

NEW DESIGN IN HISTORIC SETTINGS



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Acknowledgments

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Front Cover Image, Shettleston Housing Association Offices, Glasgow, 2010. Elder and Canon, Credit Andrew Lee.

FOREWORD



Scotland has one of the richest historic environments in the world. It has evolved over centuries as an attractive mix of the old and the new with generation after generation leaving its mark.

This is a positive process that we should celebrate but we must pay heed to these precious cultural assets.

When we see a good new building in a historic place we rightly feel proud that we have managed to unite past and present styles and tastes.

Our aspiration in designing all new buildings in historic settings must be to match the quality of the new with the old so that they are respected and enhanced for the benefit of those who live in Scotland and the millions of visitors who come to enjoy our wonderful heritage.

New designs in historic settings will always generate debate. To this day, the Scottish Parliament building splits opinion. Since the competition to design it was launched, eloquent and passionate arguments both for and against it have been voiced.

This guidance has brought together, by a collaborative partnership, planning professionals, award-winning architects, urban designers and Scotland's heritage agency Historic Scotland. It sets out to look at some broad principles and examples to help stimulate debate and understanding for all those involved in the design of buildings and places within historic settings.

It is not a checklist or a one-stop shop. It has looked at successful projects and how what they did might be replicated to enhance the design process.

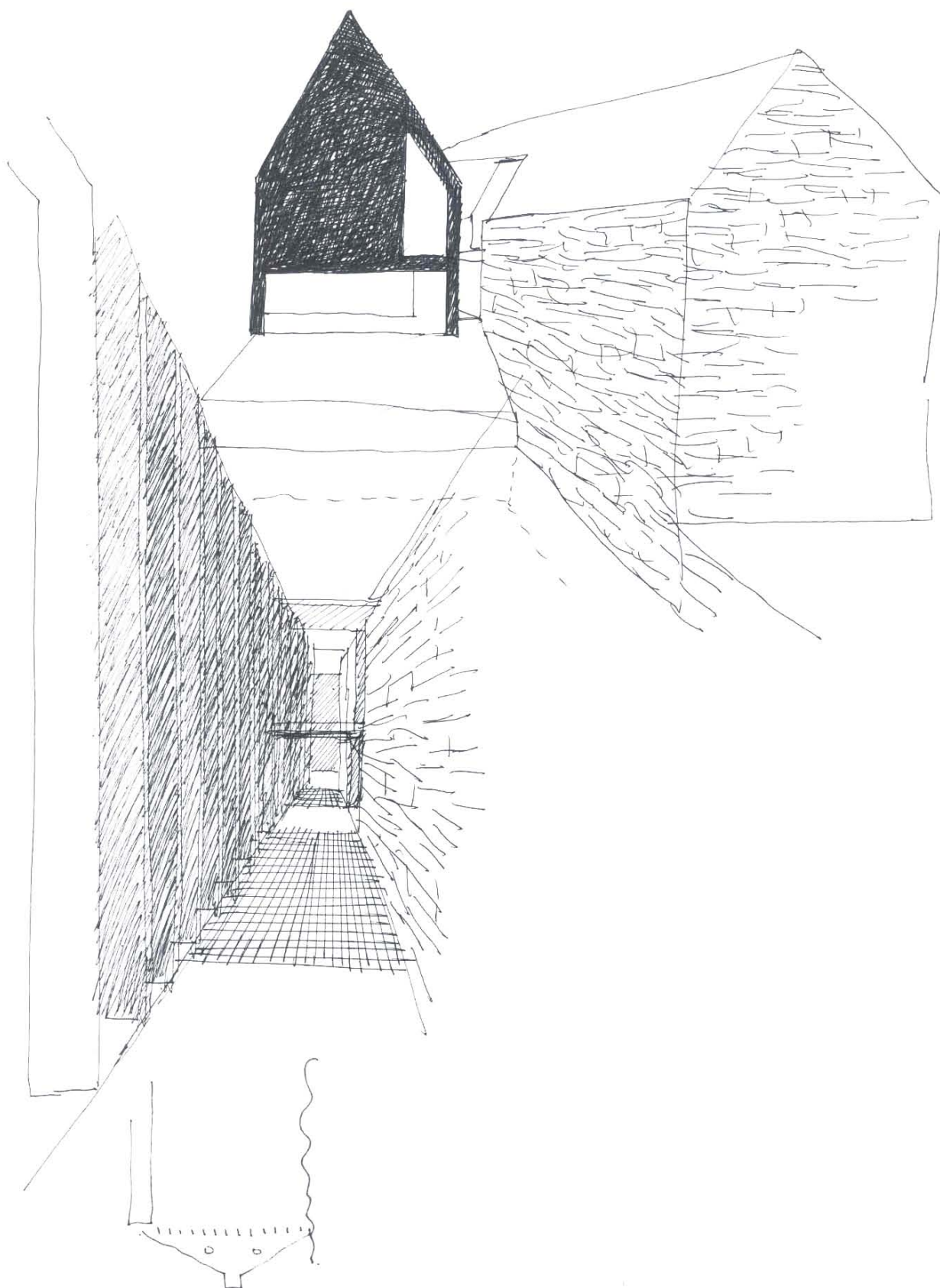
The aim of this document is to set out the means by which we can raise the standard of new design in much-loved historic settings. There are already many excellent examples throughout the country and we have included a few of these to show how the principles work in practice.

Good quality architecture and planning is vital to improving how people feel about an area and can make a significant difference in how people use space.

I hope this will encourage more people to look at what good design involves and spark further debate on how we continue our national legacy of architectural excellence.

Ruth Parsons

Chief Executive
Historic Scotland



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why is guidance necessary?

The purpose of this publication is to explore how good design in historic settings is achieved. There is not one correct answer or approach of course, but there are ways of thinking and working which increase the likelihood of success. Clearly, the skill of the designer is at the heart of the issue so our aim is to set out an approach to design which will help to break down the design process into a series of steps involving interrogating, analysing and designing effective solutions that are appropriate for the specific historic context being considered. The desired outcome is the high quality design of new buildings and spaces in historic settings.

The key message is that the historic environment is a resource that must be protected but which can add cultural and economic value to new design placed within it. Equally the introduction of a successful new building will enhance the historic setting, will become a valued addition for current and future generations and contribute to a sense of place.

To produce this document we have brought together experts in architecture, urban design, planning and heritage management to set out successful examples and to offer a suggested approach to considering new design.

1.2 Who is the advice for?

Our aim is to set out some broad principles and examples to help stimulate debate and understanding for all those involved in the design of buildings and places within historic settings. These will include:

- Designers
- Developers and other clients
- Local Authorities
- Other stakeholders such as amenity bodies and community groups
- Other built environment professionals

We hope to open a dialogue around the issues of new design in historic settings so that each case can be discussed within its own terms and context. But we would stress that there is certainly not a 'one size fits all' approach.

1.3 What is the purpose?

The aims of this publication are to:

- Promote key principles for new design in historic settings that are perceived as helpful to clients, developers, local government and practitioners
- Demonstrate through case studies how good design can be achieved, even in the most challenging historic contexts
- Showcase good design in historic settings as a way of delivering key objectives, particularly the fundamental Scottish Government objective of sustainable economic development
- Raise expectations, inspire and set a high standard for new design
- Encourage an imaginative, confident design response derived from context
- Propose a methodology for preparation of new designs in historic settings based on shared understanding of the issues
- Provide a common-sense approach to working within the existing conservation and planning development framework



Fishmarket Close, Edinburgh, Richard Murphy Architects, 2002

2.0 NEW DESIGN IN HISTORIC SETTINGS

2.1 Existing Policy Framework and Guidance

There is an extensive policy framework and a wealth of guidance on new design. A suggested reading list is included at Appendix 1 and this includes:

- International conventions and charters, mostly produced by ICOMOS and UNESCO following international conferences and seminars
- National Planning Legislation
- Planning Advice Notes
- Local Development Plans and Supplementary Guidance

2.2 Historic Settings

‘Historic settings’ describes sites across a wide range of form and scale. They include natural or designed spaces, urban, rural and cultural landscapes. They can comprise the setting of individual or setpiece heritage ensembles around buildings and monuments, conservation areas, or designed landscapes. As well as being significant cultural assets in themselves, they play a role in delivering a range of public policy objectives including education, sustainable economic development, health and well-being, community cohesiveness and placemaking. Historic settings will continue to be at the centre of many successful projects which contribute to the high quality of life in our country.

There are many aspects of successful historic places that cannot be measured easily. This publication focuses on their spatial and visual components and how proposed new development can tap into that character. By understanding the historic environment, its component parts and how they work together to create a whole, the designer will be more likely to achieve an outcome which both enhances the existing environment and the new design itself.

2.3 New Design

This document defines new design as all significant designed interventions in the historic environment. This includes open space, public realm, new build and major alterations and additions. In terms of scale, it covers everything from minor infill to major masterplanning exercises.

