



effective

Effective management of the public realm is not just an issue of funding, it is equally about the skills deployed, the way in which regulations are used and the way in which the design process is managed



- 1: Dundee
- 2: Biggar
- 3: Eyemouth

Enhancing the Public Realm

Many of the challenges for local authorities lie with changes to the public realm. The focus in conservation areas must be on the careful maintenance of public space, and the use of appropriate signage and materials for traffic management and street furniture. Conflicts between the interests of residents, local businesses and visitors must be sensitively managed, with solutions tailored to the specific circumstances of the place. Good working relationships between council departments and with relevant external agencies, especially public utility companies, are vital.

Traffic and Movement

Traffic dominates the character of many conservation areas and often poses the biggest challenge for conservation area management. Standardised transport engineering solutions rarely relate to the special character of the area and present a major challenge to local authorities in their duty to protect and enhance conservation areas.

In certain cases, the solution may be to reduce or divert traffic away from particular conservation areas thereby lessening the need for traffic calming measures, extensive parking or loading arrangements. Caution should, however, be exercised if considering

such an approach as the area may have been characterised historically by the movement of people and goods. Reducing such movement may have a detrimental effect on the special character of the area and may impact upon its vitality and viability. In order to manage traffic in the conservation area, it is important to gain an understanding, through the appraisal process, about how the area works and what aspects sustain activity and movement. Seasonal variation should also be taken into account. Conflicts may arise between the needs of residents, businesses, pedestrians and motorists. Multi-disciplinary teams will be required to consider how best to manage traffic within conservation areas. These teams must work together to provide a solution which meets the operational needs of the conservation area whilst protecting and enhancing its character.

Parking can also pose problems in conservation areas. New parking areas may have implications for visual amenity and traffic flow. Lack of parking can lead to other problems, such as illegal parking on pavements or the removal of gates, fences and walls to provide off street parking. Consideration should be given to the most appropriate location, design and materials for parking areas which will minimise the impact on the conservation area.

appraisal

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Utilities

Another common problem for local authorities can be managing the impact of work undertaken by utility companies who benefit from 'permitted development rights' for various works, including the laying of underground pipes or other apparatus. This can have significant effects on the character of the conservation area, for example, a traditional cobbled street may be reinstated with tarmac. It is essential for planning authorities, roads authorities and utility companies to work together to identify sensitive areas and agree a commitment to sensitive reinstatement.

The Scottish Road Works Register system is used by utility companies to notify road authorities of their intention to carry out works. If the conservation area is identified on the system as an area of 'special designation', the local authority may, in certain cases, be able to prescribe the specification for reinstatement. This should be based on an agreed maintenance schedule. Local authorities should ensure that the Register contains up to date and accurate information.

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Street Furniture and Signage

Inappropriate street furniture and a proliferation of signs and general clutter detract from the character of a conservation area.

The provision of new or replacement street furniture represents an opportunity for local authorities to define and enhance the historic character of the conservation area. However, standard, off-the-shelf designs are usually inappropriate to the historic environment and authorities should consider the need for high quality, custom-designed solutions. In certain conservation areas, well designed modern street furniture may be the most appropriate solution.

The problem of street clutter can easily be tackled by establishing the extent of the problem through the appraisal process, removing any unnecessary objects and then ensuring that a regular monitoring programme is in place.



- 1: reinstatement
- 2: Milngavie
- 3: Wigtown



Open Spaces

PAN 65 Planning and Open Space recognises the important role of open space in setting the landscape and townscape structure of urban areas and in contributing to the character of the historic environment. Areas of open space can be a defining element in a conservation area. Appraisals should consider the different types, functions and benefits of open space and identify opportunities to extend and enhance open space networks.

Trees

Trees contribute greatly to the character and quality of many conservation areas. As woodlands, planted avenues, or individual specimens, they can enhance the landscape setting of conservation areas, soften streetscapes and bring life and colour to gardens. Trees may also have historic or cultural significance.

Trees in conservation areas are protected through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Before carrying out any work on a tree in a conservation area, owners are required to notify the local authority giving details of the intended works. Councils can serve a Tree Preservation Order if they consider a tree to be under threat, but they can also protect and promote tree planting through conditions in planning consents.

Individuals, organisations and local authorities should take responsibility for ensuring that trees and woodlands in conservation areas remain healthy through good management. Management plans and appraisals will help to determine when and where new planting is appropriate, what form it should take and the species to be planted.

Maintenance of the Public Realm

Capacity and responsibility for short, medium and long term maintenance, involving such services as street cleaning and landscaping as well as highways and public utilities, should be programmed and regularly reviewed. A range of advice on maintenance is available from Historic Scotland.



