

The Traditional Buildings Health Check 2013-2023

Delivered by Stirling City Heritage Trust

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF TBHC



BACKGROUND

The Traditional Buildings Health Check (TBHC) was set up following a 2012 scoping study undertaken by Stirling City Heritage Trust for Historic Scotland (now Historic Environment Scotland). The study highlighted the need for a proactive maintenance scheme in Scotland. In response, Historic Scotland commissioned Stirling City Heritage Trust to conduct a 5-year pilot scheme, which ran from April 2013 to March 2018 and was funded in partnership with CITB Scotland.

The Traditional Buildings Health Check pilot was based on the European Monumentenwacht model. Monumentenwacht has been operating for a number of decades in the Netherlands and Flanders and has made a significant impact on the condition of the historic built environment.

The TBHC has been designed as a not-for-profit, proactive maintenance scheme open to anyone in the City of Stirling and surrounding area who owns a pre-1919 building. It offers an inspection and advice service, a small repairs schedule and grant assistance for priority repairs identified in the inspection reports. Incentivised fee rates are charged for membership and services, which are reinvested in the operation of the TBHC.

The key aims of the TBHC 2013-18 pilot were:

- Promote regular maintenance of traditional buildings
- Provide a hands-on approach to building inspection
- Promote private investment in the traditional built heritage
- Generate work for the construction industry and professional sector

The Trust has employed dedicated staff to run the scheme including inspectors and a Membership and Marketing Officer, overseen by the Trust Manager.

Since 2018, Stirling City Heritage Trust has continued to operate the TBHC as part of its primary services. The service has expanded to areas outside the City of Stirling and has innovated inspection methods with the introduction of Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA or Drone).



64

COMPLETED
PROJECT GRANT
FUNDED



286

BUILDINGS
INSPECTED



445

PROPERTY OWNERS
SUPPORTED

2012

STIRLING CITY HERITAGE TRUST
produced the Scoping Study for Historic Scotland

2014

OCTOBER 2014
First test property inspections

NOVEMBER 2014
Scheme launched to the public
and first members join



2016

DECEMBER 2016
100th building inspected

2017

MAY 2017
TBHC members had a special
tour of Bannockburn House



2018

APRIL 2018
TBHC Pilot completed and scheme
becomes core service operated by SCHAT

SEPTEMBER 2018
Schedule of Works service added to the scheme

2019

AUGUST 2019
Drone inspections commence



2013

TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS HEALTH CHECK
APRIL 2013
5-year pilot commissioned
by Historic Scotland

2015

JANUARY 2015
Cabinet Secretary for Culture,
Europe & External Affairs, Fiona
Hyslop, officially launched the
TBHC scheme at Cowane's
Hospital, Stirling.

FEBRUARY 2015
First official inspections take
place

JUNE 2015
Traditional Building Repair Grants of
up to £5000 opened for applicants

AUGUST 2015
First grant project completed

NOVEMBER 2015
First property re-inspection



2020

NOVEMBER 2020
TBHC services expanded to Bridge of Allan on a trial basis

2022

JULY 2022
TBHC inspection service expanded to Dunblane and Blairlogie

AUGUST 2022
Report by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust on possible TBHC
expansion to Perth

2023

APRIL 2023
Awarded 3 years funding by Historic Environment Scotland to
continue delivery of the scheme

A construction worker wearing a white hard hat, an orange polo shirt, and a safety harness is kneeling on a stone surface. He is holding a thick, braided rope and a tool. The background shows a dense forest of trees with autumn foliage. A dark green, semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

'We have always lived in traditional stone properties. We enjoy the location, and the heritage. We also are aware that we are simply custodians of the building. We only have the privilege of living in these old building for a time before another follows. We have a responsibility to pass the building to the next owner. No one really owns buildings. They have a communal ownership.'

TBHC Member

TBHC MEMBERSHIP

Joining the TBHC

The TBHC operates as a membership scheme, with owners joining for a small annual fee. The first member signed up in 2014 and the inaugural property inspection was carried out in October 2014. This building owner is still a TBHC member after 9 years.

