

GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY TOWN CENTRE BACKLAND DRAFT DEVELOPMENT BRIEF



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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY TOWN CENTRE BACKLAND

PURPOSE

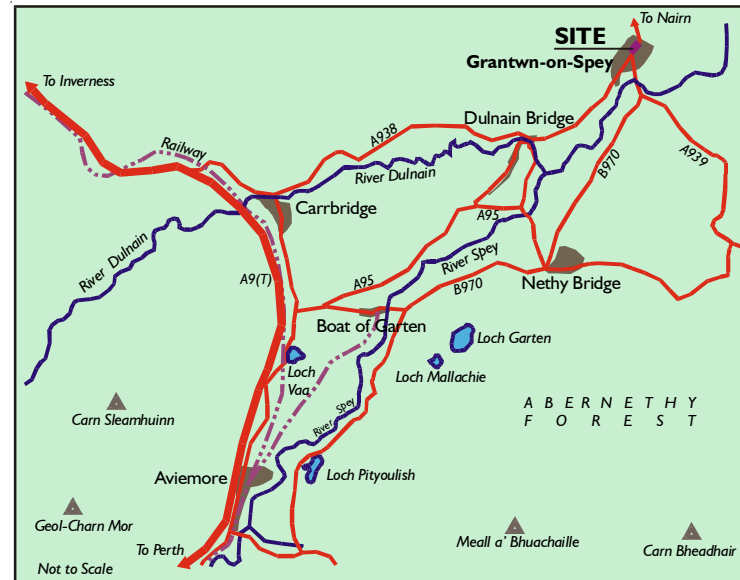
1. This Brief considers the potential for further development on land to the rear of the High Street, Granttown on Spey. It seeks primarily to:

- * identify remaining opportunities for “infill” development; and
- * rationalise related access and amenity considerations.

2. The Brief refers to the town’s historic core as delineated by Woodside Avenue/South Street to the south east and by Grant Road/Mossie Road to the north west, and embraces virtually all of the Conservation Area. Its purpose is to supplement the policy guidance contained in the adopted Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (1997).

BACKGROUND

3. Granttown-on-Spey, Capital of Strathspey, is one of the main service centres in Badenoch and Strathspey. The High Street and Square - which originated in the mid 18th C as the focus of the original planned town - form the principal commercial axis and a busy and vibrant thoroughfare. The adjoining grid layout of predominantly residential streets contains mostly large traditional properties of Victorian/Edwardian origin, usually in spacious grounds. The overall composition of fine, imposing buildings - some 25 of which are Listed, formal “streets” and tree-lined spaces give a high quality urban setting, recognised by the designation of a Conservation Area.



Left: Location Plan
Below: early town dwellings

4. The intermediate “backland” - lying essentially between the High Street frontage and residential “streets” to the rear - comprise rear service areas, the remnants of large gardens, allotments/paddocks and communal drying greens, and other open spaces. These uses have been supplanted by development over the years. A significant part of this area remains under used or neglected and could present scope for additional “infill”. However, many potential sites are difficult to access or occasionally “landlocked”, and building requires to be consistent with established uses, the grain and character of the town and residential amenity.



ANALYSIS

Development Pressures

5. There is considerable interest in development/redevelopment in the area. During the past 5 years more than 50 planning applications have been lodged. Planning permission has been given for improvement, conversion and extension of some 17 High Street properties for commercial and residential uses; and a further 30 houses have been built in “backland” locations in the form of small terraced, “grouped” or flatted developments and individual residential plots.

6. 0.4 ha. of land identified in the Local Plan for residential development at Seafield Avenue and Chapel Road has been developed. A further 0.5 ha. at Church Avenue remains undeveloped. Extant planning permission - not yet taken up - exists for a further 19 houses, including sites south of Inverallen Court (7), to the rear of Garth Hotel (8) and adjoining the Hydro-Board depot (2).

7. Several applications for the development of houses have been refused planning permission due principally to substandard plot size, overdevelopment, inadequate access/parking and inappropriate design.

