Institute of Landscape Architects (Scottish Group)
&
The National Trust for Scotland

**A National Landscape Policy for Scotland**

Report on Conference held on Cambusnethan Priory,
Lanarkshire

Saturday, 16 June 1962
Ladies and Gentlemen, my wife and I are delighted to welcome you to Cambusnethan Priory and we greatly appreciate that many of you have travelled great distances to be with us on what we earnestly hope will be a most memorable and worthwhile event.

We are surrounded here in the Clyde Valley, as in other parts of industrialised Britain, by towns which are to my mind too often an insult to human dignity, obscene parodies of architecture, landscape and planning. While they show us our re-apparent inability as communities to create satisfactory relationships of our towns within their landscape settings, they also warn us that changes in land use for economic and social reasons are inevitable. It is a tragedy that society should so often need protection against such change which always seems to be inimical. It is also an indictment that we should fear these changes, but I am afraid that this is so. How do we confront, intervene and manage this state of affairs?

As the pressure to change land use increases and the penumbra of our urban centres casts its shadow over all of our country, we must surely strive to cherish and appreciate the contribution of the noble heritage of the past and the far sighted planning needed for the future, with an altogether deeper understanding of the planning ethos of landscape – truly transmitting a trust which goes far beyond our own life span.

We must not allow our landscape to be stifled by political expediency, negative planning, the cupidity of the individual, ‘town house’ and professional feuds, specious economic arguments, or ‘Mickey Mouse’ design aesthetics. I make my case in support for a Landscape Commission for Scotland in these few reasons alone and, therefore, as the raison d’être for this conference.
May I now introduce with much pleasure, Mr Frank Clark, our Chairman:

H Frank Clark, FILA
Vice President, Institute of Landscape Architects

We are greatly privileged to share the underlying initiative of this Conference with the National Trust for Scotland who are and have been the national voice and leader in the protection and conservation of our landscape and architectural heritage since the early 1930’s, a decade we share in our separate inceptions. We are also greatly challenged by the calibre of our audience and the diversity of interests represented here today. It is overwhelmingly gratifying to feel that we are kindred spirits in a common cause. May this be for us all a highly worthwhile and relaxed occasion where diverse views may be expressed freely and may the government empower the proposals now before them and establish the Landscape Commission for Scotland.

Without further ado may I now have the pleasure of introducing the Morning Session and our first keynote speaker who needs little introduction and whom we are both privileged and absolutely delighted to welcome to the Conference.

Sir Robert Russell
Chairman of the Town and Country Planning Committee,
National Trust for Scotland.

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland to share this platform with the Institute of Landscape Architects who have so ably and imaginatively convened this event with the object of bringing together members of the various professions who are actively concerned in the making and conserving of landscapes, to discuss in an open and unrestricted manner the National Trust’s proposals for a Landscape Commission in Scotland. I am advised that eighty persons are in attendance representing the core interests in the planning and conserving of our landscape heritage.

Speaking on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland may I remind the meeting that the proposals which I am about to discuss have evolved gradually under the pressure of events. During the last twelve months, however, the situation has developed with increasing speed. First came the Departmental Committee of the Scottish Home Department which was formed to advise the Secretary of State on Hydro Electric development in Scotland; secondly; the Braemar meeting of the Scottish Group of the Town Planning Institute which was concerned primarily with the problems of tourism; then the National Trust for Scotland’s own
report on the Highlands compiled by W.H. Murray; The Scottish Tourist Board’s Conference on Tourism and Landscape conservation; the NTS announcement of its proposals to the Scottish Office for the forming of a Landscape Commission; and finally, the Scottish Development Department’s recent circular to County Authorities asking for landscape surveys and proposals on tourism in their various administrative areas.

NTS is convinced that statutory provision should be made at once to place the preservation of areas of outstanding beauty on a National basis, and to ensure that any decisions affecting such areas are taken only after full consideration, and to establish a source of intelligence and information in addition to the facilities which local authorities and others thought normal to supply.