Funding and Resources

The Scottish Executive provides around £14.5 million each year to help offset the cost of the care, repair and conservation of the historic environment. This is administered through Historic Scotland and a significant proportion is targeted to conservation area enhancement. Grants are awarded for the comprehensive repair of key buildings. Town schemes also operate in a number of outstanding conservation areas and provide grants for small scale repairs to property.

Significant parts of Scotland's urban areas are covered by City Heritage Trusts, which benefit from a combined annual grant from Historic Scotland of around £2.6 million. Additional funding is provided from local authorities and a range of other sources. Active Heritage Trusts also exist in Perth and Kinross, New Lanark and Dumfries and Galloway. These can operate local grant schemes and co-ordinate a range of other activity to promote, safeguard and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. Their staff are an important source of advice on funding for conservation.

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The Heritage Lottery Fund also contributes significant amounts of money to area conservation projects, particularly through its Townscape Heritage Initiative which focuses on the regeneration of conservation areas that face economic or social problems. The Heritage Lottery Fund generally meets up to 50% of a comprehensive and concentrated programme of building repairs, reinstatement of architectural detail, re-use of vacant floorspace, appropriate filling of key gap sites and conservation and enhancement of the public realm, all based on a conservation area appraisal and action plan. Match funding is generally provided by a combination of grants from Historic Scotland, the local authority, local enterprise company, European Regional Development Fund and Communities Scotland.

Building Preservation Trusts also play a significant role in overcoming the challenges presented by buildings at risk and adding value to wider management strategies. Building Preservation Trusts can access loans and grants to tackle development projects on a 'revolving fund' basis where a market solution is not possible. Through developing a relationship with a Building Preservation Trust, a local authority can manage the financial risks associated with urgent works notices, repair notices and compulsory purchase orders. The work of Building Preservation Trusts can also be a catalyst for wider regeneration.

enhance

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1: Beith

The recently published "Sources of Financial Help for Scotland's Historic Buildings", published by the Scottish Civic Trust on behalf of Historic Scotland, provides advice on a range of other funding possibilities. The Architectural Heritage Fund sponsored website www.fundsforhistoricbuildings.org.uk is another useful source of information.

Although in recent years resources have become fairly limited, local authorities have powers to make grants and loans for the improvement of conservation areas. Good examples of initiatives which have won external validation include Lesmahagow (1985) and Biggar (with Scottish Civic Trust) (1975) for European Architectural Year and more recently with the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning for West Wemyss, Fife and Crichton Campus, Dumfries.

Where no dedicated funds exist for conservation area enhancement, it is still possible to achieve outcomes and deliver conservation policies through influencing and aligning the spend of other agencies and organisations with a clearly communicated vision for the area.

Increasing numbers of Development Trusts are being established and can play a useful role in conservation area management. Development Trusts are community-led enterprises which seek to bring about social, economic and environmental change for the better. They can, for example, be set up to acquire and manage a historic building or historic community asset. Further information about Development Trusts can be found at www.dta.org.uk

Given that there are over 600 conservation areas, competition will be high in securing financial assistance. Applications for funding which are accompanied by supporting documents such as townscape audits and conservation area appraisals will strengthen the basis of any grant application.

The following table lists some of the sources of funding available:

Funding Sources	Grant Programme	Further Information
Local Authority Grants	Local Authority Discretionary Grants including Improvement/Repairs Grant schemes.	Relevant local planning authority.
Historic Scotland	Various	www.historic-scotland.gov.uk
Heritage Lottery Fund	Townscape Heritage Initiative Public Parks Initiative Heritage Grants Programme Places of Worship Grant (jointly with Historic Scotland)	www.hlf.org.uk
Architectural Heritage Fund	Heritage Grants and Loans Feasibility Study Grants Refundable Project Development Grants Organiser Grants Annual report of the Architectural Heritage Fund	www.ahfund.org.uk
European Union	Structural Funds Community Initiative Funding–Interrig iiiB, Leader+, Equal, Urban 11 Programme Culture 2000	www.scotland.gov.uk/esf www.dti.gov.uk/europe/structural.html www.culture2000.info
Others	The Scottish Arts Council The Pilgrim Trust National Trust of Scotland The Scottish Museums Council The Scottish Enterprise Network Communities Scotland Development Trusts Association	www.sac.org.uk www.thepilgrimtrust.org.uk www.nts.org.uk www.scottishmuseums.org.uk www.scottish-enterprise.com www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk www.dta.org.uk

Knowledge and Skills

Conservation officers, or their equivalents, are critical to the success and quality of conservation area management and often have responsibility for a range of statutory and project work. Where specialist expertise is lacking, pooling resources with neighbouring authorities or employing consultants is encouraged. The benefits of having specialist input to decision making, local planning and project work is invaluable. Once an appraisal has been compiled, monitoring and review should be less demanding on staff resources, but will still require the input of a specialist.