Development Factors

8. The following factors help to determine the potential of remaining “backland” for development (see Analysis Map):

Uses

9. Extending outwards from the main commercial axis, the pattern of activities is dominated by business and other town centre uses fronting the High Street/Square; an intermediate mix of mainly housing and community facilities (including floodlit kick pitch, car parking and amenity areas); and a broader “outlying” band of largely residential development. Future uses should be broadly consistent with this arrangement.

Urban Form/Design

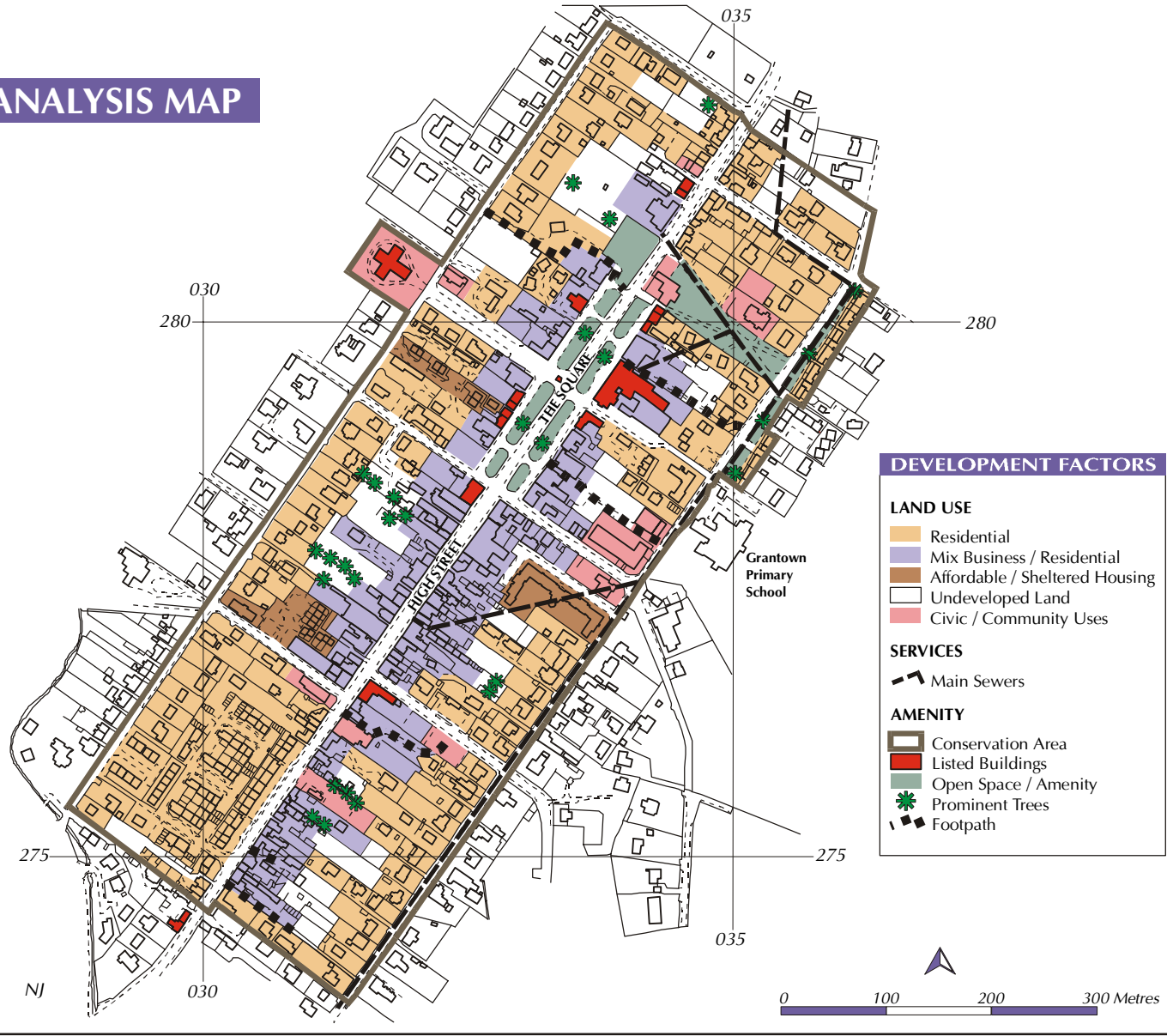
10. The original master layout for the town’s core appears to have been founded on a regular form of plots some 150m. in depth, running north-west to south-east through the High Street/Square. Traditionally, each feu has been occupied by two buildings fronting the High Street (often with outbuildings projecting at right angles from the rear and extending in some cases to 4 storeys): with a 2-storey Victorian/Edwardian, or in certain cases post-war, residential property sited at the opposite end. This has resulted in a tight and largely continuous High Street facade; and a more spacious and lower density form towards the edges of the town centre.

