



PLANNING FOR OUR PAST AND OUR FUTURE

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND'S
PLANNING SERVICE STANDARD



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

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ALBA

JUNE 2025

OUR SERVICE

Our past has shaped our country and our communities. It has made Scotland what it is today and left us with a heritage that connects us to people and places across the globe. In planning for our future, we will engage with the planning system to help deliver the right development in the right place, following the overarching principles set out in '[Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment](#).'

To sustain and enhance the benefits of Scotland's Historic Environment, for people and communities, now and in the future, we will:

- put people at the heart of decision-making
- act on the climate and biodiversity crises

- protect and promote our historic environment
- work collaboratively across sectors
- work together to make good decisions
- nurture and grow an inclusive, diverse and skilled workforce.

This service standard explains how we engage with the planning system within our regulatory role to affect these positive outcomes. It sets out the mechanisms by which we do this, and the timescales we work to in delivering our advice. It applies to our involvement in the planning system and other regulatory systems relevant to development on land and at sea. Our [corporate service standards](#) do not cover this aspect of our work.

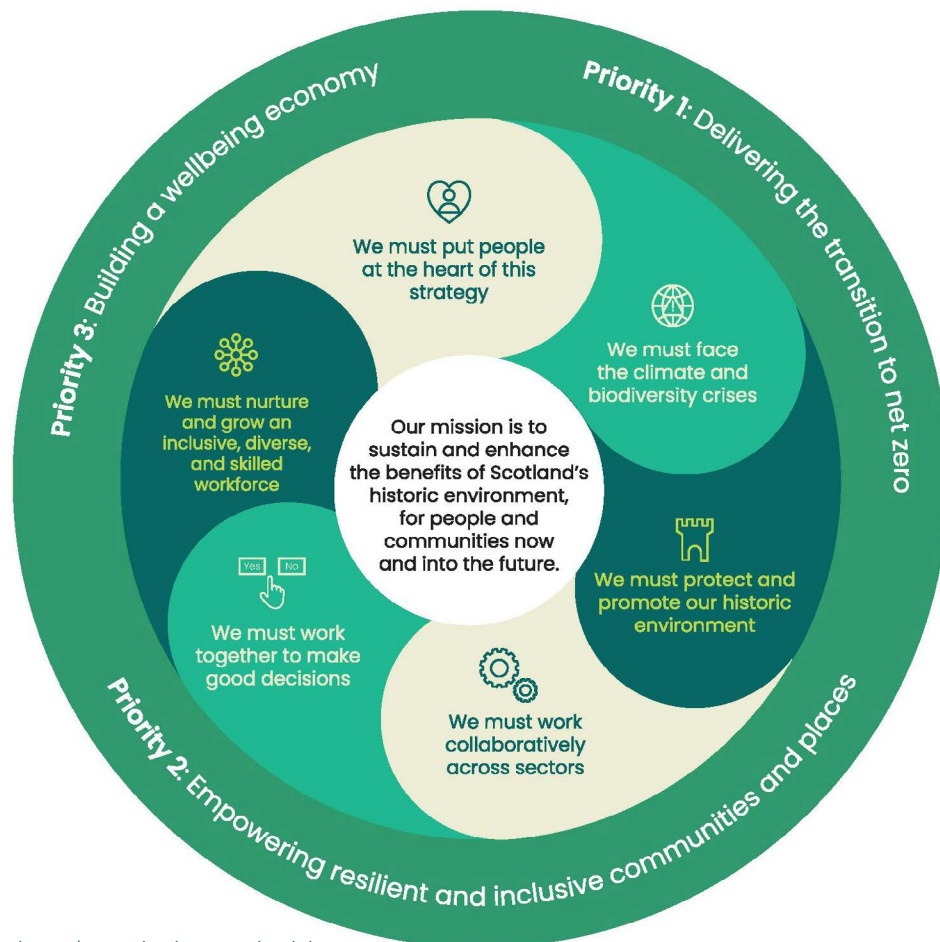


Diagram showing the mission, priorities and outcomes of 'Our Past our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment'

Our heritage directorate is responsible for the day-to-day regulatory and advisory services we provide within the planning and other regulatory systems. We have two distinct roles - The first is as a decision-maker for scheduled monument consent. Our second role is as a statutory consultee for a range of development plans and proposals. This means that decision-makers have to ask for our advice before making a decision - and then have to take that advice into account. In the planning system, this means that our advice is a material consideration.

Our roles are set out in more detail in [Our Regulatory Framework](#) and described in this [video](#). The Regulatory Framework sets out our role and how we approach it. This document sets out the standards we will achieve and the circumstances where planning authorities consult with us.

