



Planning Services
Development Planning & Environment



PLANNING GUIDANCE (PG)
Areas of Built Heritage and Townscape Value:
The Shale Miners Rows

Adopted 27 November 2020

Planning Guidance (PG) : Areas of Built Heritage and Townscape Value: The Shale Miners Rows

1. Introduction

One of the most distinctive features of West Lothian's industrial heritage is the survival, largely intact, of several groups of homes built for oil shale workers known as "the rows".

The oil shale industry was unique to the Lothians. The West Lothian rows are therefore also unique. Many of the former miner's rows have been demolished and it is important that the best of those that remain are protected from unsympathetic alterations.

This Planning Guidance explain the guidelines which have been designed to protect the miners' rows at Winchburgh, South Village in Pumpherston, Dedridge Cottages in Livingston, Roman Camps near Broxburn, and Oakbank near West Calder. All of these areas have previously been designated "Areas of Special Control" in the West Lothian Local Plan (2009) and now benefit from designation as 'Areas of Built Heritage and Townscape Value in the LDP (2018).

The Winchburgh Rows

Of the rows which have survived, those at Winchburgh represent the most extensive and some of the most intact examples of this local vernacular building style. They were built in the 1900's for workers at the nearby Niddry Castle oil works. The works were closed in 1959 and demolished four years later. The company housing in Winchburgh was sold to individuals and the council between 1963 - 1965 and since then the area has been well preserved, though minor modernisation has occurred.



South Village, Pumpherston

Together with a site to the north, South Village originally provided over 200 houses when first built for the Pumpherston Oil Company in 1883. Now, following demolition and renovation, only 55 houses remain.

Whilst the rows at South Village have been altered, these alterations have fortunately not destroyed their original character. The basic design and the integrity of the layout remain.





Oakbank Cottages near West Calder

There are only 14 cottages here, in two terraces. They were constructed probably in the 1920's to house workers in the nearby Westwood mine, and are occasionally referred to as Westwood Cottages. Consisting of one row of six and one row of eight spacious homes, the rows have been partly modernised, some fitted with dormer windows, but have otherwise remained remarkably unaltered.



Beresford Rise, Dedridge, Livingston

These cottages consist of three buildings, totalling 27 houses. They were constructed by Oakbank Oil Company in 1909 to house workers in New Farm Mine, which operated between 1909 and 1919.

Although scheduled for demolition in the 1960's, they have been retained and have not been substantially altered. The cottages are surrounded by 1970's housing built by the former Livingston Development Corporation in the Dedridge area of Livingston, and are now known as Beresford Rise.

Roman Camp Cottages, by Broxburn

There are 34 cottages here in eight terraces of three distinct types. They were built around the late 1880's to house workers at the Roman Camp works.

These cottages have been the most altered of all those considered as Areas of Built Heritage and Townscape Value. Because of the number of alterations, the only part of the design advice which apply to Roman Camp Cottages is the specific advice on dormer extensions for the three distinct cottage types.



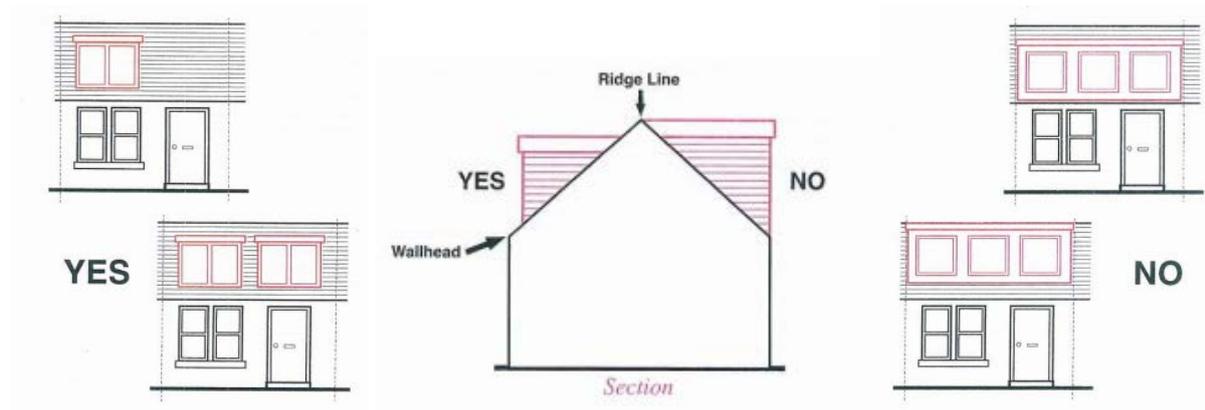
2. Design Guidance

This advice is intended to ensure that the special character and integrity of the rows is retained if any extensions or other improvements are being considered. Since the rows share many of the same features, much of the advice applies to all areas. However, there are certain characteristics which are specific to individual areas and these have been given special attention.

Dormer Extensions

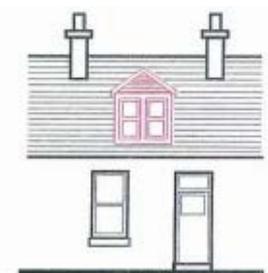
(a) All areas

When considering an attic conversion, thought should first of all be given to the possibility of using roof lights. Where a dormer is proposed it should be designed appropriately for the varying types of cottages. Some simple examples of goods and poor designs are shown in the diagrams below. The dormers should be set back from both the wall-head and below the ridgeline. New dormer windows should be centred on existing ground floor openings, windows or doors. Timber fascia boards should be kept to a minimum depth and painted black, not white, to make them inconspicuous. In all cases dormers should be clad in natural slate to match the existing roof. Whenever possible, dormer extensions to different houses in the same row should be similar in height, projection and length.