11. The “backland” between - extending from 60-80m. in depth - accommodate the bulk of more modern building. Development has been sited less formally with the effect of creating an intermediate “band” of development. Particular care with plot dimensions, building height and orientation is required to ensure continuing pressures consolidate this “band” and avoid overdevelopment, loss of character and residential amenity. Equally, it is important in the interests of meeting local housing needs in particular, to promote derelict or underused land for development where this could be adequately serviced and would reinforce or enhance the Conservation Area.



Above: a traditional backland courtyard

ANALYSIS MAP



DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

- LAND USE**
- Residential
 - Mix Business / Residential
 - Affordable / Sheltered Housing
 - Undeveloped Land
 - Civic / Community Uses
- SERVICES**
- Main Sewers
- AMENITY**
- Conservation Area
 - Listed Buildings
 - Open Space / Amenity
 - * Prominent Trees
 - Footpath



*Backland Uses
Top: paddock
Below: informal parking*

12. Several significant parcels of land - principally north-east of Church Avenue-Burnfield Place and comprising adjoining paddocks/allotments - could have potential for development either by assembly (to create larger sites) or independently as separate feus.

Access

13. From the High Street/Square, a number of pends give access to service yards and immediate “backland” and provide “short-cut” pedestrian access. These are generally of substandard width. In addition, restricted visibility for emerging traffic and on-street parking constitutes a risk to public safety. In circumstances where such conflict arises or there are limitations in the capacity of pends for additional vehicular use, it is important that priority is given to the service needs of High Street businesses.

14. Subject to adequate visibility and geometry, scope exists to access undeveloped land directly from the wider grid of adjoining streets. Where sites are “remote” development will be dependent either upon assembly of land or linkage through “frontage” properties.

Parking

15. Further to the Local Plan identifying the potential for “additional car parking, possibly on under-used backland sites” and assessment of remaining opportunities, the following locations could have potential:

- (i) south of Spey Avenue - this land adjoins Spey Avenue car park and is of derelict appearance. Whilst the creation of an all-weather pitch associated with the Youth Centre limits the extent of a parking opportunity, the existing car park is strategically placed and well used with good access;

(ii) north of Forest Road - this land lies behind the British Legion and has been investigated in the past for parking. Scope could exist to assemble adjoining land, and consideration given to various access options. The land is used intermittently for public parking as well as Legion use. This could be formalised (possibly 100 spaces).

16. Subject to further investigation of the availability of land and development costs, development proposals at both of these locations should be considered in the light of on-going appraisal of the requirement for parking in Grantown-on-Spey and any funding commitment the Council may wish to consider.

Amenity

17. Structural open spaces including at The Square, Burnfield, and adjoining the Garth Hotel together with individual or groups of trees are integral to the character of the Conservation Area.

Utilities

18. Drainage mains are shown on the Analysis Map. Development will require either to avoid these or incorporate diversion, subject to the agreement of the appropriate agency.

