required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse, or the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of such a building or enclosure;
- Class 6 - the installation, alteration or replacement of a microwave antenna on a dwellinghouse or within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse;
- 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 43 - universal service providers; and,
- Class 43A - sewerage undertakings;

should not be carried out within the Conservation Area of Crieff (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 1, 3, 6, 7, 16, 27, 30, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43 and 43A, as described above, shall not apply.

2) Classes of advertisements proposed for advertisement control under Regulation 11

Description of Advertisement
Class II (3): Advertisements relating to any institution of a religious, educational, cultural, recreational or medical or similar character to any hotel, inn or public house or hostel, situated on the land on which any such advertisement is displayed.
Class III (3): Advertisements relating to the carrying out of building or similar work on the land on which they are displayed, not being land which is normally used, whether at regular intervals or otherwise for the purpose of carrying out such work.
Class IV (1) Advertisements displayed on business premises wholly with reference to all of the following matters; the business or other activity carried on, the goods sold or services provided, and the name and qualification of the person carrying on such business or activity or manufacturing or supplying such goods or services on those premises.
Class IV (2) Advertisement displayed on any forecourt of business premises wholly with reference to all or any of the matters specified in Class IV (1) .

Sources

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Scottish Towns website: <http://www.scottish-towns.co.uk/perthshire/crieff/history.html>

National Library of Scotland maps on line: <http://www.nls.uk/maps/towns/detail.cfm?id=321>