

Contact: Richard Cartwright
Tel: 01236 616537
Fax: 01236 616206
E-mail: CartwrightR@northlan.gov.uk
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Our Ref: IHBC/01/08/RC
Your Ref:



Mark Watson
Historic Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh EH9 1SH

Richard Cartwright
Consultations Secretary
Environmental Services
Fleming House,
Cumbernauld G67 1JW
www.ihbc.org.uk

Dear Mark

CONSULTATION – BEYOND THE SCOTTISH BURGH SURVEY

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) is the professional body of the United Kingdom representing conservation specialists and historic environment practitioners in the public and private sectors. The Institute exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

The Scottish Branch of the Institute welcomes the opportunity to comment on this consultation on what should happen after the current round of Scottish Burgh Surveys is completed in March 2009, and how Historic Scotland can in future best support the provision of useful information about the character and archaeological potential of Scottish towns, to assist in their management.

We are broadly supportive of the proposals set out in the consultation, which follow on from discussions held at an AHSS Seminar in October 2007. We agree that information held should be available in digital format and be fully inter-operable with Local Authority GIS based systems. More detailed comments are as follows:

1. Input from both Local Authorities and the academic community should be welcomed but with overall control over data retained by Historic Scotland.
2. The greater the level of detail held on individual sites, the more useful the Burgh data held will be.
3. Written, descriptive data as contained in previous Burgh Survey documents will continue to be useful and would complement and assist Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

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4. The public realm element of historic settlements, where an original or historic element exists, may be an important aspect of the character of some Scottish Burghs, which should not be overlooked in any new data sets created.
5. If the new data sets are to be simply surveys and not plans, programmes or strategies, it is assumed Historic Scotland will not be required to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment, but confirmation should perhaps be given of this.

The Scottish Branch of the Institute would be grateful if you could consider these points.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Cartwright
Scottish Consultations Secretary