

Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023: Stonecleaning (DRAFT)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Status of Supplementary Guidance

This Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG) forms part of the Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

This APG expands upon the following Aberdeen Local Development Plan policies:

- Policy D1 – Quality Placemaking
- Policy D6 – Historic Environment

1.2 Introduction to Topic

Guidance is given on the strict criteria which must be adhered to when stonecleaning is proposed and implemented. Stonecleaning can reveal staining, poor previous repairs and surface damage. It may also remove the natural patina making re-soiling much easier. Cleaning materials may contribute to the decay of the mortar and the stone. Re-soiling of a building begins immediately after cleaning. Anyone proposing to clean a granite building should therefore be aware that the granite could return to its earlier state, or worse, quite quickly after cleaning.

1.3 Climate Change

This guidance has been drafted in accordance with concerns raised through the Climate Emergency. The guidance which supports Policies D6 and D7 sits alongside strategies produced by Aberdeen City Council (ACC) such as Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen, Strategic Infrastructure Plan (Energy Transition), Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework and the Council's Climate Change Plan, Net Zero Aberdeen RouteMap. Both the Policy and the guidance aim to reflect the values and objectives highlighted within these strategies moving forward to prepare Aberdeen City for the Climate Emergency.

The documents aligns with Aberdeen Adapts Goal 1 'Protecting buildings and Historic Assets'. Stonecleaning can be detrimental to buildings and must be carried out properly to ensure no damage or decay to buildings.

2. Aberdeen Planning Guidance

2.1 General Guidance

Stonecleaning should be approached on a damage limitation basis; if doubt persists, the option not to clean should be adopted.

Specialist professional skills should be sought to undertake analysis and, where acceptable, design a suitable cleaning method and undertake work.

The cleaning of listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas by abrasive, chemical or high-pressure water method above 50 p.s.i will only be permitted if:

- The stonework is in sound condition;
- The most appropriate method of cleaning is established by a consultant's report in accordance with the methodology set out in Historic Environment Scotland's Technical Advice Note 9: Stonecleaning of Granite Buildings; and
- The consultant's report demonstrates that this method of cleaning will not prejudice the long-term structural integrity and appearance of the building.

Re-cleaning of granite on a regular basis will not be acceptable.

Permission will not be given to clean individual properties when they comprise only part of a building facade, either the facade of a single building or a terrace designed as an architecturally unified composition.

Permission will not be given to clean only part of a building. Where previous stonecleaning has taken place the stone consultant's report must provide strong justification for the proposal.

Guidance on the methodology, the report and the most common cleaning methods are to be found within Aberdeen City Councils Technical Advice Note: Traditional Building Care and in Historic Environment Scotland's Technical Advice Note 9: Stonecleaning of Granite Buildings.

3. Further Reading

Further information is available on the Council's Traditional Building Care Hub webpage:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building/building-conservation-and-heritage/listed-buildings/traditional-and-historic-buildings-conservation-advice>