

Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023: A Guide to Planning Consents for the Aberdeen Multis

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	Page 2
1.1 Status of Aberdeen Planning Guidance	Page 2
1.2 Introduction to Topic / Background	Page 2
1.3 Climate Change	Page 3
1.4 Health and Wellbeing	Page 3
2. Aberdeen Planning Guidance	Page 4
2.1 Why has a guide been produced?	Page 4
2.2 Listing	Page 6
2.3 When is Consent Required	Page 8
3. Summary of Guidance	Page 9
4. Further Reading	Page 13
4.1 Further Reading	Page 13
4.2 Building Standards	Page 13

1. Introduction

1.1 Status of Aberdeen Planning Guidance

This Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG) supports the Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

This APG expands upon the following Aberdeen Local Development Plan policies:

- Policy D6 Historic Environment

Given the timing of the Local Development Plan, a pragmatic approach has been taken to changes in the planning system. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was adopted following the examination and subsequent modification of the Local Development, and the publication of a draft version of this APG for consultation. As a result, some terminology referred to in this APG may vary from the new NPF4 policy framework. References to the former Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and Strategic Development Plan (SDP) have been largely removed from this APG to minimise confusion, and wherever possible updated references to NPF4 have been included. Occasional references to SPP and the SDP have been retained where necessary to explain the source of data and/or essential context for the APG, but it should be noted that the LDP together with NPF4 now forms the basis of the statutory development plan.

1.2 Introduction to Topic / Background

Five multi-storey blocks of flats in Aberdeen have been designated as Category A-listed buildings by Historic Environment Scotland (HES). These concrete buildings were constructed as part of the city's post-Second World War housing programme and are considered by HES to be outstanding examples of Brutalist architectural style. The buildings were found to meet the criteria for listing and were designated by HES on 18 January 2021.

This guide provides clarification on what Category A designation means for these buildings, their owners and the people who live in them. Listing will usually only affect you if you want to make changes to a listed building.

Depending on the works you plan to carry out, you may need Listed Building Consent or Planning Permission from Aberdeen City Council as the Planning Authority before starting work. This guide provides more information on what may or may not require consent.

1.3 Climate Change

By providing guidance on the type of works that may or may not require Listed Building Consent or Planning permission, this APG helps to ensure the appropriate conservation and protection of Category A-listed multi-storey blocks of flats in the City Centre. This document therefore aligns with [Aberdeen Adapts](#) Goal 1: protecting buildings and preserving heritage. It also aligns with [UN Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities](#).

1.4 Health and Wellbeing

Where we live, where we work, and where we spend our time has an important influence on our health and wellbeing. How places are designed within their urban or natural environment are vital to the health of the people and communities within them.

This guidance can help to achieve the following Public Health Priorities for Scotland - Priority 1: A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities.

Overall however, this guidance is deemed to have minimal impact on population health and wellbeing. This means that, whilst it is unlikely a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) screening report will be requested to support any planning application, this will depend on the detail and scope of the application. There may be elements of the proposals that relate to the health and wellbeing of the population that warrant consideration. If that is the case, then a screening HIA will be required, and further advice on this will be provided.

2. Aberdeen Planning Guidance

2.1 Why has a guide been produced?

We have put together this guide to answer some anticipated questions from those who live in, or care for, these listed buildings.

Most people associate listing with more historic buildings, Victorian or earlier examples, constructed from traditional materials. There are however many examples of Modern and Post-Modern buildings that have been selected for listing across Scotland. The lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest are continually being refreshed and new proposals for the post-war period are increasingly being suggested to HES.

Several post-war tower blocks across Scotland have been previously listed to recognise their particular importance. Listing designations have implications on the requirement for Listed Building Consent and may raise various questions in terms of maintenance and alterations.

This guidance has been prepared to provide clarification on managing change sensitively to meet the needs of these particular listed multi-storey buildings. There is currently no specific national guidance on the management of change to post war buildings, however if any such guidance is prepared by HES, then this guidance will be reviewed and updated if required.

Who do I contact with any questions?