Building owners usually join for one year at a time, which gives them time to get their property inspection completed and get the support and advice they need to act on repairing and maintaining their building. Almost 20% have been signed up for 4 years or more.

Since the opening of membership in 2014, there have been 445 individual owners. As some owned additional properties, they have more than one membership; in total there have been 485 memberships.

Motivation for Joining

There are different reasons why people join TBHC. Most are seeking impartial, trustworthy advice and support from experts in traditional building construction. Over half of joining members want advice and support to repair and maintain their building. Building owners are motivated to carry out repairs but need help to do works appropriately.

Total membership 2014-2023

Since the scheme started, the service has had 445 individual members representing 314 buildings. Over 20% of members who signed up in the first operational year are still members today.

Undoubtedly, wider issues such as Covid-19 had an impact on the ability to deliver the service and therefore membership numbers, but on average we have 54 new memberships and 51 renewals every year. Members hear about the scheme through local advertising, social media and particularly word of mouth recommendations.

Types of Members and Buildings

The scheme welcomes all building owner types including private owners, landlords, businesses and community organisations.

Building types vary from tenements in the city centre to villas in King's Park and cottages in Cambuskenneth. They represent the rich variety of built heritage in the area.

'Being part of Stirling's history; it is a privilege to live in and look after a building that has been lived in by so many people for so many years.'