Places and their context change over time and indeed we tend to celebrate these historic changes when viewed from the present day. In taking their place in the evolving character of historic places new designs can also help realise their full economic, and cultural potential.

There is a view that new buildings in historic settings should seek to replicate existing buildings in design, appearance and materials. While this may be appropriate in specific circumstances, for example where part of a larger architectural composition had been lost, in general we believe that new interventions in historic settings do not need to look ‘old’ in order to create a harmonious relationship with their surroundings. Some of the best recent examples are contemporary design responses. This approach suggests an honesty and confidence in our modern architecture which will be valued by future generations.

A modern building which disregards its setting is very likely to be regarded as unsuccessful both now and in the future.

2.4 Scotland’s Historic Settings

Scotland’s historic villages, towns and cities are celebrated for their unique natural and man-made character. It is important not only to identify and to protect their character and setting but also to ensure that new development responds to their existing form and layout. Successful new design frequently grows out of a careful study and analysis of the nature, form and history of a specific place. This helps identify the ‘DNA’ of a place – how it has come down to us today and what were the key factors that have influenced its current form.

It is important to stress that this process of analysis does not only describe what currently makes up a place – the form, layout and materials used – but it also involves understanding how its individual elements were created and why they took the form they did. Getting behind the appearance of a place is crucial to understanding and appreciating the linear patterns of development within a historic burgh, a planned neo-classical suburb or a 20th-century new town.

Each place has its own character and its own story to tell.



His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen, Extension by LDN Architects, 2005

3.0 PRINCIPLES FOR NEW DESIGN IN HISTORIC SETTINGS

3.1 General Principles for New Design in Historic Settings

Without diminishing the creative role of the designer, it is possible to identify some general principles which can act as prompts to guide successful new design in historic settings. These prompts will not guarantee high quality in themselves, but as is the case with *Designing Places*, we hope that they will provide a useful checklist for designers and stakeholders on the client and assessment side of the design process.

The eight general principles will sit alongside the design process as the project develops. They should be applied whatever design solution is arrived at, from the reticent and recessive to the boldly contemporary. The designer should consider all the principles and balance them rather than focus on particular aspects. An approach from one aspect alone is unlikely to be successful. These principles can also act as a useful checklist for local authority decision makers in exploring whether schemes have been suitably developed.

New development should respond to:

- Urban structure
- Urban grain
- Density and mix
- Scale
- Materials and detailing
- Landscape
- Views and landmarks
- Historical development

1. Urban structure

New development should seek to understand, acknowledge and make a positive contribution to the existing urban structure, the pattern of development blocks, streets and buildings. It is the interrelationship of these elements – rather than their particular formal characteristics – that comprises urban structure.

A new intervention which responds well to urban structure would sit well within a group rather than associate itself with a particular building.



Scottish Parliament Building, Edinburgh, RMJM/EMBT, 2004

(© image credit Urban Initiatives)

In some locations, the urban structure may have been compromised by previous development or demolition and new development will present an opportunity to repair the damage. This does not mean slavish reconstruction of lost urban structures but it does ensure that a knowledge and understanding of urban structures has been taken into account in the design process.

2. Urban grain

New developments should respect urban grain – the pattern of streets and spaces – rather than of buildings. Urban grain tends to be influenced by the rhythm of architectural composition and the prevailing relationship of solid-to-void in buildings. A very 'solid' urban grain with tall buildings and narrow streets, for example as seen in Edinburgh's Old Town, tends to produce a closely delineated and confined effect, where an open arrangement, such as in the tenemental and terraced suburbs of Glasgow, with its very long streetscapes provide a different 'grain' and will require a different solution. One element of this is the 'permeability' of the grain – that is, how people move between spaces and the nature of long and short views.



(© image credit Urban Initiatives)

Royal Mile, Edinburgh



(© image credit Andrew Lee)

Reception Centre, Edinburgh Castle, Gareth Hoskins Architects, 2007

3. Density and Mix

Density and mix of uses are important elements in creating the right variety and vitality for an area.

Density is the amount of development that can be supported on a particular piece of land and will vary according to the type of use. It can be expressed as a plot ratio for non-residential uses and as dwellings or habitable rooms per hectare for residential.

New development in historic places can respond to the amount, nature and mix of current uses, particularly where they are distinctive to the area and relate to its historical growth. Glasgow's Merchant City, which had primarily been commercial now mixes residential, creative industries, retail and leisure within converted listed buildings and high quality new build.

Existing densities and uses should not necessarily determine future patterns. Urban regeneration often requires a new approach to achieve the right dynamic. The success of Holyrood North in Edinburgh or the development of the Camperdown Works in Dundee, for example, was based on a planned approach to these issues that brought a mix of uses to single industry sites.

4. Scale

New design should consider the surrounding scale, hierarchy and massing of the existing built form.

Scale is made up of height and mass and is mostly relative in that building height is generally perceived in relation to the height of a person, width of a street or space, nearby buildings, particular landmarks or strategic views. A six-storey building may be low if the surrounding context is two storeys and low adjacent to ten storeys. The appropriate scale may also relate to the wider impact of the development.

It is important to scope the sphere of influence of a proposal at an early stage using an agreed set of key views.

Within historic areas architects often used proportion and other architectural devices to make building heights appear more sympathetic. Cornices, window openings, and roofline setbacks were often used to reduce the apparent scale of buildings. In other situations, architects might also wish to increase apparent scale to give a building greater monumentality or presence.



(© image credit Andrew Lee)

Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre, Gareth Hoskins Architects, 2007



(© image credit Andrew Lee)

Reidvale Centre, Dennistoun, Glasgow, JMArchitects, 2008

5. Materials and Detailing

Earlier historical development tended to make use of indigenous materials found near the site. Improved transport in the 18th and 19th centuries brought materials from further afield and the late 19th and 20th centuries saw the introduction of steel, glass and concrete to the Scottish cityscape. 'Traditional' materials make a strong contribution to local distinctiveness.

The historic centres of Scotland's towns and cities, burghs and villages exemplify the use of local or indigenous materials and vernacular traditions in establishing their distinctive identity. In these locations, high quality sustainable materials, well-detailed and finished will tend to harmonise with traditional building stock.

The sensitive use of appropriate colour, texture and pattern of materials, whether traditional or contemporary, is also important. Their use and detailing, particularly near to open landscapes, is crucial in making a development stand out or blend in.

6. Landscape

A thorough understanding of the topography of the area – its prevailing landform – is essential for design that responds to setting. Scotland has a wealth of historic communities that appear to 'grow' out of the landscape because of their form, texture and colour. New development should aspire to blend and coalesce with the existing built form without simply replicating it.

Landscape not only comprises the natural features of an area but is also the product of human intervention, represented, for example, in field patterns and in surviving upstanding and buried archaeological remains.

7. Views and Landmarks

Often historic buildings or clusters and features within rural, designed or urban landscapes are locally, regionally or nationally important landmarks because their distinctive character contributes strongly to the identity of an area.

Views embrace wide open landscapes whereas existing vistas may be channelled or terminated by landscape features and landmark buildings, intentionally or accidentally. New design should consider ways to enhance or protect their function as landmarks.

In some instances new designs might provide the opportunity to create new vistas towards landmarks, restore older views that have been lost or compromised, or create dynamic juxtapositions of old and new, so adding texture and variety to the townscape.

8. Historical Development

Layers of history and associated development generate patterns within an area. An understanding of the historic evolution of a place is essential in determining whether a historic setting needs enhancement or whether lost elements should be restored.

New design should consider and respond to these layers of history – the 'narrative' of the place. Analysis of historical maps along with archive material and published sources are very useful analytical tools to understand the historical development of a place.



Graham Square, Glasgow, McKeown Alexander Architects, 1999

4.0 METHOD

4.1 INTRODUCTION

A methodology is suggested here as a way of ensuring that new design fulfils the general principles identified in Section 3.0. It sets out a process which connects new design with its historic setting through the understanding, documentation and interpretation of the place.

This method provides a framework for the design process: analysis; the selection of a design response; and the communication of the solution. It should inform the process and provide meaningful outcome for the designer, client, developer, assessor or third party. It should provide transparency, validation and a clear audit trail of the design process. The success of this approach relies on the appointment of a designer with the appropriate design and analytical skills and relevant experience at the beginning of any project.

Having completed the study, the outputs of the analysis should form part of any submission to planning authorities. It should be clear how it relates to local and national policies, supplementary guidance etc, and demonstrate how the design solution was reached.

The main benefits in using this method are that it provides a clear and verifiable design that:

- is logical and clearly laid out
- provides a means by which design solutions can be justified and assessed
- provides a common understanding
- has been agreed as good practice by key stakeholders
- provides prompts for thinking about key issues and a framework for their discussion
- can reduce time and cost
- can be adapted to the size and nature of the project and will be relevant to small-scale infill as well as large-scale masterplanning.

4.2 THE PROCESS

The method involves a four stage process.