If you have any questions, please contact Aberdeen City Council Strategic Place Planning:

Email: pi@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Tel: 01224 053746

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building

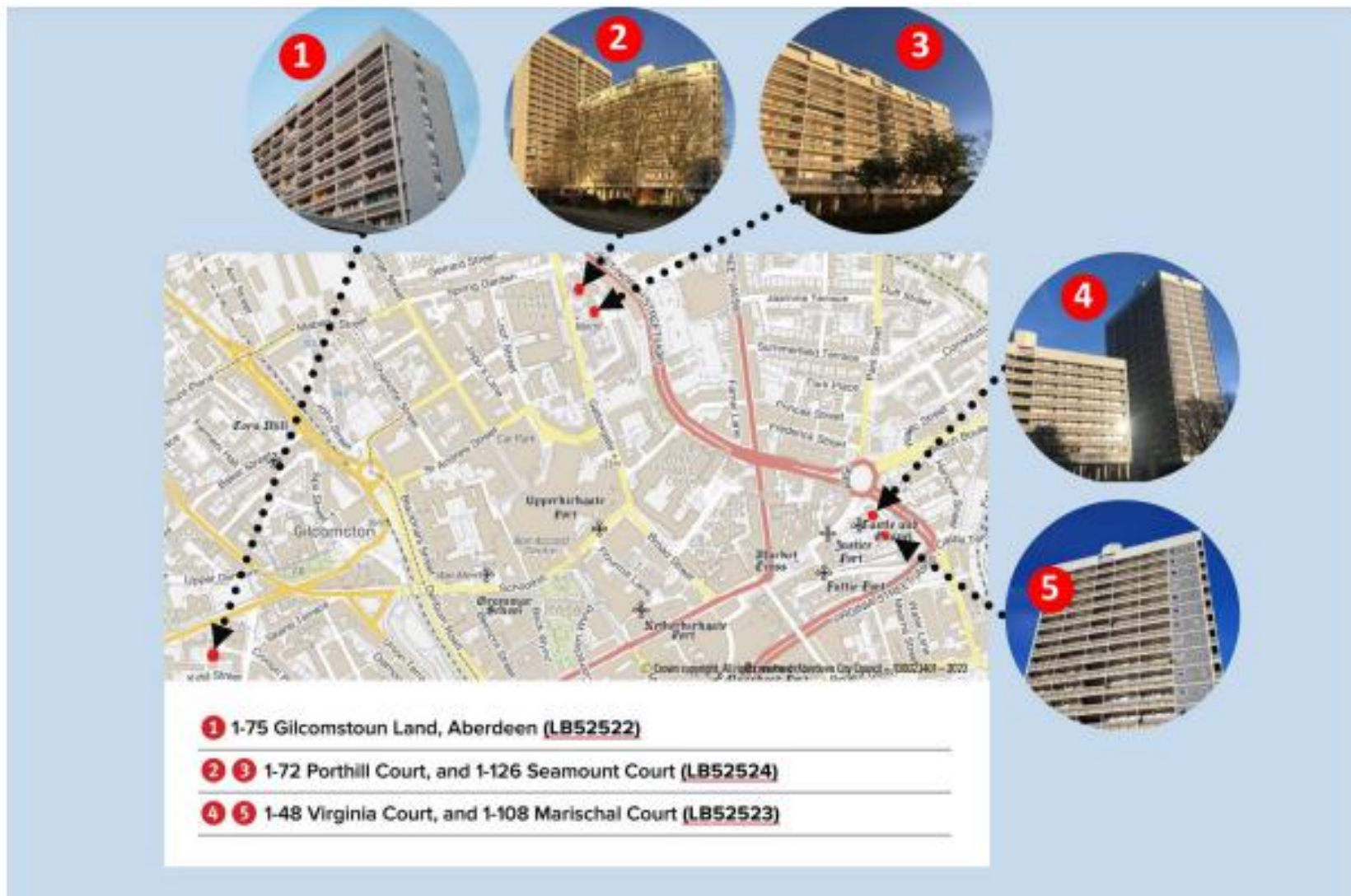


Figure 1

2.2 Listing

What is a Listed Building?

HES lists buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Listing is carried out under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. To merit listing, the structure must meet the listing criteria. Once listed they are included on a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest compiled by HES on behalf of Scottish Ministers. The policy which explains the selection criteria for listing can be found in Annex 1 of the HES [Designation Policy and Selection Guidance](#).

Which Multis Blocks have been Listed?

Five inner-city multi-storey blocks of flats have been designated by HES at three separate sites. One of the listings at Gallowgate (Porthill Court and Seamount Court) also includes an associated parade of shops and a multi-storey car park. The listings are all Category A. This is the highest category of listing in Scotland for buildings of special architectural or historical interest and includes outstanding examples of a particular period, style or building type.

The buildings were listed due to HES considering them to be of significant architectural interest and outstanding examples in Scotland of the modernist New Brutalism style in multi-storey housing. A 'Report of Handling', which informed the decision to list, is published on the [Historic Environment Scotland Portal](#). The Listed Building Records explain why the buildings have been listed.