Sir Robert claimed that any machinery which was instituted must take into account firstly, the necessity to conserve and preserve areas of outstanding beauty in the country; secondly, that there should be means of access by the public to these areas; and thirdly, that conservation must be reconciled with development. The existing machinery was in no way adequate nor had we yet commenced many of the surveys which were still necessary. Though a survey of the coastal scenery in the Highlands had been carried out and though the National Trust had implemented its own survey of the Highlands this was only a beginning and by no means the whole story. There was no code of practice for establishing principles for landscape conservation, no code of standards. Where major development was concerned the statutory apparatus for consultation was inadequate and in operation was unsatisfactory.

Therefore, the National Trust for Scotland proposed, that the Government should establish in Scotland, a body comparable in some ways with the Historic Buildings Councils and in other ways with the National Parks Commission for England and Wales to afford local authorities in Scotland, on the advice of this body, payment of Exchequer Grants at the rate of 100 per cent for such purposes as the construction of car parks, picnic places, footpaths and bridges, the provision of information services and to meet the expenses involved in tree preservation orders.

Sir Robert said that this body would have some such title as the Landscape Commission for Scotland, that it should be appointed by the Secretary of State and that its chief functions should be:

- to advise the Secretary of State on questions relating to amenity and to bring to his attention questions relating to amenity and natural beauty anywhere in Scotland;
- to make recommendations to Local Planning Authorities and to make representations to Ministers as to any action which in the Commission’s opinion should be taken to
protect areas or places of outstanding natural beauty or to provide for greater public enjoyment of the countryside and in all these instances to make representations about the specific projects which are worthy of grant aid;

- to advise the Secretary of State on the giving of grants to Local Planning Authorities and others;

- to advise the two Electricity Boards, the Forestry Commission, other statutory undertakers and other developers on questions relating to amenity and natural beauty anywhere in Scotland;

- to initiate its own investigations and researches and to provide an intelligence service on landscape, design and materials and on all matters pertaining to amenity and the preservation of areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Sir Robert also informed the meeting that it was suggested that the Commission should immediately, on its appointment, designate the areas delineated by the National Parks Survey Committee namely:

- The Loch Lomond, Trossachs area
- Glen Affric, Glen Cannich, Strathferrar
- The Cairngorms
- Loch Torridon, Loch Maree, Little Loch Broom

The boundary lines for these areas should be redrawn where necessary, to accord with developments over the past 18 years.

Sir Robert said that it was thought that if appointed, the Commission should have a staff of its own which would comprise civil servants and technical advisers consisting of planners and landscape architects, and that the Commission would function independently of the Scottish Development Department and of any other interests.

**Discussion**

In the discussion, Frank Tindall suggested that the Commission might be an executive one with powers and finance to carry out development as well as being an advisory one, and this point was made by other speakers who were concerned that the Landscape Commission should not be just one more ineffective advisory body. Peter Daniel questioned why the aims of the Commission should be solely concerned with the areas of outstanding natural beauty as at present conceived or designated, and did not seem to be
asked to investigate the landscape degeneration in the areas surrounding and within our urban centres or of the need to rehabilitate despoiled landscape. In his opinion, the County Planning Authorities might also be asked by the Department to prepare landscape rehabilitation plans at the same time as preparing tourist attraction plans.

Sir Robert Russell defended the Trust’s proposal that the Commission should have no executive powers to interfere with the function of Local Authorities other than certain powers to designate areas of high amenity value. He also said that the Commission might ultimately concern itself with landscape rehabilitation, but its immediate purpose would be to attempt to stop further landscape despoliation in the parts of the country where tourism has a definite economic factor.

The precept of separating landscape into areas which were spoilt and unspoilt continued to concern the conference and William Gillespie made the strong plea for the intelligent engineering and landscape integration of new motor roads required to carry tourists and other general users to their chosen destinations.

Our Chairman in drawing the Morning Session to a close, expressed his appreciation for the encapsulation of all that Institute of Landscape Architecture had been striving under such great difficulty to express – here was a vision that gave life to our ideals and goals shared in common in this room, and which within the framework of a Landscape Commission would engender responsible stewardship of our most valued heritage.

