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Historic Scotland
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Edinburgh
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Please ask for : Kerry Bennett
Direct Dial: 01463 702281
Your ref: -
Our Ref:
Date 07 December
2009

Dear Mr Mackie,

Consultation on Historic Scotland Guidance Notes – Managing Change in the Historic Environment

I am responding to the above consultation on behalf of Highland Council. Highland Council are a local planning authority who carry out all of the usual statutory functions associated with the planning service at local government level, including development management and conservation within the historic environment.

The guidance notes produced to replace the Memorandum of Guidance are written in a manner which is easy to follow and relatively simple to understand. The use of images and case studies is welcomed and is a useful approach both to support the written documents and also in providing further information for individuals to follow up as and when required.

The use of language and terminology in the guidance notes is, in many cases, open to interpretation by the individual reader. As such it may be difficult for local planning authorities to enforce good practice based on the national guidance, in terms of delivering best practice within the historic built environment it is essential that the principles of conservation are clearly established and presented. Where terminology is ambiguous it is difficult for conservation and development management practitioners to insist on best practice when individual officers are often faced with differing opinions from design and development teams.

The scope of the current documents is relatively comprehensive. Guidance on the conversion of traditional rural buildings would be useful, the conversion of such buildings is common place but has the potential to impact severely not only on the individual building but also on the setting and wider historic rural landscape with the associated domestication from the introduction of parking, garden sheds, domestic scale landscaping, patios etc. This is an area where development management are under ever increasing pressure when domestic, residential conversion is seen as the only potential use for abandoned, derelict historic buildings in the rural landscape.

Equally, guidance on the implementation of the Building Standards in relation to historic buildings would be useful, this guidance would be best produced as a joint document between Historic Scotland and the Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government. Again this is an area where



conservation and development management officers are under ever increasing pressure to compromise, often to the detriment of historic buildings and sites.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kerry Bennett".

Kerry Bennett
Conservation Officer