Stage One

Select a team and undertake a thorough analysis of the historic setting. This should be carried out at the initial stage of the project and must draw on the appropriate level of expertise.

Stage Two

Evaluate significance and draw out conclusions as to how far the findings of the analysis should inform the design process.

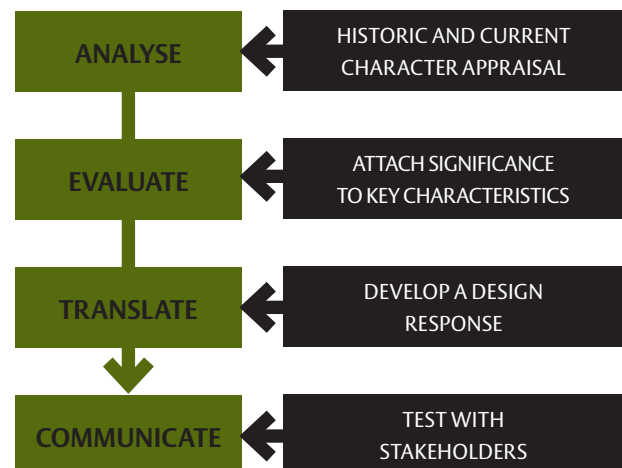
Stage Three

Translate the findings of the analysis and evaluation into an appropriate design response, which is fully justified with a clear audit trail of the design choices.

Stage Four

The conclusions should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

PROCESS



4.3 ANALYSE

Before starting work a professional with the right design expertise and experience of building with sensitivity in historic settings should be selected. Following this a thorough analysis of the place should be carried out to generate an understanding of the historic setting, its context, character, sense of place, significance and chronology. Without this it is difficult to make informed decisions about proposed changes and their impact.

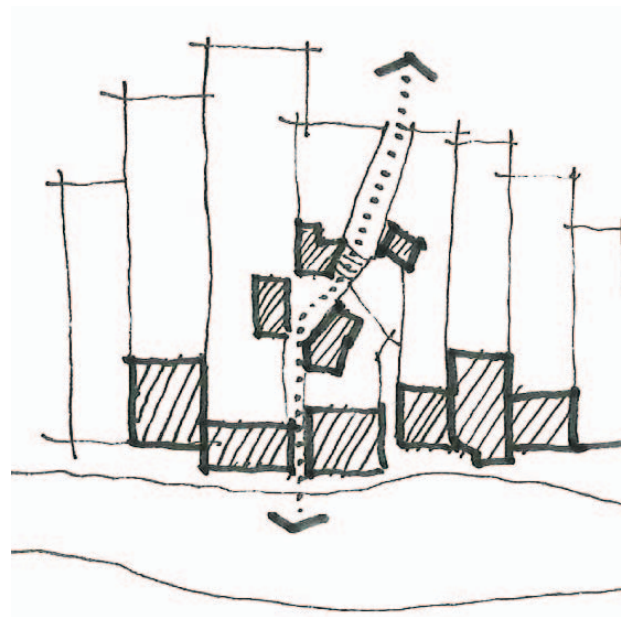
The process should follow the general principles of informed conservation. In general, change should not be made unless the impact of change is understood. The extent of analysis and the geographical area that it covers will depend on the nature and size of the project. For a small scale infill an analysis of the immediate surroundings may be appropriate, for a larger scheme an analysis of the effects of a proposed development to a whole area, town or city may be necessary.

An analysis of the elements which combine to create the historic setting is recommended. The table on page 13 lists the elements which should be considered, how they should be analysed and the outcomes.

Information from many sources will add value to the analysis. These include:

- National and local designations (World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Inventory of Historic Battlefields, National Scenic Areas)
- Relevant local planning guidance
- Conservation Management Plans
- Historic and present day maps
- Field surveys and site visits
- Archives (Dean of Guild records, RCAHMS, SCRAN, PASTMAP, local authority historic environment records)
- Oral history

A multi-disciplinary approach may be required using the skills and experience of a variety of environmental professionals, from urban designers to landscape architects, archaeologists and conservation specialists.



Analysis of typology of streets and blocks

ANALYSIS	HOW	OUTCOME
Urban Structure	<p>Carry out an analysis of how the development's streets, blocks, buildings and open spaces link together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the urban structure coherent and well-defined? • Is there an obvious hierarchy of various elements? • Where does the development sit within this hierarchy? • Where was it derived from – single period or multiple factors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the urban structure and an initial idea of whether the site needs to 'fit in' or to help re-establish structural coherence.
Urban Grain	<p>The urban grain around the site should be examined and the general pattern established.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the site sit comfortably within the surrounding urban grain? • Is there scope to open up new routes through the site that would contribute to the urban grain? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A record of the urban grain in the areas adjacent to the site. • An understanding of the need and capability of the site to contribute to that urban grain.
Density and Mix	<p>Historic environments, particularly in urban locations, are often densely built up. The assessment should examine the site, which may be in an area which has a mix of uses or where the mix is defined by a single predominant use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does density vary in the area? • How high are the densities around public transport nodes, towards town centres, parks and waterfront areas? • What is the mix of uses in the area? • Is there a mix of housing types? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the variations in density and mix in the area and the scope to translate these to the site.
Scale: Height and Massing	<p>The height and massing of the area should be examined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevailing height of the area? • Are there any significantly taller buildings? • Is the size of the site large enough to require the massing to be broken down? • If so, are there any existing buildings that have used a particular technique to break down massing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear indication of the general height and massing in the area. • An indication of landmarks and taller buildings.

NB These questions are not exhaustive but are indicative of the design process.

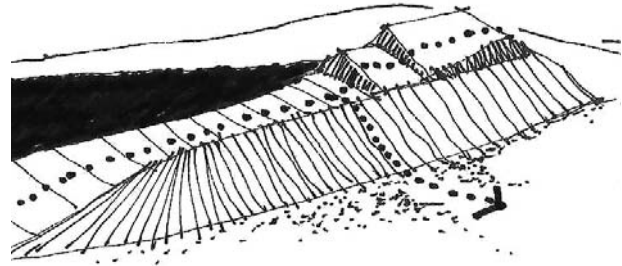
4.4 EVALUATE

The results of the analysis (information, images, maps etc.) should be evaluated in order to draw out and assess the significance of the individual elements of the historic setting. The evaluation should enable the designer to identify which elements of the historic setting play a key role, for example building heights, materials, open space. Some places will be able to accommodate a greater degree of change than others. The evaluation should make this clear.

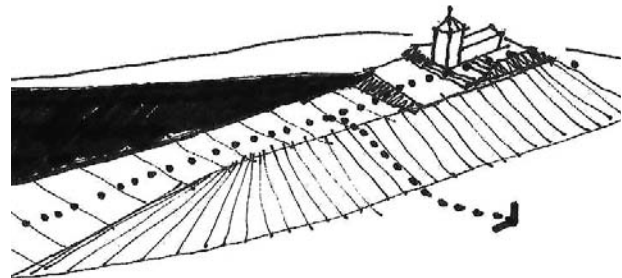
Where change impacts directly on a historic asset, we need to understand its significance to enable that change to be managed effectively. This is as true of a historic setting as it is an individual building. The evaluation can be carried out by allocating relative levels of value or significance to each element of the setting (street width, block size etc.).

Outputs

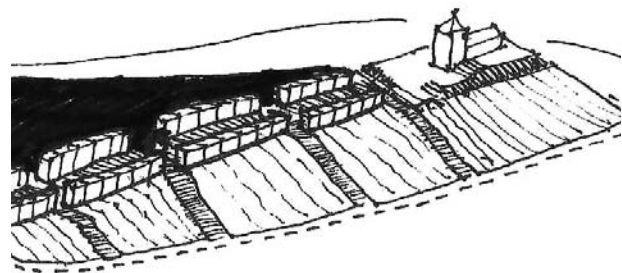
The main outputs from this stage of the process will be an enhanced understanding of the place and the historic setting through an evaluation of its significance. This should be recorded and documented, contributing to the audit trail of the decision-making process. A short report, tables which chart significance and diagrams and illustrations will help clarify the process.



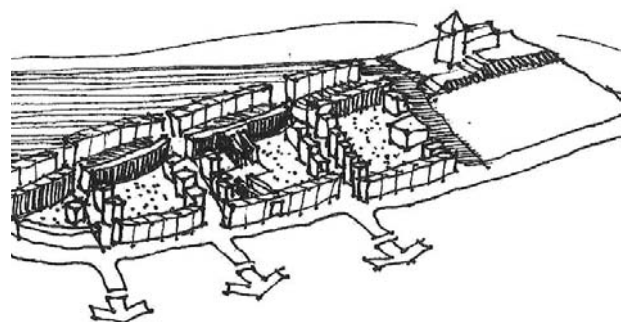
Topography and straight routes identified as significant and distinctive



Cultural significance of landmarks, located along straight routes which capitalises on the topographic setting



Existing urban form informed by history and geography



Development of urban form, cultural significance and geographical opportunities influence decisions for future development

4.5 TRANSLATE

The information and lessons learnt about the historic setting and its character needs to be translated into sympathetic design solutions through the development of a design vision.