Afternoon Session

Mr Clark gave thanks to Mrs Daniel for arranging a most delightful lunch in which we were encouraged to roam the grounds at will in beautiful May sunshine. In introducing the next keynote Speaker, he referred to him as the foremost landscape academician in the UK and whose reputation was international. It is a great honour and pleasure to welcome:

**Professor Brian Hackett**

Reader in Landscape Architecture, Kings College, University of Durham
Visiting Professor, University of Illinois

Chairman, I feel most inspired by all I have heard from Sir Robert Russell and it is so refreshing to know that the issues long felt, emotionally as well as scientifically expressed by the Institute of Landscape Architects, are being addressed here in Scotland on a pioneering basis and at a national level within a colloquium of shared experts converging on our common interest,
that is, the quality of our landscape heritage.

I am greatly privileged to be invited to respond to the NTS proposals for a Landscape Commission. It is hugely relevant to contemporary interests in the US from which I have just returned from a Visiting Professorship at the University of Illinois. My former student at Kings, William Cairns, arranged for the transportation and funding of the exhibition prepared by my graduate students, colleagues and I for the State government of Illinois on multiple land-use planning using ecological and landscape principles. I will now illustrate the basic principles lying behind Illinois State landscape policy. The exhibition panels themselves you will see in the Priory today. It will be appreciated that I show all this as background to the immediately pertinent issues being discussed at this conference and to endorse in its entirety, the timely, and most essential and imaginative NTS concept of a Landscape Commission for Scotland.

It is noteworthy that the Planning Authorities across the whole of the United Kingdom which had demonstrated an interest in the landscape are limited to about seven or eight. Landscape, however, transcends the boundaries of planning authorities and, therefore, it follows that some over-riding authority is necessary, if only for this reason. Prof Hackett stressed that before any landscape policy could be formulated, its needs must be supported and demonstrated by facts. Those advocating overall landscape policy must demonstrate that they had the knowledge to be able to deal with the various aspects of land use such as:

- Land as an Environment;
- Land as a Scientific and Technical resource;
- Land as an Aesthetic resource;
- Land as an Economic resource.

It was not enough to demonstrate that the landscape was beautiful and, therefore, ought to be preserved. It was important to be able to bring forward statistical evidence in support of a landscape’s maturity, for instance, and the importance of considering this aspect in relation to its regeneration. It was not good enough to claim that the landscape should be made available for the enjoyment of everyone unless some research was undertaken as to recreational needs and the effects of shorter working hours and increased leisure and mobility on the uses of the countryside for recreation. Such research had been undertaken in the United States on a comprehensive scale. We should also consider the impact of types of landscape on the physiology of the human being. On the economic aspect Prof Hackett advocated the payment by the tourist industry of some sort of a levy, a contribution towards the upkeep and management of the landscape. On the subject of ownership and access Prof Hackett put forward the view that the idea of a scenic or a

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landscape easement or way leave be considered over private property.

As regards any kind of development within the countryside whether it be engineering work or agriculture or forestry it should be remembered that development must start with landscape and end with landscape, that it must utilise the existing landscape as a resource for new landscape. Prof Hackett ended by stating that there should be four aims in any landscape policy:

- That we should define the extent to which regional and national landscape planning is a valid concept.
- How policies in regard to development might be evolved beyond the present legal and administrative structures.
- Outline the contribution which each land planning discipline can make.
- Point the way to new techniques of design and planning which have to be discovered when working with and on the scale of a national landscape.

Discussion

In the discussion which followed Prof Hackett’s speech, two main issues emerged; first, consideration of landscape as an aesthetic experience, the other, landscape purely as a result of land-use and man’s activity. As one participant suggested, any given landscape was a product of its time and changing society produced new ideals of beauty to correspond. How then could a Landscape Commission function with any degree of consistency in its policy framework? Prof Hackett drew the comparison between abstract art applied to landscape form in denial of the characteristics conferred by its ecology and the marriage of ecological principles with those of engineering design and agronomy or other functions of landscape in human use. The systematic interpretation of a site, area or region enabled the preparation of environmental baseline data and understanding from which the creative process towards a resolution of the existing landscape with new development should ensure visual and functional harmonisation.

