

# Conservation Areas



## Baxter Park Conservation Area Appraisal



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# 1. Introduction

Baxter Park Conservation Area is situated to the north east of Dundee City Centre adjacent to the Maryfield Conservation Area . Baxter Park is a significant historic designed landscape and an integral part of the city`s green infrastructure. It was designed in 1863 by Sir Joseph Paxton, considered the most important Victorian park designer, and it is the most complete Paxton park in Scotland. Its boundary walls, gateways and, not least, the views of the central pavilion forming vistas to surrounding streets, all contribute to the dignified suburban character of the wider area. This document is aimed at capturing the unique character of the conservation area to inform decision making concerned with its management and enhancement.

## 1.1. Definition of a Conservation Area

The definition of a Conservation Area is contained within Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 as; "An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

The Act makes provision for the designation of Conservation Areas and planning authorities are required to determine which parts of their locale merits conservation area status. Dundee currently has 17 Conservation Areas, all of which have their own distinct character which is desirable to preserve or enhance.

## 1.2. The Meaning of a Conservation Area Status

In a conservation area it is the buildings and the spaces between them that are of architectural or historic interest, contributing along with a number of factors to the individual character of the entire area. The purpose of a Conservation Area is to ensure that new development/ alterations will not have a negative impact on the existing character

of the area.

Conservation area status does not mean that new developments or alterations are not acceptable; however it is a management tool to help produce a high design quality to ensure the preservation or enhancement of the special character and appearance of the area.

Conservation area designation also reduces the limits of Permitted Development rights (i.e. those not requiring planning permission) in order to protect the character and appearance of the area. Article 4 Directions cover all of Dundee's Conservation Areas meaning that minor works such as, window and door replacement, external painting and stone cleaning, erection of fences, gates and porches, require Planning Permission.

### 1.3. The Purpose of a Conservation Area Appraisal

A Conservation Area is dynamic and constantly evolving and therefore it is essential to review and analysis its character. The purpose of a conservation area appraisal is to define what is important about the areas` character and appearance in order to identify its unique features which should be preserved and enhanced.

The overarching aim of this appraisal is to draw out the elements that contribute to the 'character' of Baxter Park Conservation Area. This is the first step in the active management of the area. The character appraisal includes policies and proposals to protect, enhance and manage change within the conservation area.

Part of the function of this appraisal is to assist the City Council when carrying out its statutory planning function. It will act as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, provide support for Article 4 Directions and help guide the development of Design Guides and Development Briefs within the conservation area.

This appraisal sets out a number of proposals for the enhancement of the Conservation Area, a role highlighted and supported by Scottish Planning

Policy, which sets out policy on the historic environment and states;

“Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The design, materials, scale and siting of new development within a conservation area, and development outwith the conservation area that will impact on its appearance, character or setting, should be appropriate to the character and setting of the conservation area” (SPP, 2014).

The guidance from the Scottish Executive, contained within PAN 71 Conservation Area Management, highlights that ‘conservation area designation alone will not secure the protection and enhancement of conservation areas. Active management is vital to ensure that change can be accommodated for the better.’

The advice contained within this draft conservation area appraisal is subject to approval by Dundee City Council prior to consultation with the public. The Conservation Area Appraisal document will provide the basis for the development of an action plan as the next stage in the management process for the area.

## 2. Conservation Area Context

Baxter Park Conservation Area is an approximately 22 ha territory situated on the east of Dundee. It includes Baxter Park and the surrounding streets with residential properties overlooking the park. The park itself is a significant historic landscape and also forms part of Dundee's green network. Its central pavilion is one of the listed buildings of the Conservation Area and serves as the focal point of the park. The area includes some other properties which have historic importance and notable examples of ironwork, railing and boundary walls. The late 18c tenements on the west are significant due to their character and appearance as well as their part in the history of the neighbourhood.

### 2.1. Current Boundary & Designation

The current boundary of the conservation area was designated in 2002. The territory lies on a southward sloping hill stretching from Pitkerro Road on the north to Arbroath Road on the south. From the west, its boundary is the back garden of the tenements on Baxter Park Terrace. On the east it includes Worthley Place and the residential properties of Dalkeith Road which are linked to the park by their back garden. The area boundary reaches out to include some other notable buildings which are to be protected under the boundary of the conservation area. Maryfield Conservation Area is located to the north that includes the notable Morgan Academy which is an A Listed Building.