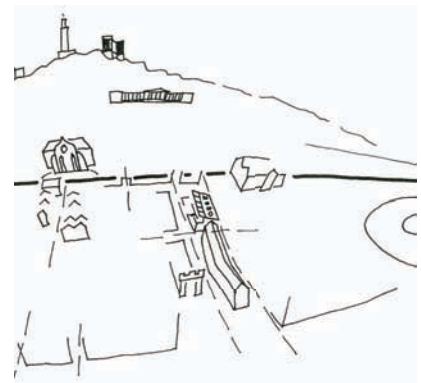
A justification for the selected design response and a clear audit trail of the steps that have led to these decisions is required.

Outputs

The likely output of this stage is a report setting out the design vision, concepts, objectives or principles that have informed the design solution. It may be in the form of a design brief, development brief, masterplan or set of annotated diagrams – in essence a design statement. This should form a part of the documentation supporting a planning application. The report should give a clear expression of how the designer arrived at the proposed solution through a series of linked stages.



(© image credit Elder & Cannon)



(© image Malcolm Fraser Architects)

4.6 COMMUNICATE

The key to the success of the whole process is communication to key stakeholders and consultees. The nature and scale of the project will determine which bodies should be consulted. These are likely to be:

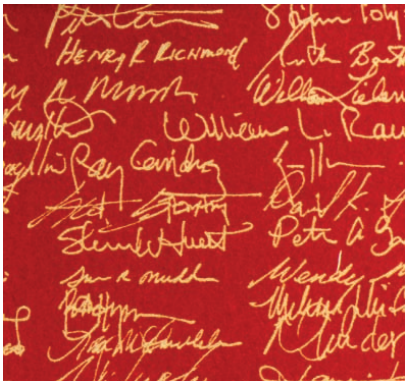
- The planning authority
- Key government agencies including Historic Scotland
- Architecture and Design Scotland
- The local community
- Other interest groups and individuals

In order to communicate effectively the outputs from Stage 1, 2 and 3 need to be appropriate for the target audience, concise and easily understood.



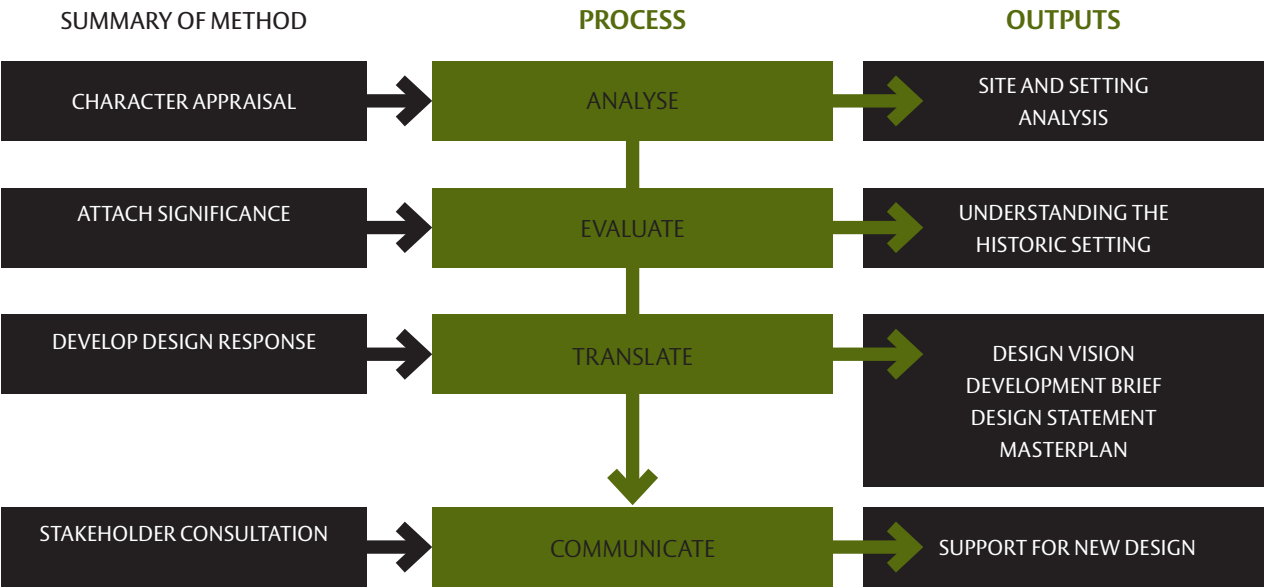
(© image credit Urban Initiatives)

A community consultation event



(© image credit Urban Initiatives)

Community endorsement of proposal by signing a charter



5.0 CASE STUDIES: AN OVERVIEW

Contexts

Seven case studies have been selected that demonstrate design excellence in a historic setting, falling into the following themes: Urban Grid, Loose-fit Urban, Small Town, Rural, Historic Landscape, Extension and Public Space. Within each of these types there are, of course, many different settings, but this publication, and the case studies it features, is about an attitude towards understanding a place, rather than being a catalogue of good buildings or a precise instruction manual.

Choosing the Case Studies

The seven projects are chosen as being good exemplars from the seven settings. First – this being a study of contemporary practice – a start date of the mid 1990s was chosen. This date coincides with a recovery of some confidence in the craft of building following the uncertainties of post-modernism. Next, while all settings have a “history”, the setting for the buildings chosen were demonstrably historical.

The long list was then chosen. Post-1994 buildings, embracing historic contexts, were scanned from Prospect magazine’s “100 Best Modern Scottish Buildings”. As it was published in 2005, the list was then augmented by the shortlists for the RIAS Doolan Building of the Year Awards from recent years.

Exemplars from the long list were then chosen and examined at workshops and confirmed as being useful for this exercise. Some of these case study exemplars are from very early in the timeframe and were pioneering projects, providing lasting lessons. For example, Richard Murphy’s early work, such as the rear “Extension”, introduced (or reintroduced) a concentration on qualities of light, view and openness to landscape that characterises much of the best work on these pages; while Page\Park’s “Public Space” at Glasgow Cathedral Precinct, from 1988, promoted a contemporary approach using simply-detailed materials.

01 URBAN GRID: ST ALOYSIUS SCHOOL

Project: three new buildings to augment the campus of Glasgow's St Aloysius School.

Location: three sites on Hill Street in Garnethill, north of Sauchiehall Street and close to the Glasgow School of Art, in the Glasgow Central Conservation Area.

Designer: Elder & Cannon Architects; **Client:** St Aloysius;
Budgets: £3m, £4m, £3m; **Completions:** 1998, 2003, 2007.

Setting

The Glasgow grid has been one of the city's most significant exports, informing the development of the urban plan that enabled the growth of America's towns and cities.

This long, east-west ridge is one of Glasgow's better preserved areas, with a background of good stone tenements (including the National Trust for Scotland's historic Tenement House) and some fine, stone, institutional buildings (some of them part of the School's existing campus) including Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art, located on the next block to the south. These institutional buildings, usually 19th/20th century, tend to be 'object' buildings, conforming to the general city pattern in terms of massing and materials.

Phases

St Aloysius is a private, Roman Catholic school, in Garnethill. The school commissioned Elder and Cannon Architects to carry out an estate strategy, and an Options Appraisal to evaluate where their growing school roll could be accommodated. While the options included moving to a new campus, the school reaffirmed its commitment to the centre of Glasgow and set out a programme for securing nearby sites, and a phased programme for three new buildings on each of these sites. The school returned to Elder & Cannon for each phase.



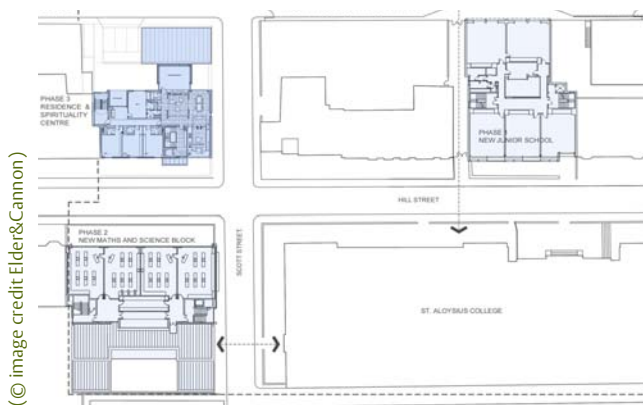
(© image credit Elder&Cannon)

Central Glasgow grid with Garnethill, running east-west, in shadow



(© image credit Keith Hunter)

The Junior School



(© image credit Elder&Cannon)

Left: Site Plan: Primary School (1998) right; Clavius Building (2003)
bottom left; Residence (2007) top left, all facing onto Hill Street

Opportunity

It is unusual for institutions facing such major change to commit to urban environments, and very positive that the school should see the value in its pupils being taught within the hurly-burly of the city. The setting of Garnethill demanded new buildings that repaired and enhanced their urban context, while demonstrating how the dense, integrative city enhanced, in turn, its pupils' learning experiences.