Frank Clark defined scenery and landscape as something which not only gave visual satisfaction, but often was beautiful because it represented good order and sensible land use as a viable environment. Dr Arthur Geddes supported this with the statement that landscape is a physical reality and as such had the need for an arbitrator, i.e. a Landscape Commission, especially in significant regions of multiple land use. The need for a co-ordinator was patently obvious. Certainly, it would be wrong of the Commission to concern itself only with the unspoilt Highlands;
the Lowlands and urban landscapes must also be included in the Commission’s work.

Charles Smart (latterly Chief Landscape Architect, Wales) suggested that the truly intractable elements were the large scale changes made to the landscape by the Public Utilities – now the biggest devourers of landscape. This must certainly be a first object of the Commission to control in the Country’s interests the gargantuan powers of the Statutory Authorities.

Sir Robert Russell said that the scope of the Commission was not to take over the whole of land planning. While he agreed with Daniel and Geddes that rehabilitation was an important subject, the NTS considered that if the Landscape Commission was to be a practical one, it must at first be strictly limited in the scope of its work. The suggestion that a landscape policy was only one fact of a much needed regional planning concept was made by several speakers and James Morris suggested that a clear concept – a modern movement in landscape aesthetics, must come about in keeping with urban planning aesthetics if a landscape policy was to become a reality affecting our environment in a positive way.

Frank Clark, in summarising this part of the conference suggested that the case had been made for a Landscape Commission; that tourism in our present context had acted as the motivator; that areas of outstanding natural beauty were now an accepted national resource calling for planned public and private access; and that statutory powers were needed to encourage fuller public enjoyment of these areas. While he criticised the rather narrow view of landscape taken by many professionals, the overall concept must continue to be expanded to take into account other aspects of landscape – such as rehabilitation of derelict lands for instance, where he believes similar economic arguments would soon be available for their comprehensive landscape development.

To conclude the discussion, the Chairman asked Frank Tindall, Planning officer of East Lothian, John Arbuthnot of the Nature Conservancy and Col CHK Cossar, a farmer and agriculturalist to present their views.

Frank Tindall, FTPI
County Planning Officer for East Lothian

Frank Tindall, speaking as a Planning Officer, referred to S.D.D. Circular No. 2. This to him was a job of work to be done, and a great step forward for planning. It was the outcome of the T.P.I. meeting at Braemar and was made possible by the general mood, by the driving force of planning for tourism. The Planning Officers would carry out landscape surveys and consult as a matter of course: the National Trust for Scotland, Tourist Board, Physical
Recreation and other bodies. Of course national and regional planning was needed and when this came about landscape would be promptly considered. He felt, moreover, that a Landscape Commission might serve a useful purpose to help Local Planning Authorities with a design service – a long-stop commission to support local authorities. However, it was more important to help with the bigger proposals, for when the tourist maps came out there would be and indeed there was already, major investment waiting to pounce. Here, the Landscape Commission could help by not just being a commission of amateurs, but a body on the lines of the Nature Conservancy with a staff of 40–50 people capable of being called in by the Local Planning Authority to implement developers proposals partly financing, partly building, buying land, and executing easements. Also, a Landscape Commission could help to implement private enterprise schemes for tourism within the scope of the local plans prepared by the planning authority concerned.

**John Arbuthnott, DSC FRSE FRICS**
Latterly, Lord Arbuthnott
Land Agent, Nature Conservancy Council

John Arbuthnott of the Nature Conservancy spoke about his own attitude to the problem and how valuable the experience of the Nature Conservancy was in assessing the multiple use of landscape. It was not just scenic beauty, but land which must be managed. Landscape formed the arterial roadways for nature from one area to another – just one aspect of our conservation of wild life. He believed tourism need not be kept on one place and the Nature conservancy had learned to exist side by side with other development and land use. This balanced view, the concept of multiple uses was far more valid than preservation of a declining status quo. The Landscape Commission must have a balanced view of the diverse forms of landscape in Scotland and that precepts which might apply to the Highlands may be inappropriate in the Borders. Certainly easements and access to the countryside must be channelled more frequently over the lowland farming landscape and the rationalising of agronomy must also make changes in the landscape.

