

Extract from

# ST. ANDREWS

Conservation Area Appraisal  
& Management Plan  
2010



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Conservation Areas**

In accordance with the provisions contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 all planning authorities are obliged to consider the designation of conservation areas from time to time. St Andrews Conservation Area is 1 of 48 Conservation Areas located in Fife. These are all areas of particular architectural or historic value, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Fife Council is keen to ensure that the quality of these areas is maintained for the benefit of present and future generations.

Conservation area designation is not a means to preserve an area without change, but there is a joint responsibility between residents and the council to ensure that change is not indiscriminate or damaging, and that the unique character of each area is respected. In this way, communities can benefit from living in an environment that is of recognisable value. A written description of the St Andrews Conservation Area Boundary is included in Appendix 1.

### **1.2 The Purpose of this Document**

St Andrews Central Conservation Area was designated in 1971 in recognition of the townscape value of the predominantly medieval urban layout and the 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion. St Andrews has an adjoining Conservation Area at Hepburn Gardens, designated in 1993, which will be the subject of a separate appraisal. The purpose of the St Andrews Conservation Area Appraisal is:

- To confirm the importance of the designation of the area and to review the current conservation area boundaries
- To highlight the significance of the area in terms of townscape, architecture and history
- To identify important issues affecting the area
- To identify opportunities for development and enhancement
- To stimulate interest and participation in conservation issues amongst people living and working in the area
- To provide a framework for conservation area management

The document is to be used in partnership with the Fife Council St Andrews Design Guidelines.

Andrews Links falls within the Conservation Area. The Links is included on Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens & Designed Landscapes.

### 3.8 Green Spaces

The centre of St Andrews is characterised by its density, with buildings hard on to the pavement. There are, however, a number of public spaces and a variety of privately owned or university owned gardens. They range in size and shape but are all equally important to the character of the Conservation Area.

#### The Links

Only a small section of The Links is part of the Conservation Area, in the north-west corner, and as stated above it is included on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. Whilst not a public area it is an important historical feature of the Conservation Area and provides open views of the West Sands from the town.

#### Kinburn Park

This 19<sup>th</sup> century park once formed part of the medieval burgh lands used as pasture but latterly became the West and East Windmill Parks by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1852 they were bought by Dr. David Buddo and used to build a neo-Tudor mansion house with associated landscaping. More recently, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Town Council acquired it and laid out the grounds for recreational purposes. The building now houses a museum and café.



Kinburn House & Park



Bow Butts Park with Martyrs' Memorial

The elevated position of the Park means it has an attractive and open environment which is used as a quick access route to the North Haugh university campus. It is a busy and easily accessible park with good views of the town and campus. The trees and landscaping surrounding the building are well maintained.

#### Bow Butts

This area, on the cliffs to the northern edge of town, was known as being a practice area for archery from medieval times through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is also possibly part of an earlier links course. It now takes the form of a peaceful green area for public use, with the key features of a Victorian bandstand designed by the renowned Saracen

Foundry in Glasgow, and the Martyrs' Memorial ; a large obelisk of local sandstone. The memorial was erected in 1842 to commemorate the martyrs of the Scottish Reformation who perished in St Andrews.

Victorian cast iron railings line the edge of the cliff at the eastern end, some of which have been recently restored with new stone plinths.

A number of key buildings surround the green. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club sits to the west of Bow Butts at the head of the Links; a Modernist flat roofed Museum of Golf is partially hidden in the green to the north; the new Seafood Restaurant at the edge of the cliff is a dramatic steel and glass design which sits very well in its environment; the red sandstone Grand Hotel (Hamilton Hall) at the corner of Golf Place; and the line of grand Victorian terraced townhouses to its south (Gillespie Terrace). The architect George Rae had a great vision for this area - including Golf Place and The Scores itself - to become a *tour de force* of the classical style, but this was only partially realised.

The views across the bay from this area to the West Sands and north are spectacular. The rock pools below, once used as bathing pools for Victorian ladies and in much earlier times for witch trials, make this an intriguing part of St Andrews.

#### **Green spaces around the castle and in the cathedral precinct**

These areas are clearly critical to St Andrews' historical and archaeological significance. In townscape terms they provide an open setting for the eastern end of the town and a focus for views in and out. They have few trees and are mainly large areas of maintained grass, although there are areas used for car parking which degrade the general appearance.