Design Process

The architects were clear that the task of repair and renewal of the urban fabric meant following the general urban scale and pattern. Re-affirming the urban wall to the street in the mid-terrace, primary school site, by infill, was straightforward. For the Clavius and Residence buildings, at the two corner sites, the terrace form was robustly terminated. In the backs of the buildings, in the space analogous to the tenements' back greens, all the buildings offer a sophisticated series of open or enclosed courts, each differing according to their orientation and the need to ensure the amenity of their neighbours, as well as their monumentality.

With the form of the buildings set, the articulation of these forms is driven by their concentration on providing spaces which enhance and encourage a rich learning experience for the school's pupils. The density, incident and connectivity of the city is embraced, with the classrooms and gathering-spaces of the school shielded, then opened-up, to the richness of the urban townscape, as appropriate.

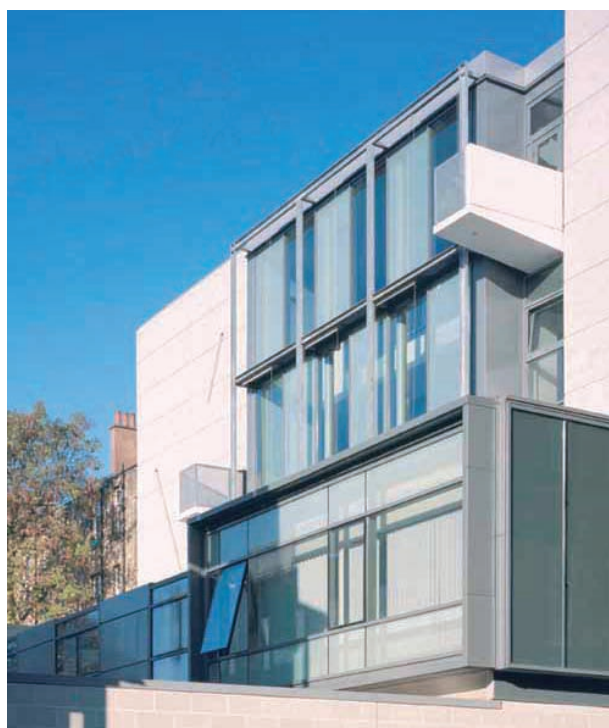
The buildings are constructed in pre-cast concrete and glass, with patterns of louvres to large south-facing glazed elevations. The concrete is fine quality and in its weight and density, as in its austerity, it matches the fine stone work of its neighbours.

Overview and Lessons

These three buildings represent a powerful recovery of the urban grid, taking its structure and grain and uncovering fresh virtues in its form, while showing it due respect. The buildings demonstrate that, while the dense, nucleated city possesses virtues as an urban 'stage set', it is in the designers' concentration on creating humane, connected places within it, that its civility is revealed.



(© image credit Elder&Cannon)



(© image credit Keith Hunter)

The Back Courts, Clavius Building



The Clavius Building



The Residence



Hill Street, looking east along Garnethill's ridge

(© image credits Keith Hunter)

02 LOOSE-FIT URBAN: SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY

Project: a small reference and lending library for Scottish and international poetry, with an evolving brief that sought a contemporary building, rooted in its context, to demonstrate poetry's living heritage.

Location: the Canongate area of Edinburgh's Old Town, within the Old Town Conservation Area and the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The building is set within the wider, masterplanned, "Holyrood North" redevelopment.

Designer: Malcolm Fraser Architects; **Client:** The Scottish Poetry Library; **Budget:** £560,000; **Completion:** 1999.

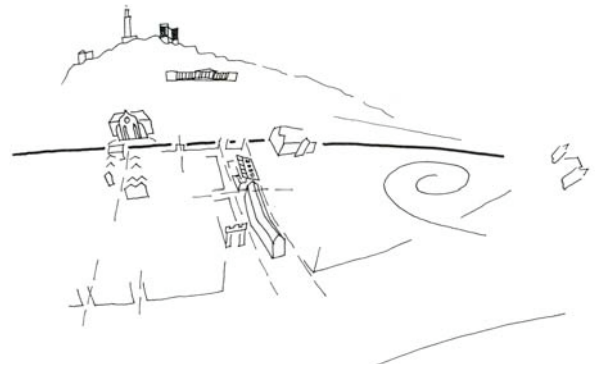
Setting

Although now seamlessly connected along the Royal Mile Cannongate was formerly a separate burgh with its own character. It was developed in a similar way to Edinburgh with narrow frontages and long narrow 'rigs' or gardens but it retained its suburban character until a huge influx of industry and workers in the 19th century created a very densely-packed urban area, later penetrated by major streets lined with 'improved' tenements.

By the late 20th century the area was in decline, with its many breweries closing and population departing. Civic agencies collaborated to promote regeneration with a masterplanning competition for redundant brewery land. The award-winning Holyrood North masterplan by John Hope Architects, was instrumental in guiding sensitive development by reintroducing the close pattern and promoting a mix of uses in this historic setting.

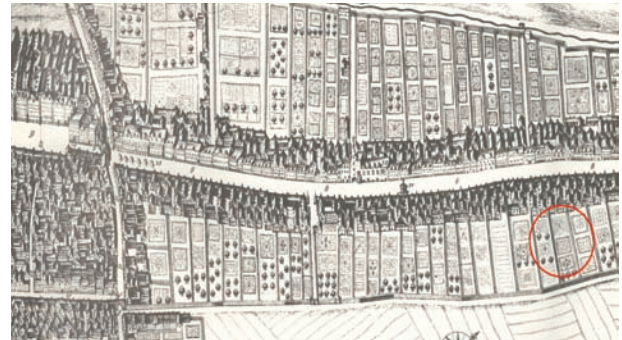
Opportunity

The topography of the site, south-facing down the close, with historic walls at its back and a sunny outlook to the iconic landscape of Salisbury Crag, allowed a contemporary concentration on orientation towards sun and landscape and the exploitation of the social-placemaking that a close offers.



(© image credit Malcolm Fraser Architects)

Above: the site as seen from Salisbury Crag, with Calton Hill to the north and the new Parliament, and Holyrood Palace, to the East. Below: the tail-end of Edinburgh's High Street and Netherbow Port (left), and the Canongate, with its gardens, in 1647.



(Edinburgh City Libraries)

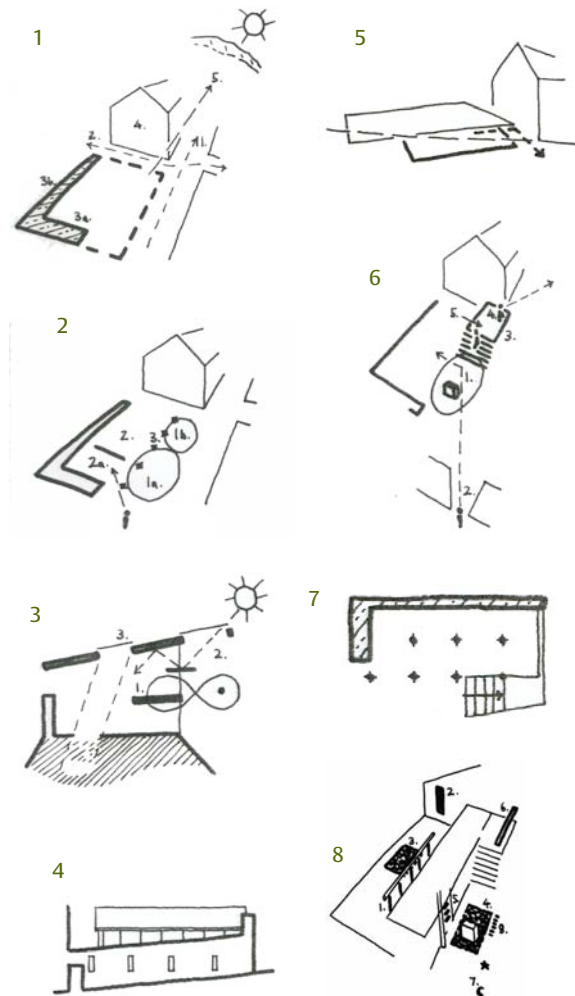


(© image credits Keith Hunter)

Interiors showing the descending, 17th-century close wall and its arrowslits, glazed to form intimate windows to study carrels

Design Process

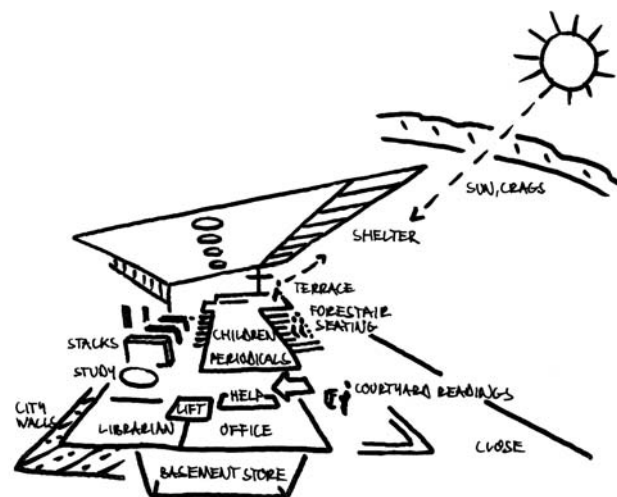
The bringing together of Project, Setting and Opportunity, and its relationship to the wider masterplan, was set-out by a Design Statement that was a series of explanatory diagrams. These showed, in summary:



- 1 the setting and opportunity;
- 2 how the spaces the brief demanded settled into this;
- 3 how light was accepted into the building's section;
- 4 how the new building settled over the historic wall behind it;
- 5 the slope exploited;
- 6 the social realm defined by a forestair and the forestair's other uses;
- 7 the frame and enclosing masonry; and
- 8 how work with artists clarified an understanding of the interrelationship of building, language and landscape.