Community organisations and amenity bodies often take a strong interest in conservation area issues. Their involvement in the planning process is strongly encouraged as a way of capturing local knowledge and expertise and helping local authorities in their efforts to enhance environmental quality. In particular, they have an important role to play in the appraisal process. Historic Scotland, in the form of the Area Inspector of Historic Buildings, is another source of stakeholder advice on the creation and monitoring of conservation area appraisals and conservation area management generally.

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1: East Dunbartonshire Council
2: Dollar



Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and review is essential in validating the continuing relevance of designations, their boundaries and the success of management strategies. Useful indicators of the impact of a management strategy might include the:

- › extent of repair needs of buildings and the public realm, the progress made towards addressing them, and the quality of repairs undertaken;
- › design quality of new buildings, alterations and extensions;
- › cumulative effect of erosive small-scale changes and the use of planning tools, such as Article 4 Directions, to combat them;
- › vitality and viability of any commercial areas; and
- › the level of investment and progress in the implementation of particular schemes of enhancement, such as shopfronts or streetscape enhancement.

Monitoring indicators should be set out in the conservation management strategy. As most of the indicators are qualitative and hard to measure, it may be necessary to develop assessment methods using external audits or community juries. There are, of course, other indicators of management performance that go beyond conservation, such as litter, graffiti, vandalism, community safety and maintenance standards.

It is necessary to establish a review cycle in order to give continuing support to conservation area management. The local community should be actively involved in the monitoring and review process.



Conclusion

Designation alone does not fulfil a local authority's responsibilities for conservation areas. An active culture of management can deliver quality if it is based on the character and needs of individual areas.

When local authorities have evaluated and understood the issues, it is vital that action is taken to manage change effectively. This may require new policies in local plans, the publication of supplementary guidance, improvements to the public realm or design and conservation training. Management objectives need to be realistic, taking into account: available staff resources and funding; the feasibility of enhancement opportunities; the development plan review timetable and methods to involve the community and other stakeholders.

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A robust and active management strategy combined with an effective monitoring and review mechanism will ensure that valuable aspects of our heritage resource are protected and that opportunities to enhance them are delivered.



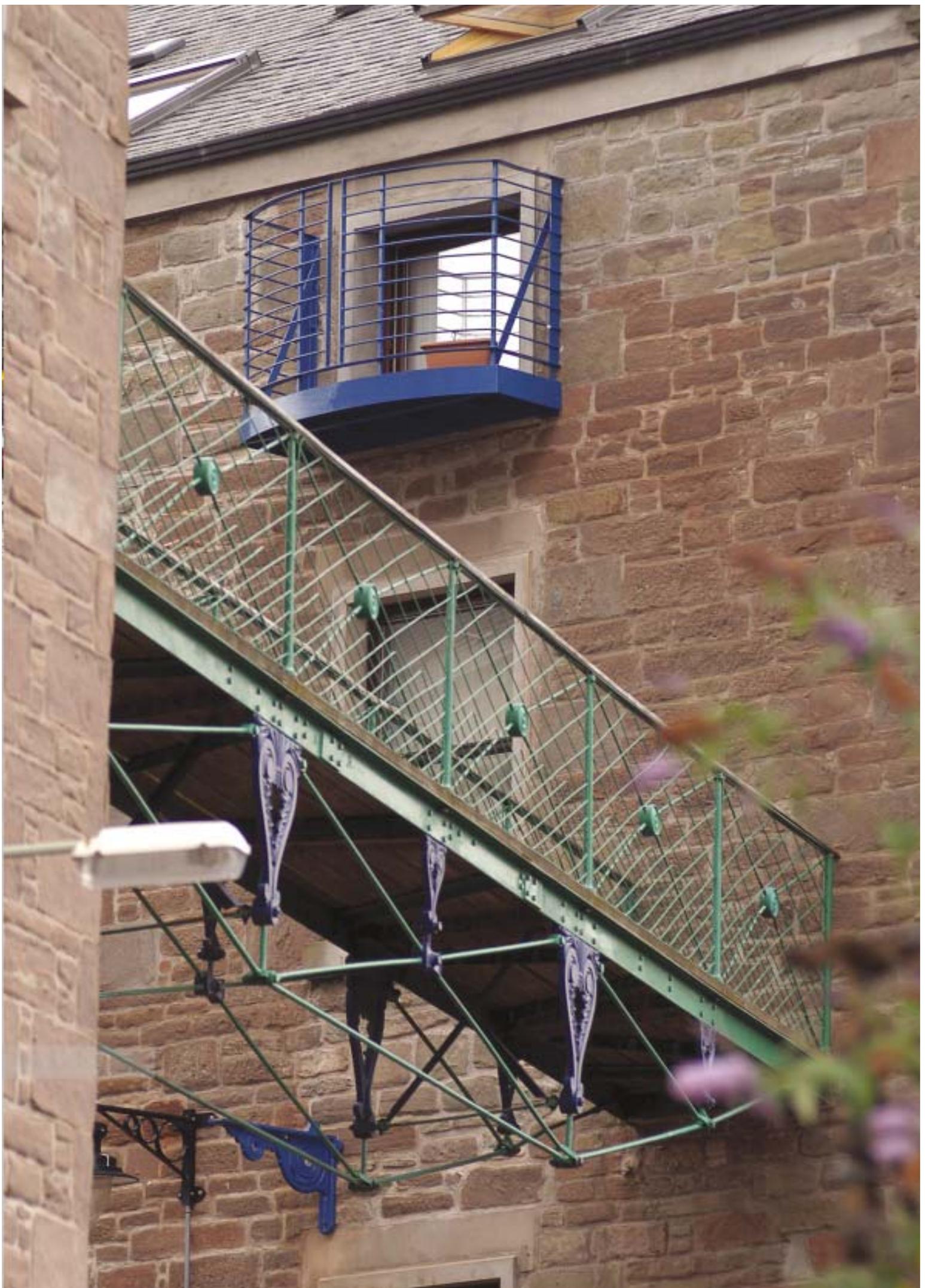
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- 1: Glasgow
- 2: Dunkeld
- 3: Dundee





