

13. WATTEN



Background

The village of Watten (pop. 320) lies on the south east shore of Loch Watten on the main A882(T) road between Wick and Thurso. With a primary school, Post Office, shop, hotel, hall and petrol station, the community acts as a local service centre to the largely agricultural population. Development has been limited in recent years, but the village is ideally located between Wick and Thurso to accommodate new housing. The Caithness Economic Partnership's strategy envisions a development corridor on the Dounreay – Thurso – Wick axis. Watten is ideally placed in this respect. However, there are servicing problems, particularly waste water treatment and low water pressure. Further expansion should await the completion of the proposed new sewage treatment works.

There has been piecemeal development along the A882 in recent years. There is a need to control this growth and direct development to more appropriate locations. Land immediately adjoining the primary school was previously allocated for development and has an existing access. Station Road offers an opportunity to use the existing road network and allow further development for limited investment, whilst the Council still has land at Bain Place.

Loch Watten immediately to the north is a key nature conservation site as well as an important recreational facility and tourist attraction. Other important amenity features are the trees around the church and manse. The trees in the village are now mature and a planting scheme for the village would be of benefit. The former garage is now something of an eyesore. Redevelopment for a new business use or housing would be appropriate.

Community Input

The main concerns of the community put forward at community workshops in the Spring of 1998 were:

- provision of sheltered housing;
- tree planting / community woodland;
- road improvements, particularly speed limits and passing places;
- demolition of the old garage; and
- a pavement at Station Road.

Development Factors

Expansion of the village is constrained by:

- the natural barriers to the north and east of Loch Watten and the Wick River;
- to the south and west by good agricultural land; and
- the need to prevent linear development beyond the current edge of the village.

Objectives

The Plan seeks to:

- identify sufficient land to accommodate 45 houses over the next 15 years;
- discourage any further linear development along the A882(T).
- identify land for a new waste water treatment works;
- safeguard the surrounding countryside notably the good agricultural land;
- maintain and enhance the trees and hedgerows in and around the village; and
- protect the setting of Loch Watten;

Policies

In the built up area of the village, Primary Policies and Settlement Policies apply as shown on the Inset Map. Site and area specific policies, proposals and development opportunities are as follows.

H: Housing

1. The Council will encourage further infill housing development subject to Settlement Policy H.

2. The following sites in Table 2 are allocated for housing:

LOCATION	Area (Ha.)	COMMENTS
(a) Bain Place	0.5	<i>This site has potential for sheltered / affordable housing.</i>
(b) Station Road	1	<i>Developers/Owners will require to widen road to 5.5m and provide footpath.</i>
(c) North of the A882	0.5	<i>A further 3 plots will be allowed. An access should be retained to the backland for potential future development as shown on the Proposals Map. Access to the sites must avoid conflict with the Bain Place access.</i>



Photo: Housing land at Station Road

B: Business

3. *Land at the former garage is allocated for business uses. It would also have potential for infill housing.*

S: Special Uses

4. *The North of Scotland Water Authority intend to construct a new waste water treatment works just outwith the village on the Wick River opposite Henderson Square. Provision is made in their Capital Programme for this project in 2000/01 at a cost of £300,000.*

E: Village Expansion

5. *The sites in Table 5 below are allocated for the expansion of the village.*

A: Amenity

6. *The Council will protect important open spaces and amenity areas, particularly:*
 (a) *open spaces along the A882;*
 (b) *playing field / play areas;*
 (c) *important trees; and*
 (d) *open space at Henderson Square.*

Environmental Action

7. *The Council will encourage tree planting within the village, particularly along the A882 (T) and the proposed new housing areas.*

8. *The Council will give consideration to traffic calming measures at the entrances to the village as resources permit.*

LOCATION	Area (Ha.)	CAPACITY	COMMENTS
(a) North west of Primary School	1.5	15 - 25	<i>Await new foul drainage system. Phase with any necessary improvements to the water supply. Overall framework plan incorporating details of internal road layout; access as shown on the inset map, boundary tree planting and open space standards.</i>
(b) Banks Road	3	25 - 30	<i>Await new foul drainage system but separate disposal for surface water. Phase with any necessary improvements to the water supply. Overall framework plan incorporating details of internal road layout, access as shown on the inset map, path link to hall, boundary planting and open space standards.</i>