Overview and Lessons

Analysis of, and respect for, the site's historic urban grain and structure, combined with a contemporary concentration on the building's relationship to views and landscape, has produced a building whose modernity is rooted in tradition. In addition the use of good quality materials, some traditional and some novel, has meant this project is successful on a number of levels.



(© image credits Malcolm Fraser Architects)



(© image credit Keith Hunter)

03 SMALL TOWN: PIER ARTS CENTRE

Project: an expanded home for the Pier Arts Centre, focussed on the outstanding Margaret Gardiner collection of 20th-century British modern art, with its emphasis on small pieces and art works that look to the sea. The commission was won in competition.

Location: visible on the approach from the ferry, between the main street and the foreshore, Victoria Street, Stromness, Orkney, within the Conservation Area.

Designer: Reiach and Hall Architects; **Client:** The Pier Arts Centre; **Budget:** £2.9m; **Completion:** 2007.

Setting

Scotland's small towns are principally formed and adapted around the agricultural, fishing and associated trading lives of their inhabitants. In the far north these patterns are mediated, to a greater extent than normal, by the pressing need for shelter – for modifying the prevailing climate. Buildings tend to be formed perpendicular to each other, to shelter and enclose space, often with the first gable set to the wind. The raggedy nature of Stromness' resulting town fabric not only provides shelter, but snags and disperses the wind. While the main street has both buildings with gables and buildings with fronts onto it, it is gable ends that face out onto the bay at Hamnavoe: boatsheds, saillofts and fishstores that fringe the foreshore – making use of the Udal Law, a Norse derived legal system, that still applies in the Northern Isles. The Pier Arts Centre's site and old buildings were once the offices and stores of the Hudson Bay Company, and face both the main street and the foreshore.

Opportunity

Small towns have largely lost the intimate commercial uses that articulated and enlivened their cores. This has left these traditional contexts admired by most, but often degraded and underused. Towns have, as a result, become "doughnuttred", with bungalows surrounding emptying cores. There is an opportunity for the value of these cores to be recaptured. Through new uses that combine careful repair and renewal with openness to their natural contexts, the core can be enlivened once more.

Design Process

The competition was won with a single, very simple drawing, that communicated the architects' understanding of the town structure, their respect for the old, adapted buildings the Gallery used, and the introduction of a new element, familiar in form yet strange in aspect and detail.



Stromness Plan from 1880

(National Library of Scotland)



Below: Competition Drawing



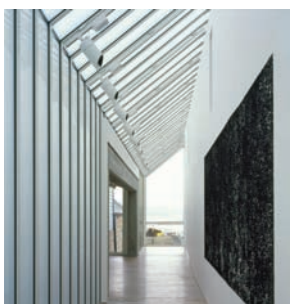
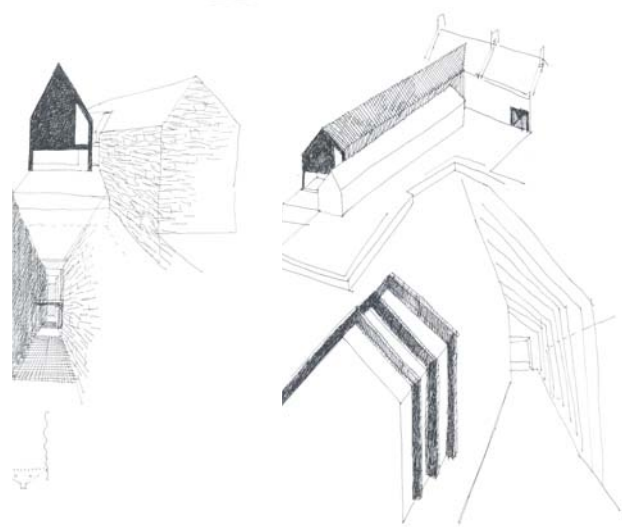
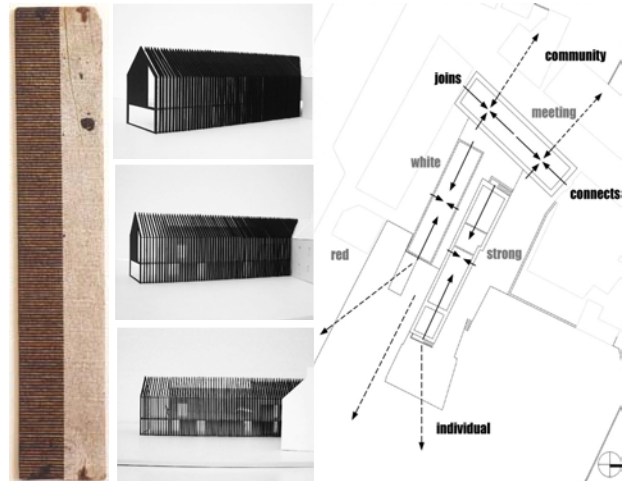
(© image credits Reiach and Hall)

The bringing-together of setting, brief and opportunity, involved the architect reflecting on the special qualities of “a vivid, imaginative north” and on the virtues of “reticence” and “shade”. The familiar form of the new addition achieved its relevance to the brief, containing and opening-out the collection to its setting. The architect references the artist Roger Ackling, who focuses the sun to burn lines in driftwood, suggesting ribbed cladding whose veiling or revelatory qualities were investigated in sketch and model form. The new form, and its ribs, were clad in black patented zinc, chosen for its “softness” and for “a quality that is ambivalent and melancholic”.

The architect has written: “The culture we have experienced in the North is suited to our need to work quietly and thoroughly, attempting to understand a situation and work with it to create buildings that are not only useful but also poetic; buildings that are still.”

Overview and Lessons

The setting is enhanced not only by the cultural use but by the demonstration that the virtues and values of the old town – the tight, quiet entry from the street and the long view out to sea, the slap of the waves against the pier and the rocking of the boats – enrich our daily lives.



04 RURAL: LOTTE GLOB HOUSE, SUTHERLAND



Project: the far north-west has come to support a community of artists and craftspeople. The brief was for a new house and studio for the ceramic artist Lotte Glob, that would be affordable and sensitive to its context, and to the relationship of her and her work to the landscape of north-west Scotland.

Location: site beside Loch Eriboll, Sutherland, in the far north-west of Scotland, in a non-designated landscape.

Designer: Gokay Deveci Architect; **Client:** Lotte Glob; **Budget:** £75,000; **Completion:** 2004.

Setting

A bleak landscape swept by icesheets, but with a history of human occupation that ranges from the early marks of civilisation, through the highland clearances and surrender of the German U-boat fleet in Loch Eriboll at the end of the Second World War, to the present day.

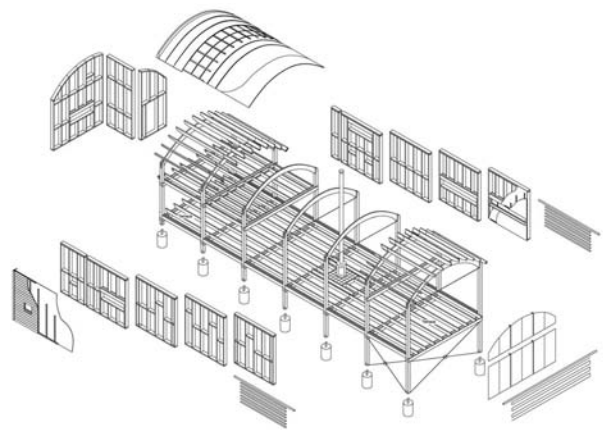
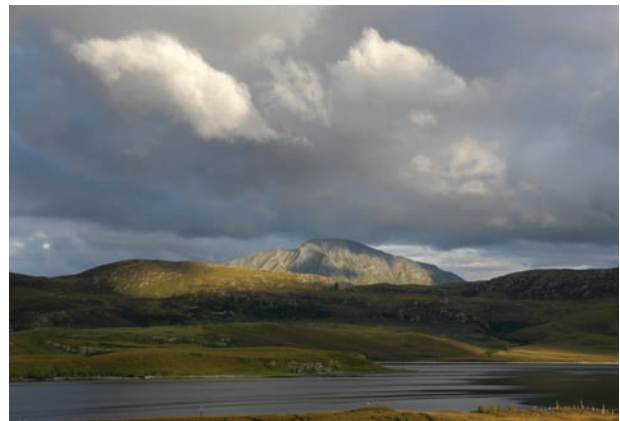
Opportunity

Much of the best Scottish building is simple and plain, making virtue out of the necessity of using local materials and available technology in efficient, cost-effective ways. Today, however, the technology and materials available to us are skewed with “vernacular” interpreted as style, rather than as an efficient, rooted means of production.