The [Historic Environment Policy for Scotland](#) and [Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance note series](#) form the basis of the advice we offer. We encourage pre-application consultation for all aspects of our work. We are committed to the principles set out in the Key Agencies statement on [pre-application engagement for National and Major Developments](#). Where possible, we aim to provide relative certainty as soon as we are able in the development process. We will use relevant policy, guidance and our professional judgement to provide advice on how historic environment issues may be managed through the design process. We will identify as early as possible where there is an insurmountable difficulty for our interests, to avoid unnecessary effort or expense on the part of the developer and others.

We publish [annual reports](#) on our Planning, Consents and Advice Service, which provide information on whether we have met our service standards, as well as detailing service improvements.



Through our regulatory and advisory roles, we inform and enable good decision-making so that the historic environment of Scotland is valued and protected.

OUR DECISION-MAKING ROLE

SCHEDULED MONUMENT REGULATORY WORK

OUR ROLE

We are the regulatory body for works on scheduled monuments. This means we are responsible for consents for works on scheduled monuments and enforcement. There are two types of consents for works on scheduled monuments:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) – for any works to a scheduled monument including works of repair, removal, addition, tipping and flooding
- Metal and Mineral Detecting Consent – for the use of any equipment capable of detecting metals or minerals on a scheduled monument or protected place

We encourage all applicants to engage in pre-application discussion at an early stage if they plan to apply for scheduled monument consent. Pre-application discussions:

- help to identify the information you must provide to support an application, and when it will be submitted and considered
- aim to add value at the start of the change management process
- should improve the quality of the proposal and give you the chance to amend your emerging suggestions
- will simplify the application process itself

RELEVANT GUIDANCE AND APPLICATION FORMS

The following publications provide detailed advice on the need for scheduled monument and metal and mineral detecting consent:

- [Working on or Near Scheduled Monuments](#)
- [Metal Detecting in Scotland](#)

Application forms can be found on our website:

- [Scheduled Monument Consent Application Forms and Guidance](#)
- [Metal and Mineral Detecting Consent Application Forms and Guidance](#)

RESPONSE TIMESCALES

Consents Activity	Timescale
Pre-application advice	21 days from receipt
Application Determination	8 weeks to reach a view, or extended period as agreed with the applicant. Certain SMC applications may also need to be notified to Scottish Ministers for their consideration. There is no set timescale for Scottish Ministers decision, but an update will be provided by them every 4 weeks.
Post-Application consultations including satisfying conditions	21 days from receipt

OUR ADVISORY ROLE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

OUR ROLE

We are a Consultation Body for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Both SEA and EIA focus on identifying significant environmental effects.

In our role as a Consultation Authority in SEA we help Responsible Authorities decide whether an assessment is required. We then support them through the process. We are consulted at screening, scoping and report stage.

Our role as a Consultation Body for EIA is to provide information and help inform the assessment of predicted impacts of a development proposal on the historic environment. We are consulted on all qualifying Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) projects in Scotland. This includes some project types not typically considered 'development', for example forestry.

Our role is to provide advice and comments on impacts on:

- scheduled monuments and their setting
- category A listed buildings and their setting
- Inventory gardens and designed landscapes
- Inventory battlefields
- World Heritage Sites
- Historic Marine Protected Areas

At the decision maker's request, we will comment on:

- screening where a specific issue has been identified
- scoping

Our advice on the historic environment is one of a range of factors that the decision maker will take into account to reach a view on the application.

RELEVANT GUIDANCE

- www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/environmental-assessment
- [EIA Handbook](#)

RESPONSE TIMESCALES

SEA Activity	Timescale
SEA Screening Report	Within 28 days
SEA Scoping Report	Within 35 days
SEA Environmental Report and accompanying plan, policy, programme or strategy	As agreed at scoping (usually a minimum of 6 weeks)

EIA Activity	Timescale
EIA Pre-Application Advice	Within 21 days
EIA Screening Report	Within time specified by the competent authority but likely to be less than 10 days. A longer time period may be agreed between the applicant and the relevant decision-maker.
EIA Scoping Report	Within time specified by the competent authority, but likely to be less than 28 days. A longer time period may be agreed between the applicant and the relevant decision-maker.
EIA Report	Within 30 days on receipt of the consultation. A longer time period may be agreed between the applicant and the relevant decision-maker.