TBHC Member

FIGURE 1 REASONS WHY PEOPLE JOIN TBHC

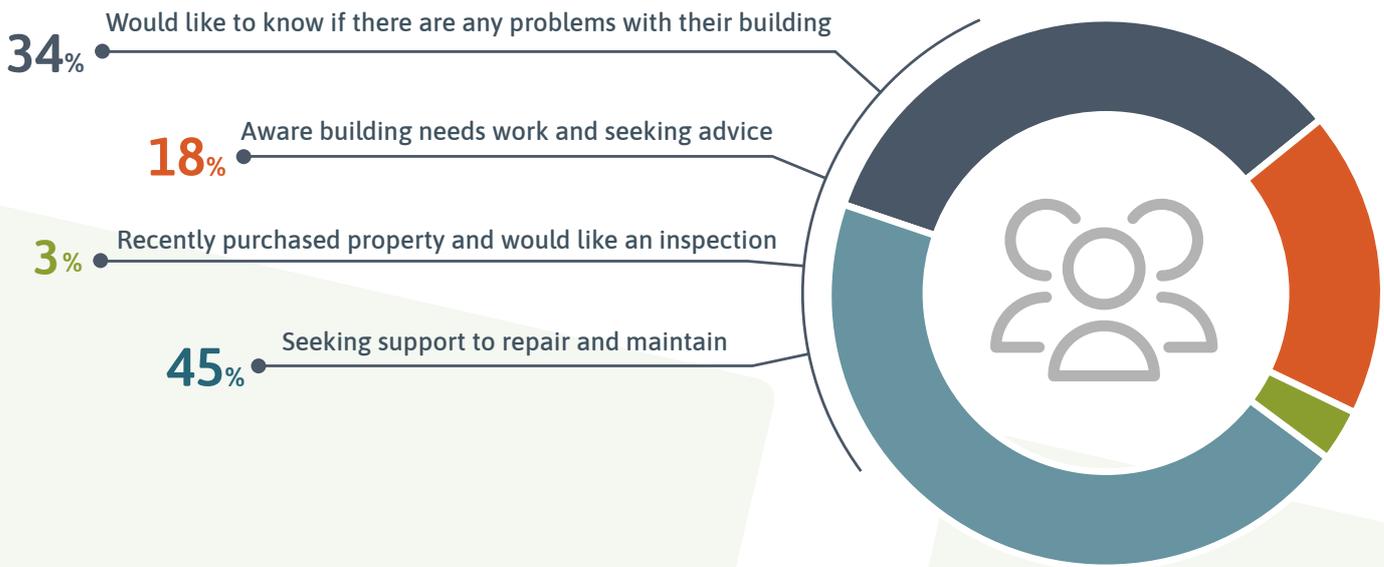