**Col CHK (Chay) Cossar**
Member of Council, Scottish Land Owners Federation

Col Cossar drew attention to the landscape husbandry role played by land owners, farmers and foresters in maintaining the fabric of the Scottish landscape through enlightened management practices and appreciation.
of the inherited landscape structure of the countryside. There is a deep seated understanding and love in the land management sector for natural beauty and the forms that arise from different forms of land husbandry be it for sheep, cattle or arable crops. The cost of maintaining this heritage had always been taken for granted but now that greater public access and pressure was demanded, there has to be a new reckoning and cost apportionment between the private and public sectors.

He specifically gave reference to stock farmers who are becoming more tree conscious and shelter belts are becoming more frequent in the borders to take farming to the 1,000 ft. contour to replace land at the lower levels lost to other use. The Federation is supportive of the proposals for a Landscape Commission to coordinate the mutual interests of the farming and forestry interests and to support landscape and ecological probity in land use management.

Discussion

Sir Robert Russell believed that Frank Tindall may have given an over optimistic view of the ability (in trained personal resources) of the Local Planning Authorities to carry out all the work. He envisaged that the Landscape Commission could play a direct part as adviser and provider of an intelligence service and essential forum for early consultation from the big public authorities who potentially could cause so much trouble. Sir Robert did not agree that the Commission should develop and implement themselves – the Commission could not become a Landscape SSHA. Local authorities, statutory undertakers and private developers must implement the work under strict planning control.

Conclusion

Frank Clark in his concluding remarks to the conference said that landscape is always in the process of evolution, development and change, even of taste. It is a resource for use, agriculture, forestry, tourism and development and it is a trust to be conserved – a trust that we share with other animals and plants and for our own sake it must be the subject of management and good order. If a Landscape Commission for Scotland could effectively contribute to this, then it was a very good step forward.

WJC, Glasgow June, 1962
Acknowledgements

“A National landscape Policy for Scotland”

The Institute of Landscape Architects wishes to express the appreciation of its members for the interest and enthusiasm shown by all participants in the conference held at Cambusnethan Priory, Wishaw on 16th June, 1962.

The ILA would particularly like to thank Lord Wemyss and Mr Jamie Stormonth Darling of the National Trust for Scotland for their kind and enthusiastic co-operation from the outset in the original idea through to its implementation. Particular mention is made of the speakers, Sir Robert Russell and Prof Brian Hackett; Mr H. Frank Clark is given special thanks for his Chairmanship and to Mr and Mrs Peter Daniel who kindly put their home at the disposal of the conference. Finally, thanks are also due to Mr AH Bannerman, Head of Design Group of the City of Glasgow Planning Department and his team who provided inspired support and encouragement throughout.

Abridged List of Participants (from 80)

Organisers
Chairman: Frank Clark, Reader in Landscape Architecture, Edinburgh Univ.
Host/Co-Organiser: Peter Daniel, Architect Planner and Landscape Architect
Secy. & Co-Organiser: William Cairns, Landscape Arch. Design Group Glasgow City Council

Participants
For NTS Sir Robert Russell, Chairman Planning Committee, NTS
Jamie Stormonth Darling, Director, NTS (Absent in body, present in mind!)
For NCC John Arbuthnott, Land Agent
Tom Huxley, Scientist
For SLF & NFU CHK Cossar
For the Forestry Commission James Stewart, Director
For UoE Dr Arthur Geddes, Reader in Geography, Univ. of Edinburgh
For RSFS R Maclaggan Gorrie, Editor, Scottish Forestry
For TPI Frank Tindall, County Planning Officer, East Lothian
Thomas Findlay Lyon, Head of Planning, University of Strathclyde
For RIBA AH Bannerman, Head, Design Group Glasgow City Council, Planning Department
R A Strang, Arch/Planner, Design Group Glasgow City Council, Planning Department
Post Conference Review