What Listing Means

Listing will usually only affect you if you want to make changes to a listed building. Depending on the works you plan to carry out, you may need Listed Building Consent or Planning Permission from the Planning Authority before starting work. The Planning Authority in Aberdeen is part of Aberdeen City Council. There is currently no charge to apply for Listed Building Consent, and you apply in much the same way as for Planning Permission, i.e. submitting an application form and plans of the proposed work. You can submit your application online using the Scottish Government's ePlanning website. HES advise on Listed Building Consent applications when asked to do so by the Planning Authority.

Importantly, it is a criminal offence to demolish or extend a listed building without Listed Building Consent. It is also a criminal offence to alter a listed building in any way which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest unless you have Listed Building Consent. This can all include objects or structures fixed to the listed building.

Role of Aberdeen City Council's Corporate Landlord

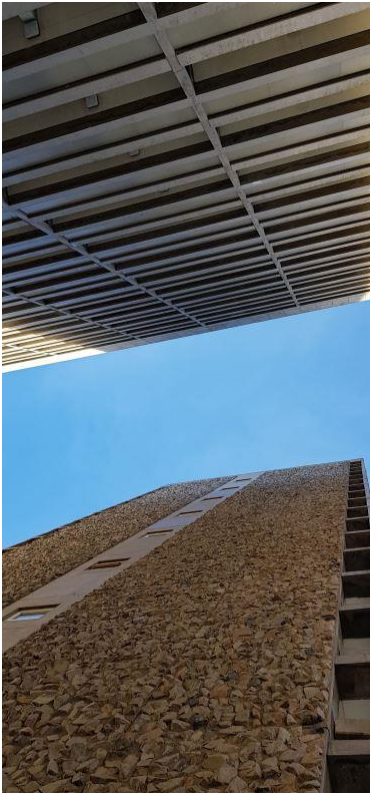
Listing a building does not affect routine repairs and maintenance and does not add an additional requirement on owners to maintain their buildings. As before, the Housing Team at Aberdeen City Council are responsible for managing the programme of repair and maintenance of the Multis. To request a repair contact:

Aberdeen City Council, Housing
Tel 03000 200 292
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

2.3 When is Consent Required

In this guide we have used a traffic light system to show how works to the Aberdeen Multis will be categorised.

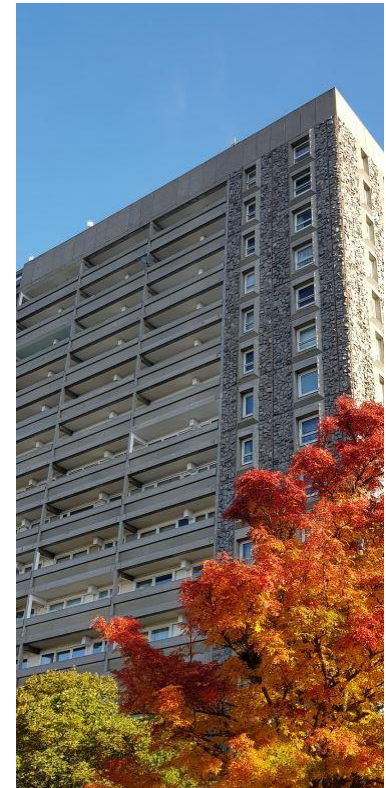
Please note that these categories are applicable to the Aberdeen Multi-storey Buildings only and have been prepared with due recognition of their particular special architectural and historic interest. This guide is not applicable to other listed buildings across the city, proposals for which will be considered on their own individual merits.



GREEN – examples of works where Listed Building Consent / Planning Permission will not be required and do not need discussion with the Planning Authority.

AMBER – examples of works which need an initial discussion with the Planning Authority to see if Listed Building Consent / Planning Permission is required.

RED – examples of works which will need Listed Building Consent and/or Planning Permission application(s).



3. Summary of Guidance

GREEN

Green works are works to the Multis which the Planning Authority would consider are always acceptable and would not affect the character of the building or its special architectural or historic interest. These could be works to communal areas or communal property led / carried out by Aberdeen City Council as majority building owner or works carried out by individual flat owners / tenants (depending on the tenancy agreement). For example:

Green works by individual flat owners / tenants:

- internal redecoration and modernisation of individual flats – for example new front or interior doors, wallpaper, painting, flooring, bathrooms, kitchens and new lighting and cabling.
- replacement windows / external (outside) doors where these use the same materials, have the same method of opening, and have the same proportions as the existing windows or external doors.
- the removal or alteration of non-structural internal walls within a flat.
- like-for-like works replacing elements of shopfronts (applicable to the Gallowgate blocks).