FIGURE 2 TYPES OF MEMBERS AND BUILDINGS

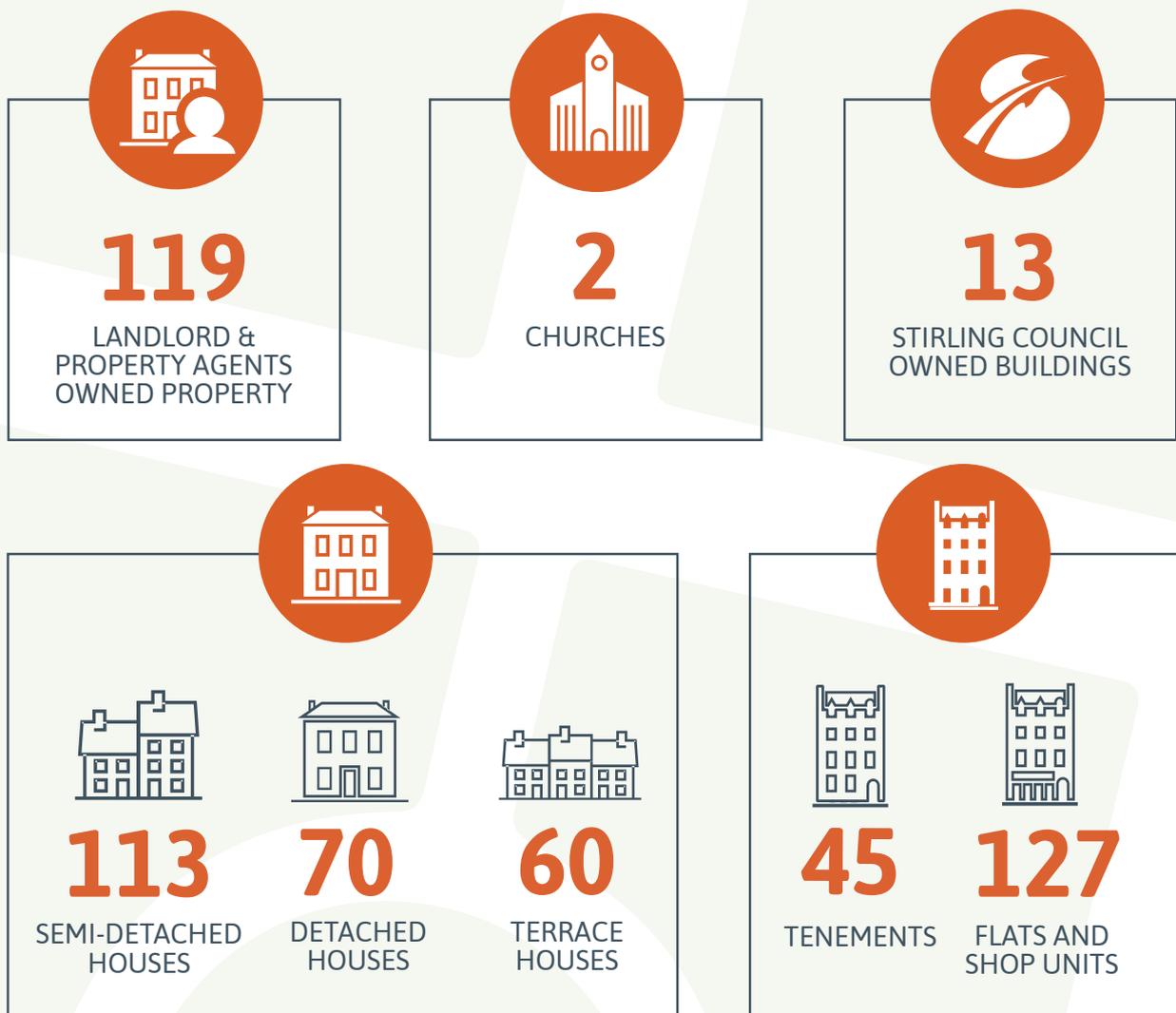
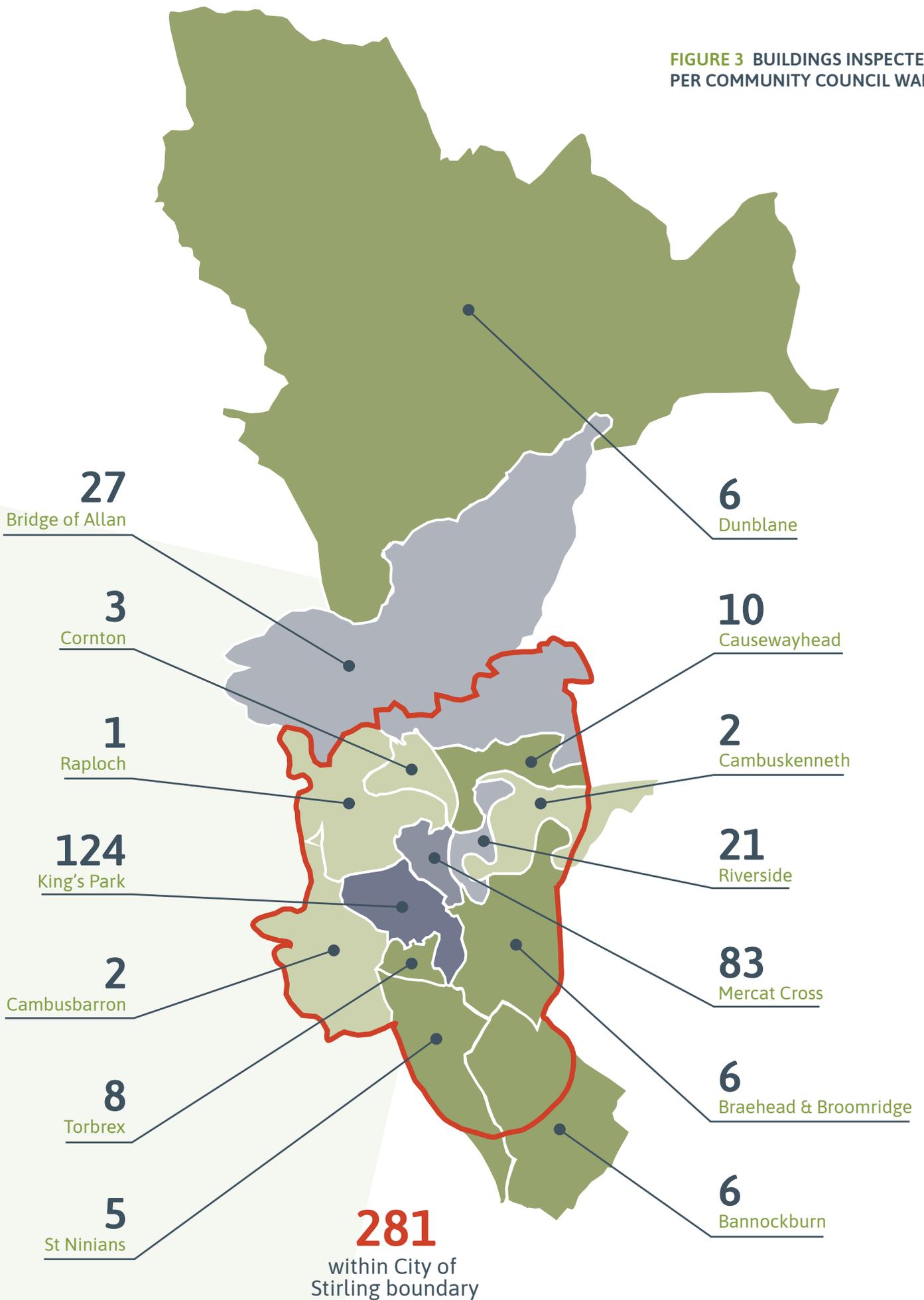