#### **Madras College green**

The open area in front of the school and its grassed area is an important feature of the buildings behind, forming part of the original design with the express purpose of providing a setting for Blackfriars Chapel.

#### **University gardens and greens – St. John's Garden & Deans Court**

This university-owned courtyard off South Street is lined with 16<sup>th</sup> century buildings of significant architectural merit. The courtyard includes a well, a walled orchard and garden, which are of archaeological importance as well as forming part of a designed landscape. Partnership between the Pilgrim Foundation, Fife Council and the University has resulted in a new gateway opening up the view from the narrow end of Market Street, and it is hoped that the area will be partially opened to the public.

#### **St. Andrews Preservation Trust Museum garden**

The small garden to the front of the building on North Street is the only such example along this street and is an important addition to the streetscape. It enhances the building and brings colour to the area. The larger garden behind the museum is open to the public.

### **Baker Lane public garden**

This small public garden was formed in the space left following the demolition of backland buildings and has been maintained by the locals and the Council. It is a small colourful area with seating, hidden from the main streets, and is an attractive addition to this wynd.

### **Rigg gardens**

These are essentially “hidden gardens” in the backlands of many of the houses on the main streets. They are accessible through buildings or via pends and are bound by ancient rigg walls. These may be under threat from redevelopment and are often neglected if the property is in multiple occupancy. It is important to maintain these in order to preserve their reminder of the medieval street plan and also to provide a natural environment for wildlife.

### **Greyfriars Garden and Queen’s Gardens**

An unusual feature of these streets is that the gardens are situated opposite the houses on the other side of the street. As with the less visible rigg gardens, the use of residences as businesses premises and multiple occupancy flats has resulted in neglect. It is important to recognise the significance of these gardens and their contribution to the character of the streetscape.

## **3.9 Trees and Landscaping**

The mature trees and gardens of St Andrews, many of which were laid out in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, are an important backdrop to the town.

John Milne, a renowned local architect and town councillor in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, was known for planting trees along the main streets and also along the Lade Braes Walk. Those on South Street were planned and laid out in 1878. He also went on to plant trees in Market Street, The Scores and North Street, and in 1887 began work on improving and extending the Lade Braes Walk. Milne planted a variety of trees, including sycamore, maple, copper beech, Austrian pine and Lombardy poplar.

The landscaping and management of the castle and cathedral precinct are also important although these areas contain fewer trees.

## **3.10 Views**

The skyline of St. Andrews is visible from a considerable distance outside the town, and makes a strong initial impression. The various church steeples and St. Rule’s Tower are the most prominent features on the skyline. As noted above, the 17<sup>th</sup> century view from the Kinkell Braes in John Slezer’s print remains essentially unchanged.

Within the town views down the wynds and closes give inviting glimpses of other streets and buildings tucked away behind the main streets.

The long views along each main street are also important, particularly that looking east on North Street towards the War Memorial and the cathedral buildings. The view of the castle from along North and South Castle Street is a highlight of the pedestrian tourist routes in the town, further enhanced by the picturesque historic buildings on either side of those streets.

### 3.11 Character Areas

The Conservation Area is predominantly made up of 3 character areas –the area known as “the Ladyhead” (and the surrounding larger area including the cathedral precinct), the medieval town burgh and the 19<sup>th</sup> century areas to the west and south. Each represent successive periods of development of the Conservation Area, the boundaries of which can be defined by roads and buildings.

#### “The Ladyhead” and adjacent areas

This area is to the east of South and North Castle Street (formerly Fishergate), and the east end of North Street. For the purposes of this report it is considered along with the cathedral precinct, the castle, Kirkhill, the harbour and St. Leonard’s School. Together these form the oldest area of settlement in St. Andrews.



North Castle Street



Gregory Place

The housing mainly lies to the north west of this area, huddled around the ecclesiastical sites. A wide variety of architectural designs and periods are represented, with the earliest features from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest vernacular buildings are generally low with small window and door openings, steep pitched roofs, occasional catslide roofs and rubble masonry. Pantiling is the dominant roofing material, and crowstepped gables and sash and case windows are typical features. There are exceptions to this with the ashlar masonry and decorative carved features of the occasional 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings.

The buildings are generally hard against the pavement although the occasional forestair has survived the 19<sup>th</sup> century clearances. The streets are narrow with examples of original cobbling remaining in places.