Green works by owners (normally led or carried out by Aberdeen City Council) to communal areas or communal property:

- routine maintenance and repairs to the outside of the buildings where these use the same materials and details as currently exist, and where the work carried out matches exactly what was there previously.
- replacement windows / external (outside) doors where these use the same materials, have the same method of opening, and have the same proportions as the existing windows or external doors.
- non-invasive cleaning and repainting of the exterior (outside) if there is no obvious change in colour.
- interior repair / upgrade / modernisation / redecoration to communal areas (including entrance areas, stairs, lifts, and undercroft facilities, such as laundry and storage buildings).
- the removal or alteration of non-structural internal walls.
- repair and replacement of existing utilities.

AMBER

Amber works are where advice should be taken from the Planning Authority to find out if an application for Listed Building Consent and/or Planning Permission is needed. For example:

Amber works by individual flat owners / tenants:

- individual flat window / external (outside) door replacement where these will not use the same materials as the existing ones, or do not have the same method of opening or the same proportions.
- structural alterations to interior layout of flats and maisonettes (such as taking down a load bearing wall).

Amber works by owners (normally led or carried out by Aberdeen City Council) to communal areas or communal property:

- localised repair / replacement of concrete frame / panels, granite aggregate, and balcony parts which do not match exactly what was used previously.
- localised repair/replacement of existing roof installations which do not match exactly what was used previously.
- individual flat window / external (outside) door replacement where these will not use similar materials, have the same method of opening, or have the same proportions as the existing.
- thermal upgrade programmes.
- minor adaptation (introduction of ramps or handrails) to exterior or interior communal areas to improve accessibility / meet Equality Act 2010 standards.
- comprehensive new utilities scheme affecting more than one flat – for example heating, plumbing, electrical systems etc.
- undercroft works such as resurfacing, repaving, minor new facilities (stores, bike-sheds).
- replacement or new lighting, cabling, CCTV cameras, replacement or new signage (all exterior only).
- structural alteration to interior layout of flats and maisonettes (such as taking down a load bearing wall).
- installation of exterior telecommunication equipment.
- installation of communal/shared satellite dishes.

RED

Red works will require Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission and include alterations or demolition works that would affect the special architectural or historic interest of the buildings. Most of these examples would be led or carried out by Aberdeen City Council as majority building owner. The requirement for consent does not mean that the works will not be able to proceed but full assessment in line with relevant policy and guidance will be required first.

Red works by individual flat owners:

- balcony alterations.
- the installation of individual satellite dishes.

Red works by owners (normally led or carried out by Aberdeen City Council) to communal areas or communal property:

- comprehensive exterior refurbishment schemes, such as window / door replacement where these will not use the same materials, have the same method of opening, or have the same proportions as the existing.
- extensive non “like-for-like” repair and/or replacement of concrete frame/ panels, granite aggregate.
- introduction of new external cladding.
- balcony alterations, including infill screens/glazing,
- new roof additions,
- alterations/extensions to undercroft areas, e.g. involving significant infill of open space and enclosure of concrete piers.
- comprehensive fire safety upgrades, including major works such as stair tower additions.
- major thermal upgrade schemes which impact on external appearance.
- major interior alterations, such as reconfiguration of original crossover plan for maisonettes.
- wholesale demolition or substantial demolition of building.

The above lists are presented as guidance and are not exhaustive. If you have any doubt regarding the need for consent then the Planning Authority should be consulted in the first instance. Works to communal areas will still require a “scheme decision” by the owners in line with the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004.

4. Further Reading

4.1 Further Reading

- Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, Historic Environment Scotland, December 2020
- What is listing?, Historic Environment Scotland website: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/what-is-listing>
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS), Historic Environment Scotland website: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/historic-environment-policy-for-scotland-heps>
- Managing Change in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Scotland website: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/managing-change-in-the-historic-environment-guidance-notes/>
- Aberdeen Local Development Plan, Aberdeen City Council website: <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-standards/local-development-plan/aberdeen-local-development-plan>

4.2 Building Standards

Some works listed above may also require a Building Warrant. This should be clarified with Building Standards through the Application Support Team.

Aberdeen City Council, Strategic Place Planning

Tel 01224 053746

Email pi@aberdeencity.gov.uk

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building