The limited £75,000 budget, coupled with the client’s wish for the house to complement her lifestyle and relationship to the landscape, focussed attention on what a contemporary vernacular might be.

Design Process

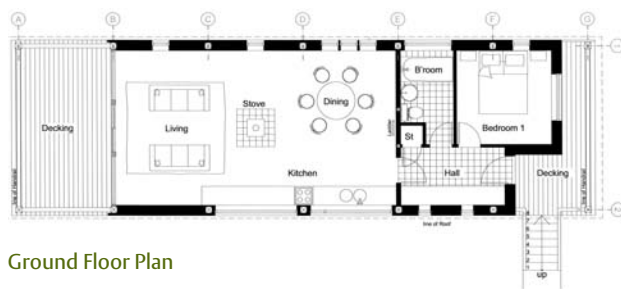
The practicalities and efficiencies of timber – as the predominant local material available today – are exploited via an engineered, laminated timber frame that allows the building to float within the landscape and focus on distant views (right). This frame is then highly-insulated and clad in timber and copper – materials that will age and weather – and the ability of a frame construction to accept different window configurations is exploited, to engage the interior with the landscape.



Overview and Lessons

The house sits in its landscape with the self-possession and lack of self-awareness of a harled stone cottage, matching it in its relevance to its time and place.

The lessons learned from this simple response to time, place and the pragmatics of supply and technology could inform rural development anywhere. It is in projects like this, through their efficiency, cost-effectiveness, use of local materials and available technologies married with today's patterns of living, such as the desire for a warm and light-filled living space which engages with the landscape, that a truly contemporary vernacular will be found.



Ground Floor Plan



05 HISTORIC LANDSCAPE: CULLODEN VISITOR CENTRE

Project: a replacement visitor and memorial centre, won in competition, in association with exhibition designer Ralph Appelbaum, comprising exhibition spaces, education space, restaurant, shop and support facilities. The building is part of the wider reinterpretation and reinstatement of the landscape of the Culloden Battlefield, to inspire and inform around 250,000 visitors a year.

Location: Culloden Moor, east of Inverness, within a Conservation Area, containing a number of Scheduled Monuments and a war grave.

Designer: Gareth Hoskins Architects; **Client:** National Trust for Scotland; **Budget:** £9.4m; **Completion:** 2007.

Setting

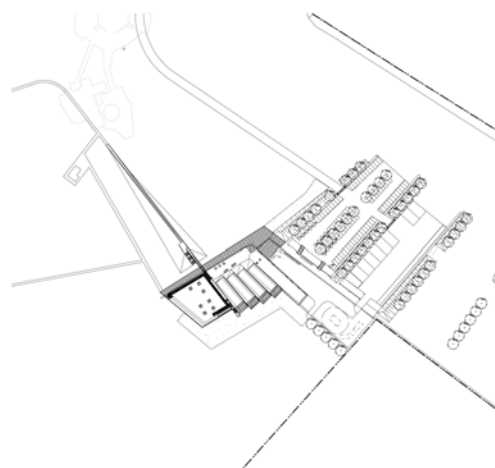
The bleak battlefield site of Culloden is that of the last pitched battle fought on British soil, where in 1746 the Hanoverian Army defeated Charles Edward Stuart's forces to end the final Jacobite Rising. The site is the final resting place for over 1800 soldiers, and there is little to mark the battle site physically apart from a memorial cairn and modest graves and markers.

The previous visitor centre was found, through recent research, to be sitting close to the edge of the battlefield. The National Trust for Scotland has resolved over a number of years to reinstate the full battlefield and recover its haunting context while increasing access and visitor numbers to enhanced visitor facilities.



Memorial wall and berm

(image credits Andrew Lee)



Above: Site Plan showing the 150 metre landscaped berm leading out to the Battlefield

Left: Battlefield Plan

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| ① Site boundary | ⑦ 'Well of the dead' |
| ② Access road and car park | ⑧ Government graves (tbc) |
| ③ Location of new visitor centre | ⑨ Old road (reinstated as footpath) |
| ④ Government troops | ⑩ Failure of Jacobite charge |
| ⑤ Clan graves and memorial cairn | ⑪ Leanach enclosure (charge of Argyll militia) |
| ⑥ Jacobite troops | ⑫ Leanach Cottage |

(© image credit Gareth Hoskins Architects)

(© image credit Gareth Hoskins Architects)

Opportunity

Visitor Centres today are expected to explain a site without detracting from it, while providing the essential facilities that visitors have come to expect. The challenge is to make a building that does not divert attention, but has its own integrity.

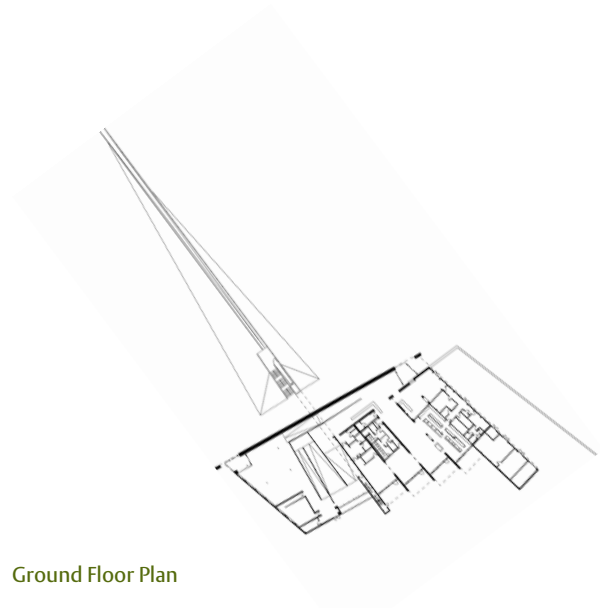
At Culloden, the siting of the new building lay at the heart of the success of the project, preserving a sense of openness to the battlefield, allowing it to dominate.

Design Process

Given the extreme sensitivity of the site and international significance of the project there were many partners and consultees. The Trust's own archaeologists were involved in the design development of the project. In this sensitive location, the materials are, in the main, locally sourced with an emphasis on sustainability.

Overview and Lessons

While the designed earthen platform directs visitors out into, and back from, the battlefield, the building turns its main spaces and exuberant roof away from it to address the stunning views from Strathnairn, placing the "memorial wall" between the building and the moor. The detached relationship continues with the exhibition, which provides a different, more controlled, visitor experience. The aspect from the moor is very muted, with the result that the buildings have significantly less impact than the previous visitor centre, which sat on the skyline and was a fraction of the size of the present building. The careful choice of materials, locally-sourced and used in their natural state, further settles the building into its context.



Ground Floor Plan

(© image credits Gareth Hoskins Architects)



Roof form

(© image credit Andrew Lee)



Path back from the Battlefield

(© image credit Andrew Lee)

06 EXTENSION: 49 GILMOUR ROAD

Project: a study and new kitchen extension to a private, unlisted, end-terrace house, reflecting the reality that, today, the occupants of such properties tend to make their everyday living spaces in the less-formal backs of their homes (in the former maid's quarters and workplace), opening out to the garden.

Location: south of the Edinburgh city centre, originally just outside the Craigmillar Park Conservation Area. This designation has now been extended to include Gilmour Road.

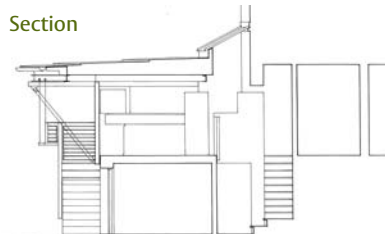
Designer: Richard Murphy Architects; **Client:** Mr and Mrs Francis; **Budget:** £45,000; **Completion:** 1994.

Setting

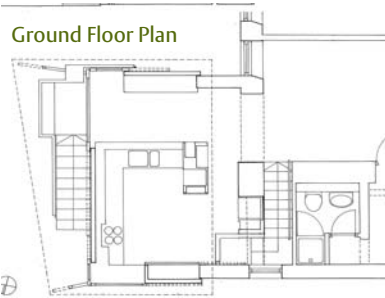
The neighbourhood is characterised by individual residential plots, and the occasional institutional building, containing substantial, stone Victorian terraces and villas with mature private gardens to the front and rear.



Section



Ground Floor Plan



(© image credits Richard Murphy Architects)

The open character of the area affords fine views outwards towards Arthur's Seat, Blackford Hill and Craigmillar Castle.

The formal street facades, and general urban grain of walls and gardens, are little-altered, giving an impression of quiet, residential solidity. The project's immediate setting is the less-formal, garden elevation of a historic villa. The garden is tight, compared to surrounding properties, but gives onto a communal lawn. Beyond is a long view of Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh's urban mountain.

Opportunity

The building is typical of many that are traditional in that they are constrained in their ability to "open-up" to views, landscape and sunshine by the limitations of the materials available in the past. This project allowed an opportunity, on the less-formal rear of the house, to exploit the qualities of modern materials and construction, in contrast to the virtues of the historic building being extended.

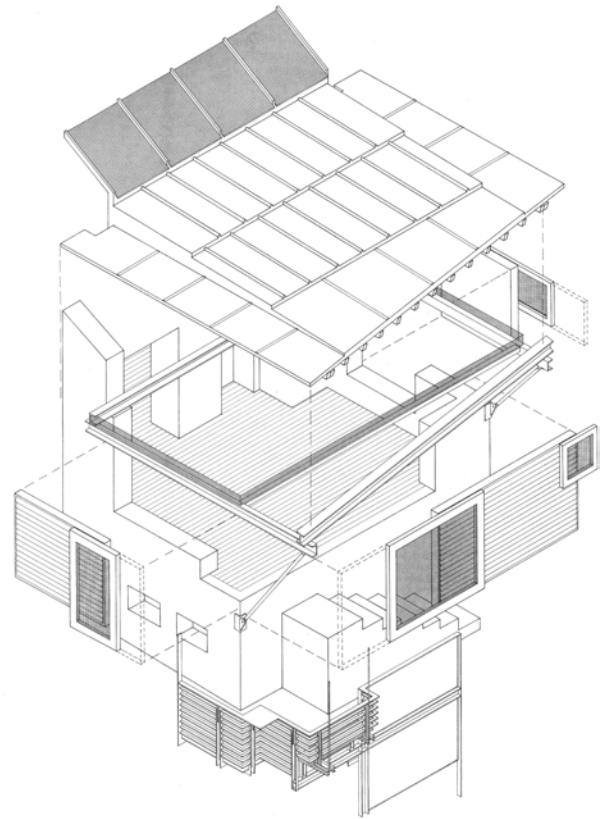
Design Process

The turning-away from modernism that the standard housebuilder's "vernacular" represents, is contradicted by the patio door; a continuation of the Arts and Crafts desire for a direct connection with the garden and a Modernist concern for light and air. Here, an opportunity exists to reintroduce these simple qualities to the upper end of the housing market via spatial and structural dynamism and excellent craftsmanship.

Overview and Lessons

Although designed and approved prior to the introduction of the Conservation Area, conservation designations need not imply a blanket protectionism. Here, respect for the quiet, formality of the street scene complements a more relaxed opening-up at the rear – an understanding that the grain and structure of the area has a hierarchy which may prohibit or encourage bold interventions.

The work has been carried out with care, craft and exuberance, a contemporary solution guided by respect for, and exploitation of, the qualities of landscape and view that are so important to the Conservation Area designation, using good quality, contemporary materials whose contrast to the materials of the original house is justified by their appropriateness to the new brief.



07 PUBLIC SPACE: GLASGOW CATHEDRAL PRECINCT

Project: an urban design masterplan won in competition, in association with the artist Jack Sloan, which proposed public realm improvements around a new axial approach to the front of Glasgow's historic Cathedral.

Location: Townhead, at the northern end of the city's High Street, set within Glasgow's Central Conservation Area.

Designer: Page|Park Architects and Ian White Associates Landscape Architects; **Client:** Glasgow City Council; **Budget:** £1.5m; **Completion:** 1988.

Setting

The site is bounded by the founding, and religious and urban development of Glasgow, and was one half of the city's medieval "twin burgh". As the area developed the precinct came to contain, and be surrounded by, very significant historic buildings, routes and burial sites (including the city's famous Necropolis). The adjacent, towering Victorian Royal Infirmary added a challenging scale-shift and the change brought about by 20th-century slum clearance and roads projects represented a regeneration challenge.

Opportunity

The situation at the precinct was typical of the glory and planning blight that often co-exist in historic settings. Addressing this area was one of the key urban design and public realm projects that led the renaissance of Glasgow's city centre. The landscaped square offered the opportunity to act as a catalyst to repair and renew the surroundings, mediating the varied uses and scale shifts within a cohesive structure. The proposals, post-competition, were linked to neighbouring initiatives, encouraging further regeneration through a mix of buildings with public, private and institutional uses.



Aerial view of the Cathedral precinct with the Royal Infirmary complex to the north



Design Process

The form proposed was simple and geometric, giving each of the disparate surrounding historic buildings and burial sites their setting. It also creates setting for the new buildings, which are by various architects and in various styles, and has completed the regeneration of the precinct while re-establishing its historic urban form.

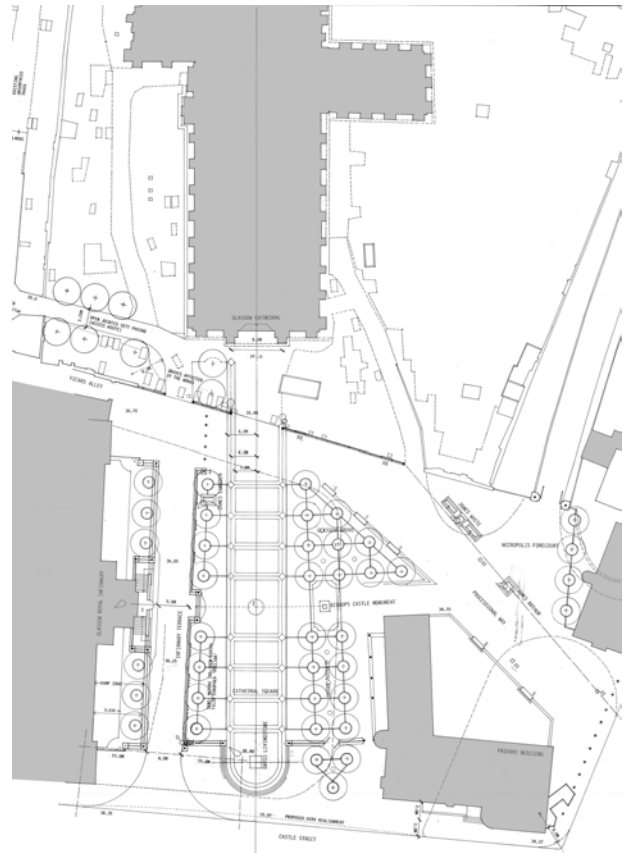
“Space” comes first rather than its decoration, allowing human interaction within the square to be its focus. This simplicity is carried through to the use of high quality, natural materials, and the simple setting of statuary and trees within the space.

Overview and Lessons

The masterplan has retained its integrity through the variety of new building styles that have completed and augmented it. The simple, contemporary style of the residential blocks and the neo-baronial of the Museum of Religion are unified by the use of sandstone and the strong, simple form of the central space.

Completed at a time when the “public realm” was being filled with busy mosaics, blacksmithwork and elaborate street furniture, the simplicity and solid quality of the work, understanding of the important history of the site and focus on open, usable space at its heart was ahead of its time.

This has ensured the longevity of the design and led to the re-established city focal point’s success as a visitor attraction, while enabling the historic site to be re-established as a loved, significant space for the people of Glasgow.



Site Plan (c. 1980) with the Cathedral top, Royal Infirmary to the left, Museum of Religion (Ian Begg Architect) to the bottom right and Housing Association flats (Page|Park) far right

(© image credit Page|Park)



Re-sited statuary on the axis from the High Street



St Mungo Museum of Religion by Ian Begg

FURTHER READING

International

- Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture - Managing the Historic Urban Landscape (2005)
- Xi'an' Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas (2005)
- European Convention for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (the 'Valetta Convention') (1992)
- Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage (the 'Lausanne Charter') (1990)
- International Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Area (the 'Washington Charter') (1987)
- European Convention for the Protection of Architectural Heritage (the 'Granada Convention') (1985)
- Bruges Resolution on the Conservation of Smaller Historic Towns (1975)
- World Heritage Convention (1972)
- International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the 'Venice Charter') (1964)

Policy and Guidance

- Scottish Planning Policy
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes Series
- PAN 42 Archaeology: The Planning Process and Scheduled Monument Procedures
- Scheduled Monument Procedures
- PAN68 Design Statements
- PAN71 Conservation Area Management
- PAN81 Community Engagement - Planning with People
- PAN83 Masterplanning

Other Reading

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- Cowan, R. (2005). Dictionary of Urbanism, Streetwise Press.
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