

Cleish - Proposed Conservation Area

The Local Planning Authority have determined that the village of Cleish, situated in an area of considerable rural charm, shall be designated as a Conservation Area, under Section 2(1) of the Town and Country Amenities Act, 1974, this being an area of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

The accompanying map shows the area designated and it is bounded thus:-

On the north side - by a line running east along the boundary of field No. 2139, turning north at that field's eastern edge to the footbridge at the south-west corner of field No. 5533. The boundary follows the burn east to where the eastern boundary of field No. 7600 meets the burn.

On the east side - by a line following the eastern boundary of field No. 7600 southwards to meet the unclassified road. The boundary travels west along the same road and turns south again by Thrums.

On the south side - by a line running west along the southern boundaries of Thrums and Paphie to the track leading to Cogfauld. The line follows the track as it swings south-west to exclude Cogfauld and finishes at the south-western corner of field No. 4282.

On the west side - by a line running north along the western boundaries of field Nos. 4282 and 3600 across the unclassified road and along field No. 3522 to the small copse in the corner.

History

The name Cleish is derived from the Gaelic word 'clais' meaning a hollow, ditch or furrow.

The Church is not the first in Cleish, the former Church was built in 1775 and only lasted 60 years before being burnt down on the 11th March, 1832. It was rebuilt almost immediately and was noted in the New Statistical Account of 1844 as being a handsome building if only a bit small. The chancel and crenelated tower were added in Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Year 1897. There was no shortage of good building stone from quarries nearby but the preoccupation of most of the landowners and farmers of that period was land drainage to provide suitable pasture. Drainage of the Gairney Water and its contributors was made easier around the beginning of the C.19 when the level of Loch Leven was lowered by 4 - 5 feet by improvements schemes.

The local landowners, and the Adams of Blair Adam in particular, set in motion planting and drainage schemes which had the dual purpose of making the land not only more attractive but more fertile and productive. They introduced the widespread and large scale growth of potatoes in the field and new planting provided shelter for crops, and drainage, new pasture for stock.

Appraisal

Situated at the foot of the Cleish Hills this small building group lies astride an unclassified road with Church, Manse and Graveyard on one side and the school and a collection of cottages on the other. The buildings north of the roadline are complemented by a variety of mature trees which run down to and surround the Graveyard. The Church too is on a raised mound which gives a substantial appearance to this half of the settlement. The cottages on the south side of the road group closely together; the School and Schoolhouse and former/

former Post Office are well detailed, and finished in natural stone and slate. The Schoolhouse dates from the C.18 and combined that use at one time by being the School as well. The attic space provided box beds for the boarders. There has been little new development within the confines of the village. There are no gap sites due to the tight grouping of the buildings. However one relatively new building, the village hall, has been built on the western edge. Its design and finish does not complement the village character and its prominent position is unfortunate. Any further building should be carefully considered for both approaches to the village are relatively unspoilt and offer no opportunities for new development to be slotted into the village framework.

One of the most essential features of the village's character is its neat, tidy and well maintained appearance. The local stone has weathered well and the buildings retain a well ordered appearance which is enhanced by the natural tree cover on and within the fringes of the settlement. The old outhouses at the rear of the Church have recently been converted to a dwellinghouse in a manner sympathetic to its original character. The appearance of some cast iron gas lamplights make interesting features, they came originally from Blair Adam and date circa. 1850. The stone walls feature prominently in the village linking many of the outbuildings in a most attractive yet informal manner.