CONSULTATION CHECKLIST

Strategic Environmental Assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening Reports	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scoping Reports and Environmental Reports produced in connection with a plan or policy that requires SEA. (In practice we will also be consulted on the related plan, programme, policy or strategy.)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Impact Assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening requests where a specific historic environment issue has been identified following initial assessment by the decision-maker. The issue in question should be made clear.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scoping requests and EIA Reports produced in connection with a development proposal that requires EIA. (In practice we will also be consulted on the related development proposal.)	<input type="checkbox"/>



Our officers use a range of tools to inform their assessment of the impact of a development on the historic environment. Where a proposed development close to a designated heritage asset, we may ask for visualisations to be produced showing the change that would occur to the setting of the asset. Our [Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting guidance](#) explains more about this process.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

OUR ROLE

The Scottish planning system is planned. Development plans identify and allocate land for future development. We are a statutory consultee for development plans and their related strategic environmental assessments (SEA). Planning authorities consider our views alongside advice from other consultees and the views of the public. This is part of our role as a member of the Scottish Government Key Agencies Group. Our advice focuses on making sure that the likely effects of proposals concerning Scotland's protected sites are accurately assessed. We are consulted on the

Strategic Environmental Assessment of development plans. We also work with planning authorities on projects linked to development plans. This might involve helping to prepare:

- supplementary guidance
- masterplans
- development briefs

RELEVANT GUIDANCE

- [Development Planning](#)

RESPONSE TIMESCALES

Development Planning Activity	Timescale
Evidence Report (requests for evidence)	Within time specified by the planning authority but generally within 6 - 12 weeks
Proposed Plan Consultation	Within time specified by the planning authority but generally within 6 - 12 weeks
Consultation on drafts including emerging spatial strategies and land allocations	21 days from receipt, or extended period as agreed

CONSULTATION CHECKLIST

Development Planning	✓
Evidence Reports / requests for evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed Plans (in practice we will also be consulted on the related SEA)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivery Programmes where HES is identified as a delivery partner / consultee	<input type="checkbox"/>



The planning system in Scotland is plan-led. Development plans set out how places will change into the future, including the long term vision of where development should and shouldn't happen. When plans are being updated, we work with local authorities to ensure any positive and negative effects on the historic environment are recognised at an early stage.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

OUR ROLE

Decision-makers normally ask for our advice on a planning application when it may affect a nationally designated historic asset or place. For planning applications, this includes developments which may affect:

- a category A listed building or its setting
- a scheduled monument or its setting
- a site included on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

- a site included on the Inventory of Historic Battlefields
- a World Heritage Site
- the preservation objectives of a Historic Marine Protected Area
- the amenities of any Royal Palace or Park.

RELEVANT GUIDANCE

- [Historic Environment Scotland's Role in Planning](#)

RESPONSE TIMESCALES

Development Management Activity	Timescale
Pre-Application Consultation	21 days from receipt
Consultation	14 or 21 days from receipt, or extended period as agreed

CONSULTATION CHECKLIST

Development Management	✓
Development which may affect a category A listed building or its setting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development which may affect a scheduled monument or its setting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development which may affect a site included on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Householder Development which may affect an Inventory battlefield	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Householder Development which may affect a World Heritage Site	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of land which is situated within 800 metres from any Royal Palace or Park, that might affect the amenities of that Palace or Park.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applications for a Masterplan Consent Area affecting any of the above or include works for the demolition of a listed building, the alteration or extension of a listed building or for the demolition of a building in a conservation area.	<input type="checkbox"/>

LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT

OUR ROLE

Planning authorities consult us on listed building consent when it relates to:

- Alterations to category A or B listed buildings
- Demolition of any listed building
- Listed building consent applications where the planning authority is the applicant

RESPONSE TIMESCALES

Listed Building and Conservation Area Consent Activity	Timescale
Pre-Application Consultation	21 days from receipt
Consultation	14 or 21 days from receipt, or extended period as agreed
Re-consultation	14 or 21 days from receipt, or extended period as agreed

Authorities also consult us on conservation area consent applications. These are applications to demolish an unlisted building in a conservation area.

RELEVANT GUIDANCE

- [Listed building consent](#)
- [Guidance on the principles of listed building consent](#)
- [Use and adaptation of listed buildings](#)
- [Interim guidance on the designation of conservation areas and conservation area consent](#)

CONSULTATION CHECKLIST

Listed Building and Conservation Area Consent	✓
Applications for conservation area consent (demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applications for listed building consent for alterations to category A and B listed buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applications for listed building consent for demolition	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applications for listed building consent by planning authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>



Listed building consent is determined by the relevant planning authority. We are statutory consultees and provide advice to them on applications for alterations to Category A and B listed buildings, and demolition of any listed building.



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ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

Historic Environment Scotland
Longmore House, Salisbury Place
Edinburgh EH9 1SH

0131 668 8600
www.historicenvironment.scot

Historic Environment Scotland – Scottish Charity No. SC045925
Registered Address: Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh
EH9 1SH