What is a conservation area?
A conservation area is part of a town or village that has special architectural or historic interest. It is the character and appearance of these areas we all wish to preserve or enhance.

Midlothian Council has to decide which parts of its area are of sufficient architectural or historic interest to merit becoming a conservation area.

What is special about Penicuik?
Penicuik has a fascinating history with a surviving street layout dating from the 18th century, and many historic buildings dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Many of these are listed because of their historic and architectural value. Penicuik was an important market town, famous for its paper making.

The conservation area covers part of the town centre, and extends south to Uttershill Castle, including the Valleyfield housing development.
What is a Conservation Area Appraisal?

Midlothian Council has produced a Conservation Area Appraisal for Penicuik. This describes the historic and architectural importance of the town. The key features and buildings within the conservation area are described, as are the landscape character and setting of the area. The appraisal also highlights some of the issues and problems within the area. This includes the condition of some of the buildings and the improvements that could be made. The appraisal is an important document that will inform the statutory planning policies for the town. The Penicuik Conservation Area Appraisal is available from the Midlothian Council Planning Service.

What is a Conservation Area Management Plan?

Midlothian Council has produced a Conservation Area Management Plan for Penicuik. This follows on from the appraisal and identifies how the area should be managed and improved to increase the economic competitiveness of the town centre and to conserve and enhance the historic core of Penicuik for future generations to enjoy.

The following objectives have been identified:

- Careful conservation and enhancement of the historic core of Penicuik town centre;
- The repair of buildings;
- The repair and reinstatement of traditional shop fronts;
- The improvement of urban spaces by new hard and soft landscaping;
- Improvement of the commercial centre public realm;
- Working with other main interests in the town centre to improve the physical environment and promotion of the town centre; and
- The encouragement of civic pride and a sense of place and belonging in the town centre.

What is the Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Scheme?

The Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Scheme is a partnership between Midlothian Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Environment Scotland, supported by the Penicuik Community Development Trust and Penicuik First. The partnership has been formed to encourage investment in the town centre by offering grants for the restoration of historic buildings and the improvement of public spaces together with community engagement projects and training related to the history and heritage of the town. The funding from Historic Environment Scotland is through a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme, and the funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund is through a Townscape Heritage grant.
What does it mean for an area to be called a Conservation Area?

In a conservation area it is the buildings and also the spaces between them that make the area special. It is this special and unique character that planning controls seek to preserve and enhance. Care should therefore be taken to ensure that new development is appropriate and contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.

The following works are brought under planning control in a conservation area:

- demolition of buildings;
- removal of or work to trees;
- development involving small home extensions, roof alterations, stone cleaning or painting of the exterior, provision of hard surfaces and
- control over satellite dishes.

Where the character or appearance of a conservation area would be affected by a development, the Council will advertise the application in the local newspaper to allow the public to make comments. These comments will be taken into account by the Council when deciding on the application.
Your role

Owners and occupiers have a central role to play in protecting the quality of the conservation area. Regular maintenance is the single best way of extending the life and value of your property and also helps protect the special appearance of your area. Regular cleaning of gutters, repair of leaky downpipes, re-pointing of stonework, painting of windows and the replacement of broken or missing slates will all help keep your building wind and watertight and prevent decay.

Insensitive new developments and removal of original features can harm the appearance of the area as much as overgrown gardens and crumbling masonry. This is why it is important that works such as painting of buildings, changes to windows and doors, the addition of extensions or conservatories, the demolition of outbuildings and boundary walls and alterations to shop fronts, fascias and shop signs are done in a sensitive way.

Checks

Owners and occupiers should check with the Duty Planning Officer at Midlothian Council to see if their property is a listed building or in the conservation area before doing any work. They should find out what kind of Council approval is needed. Planning Permission will be needed for most kinds of work but the need for Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent or Advertisement Consent will depend on the type of work proposed.

Trees

Trees are protected by law in the Conservation Area. It is illegal to cut down, lop, top, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy a tree without consulting the Council.

Breaches of Regulation

If you believe that work has been carried out in the conservation area or to a listed building without permission you should contact the duty Planning Officer, Midlothian Council. Contact details are provided on the back page of this leaflet.

Remember

Always contact Midlothian Council for advice before starting any work to your property. This could prevent work being removed or changed and save you time and money.
Useful Contacts:

**Duty Planning Officer,**
Planning Service,
Midlothian Council.

**Telephone:** 0131 271 3302  
**Email:** dutyplanningofficer@midlothian.gov.uk

Fairfield House,  
8 Lothian Road,  
Dalkeith, EH22 3AA  
www.midlothian.gov.uk

**Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project Manager,**
Rod Lugg,  
Lasswade Room,  
Penicuik Town Hall,  
33 High Street,  
Penicuik, EH26 8HS

**Telephone:** 01968 664 041  
**Mobile:** 07545 551356  
**Email:** rod.lugg@midlothian.gov.uk