For ASLA/IFLA

Professor HB Owens, Professor of Landscape Architecture, Univ. of Georgia

NB: Mr H Frank Clark held a post conference review with Professor Hubert Owens, who was visiting Scotland and Italy following his attending the IFLA ‘62 Conference in The Hague prior to his return to the US. HBO expressed his wish to set up collaborative arrangements with Edinburgh University and also in following the developments of the proposed new Landscape Commission. He saw the Commission as a major step forward in integrated land resource use management in which the University of Georgia was deeply involved in US federal initiatives and felt there was considerable scope to share knowledge and experience.

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Epilogue

Forty Nine Years On!

In rediscovering this modest report of the proceedings of the Conference held at Cambusnethan Priory in the Clyde Valley on 16 June, 1962 it occurred to Peter Daniel and I that the principles expressed at that very first meeting arranged between the then fledgling Scottish Branch of the Institute of Landscape Architects and the National Trust for Scotland are as relevant and poignant today as they were then. We again face the problems of eroding functional and aesthetic quality in our national landscape. Is it now time to revisit first principles, take stock and plan for the next fifty years?

We were then pioneers in search of greater understanding and direction to meet the challenge of the second wave of surging post war development and the changes that this was having on the landscape of Scotland and the British Isles. The components of development we must recall were motorways, nuclear power plants, power lines, open cast coal extraction, quarries, new towns, satellite communities in open countryside, reservoirs, changing agricultural patterns and large scale afforestation in the uplands; recreation and tourism in the countryside, derelict land reclamation following deep mine closures and the construction of large scale industrial estates.

The landscape of Britain was under unprecedented pressures of change and we did not at that time have the analytical tools, methodologies or planning systems capable of managing the enormity of the task of accommodating development within our treasured landscape heritage. This realisation held in common by NTS and the ILA was the driver that led to the idea of a conference to discuss the need for a National Landscape Policy for Scotland bringing together many of those who had influence over landscape change and whose discrete interests had to be recognised and incorporated in planning for the future. These included farmers, landowners, foresters, land agents, planners, civil engineers, architects, conservationists and landscape architects.

All of us were bound by a common purpose, “the need for a unifying body within a coordinated policy”, hence ‘A National Landscape Policy for Scotland’ and which, through the influence of the National Trust for Scotland aided by the Institute of Landscape Architecture members in Scotland (now LI) and many other environmental bodies, led to the eventual founding of the ‘Countryside Commission for Scotland’ in 1967. This was following the recommendations of Study Group No.9 ‘Planning and Development in Scotland’ report to the Second Countryside Conference ‘The Countryside in 1970’ in November 1965. CCS, an outstanding public agency was merged with the Nature Conservancy Council (Scotland) to become Scottish Natural Heritage in 1990. NB Study Group No 9 was chaired by Sir Robert Grieve. Frank Tindall was the Convenor Secretary and Sir Robert Russell was one of eleven members appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

WJC Edinburgh, January 2012
Proposal for a National Landscape Policy for Scotland Conference to be held in June 2012.

The Landscape Institute (Scotland) propose, together with the National Trust for Scotland, to arrange a significant national conference to review the major changes in legislation and in the landscape resource itself over the past fifty years. An organising committee for the event will include representatives from the land resource based interests and professions, both private and public. The programme which has yet to be designed in detail will have its roots in the key issues explored in the Cambusnethan Conference but will clearly embrace all of the major land-use and development events and trends that have both been magnificently implemented, or interpreted or alternatively, have failed in both conservation and visual terms. The proposed conference will focus on each of the major land resource users and address the contemporary challenges facing Scotland’s landscape heritage and how these may be resolved.

William J Cairns, MCP (MIT) DLD (Dunelm), MH, DHE, FLI, FRSA, 20th December 2011