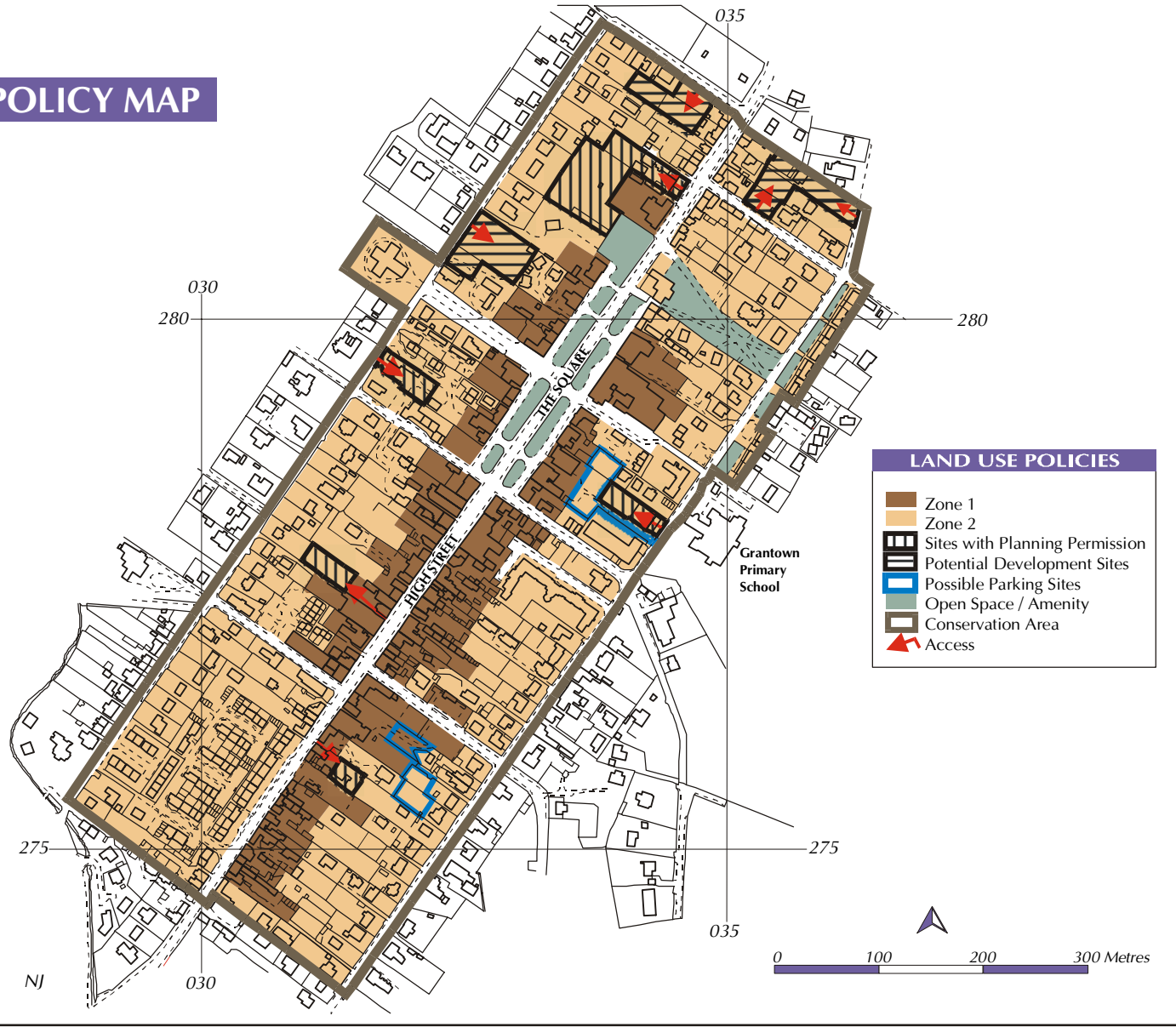
POLICY

19. The Adopted Local Plan provides the following statutory policy context for the Council’s consideration of planning applications, in the area to which this Brief refers.



Above: a typical backland access from High Street

POLICY MAP



Top: Zone 1 - High Street frontage
 Below: Zone 2 - scope for infill development

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

HOUSING

Main Development Areas

1.1 The following land is allocated for housing (Policy RS4 applies);

- 3.1.1(j) Church Avenue - 0.5 ha - 6-8 houses (Badenoch & Strathspey Local Plan) - See para 5.1.

Infill

1.4 In the interests of safeguarding the character of established residential areas, there will be a presumption against infill housing, including sub-division of existing plots, where proposals involve;

- * inappropriate massing, design or orientation;
- * inadequate plot size or spacing between properties;
- * breaching established building lines;
- * felling significant trees;
- * loss of privacy or amenity to neighbouring occupiers; or
- * substandard access.

EMPLOYMENT

Commerce - Town Centre

2.1 The Council will encourage consolidation of commercial and office uses within the area identified on the Proposals Map. The Council will apply their General Development Control Policy No 2 which seeks to consolidate established shopping frontages. New or replacement shop fronts should be sympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area and where appropriate, listed buildings.