FIGURE 3 BUILDINGS INSPECTED PER COMMUNITY COUNCIL WARD



TBHC INSPECTION SERVICE

Inspection Methods

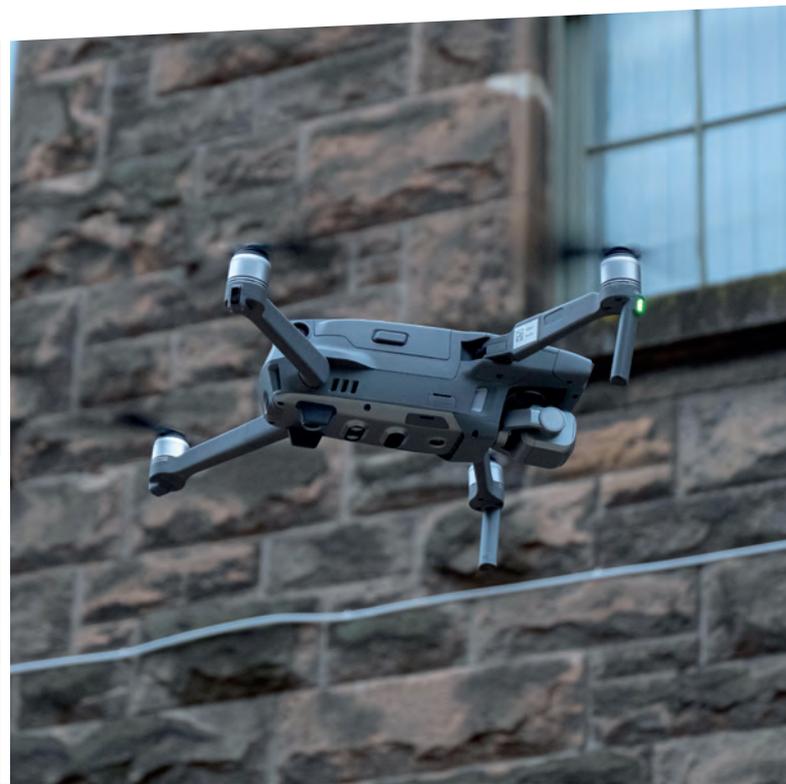
When the service was first underway in 2014, the main methods of inspection were using ladders and a mobile access tower. This required a large van and a great deal of effort on the part of the two staff who carried out inspections to set it up at each property. Staff had special training to undertake this work.

Further training in the use of harnesses and rope restraint was then undertaken. This allowed the inspectors to access roof areas safely. Ladders were still used for more accessible areas.

For some buildings, it was necessary to use a MEWP or mobile elevated working platform. These allowed staff to view high areas and elevations of buildings safely. However, these are large machines which involve road closures

and can only be operated in certain weather conditions so do not offer the flexibility needed for some inspections, albeit the access provided is excellent.

By 2019, with the development of new drone technology and it becoming significantly more affordable, the Trust invested in its own Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) or drone and the two inspectors were trained as pilots registered with the CAA. The opportunity to take high level photographs using the drone has changed the way the Trust carries out inspections. While they do not allow hands-on to the higher areas of the building, the images they take allow both inspectors and building owners the chance to get highly detailed images of the building. Diagnosing issues is then considerably easier.



'My house is a listed building and I needed guidance on repair work in keeping with the character of the building.'

TBHC Member

Number of inspections and re-inspections

Since the service started in 2014, we have undertaken 286 initial inspections and 73 re-inspections. We encourage members to arrange a re-inspection every 2-3 years to ensure that their building remains in good order. While initial inspections remain the majority, we have promoted the benefits of re-inspection, offered a lower cost to encourage uptake and they may also be required for grant applications if it is some time since an inspection has been carried out.

Inspections by Building Type

Our membership is varied with the majority of buildings being semi-detached or detached representing 222 inspections from a total of 359.

