

# **Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023: Stonecleaning**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Status of Supplementary Guidance**

This Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG) forms part of 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 D1 – Quality Placemaking
- 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 Plan, 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 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**

Guidance is given on the strict criteria which must be adhered to when stonecleaning is proposed and implemented. Stonecleaning can reveal staining, poor previous repairs and surface damage. It may also remove the natural patina making re-soiling much easier. Cleaning materials may contribute to the decay of the mortar and the stone. Re-soiling of a building begins immediately after cleaning. Anyone proposing to clean a granite building should therefore be aware that the granite could return to its earlier state, or worse, quite quickly after cleaning.

### **1.3 Climate Change**

Stonecleaning can be detrimental to buildings and must be carried out properly to ensure no damage or decay to buildings. By providing guidance on the factors which must be considered where stone cleaning is proposed, this APG will help to ensure the appropriate protection and conservation of buildings within Aberdeen. This APG therefore aligns with [Aberdeen Adapts](#)

Goal 1: Protecting Buildings and Preserving Heritage. By helping to protect buildings into the long term, this APG 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.

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 General Guidance

Stonecleaning should be approached on a damage limitation basis; if doubt persists, the option not to clean should be adopted.

Specialist professional skills should be sought to undertake analysis and, where acceptable, design a suitable cleaning method and undertake work.

The cleaning of listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas by abrasive, chemical or high-pressure water method above 50 p.s.i will only be permitted if:

- The stonework is in sound condition;
- The most appropriate method of cleaning is established by a consultant's report in accordance with the methodology set out in Historic Environment Scotland's Technical Advice Note 9: Stonecleaning of Granite Buildings; and
- The consultant's report demonstrates that this method of cleaning will not prejudice the long-term structural integrity and appearance of the building.

Re-cleaning of granite on a regular basis will not be acceptable.

Permission will not be given to clean individual properties when they comprise only part of a building facade, either the facade of a single building or a terrace designed as an architecturally unified composition.

Permission will not be given to clean only part of a building. Where previous stonecleaning has taken place the stone consultant's report must provide strong justification for the proposal.

Guidance on the methodology, the report and the most common cleaning methods are to be found within Aberdeen City Councils Technical Advice Note: Traditional Building Care and in Historic Environment Scotland's Technical Advice Note

## 9: Stonecleaning of Granite Buildings.

### **3. Further Reading**

Further information is available on the Council's Traditional Building Care Hub webpage:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building/building-conservation-and-heritage/listed-buildings/traditional-and-historic-buildings-conservation-advice>