(b) South Village, Pumpherston

At the south-east of South Village there are cottages of a slightly different design to the others in this area. These cottages have a distinctive dormer style. Only dormers which match this design will be acceptable to the front, as illustrated to the left. Box dormers as described in the previous section will be acceptable at the rear.



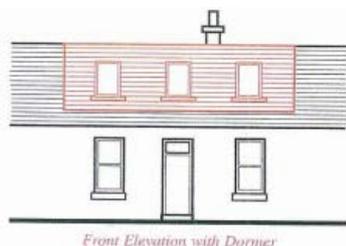
Dormer for Oakbank, Westwood.

(c) Oakbank, Westwood

Again the cottages at Oakbank have a distinctive style of dormer to the front, as shown to the left. Any further dormers to the front should respect this style. Dormers to the rear should be individual and should be kept from the wall-heads and ridgeline as explained above.

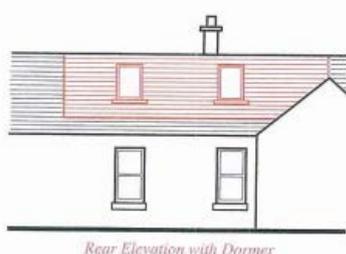
(d) Roman Camp

At Roman Camp different groups of buildings have different requirements, for dormer extensions, due to differing ridge heights. The following illustrations give examples of dormers which would be acceptable within the different groups of buildings.



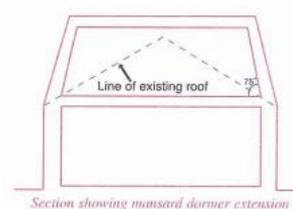
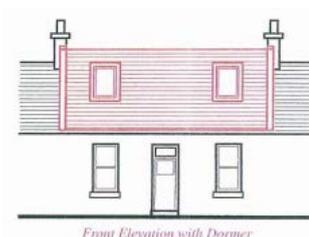
Cottage No's 1-8

Because the existing roof space is so small, the ground floor ceilings should be lowered in order to provide enough headroom whilst still keeping the dormer below the level of the ridge of the existing roof, as shown in the sketches on the left. The same principles for size and scale of dormers at the other rows apply here also.



Cottage No's 9-28

These cottages are slightly smaller than cottages 1-8 and unfortunately it is not possible to adopt the same solution of lowering the ceiling to keep the dormers below the ridgeline without reducing the aperture of the existing ground floor windows. Therefore, at these cottages, a mansard-type extension should be adopted where the slope of the new mansard roof should be 75°. The sketches on the right illustrate this approach.



Cottage No's 29-34

These are the largest cottages in the village and dormer extensions can be accommodated which can be kept back from the wall-head and below the ridgeline. Again, the guidelines detailed above for all areas apply here.

Other Extensions – All Areas (except Roman Camp)

All other extensions to the cottages should respect the scale and character of both the individual building and the row as a whole. Rear extensions and, where appropriate, side extensions should not encroach beyond the building line.

At the miners' rows at Oakbank, Dedridge and Winchburgh, extensions should be finished in a suitable red brick to match the existing buildings. At all rows no extension should be higher than the eaves of the existing building. Front extensions will not be permitted.

Re-roofing – All Areas (except Roman Camp)

At all miners' rows, the roof finishes are a most important part of the integrity and character of the cottages. Only natural slate should be used where re-roofing is required. The use of modern materials such as concrete tiles will not be permitted.

Walls

(a) Winchburgh, Oakbank and Dedridge

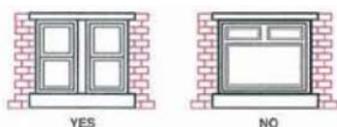
Part of the character of the miners' rows at Winchburgh, Oakbank and Dedridge is that they are all constructed from the same red brick. Whilst roughcasting and painting may improve the appearance of an individual cottage, thought should be given to the appearance of the row as a whole. Where possible on front elevations, red brickwork should be retained.

(b) South Village and Roman Camp

At Pumpherston and Roman Camp most cottages have been roughcast when being improved. Therefore, at these locations re-roughcasting or painting should respect the tones and colours of adjacent properties.

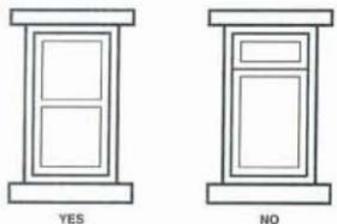
Replacement Windows and Doors – All Areas (except Roman Camp)

Windows



Replacement windows should be the same size and as the original windows and have the same glazing proportions.

Where a mullion is present between two windows this should also be retained.



Where it is a single window, the proportions should remain the same.

Doors

Doors should be timber framed, panelled doors to match the existing. Fully glazed modern doors should be avoided.

Chimney Stacks and Cans

Existing chimney stacks and cans should be retained in-situ and repaired or replaced using similar materials whenever necessary.

Garden Ground

Garden ground is part of the original setting of the miners' rows. Where development proposals impact on associated garden ground owners should discuss proposals with the planning authority.

3. Other Shale Miners Rows

Although not within an Area of Built Heritage and Townscape Value, the former shale miners' rows at New Holygate off West Main Street in Broxburn are within the Broxburn Conservation Area. Similar guidelines to those explained in this leaflet will, therefore, also apply to all applications for alterations to the houses at the Holygate Rows.

4. Further Advice and Contacts

It is impossible for these guidelines to cover every situation. They are intended to be used by householders to assess whether a proposal is likely to be acceptable.

Should you require further advice please contact the Development Management team.

Applicants can also make use of the council's [pre-application enquiry service](#) which can be accessed on the council's website. *Please note however that this is a chargeable service.*

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Approved by West Lothian Council Executive
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