Statutory Protection: Listing and Conservation Areas

Many of the buildings that the service deals with have statutory protection. In Stirling, there are 11 Conservation Areas and around 500 listed buildings. Dunblane, Blairlogie and Bridge of Allan also have Conservation Area status. Supporting owners of listed buildings to understand their responsibilities and the need for appropriate repairs and materials is an important part of the service. We also signpost members to Stirling Council Planning Department and HES for advice, where appropriate.

Over half of the buildings we have inspected are listed and 83% are in Conservation Areas. Our strongest membership is in King's Park Conservation Area where we have undertaken 120 inspections/re-inspections with a further 79 in Stirling Town & Royal Park.



FIGURE 4 BUILDING INSPECTIONS BY YEAR



FIGURE 5 INSPECTIONS BY BUILDING TYPE

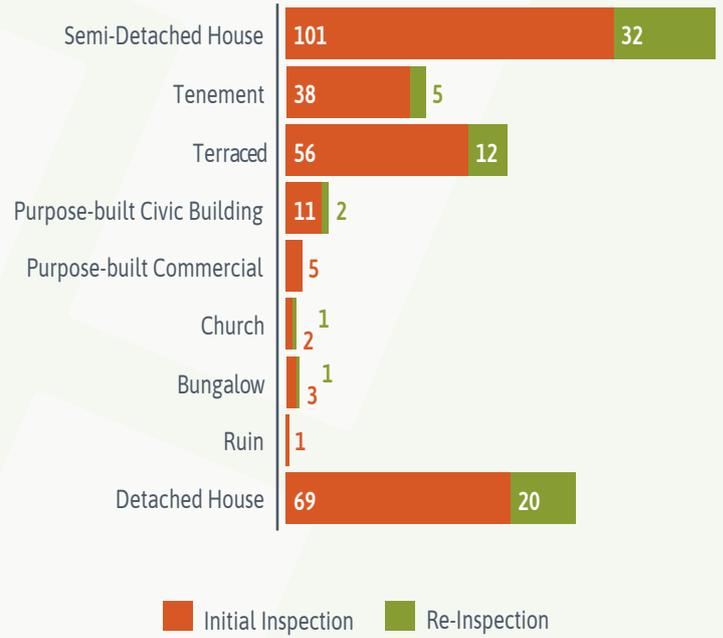


FIGURE 6 INSPECTIONS BY LISTING CATEGORY

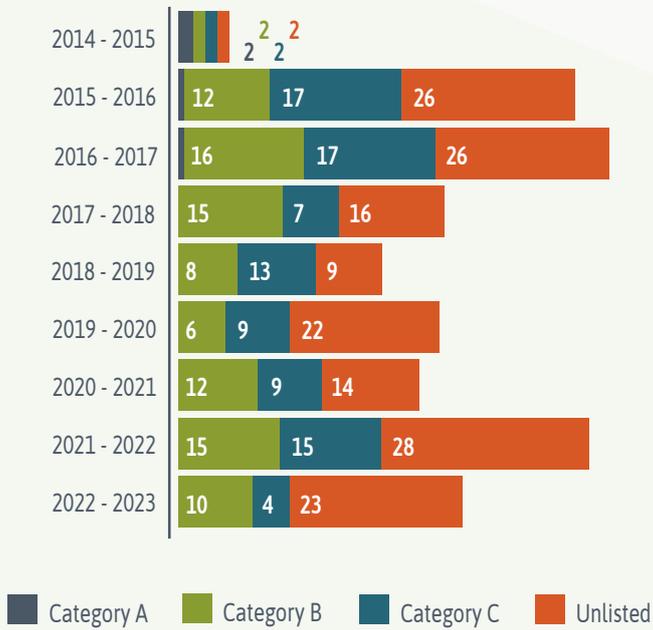
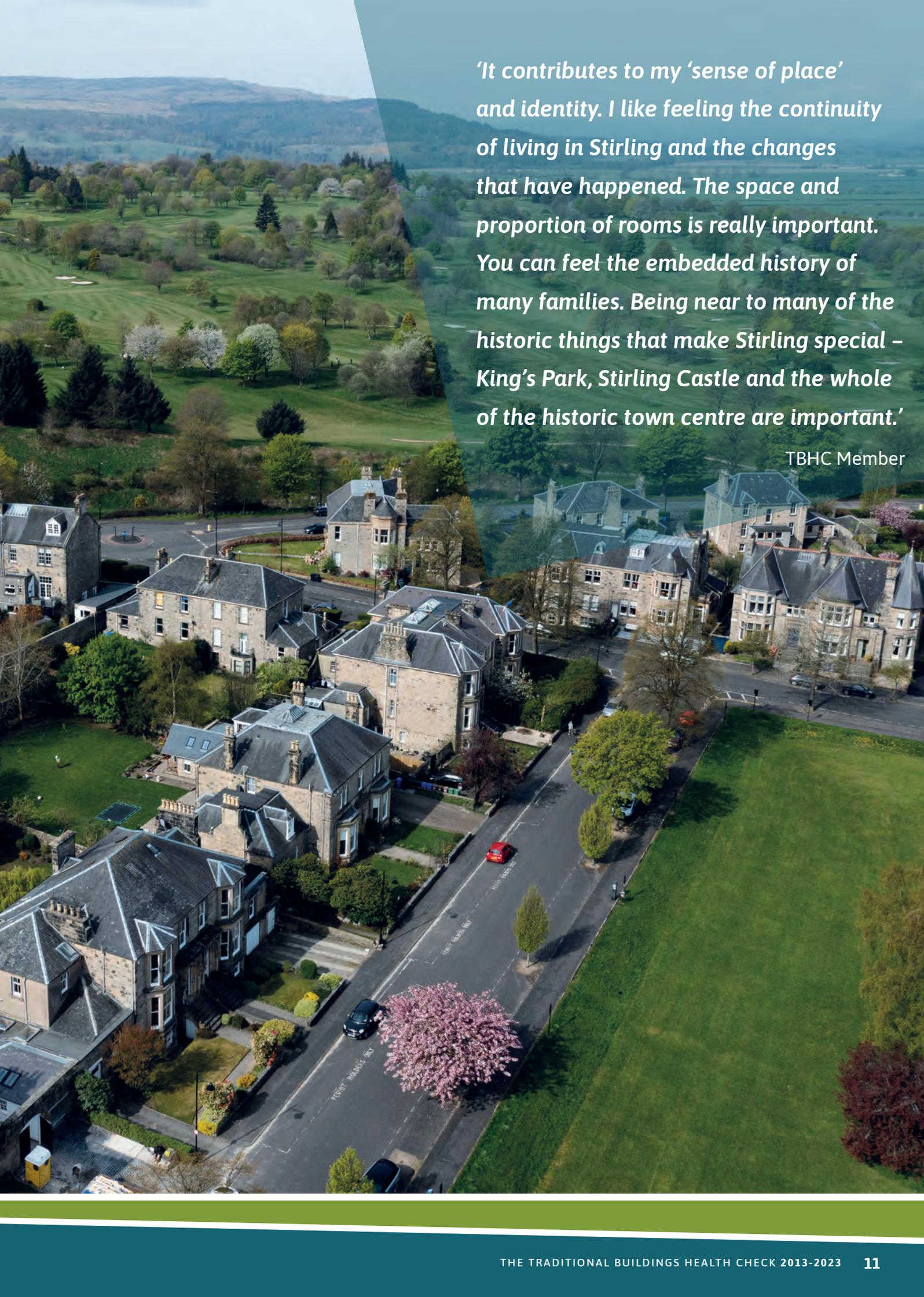


FIGURE 7 INSPECTIONS BY CONSERVATION AREA





'It contributes to my 'sense of place' and identity. I like feeling the continuity of living in Stirling and the changes that have happened. The space and proportion of rooms is really important. You can feel the embedded history of many families. Being near to many of the historic things that make Stirling special – King's Park, Stirling Castle and the whole of the historic town centre are important.'