SERVICES

Town Centre Traffic Management/Enhancement

4.1 The Council will investigate the scope for future traffic management and environmental improvements in the town centre. A package of sensitive measures could involve;

- * enhancement of High Street for pedestrians and shoppers;
- * additional car parking, possibly on under-used backland sites;
- * traffic-calming measures incorporating dedicated servicing and on-street car parking.

This will be subject to discussion with local business and community groups.

ENVIRONMENT

Conservation Area

5.1 Policy RS5 will apply where proposals for infill development within the Conservation Area do not compromise the criteria set out in 1.4. Development, including ancillary buildings, should be of a form and scale compatible with the character of the town and consistent with the following agreed Council guidelines;

- * finishes - natural stone or harled walls with roofs clad in slate or similar materials;
- * design - roofs should be pitched at 40 degrees, window openings should be of sash and case dimensions, doors of traditional proportions, and gabled dormers will be sought where appropriate;
- * orientation/building lines - reinforcing established street frontages, possibly single storey tenement cottages on backland sites, and reinstatement of walls;
- * satellite dishes - preferably to the rear of buildings;
- * open spaces - safeguard important features and vistas.

The Council will keep the boundaries of the Conservation Area under review.



Above: an underused and overgrown site

5.2 The Council will undertake a comprehensive survey of mature trees within the Conservation Area in consultation with landowners. This will identify specimens requiring surgery, selective felling and replacement. It will seek to prolong the life of existing features and secure mature trees as an integral element of the town's character. Financial aid or advice will be available in appropriate circumstances. Priority will be given to reinforcement planting in The Square and Church Avenue.

Supplementary Guidelines

20. Further to the technical and policy factors in paras. 8 - 20 above, it is considered that opportunities for development (in addition to extant planning permissions) could arise in the context of the following ZONES (see Proposals Map) and the guidelines below:

ZONE 1 : HIGH STREET/SQUARE FRONTAGE AND ASSOCIATED REAR CURTILAGE :

predominantly commercial/mixed town centre uses (including retail, office and residential) - where limited spare capacity in access from the High Street/Square should be associate with improvement, extension and/or conversion of existing buildings/uses.

ZONE 2 : WOODSIDE AVENUE/SOUTH STREET AND GRANT ROAD/MOSSIE ROAD AND THE INTERMEDIATE "BACKLAND" :

predominantly residential/community uses - where suitable access other than from the High Street/Square could enable development/redevelopment as follows:

* larger sites or land with scope for assembly sites which adjoin the public road network and are considered to have potential for residential or other community uses, subject to availability (Table below):

Potential Development Sites

SITE	AREA	CAPACITY / NOTES	ACCESS
Church Avenue	0.8 ha	12-14 houses - allocated	Grant Road
Market Road (north)	0.3 ha	10 houses - suitable for sheltered / affordable	Heathfield Road / Market Road
Mossie Road (north)	0.2 ha	3 houses	Mossie Road

Sites with Planning Permission

SITE	AREA	CAPACITY / NOTES	ACCESS
Grant Rd. / Inverallan Court	0.1 ha	7 houses	Grant Road
Garth Hotel	0.6 ha	8 houses	The Square / Castle Road
Hydro Board Depot	0.1 ha	2 houses	South Street

* incidental or individual sites where residential "infill" could be acceptable , subject to compliance with the following:

- building height not exceeding 2-storeys ;
- plots orientated north-east/south-west with minimum dimensions of approximately 30m. (depth) by 20m. (width) and a ratio of development to site area not exceeding 20% (smaller plot dimensions made be acceptable for semi-detached or terraced houses);
- building foundations/services not encroaching within the canopy spread of large/mature trees;
- safeguards for the Right of Way;
- on-site parking and servicing as required;
- access serving more than 4 houses will be required to adoptable standards.

Applications for planning permission involving land south of Spey Avenue and north of Forest Road (see 15 above and Proposals Map) should be considered in the context of further appraisal of the requirement for parking at these locations.

21. The above the guidelines supplement statutory policy and will be considered as a material factor in the Council's consideration of further planning applications in the historic core of Grantown-on-Spey.

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