### 3. History



*Baxter Park c1860's*



*Baxter Park c1900s*

The site that Baxter Park now occupies was acquired by Sir David Baxter and his sisters in 1861. The Baxter family owned fax and hemp mills in Dundee and employed as much as 5000 workers. Sir David Baxter funded the landscaping of the park in memory of his father and wanted it to be a place of recreation for his workers.

The title deed of 1863 states '... resolved to present to the Inhabitants of Dundee a public park in the immediate vicinity of the town, with the view of affording to the working population the means of relaxation and enjoyment after their hard labour and honest industry' (Historic Environment Scotland). At the time, the on the edge of the city surrounded by Gallow Hill and Quarry on the east and smaller, irregular parcels from the south. Its green surroundings and view of the River Tay made it a perfect choice for creating a place that can be enjoyed undisturbed by hustle of the city. Sir David Baxter commissioned Sir Joseph Paxton with designing the park. The gardener and architect Sir Joseph Paxton became well-known of designing the Crystal Palace in London and is noted as one of the most important Victoria Park designers.

Baxter Park, designed in 1863, is the most complete example of Paxton parks in Scotland. The boundaries of Baxter Park were mainly based on old field boundaries and remain the same today. As opposed to its original settings, due to the expansion of the city, today it is within a largely urban area. The first line of tenements around the park were built in 1885 on the north end of Baxter Park Terrace and completed 20 years later on the south. The individual houses by the eastern edge of the park are all late 19th century. Their back gardens directly border the park while the buildings face Dalkeith Road. Wortley Place on the north-east corner breaks this pattern with its cottages facing towards the park. The rest of the buildings

on this side were mostly built in the early 20th century. Other changes over time include some alterations in the original planting and the addition of bowling greens and a tennis court on the southern half of the park. Besides the main entrance on the south-west corner, other entrances were opened alongside Baxter Park Terrace.



*Modern Activity Centre*



*Playpark*

Not long after the turn of the millennia, Dundee City Council initiated the restoration of the park and applied for grant assistance to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Environment Scotland. Unfortunately, from the 19th century on some elements of Paxton`s original design were lost due to vandalism while others simply eroded over time. The funds were used to restore the park following Paxton`s original layout. Gates and railings were re-installed and the central pavilion was restored to serve as an event venue. The project also included adding a modern element to the historic landscape. The Activity Centre was built north of the Pavilion and now hosts community activities. There is also an Adventure Playground next to the Pavilion that provides another reason for families to visit the park. Since the restoration the park has received the Dundee Civic Trust Award in 2008 and the Green Flag Award in 2009 and 2010.



*Central Pavilion*

## 4.1 Topography and Street Pattern



*Baxter Park Terrace*



*Aerial Image of the area*

Baxter Park Conservation Area lies by the edge of the inner city boundary within a mainly residential area. The site slopes from north to south having its highest point on Pitkerro Road and lowest on Arbroath Road. These streets by the shorter edges of the park are the main transport routes in the area. Baxter Park Terrace, Dalkeith Road and Wortley Place receive less traffic and have a strongly residential character. In terms of building height, Baxter Park Terrace and Arbroath road consist of 4 storey tenements while the streets to the east of the park have one or two storey houses.

The park itself can be divided into two very distinctive parts. The northern half of the site was designed as a pleasure garden with winding walks, flower beds and seating areas. The south on the other hand is a wide open area of grass with only one path across it. This path is a `desire line` that developed naturally over time as a number of people choose the same route across the field. The southern half of the park is used as a parade ground. The two parts are divided by the central terrace that runs east to west. There is a circuit walk running around the perimeter of the park connecting its distinctive parts.

## 4.2 Characteristic Features



*Seating Area on the central terrace*



*Benches organised in a circle*



*Trees in the Summer months*

### Victorian Style Landscaping

The layout of walks and seating areas is a striking feature of Baxter Park. Without being artificial, it is clear that the paths were designed deliberately to achieve a certain character and appearance. Some of the benches are organised in semi-circles around formal flower beds which is a typical feature of Victorian style gardens. The recent refurbishment preserved the original layout of the walks as well as the footpath across the southern field.

### Vegetation

Another common characteristic of Victorian style landscapes is showcasing a wide variety of plants. Baxter Park retains much of its original tree planting although this has thinned over the years through natural decay. The structural planting includes lime, particularly around the perimeter of the parade ground. Other species relating to the earlier planting include Scots pine, common and copper beech, sycamore, weeping ash, and silver birch. The topiaries evergreen hollies are a feature of the terrace in front of the pavilion. The vegetation is the most changeable element of the area's character. Seasonal variations have an impact both on the physical appearance of



*Trees in the Winter months*



*Main gate*

the park as well as the ambiance created by user activities.

#### Gatepiers, Boundary Walls & Railings

From all four sides, Baxter Park is surrounded by a line of boundary walls and railings. Today it is only a small section on the north-east corner which remained original; the rest had to be replaced over time. A striking element of the park is its grandiose gateway on the south-east corner. The main entrance is framed by four gatepiers connected by arches on the top. The area of the park as well as its walls and railings are listed and protected by Historic Environment Scotland.



*Section of original railings on Wortley Place*

Similar characteristic element can be found on the streets surrounding the park. On Baxter Park Terrace, the front garden of the tenements is framed by low boundary walls and entrances are marked by square ashlar gatepiers. On Dalkeith Road there is a mixture of low and high stone walls separating the street and the front gardens.

#### Iron Work Detailing

In the conservation area there are some remarkable iron works detailing such as the iron-cast arch on the top of the main entrance and the ornate wrought-iron balconies on Baxter



*Gatepiers and boundary walls on Baxter Park Terrace*





*Decorative ironwork on Baxter Park Terrace*



*Slate roofs with modern windows on Wortley Place*



*Slate roofs on Arbroath Road*

Park Terrace. These do not only contribute to the character of this specific area, similar examples can be found all over city referring to its historic trades.

### Roof Shapes & Materials

Natural Slate is the predominant roofing material within the Conservation Area, with a high percentage retaining their traditional Scottish Slate. Wortley Place cottages are covered with slate in two different patterns (traditional diminishing courses and fish scale pattern) while on Arbroath Road roofs are notable because of their striking shape.

### Doors & Windows

Baxter Park Terrace is a striking street within the Conservation Area and is a distinct element to its character and appearance. As it can often be



*Original windows*

## 4.3 Listed Buildings



*Central Pavilion*



*Gardener's Cottage*



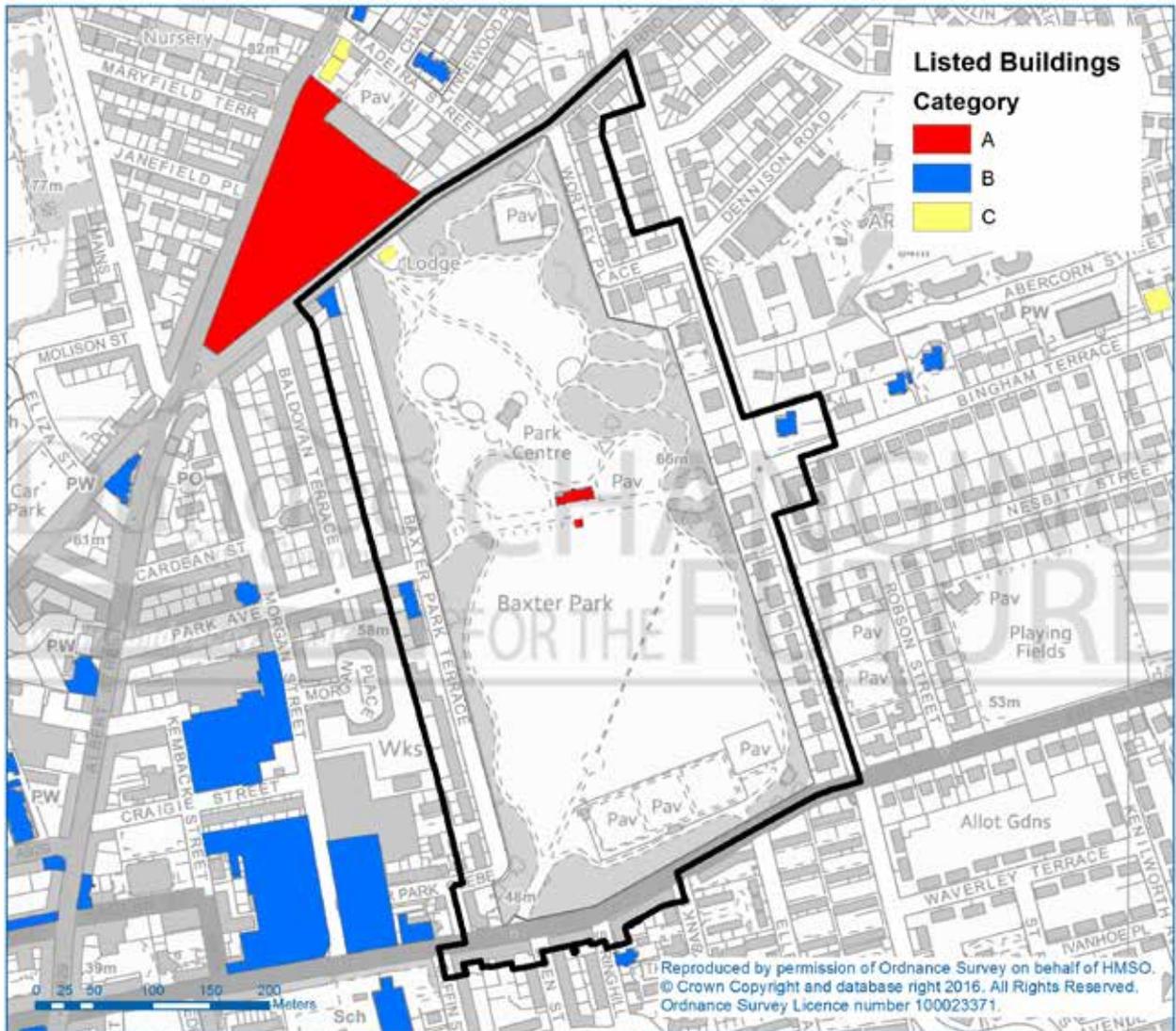
*Corner of Baxter Park Terrace*

seen in other parts of the city, it is characterised by the uniformity of tenement buildings.

Repetitive elements include twin door pieces, Doric columns and segmental and triangular pediments over the windows. Some of the original sash and case windows are decorated with coloured glass.

Baxter Park Conservation Area includes five buildings which are listed by Historic Environment Scotland for their special architectural and historic interest. A building's listing covers its interior, exterior and 'any object or structure fixed to a building' or which falls within the curtilage of such a building, forming part of the land since before 1 July 1948. The alteration or removal of any key feature or fixtures requires listed building consent. Within the area of the park, two buildings fall under this category. Baxter Park Pavilion is an A listed building that was designed in Italian Renaissance style. The five-bay open loggia rests on Doric columns and extends into two square corner pavilions. During the recent refurbishment the loggia openings were filled in with glass and the steps in front of the building were rebuilt from concrete. The Gardener's House, the small cottage on the north-west corner of the park is a C-listed building.

The listing also includes 1-3 and 17-18 Baxter Park Terrace which hold some of the features that make the street unique e.g. roof structure, gatepiers, tiles, iron works.



Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

## 4.4 Designated Landscape



*Central Pavilion*

Baxter Park itself is listed by Historic Environment Scotland in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. The role of the inventory is to identify those sites which are of national importance and guide their management to preserve their value and unique character. According to the HES Assessment, Baxter Park has an outstanding historical and high architectural value.

Sites in the Inventory are material considerations in the planning process. Under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008, local authorities are required to consult Historic Scotland on development proposals considered to affect a garden or designed landscape.

## 4.5 Movement & Activity

Most of the movement in the area happens along Pitkerro Road and Arbroath Road. Arbroath Road receives a higher amount of vehicular traffic in the form of cars and buses and it is also fitted with cycle lanes. On the north, the park entrance is opposite to Morgan academy which makes Pitkerro Road particularly busy with pedestrians before and after school times and during breaks. The roads to the west and east of the park are quieter, residential streets.

## 4.6 Views & Vistas



*View from the top of Dalkeith Road*



*View from the bottom of Baxter Park Terrace*

In the choice of the park's location, the scenic view down to the River Tay was one of the key considerations. Today however, the tenements to the south of the park obstruct the view from most of the site. It is only the uppermost point of Dalkeith Road from where it is possible to get a glimpse of the river.

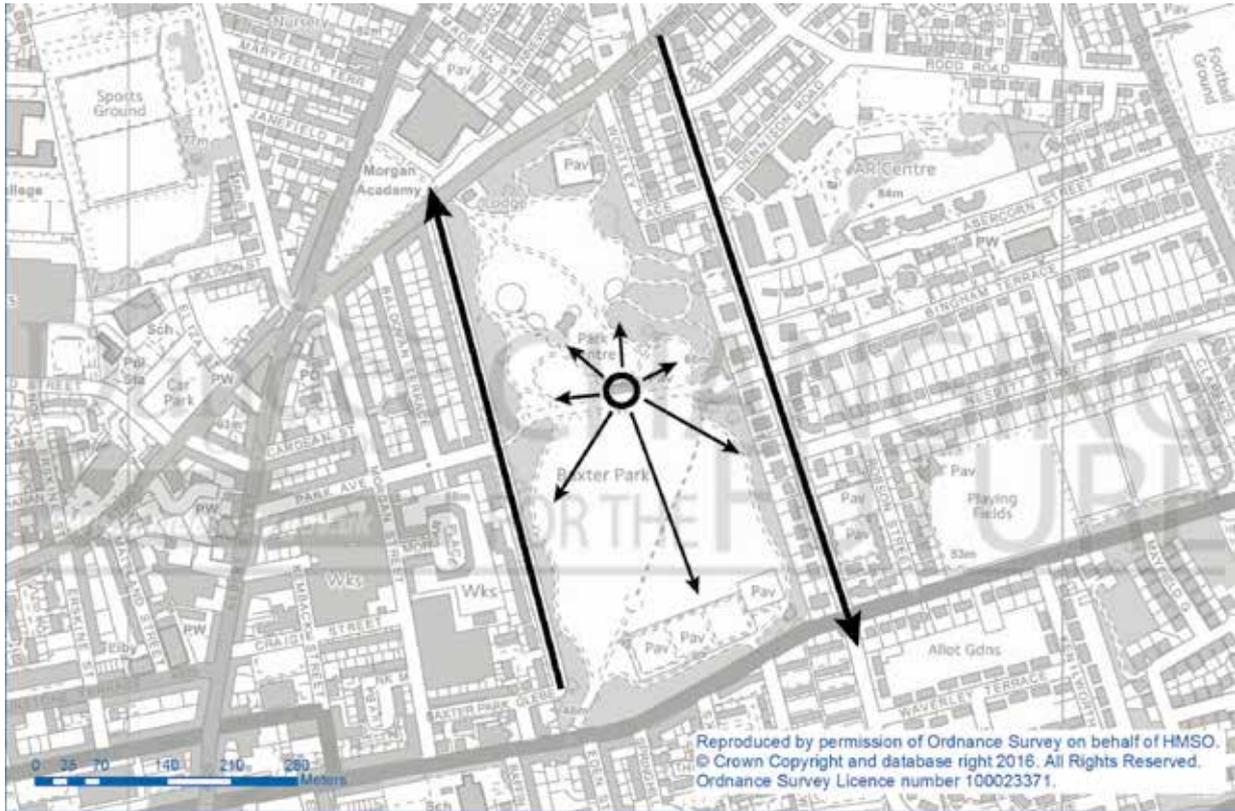
The park contains several pleasant views within the conservation area. Looking up from the bottom of Baxter Park Terrace there is a view of Morgan Academy, a spectacular gothic building which is part of Maryfield Conservation Area.

Within the park the Central Pavilion provides a focal point. From this elevated point in the middle, there is a panoramic view of the large green area on the southern half of the park. The north, where tree cover is denser feels more intimate and enclosed. Thanks to the mature trees around the periphery, traffic has less impact on the inner part of the park and the natural settings can be enjoyed undisturbed.

Baxter Park Conservation Area is unique in the sense that most of its territory is accessible by the public.



*View of the pavilion from the parade ground*



*Principal Views & Vistas*

## 4.7 Public Realm



*Busy playground*

The park is the first large green area to the east of the City Centre, providing a key site for recreation. Its layout and design provides a number of different options for enjoying the outdoors. It includes a long network of footpath, a number of benches, a playpark, three sport fields and a café. On the surrounding streets, several buildings have a front garden, which also adds to the urban greenery in the conservation area.

## 4.8 Community



*Seating areas*

Baxter Park is an important asset for the local community. Residents from the area are proud of its rich history and wish to see it flourish as a place for recreation. The Friends of Baxter Park volunteer organisation works on educating people about the history of the park and encourages them to use the facilities it has to offer.

For more information see:

<http://www.friendsofbaxterpark.co.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/baxterparkdundee>

Besides being a place for pursuing free-time activities, the park also hosts larger events which are important in the life of the community. Each year there are several fireworks and bonfires taking place in the park, such as on Hogmanay and Guy Fawkes night, while the community event `Celebration in the Park` is organised in the beginning of August. Since its restoration, the Central Pavilion also serves as a venue for weddings.

The principle focus of planning action in Baxter Park Conservation Area is to preserve and

## 5.0 Opportunities for Planning Action & Enhancement



*Back garden by the park boundary*

enhance its character and appearance. The active management of the area through planning action should ensure that the area adapts well to change over time. Sympathetic restoration and upgrading of buildings have been successful in the past and shall continue in the upcoming decades.

Applications for inappropriate developments or alterations that negatively impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area shall be recommended for refusal. Best practice guidance by Historic Environment Scotland and other bodies shall be taken into consideration as part of the preservation on the character of Baxter Park Conservation Area.

### 5.1 Alterations to Existing Buildings



*Back of house on Dalkeith Road as seen from the park*

Most of the buildings that Baxter Park Conservation Area includes are on the periphery of the Conservation Area looking towards the park. They frame Baxter Park from all sides and many of them are visible from inside of the park. Several properties also include elements which are key to the character of the area and should be preserved. Therefore it is crucial that alterations or extensions to them are sympathetic towards the conservation area and do not negatively impact on its character and appearance. Before works commence, guidance should be sought from Dundee City Council's Development Management section to seek advice on whether the works would require planning permission.

## 5.2 Utilities and Amenities



*Clutter of satellite dishes on Baxter Park Terrace*

Works carried out by utility companies and by statutory bodies must have regard to the character of the conservation area. Cables, pipes and satellite dishes on the outside of walls negatively impact the appearance of the buildings as well as the conservation area in general. The installation of pipes and cables should be hidden from view, and in accordance with guidance set by Historic Environment Scotland.

In the Conservation Area there are examples of cluttered satellite dishes on the wall of tenements. Opportunities for the removal of already existing intrusive elements should be seized to improve the visual qualities of the area. The replacement of individual satellite dishes with a communal dish is strongly advised as it would significantly improve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## 5.3 Repairs and Materials



*Mismatch in colour*

Street surfaces and pathways within the park are in relatively good condition and do not currently require replacement. There should be however special care taken of original stone walls, railings, gatepiers and other characteristic features of the conservation area which are vulnerable to insensitive repair work and decay.

The use of inappropriate materials and techniques threatens the integrity and the buildings and the character of the conservation area as a whole. Any repair or replacement should be carried out in material that closely matches the original. This includes for instance repairs to stone walls or slate roofs in this particular area. Within the conservation area removal of any historic materials would be considered unacceptable. This also applied to



*Cracked boundary wall*

features such as historic ironworks on buildings and gates.

## 5.4 Building Frontages



*Discoloured wall surface  
opposite the parks main  
entrance*

A building's frontage is made up of a number of components such as its architectural style, building materials, individual detailing, windows and doors. Any alteration to these elements in a conservation area requires careful considerations. Minor changes to windows and doors can have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the area.

It is of particular importance that any traditional windows and doors should be repaired rather than replaced in case of damage, to retain the original character of the area. If replacement is the only option then the replacement shall be required to be in accordance with Dundee City Council's "Replacement Windows and Doors" guidance. Where possible, those surfaces and elements should also be improved which are in an apparent state of neglect and negatively impact the character of the conservation area.

## 5.5 Quality of the Public Realm



*Unused pavilion building*

Baxter Park is an important public space within the Conservation Area and forms an integral part of the City's green infrastructure. The park is well equipped with essential street furniture such as benches and bins and also has examples of public art. It is important that the state of these features is kept up to standard and any new elements to be added in the future respects the unique character of the park and the conservation area in general. As it has been already mentioned, the planting in the park is part of its original design. Vegetation is particularly sensitive to human activity as well as changes in the climate. To preserve the character of the park it should be ensured that there remains a large variety of plant species including those that originally populated the site.

On the southernmost part of Baxter Park there are two smaller pavilion buildings which are currently not in use. They are not part of the original design of the park therefore represent an opportunity to further enhance the Conservation Area.



*Mosaic Public Art*

## 5.6 Dundee Historic Environmental Trust (DHET)

DHET is an organisation which is set up to encourage the conservation, protection and enhancement of historic architecture and the physical environment within Dundee. The Historic Environment Grant scheme aims to financially support the repair of historic buildings within Conservation Areas.

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Other potential sources of funding for historic building repair in Dundee are Historic Scotland and Heritage Lottery Fund.

## 6.0 Conservation Strategy

The conservation strategy of the City Council is to ensure that new development and alterations to existing buildings will not have a negative impact on the existing character of the area. The City Council will use the Conservation area status as a management tool to help produce a high design quality to ensure the preservation or enhancement of the special character and appearance of the area. The City Council takes the view that this does not mean that new developments or alterations are unacceptable but that rehabilitation, restoration, new build or contemporary architecture is of suitably high standard.

## 7.0 Monitoring & Review

It is envisaged that this Conservation Area Appraisal will be reviewed approximately every five years, to ensure that it remains current, its effectiveness is gauged and it responds adequately to the pressures encountered within the Conservation Area.

As part of the mechanism for review and monitoring, a photographic survey will be undertaken as a means to record change. This will create an important tool in the management of the Conservation Area by providing an indicator of the impact of development and form the basis of future reviews. It is only through the continual co-operation of the public, can the aims and objectives of this appraisal be met.

For further information concerning the contents of this document, contributions for its improvement, or any matters concerning conservation areas or listed buildings, contact:

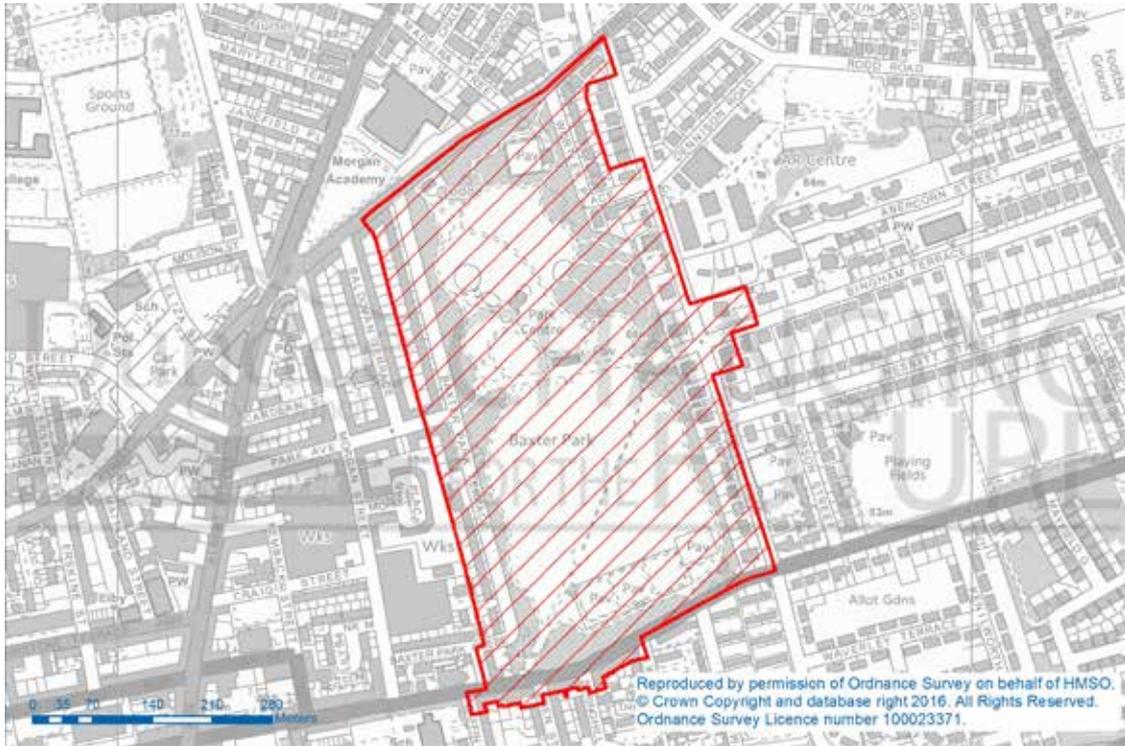
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# Appendix A. Proposed Boundary Map Review



*Proposed Conservation Area Map*