TBHC Member

TRADITIONAL BUILDING REPAIR GRANTS

The Traditional Building Repair Grant (TBRG) was established in 2015 to encourage TBHC Members to act on the issues highlighted in their Building Inspection Reports. The grant scheme incentivises members to undertake high quality conservation-standard repairs using traditional materials. Initially, small grants of up to £5000 per building were made available for Priority 1 and 2 repairs identified in the Inspection Reports. In 2021, the grant award per building was

increased to a maximum of £15,000 to encourage members to undertake larger projects which tackled multiple Priority 1 and 2 repairs.

Since its inception, both HES and Stirling Council funds have been allocated for the TBRG. HES funds are used for Conservation Areas and for Listed Buildings. Stirling Council funds are allocated to other traditional buildings and for properties in Bridge of Allan.

'We only really borrow a property for a period of time. We think we own it but we really just curate it for a period. The building's life is much longer than ours. I get frustrated when some of my neighbours take a minimalist, short-term approach to maintenance. We should aim to pass the building on in a better state than we received it.'

TBHC Member





63

COMPLETED REPAIR
PROJECTS HAVE
RECEIVED TBHC
GRANT SUPPORT



33

LISTED BUILDINGS HAVE
RECEIVED GRANT SUPPORT
12 CATEGORY B LISTED BUILDINGS
21 CATEGORY C LISTED BUILDING



51

COMPLETED REPAIR
PROJECTS IN
CONSERVATION AREAS



£1,066,680

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
ON COMPLETED GRANT
FUNDED REPAIR WORKS



£726,394

TOTAL INVESTED BY
BUILDING OWNERS



£340,340

TOTAL GRANT SUPPORT
RECEIVED BY MEMBERS



CHANGING CULTURE

The TBHC service is holistic in its approach; members are offered a variety of ways to learn about their building and to seek advice if they have a problem or want to carry out work.

- Education- newsletters, events and learning through the report and follow-up meetings.
- Advice- whenever needed about what type of materials to choose, appointing contractors and dealing with neighbours for those in shared buildings and directing to resources such as HES Engine Shed publications.

- Signpost- All owners are offered a follow up meeting after they have been issued with their report. In total the service has hosted 132 follow-up meetings where TBHC staff talk through the report, provide advice and guidance and signpost to next steps.
- Support- when applying for statutory consents, grants or dealing with repairs.

The experienced team at SCHAT can provide necessary guidance or signpost to where help can be provided. In this way, building owners are fully supported to repair and maintain their building.

'It is very reassuring to have access to people who understand old buildings when I am worried about issues to do with the fabric of our house. Nothing is straightforward and having advice at hand is a huge advantage.'

TBHC Member



FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The TBHC in Stirling is established as a model which supports owners of traditional buildings to prioritise repairs and to understand better the most appropriate way to repair and maintain their building. Over the past decade, the scheme has supported over 400 building owners and the service will continue to grow and evolve in the next three years.

There are opportunities to expand it further in Scotland and other organisations in Fife and Perth have shown interest in exploring how it could be delivered in their area. More work is needed to see how this could be done both logistically and in terms of available funding. SCHT will support the growth of the scheme beyond Stirling.

The increasing need to make buildings more energy efficient is also changing the landscape in terms of what is being expected of building owners in helping to address the Climate Emergency. The TBHC has the opportunity to play a key role in supporting owners to make appropriate retrofit decisions in relation to their traditional building. This will be a developing part of the service between now and 2026 and is an exciting development for the years ahead.

'I want to access advice, but also want to support caring for traditional buildings in Stirling.'

TBHC Member



ABOUT SCHAT

A registered Scottish Charity and a private company limited by guarantee.

The Trust is managed by a Trust Manager and overseen by a Board of up to 11 voluntary Trustees. Funding is from **Historic Environment Scotland** and **Stirling Council**.

Stirling City Heritage Trust,
Ground Floor, Cameron House,
Forthside Way, Stirling, FK8 1QZ

Company number: SC277033
Scottish Charity number: SC037888



Stirling City
HERITAGE TRUST



TRADITIONAL
BUILDINGS
HEALTH CHECK



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA