

TOWNSCAPE CONTEXT

SCOTTISH TOWNSCAPE PATTERNS

The design of the new settlement learns from the past and identifies places that can be considered successful. Centuries of building in the Scottish landscape and climate and culture are represented in existing settlements. Historic villages and burghs, especially those which have passed the test of time and despite technological and demographic change, still provide desirable and sustainable living environments. They demonstrate patterns of streets and public spaces, as well as building form and organisation, relevant for today. In particular the accommodation of relative high densities and diversities of use within a small physical area is of particular relevance to sustainability.

In the same way that the design of An Camas Mòr learns from an understanding of the Scottish Townscape, so too does much of the language and terminology that is used. The main or primary street is a High Street, off which lead Side Streets, Wynds, Vennels, and Pends. A Wynd is a narrow winding street off a High Street, a Vennel is a narrow ally or lane between houses and generally straight, and a Pend is normally an arched passageway leading to a back court under a house or block of houses.

SMALL FOOTPRINT

To achieve the Park's Plan for housing with least possible damage it is necessary to limit the footprint of the settlement. A vital aspect of traditional settlements is their small footprint, demonstrating a response to sustainability (or survival) with an economy of material (as well as time and energy) in their plan. Traditional places are simply built with everything necessary within walking distance. Apart from the practical aspect of getting around, the compact footprint means that the surrounding landscapes are protected from unnecessary development and expansion.



FORMAL FRONTS AND UNTIDY BACKS

The clear order of front and back, the tidy fronts all neatly along the street line recognise the civic face of the community while the freedom of architectural expression and uses at the back recognise the diversity of peoples' needs and activities. This simple order allows these two complex and very different aspects of settlement to co-exist in the same place.



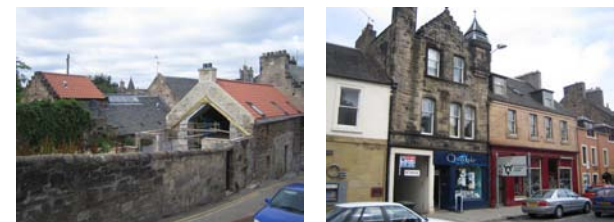
JOINED-UP BUILDINGS

The most distinct characteristic of traditional settlements in Scotland is the pattern of joined-up buildings. Building right up to the edges of the sides of the plot with blank gables to allow the next door building to do the same and building right up to (or nearly up to) the street edge to allow the largest possible secluded and protected (and therefore much more useful) area to the rear of the building. There is also a microclimatic advantage because of wind protection. As well as reducing heating costs as the area of exposed external wall is greatly reduced, the higher densities are appropriate for the installation of community heating.



NARROW PLOTS

Relatively narrow plots maximise the developable area while minimising the amount of street surface and utility infrastructure required. This saves on both land and material, making for greater sustainability in terms of economy (affordability and maintenance) as well as in environment by drastically reducing the amount of non-porous surfaces.



OUTBUILDINGS

The possibility to have outbuildings to the rear of the main buildings allows a wide range of complementary activities to take place, including storage, workspace, additional independent living accommodations etc. In an economic way, out buildings allow the properties to develop organically over time, responding to demographic and economic change. Additionally the buildings can provide privacy between different plots and help improve microclimate by offering wind protection.



PENDS

Passages through the buildings, wide enough for small vehicles allow for on site parking as well as storage of a wide range of private property in a tidy and safe way, neatly behind the buildings. The pends also give independent access to the rear to access the outbuildings or activities, without disturbing the main building.



DIMENSIONS FOR PEOPLE

The smaller scale of traditional public space, apart from reducing infrastructure costs and offering better climatic protection, would have a positive effect on community, making for intimate places, physically bringing people closer together



MICROCLIMATE

Traditional settlement patterns with their often meandering street patterns and non-aligned side-streets provide valuable wind protection in the northern climate, as well as attractive corners for shelter and sun.



PITCHED ROOFS

Traditional pitched roofs perform well in the northern climate – performing aerodynamically in windy conditions (minimising turbulence into street spaces) and ensuring sun penetration for light and warmth.



INHABITED ROOFS

The pitched roofs also give the opportunity for storage and later inhabitation, giving an easy and affordable solution to expansion.



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DIVERSITY AND FLEXIBILITY

The pattern of blank gables allow for different uses to co-exist and for change of use and even replacement of buildings over time – robust pattern for responsive, organic growth.



EAST-WEST HIGH STREET

A common feature of the Scottish townscape, in particular the Royal Burghs, is the East-West orientation of the High Street. Although there are many different theories as to why this phenomenon exists, it can be observed that this pattern provides a sunny side on the north side of the street and sunny gardens to the rear of the south side with attractive pockets of public spaces.



MEANDERING STREET AND BOW SHAPE

Responding to topography and the sun, the traditional High Street with its bow shape or small meanderings, has considerable climatic benefits such as wind protection and solar gain. The varying width of the High Street allows the creation of appropriately sized spaces for climate and function.



ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR

Useful activities (workspaces, services, commerce, entertainment) are traditionally accommodated at ground floor, along main thoroughfares and at strategic corners, for visibility and for ease of access.

