



**Buckhaven
Heritage**

A TRADITIONAL MATERIALS AUDIT FOR BUCKHAVEN



**HISTORIC
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**Fife Historic
Buildings Trust**

A Traditional Materials Audit for Buckhaven

**This report has been prepared by Dr Ewan Hyslop on behalf of
Fife Council as part of the Buckhaven Heritage project.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose and objective

This report describes a traditional materials audit of Buckhaven in Fife, commissioned by Fife Historic Buildings Trust on behalf of Fife Council and carried out by Dr Ewan Hyslop. It is one of a number of initiatives to support the development of the Buckhaven Heritage project. It forms one of the requirements under the Development Phase funding by Historic Environment Scotland's Heritage & Place Programme and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The results of this work will help to plan the project and inform the specifications for capital projects.

The project brief was to undertake a detailed traditional materials audit for the proposed capital projects area within the Third Party Grants Area as defined by Fife Council and Fife Historic Buildings Trust (see Fig. 1.1), thereafter referred to in this report as the 'project area'.

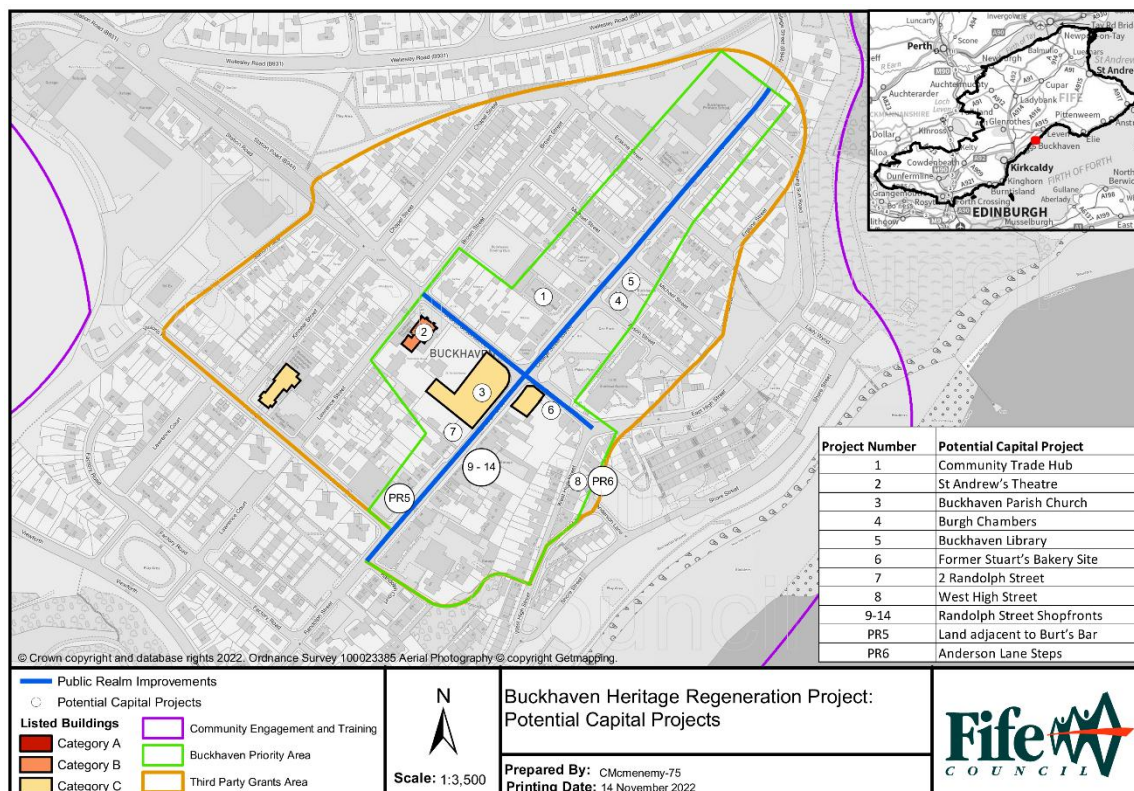


Fig. 1.1. Map of the potential capital projects area for the Buckhaven Heritage project. The Traditional Materials Audit is contained within the proposed Third Party Grants Area (orange boundary), including the Buckhaven Priority Area (green). (Map: Fife Council).

The objective was to record and assess the traditional materials found in buildings and the public realm within the area. The key tasks are to:

- Identify material types and varieties used to construct historic assets in the area.
- Analysis of a representative sample of materials.
- Identification of where materials may originally have come from such as quarries, brickworks etc.
- Recommendations for matching material from currently available sources for repair.

- General condition survey of the material type (e.g. stone masonry) within the project area.
- General recommendations for maintenance and repair.

The audit is carried out in line with Historic Environment Scotland's Heritage & Place Programme Traditional Skills Training and Materials Guidance.

Methodology

The initial phase of the project involved a review of available documentation including relevant data records, publications and maps to collate information on the historical, economic and social development of Buckhaven. A detailed appraisal of historic Ordnance Survey (OS) maps was undertaken in order to establish the pattern of development of the town over time. Information on traditional materials, including natural resources and production of building materials, was obtained from published archival sources from the British Geological Survey (BGS) and others such as www.scottishbrickhistory.co.uk. All such sources of information are referred to as footnotes in the text. A list of these and further sources of information is given at the end of the report.

A detailed walk-through survey of the project area was undertaken, documenting the key traditional materials and varieties in the project area. Information was recorded on a building-by-building basis using detailed current OS basemaps, and then uploaded on a QGIS project to collate the information in a digital format, enabling the data to be analysed to quantify the key materials and identify patterns of use across the project area.

During the survey, specific buildings and areas identified as Potential Capital Projects were given particular attention. Each is described in terms of its potential heritage significance and use of traditional materials, with comments on key features including condition and outline maintenance/repair needs. Additionally, a further series of buildings and structures were identified during the walk-through survey that help define the historic character of Buckhaven and which highlight the use of traditional materials and maintenance needs.

Fieldwork was carried out over the period from October 2024 to February 2025. All observations were made from public areas and no access was obtained to individual properties. The survey only covers the external elements of buildings, and no internal spaces were examined. Observations were made using the naked eye and (where necessary) with the aid of binoculars, and were therefore dependant on having clear lines of sight. Identification of stone types was carried out with the aid of a hand lens to determine mineral constituents etc.

The audit records the variety of traditional materials used throughout the project area, and documents changing building practices as the town developed over time. The results are intended to support future conservation planning in terms of ensuring continuity and maintenance of the historic character and heritage values of the town. The work presented here is not intended to be a substitute for detailed condition surveys or material specifications which should be carried out on a case by case basis for specific buildings and projects.

Structure of the report

Following this introduction, Section 2 describes the geological and landscape setting of Buckhaven and how this has influenced the pattern of human settlement and historical development over time, including the importance of natural resources to the economic development of the town. Section 3 gives the results of the walk-through survey, presented as a series of thematic 'materials maps' showing the spatial distributions of different key traditional materials as the town developed over time.

Detailed descriptions of the Potential Capital Projects buildings are presented in Section 4, and other notable buildings and structures in Section 5. Section 6 gives a systematic detailed description of the traditional materials identified in the survey and from the key buildings, including their principal characteristics as well as information on provenance and original sources. Section 7 provides general comments on building maintenance and issues in terms of condition of materials; whilst Section 8 describes sources of materials for repairs.

A short Glossary of technical terms and a list of Further Reading and Sources of Information are provided at the end of the report.