Annex: Conservation Area Appraisal

What is a conservation area appraisal and why is it useful?

A conservation area appraisal is a management tool which helps to identify the special interest and changing needs of an area. An appraisal provides the basis for the development of a programme of action that is compatible with the sensitivities of the historic area and enables local authorities to fulfil their statutory duties to protect and enhance conservation areas. Appraisals also inform policy and assist development control. They provide an opportunity to educate residents about the special needs and characteristics of the area and help developers identify and formulate development proposals.

A conservation area appraisal should not be included in a local plan. It is more appropriate as supplementary planning guidance.

Who should prepare a conservation area appraisal?

Local authorities are encouraged to prepare appraisals for all their conservation areas on a priority basis and in consultation with the local community.

In cases where an appraisal is required to assist the consideration and determination of a major development proposal, the developer may wish to carry out the appraisal or may be willing to pay for its independent production in order to improve the decision making process.

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How do you prepare a conservation area appraisal?

Conservation areas are unique. It is therefore not practical to prescribe a method of appraisal that will be applicable to all. The following checklist, however, provides a starting point for local authorities. The list is not exhaustive but can be adapted to meet the specifics of individual conservation areas and can be updated over time. The left hand column outlines elements which will be likely to form an essential part of the appraisal. Consideration of the significance and importance of each element to the conservation area is vital. The right hand column provides further suggested issues for assessment.

Before commencing the appraisal, authorities should consider the format in which it is going to be presented. Findings should be set out clearly and concisely and seek to analyse and draw conclusions rather than simply describe an area. Publication of appraisals on the internet will give further accessibility and allow for simple updating.

Many of the themes and issues addressed in an appraisal are best communicated through pictures, maps and diagrams.

Appraisal Checklist

<p>Introduction, Purpose and Justification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Date of appraisal ‣ Purpose of appraisal ‣ Date and reason for designation ‣ Location map showing area in context with the surrounding area (including any adjacent conservation areas) ‣ Boundary map
<p>Location, History and Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Reasons for location - natural landforms, strategic defence, river crossing, religious foundations etc ‣ Regional context ‣ Geology ‣ Topography ‣ Historic pattern of land use ‣ Settlement development ‣ Planned landscapes
<p>Character and Appearance</p> <p>Setting</p> <p>Activity and Movement</p> <p>Street Pattern and Topography</p> <p>Buildings and Townscape</p> <p>Spaces</p> <p>Trees and Landscaping</p> <p>Character Areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ Assessment of the landscape and surroundings ‣ The area in relation to its form and function ‣ Significance of views into, across and from the conservation area ‣ Direction, mode, volume, circulation and levels of activity ‣ Day & night variations ‣ Seasonal variations ‣ Changes to previous street patterns and surfaces ‣ Way in which streets and buildings relate to ancient man-made and landscape features ‣ Scheduled monuments ‣ Key listed and unlisted buildings ‣ Buildings considered to be of townscape merit (including modern examples) ‣ Parks, historic gardens and designed landscapes ‣ Distinctive architectural style and detailing ‣ Building types ‣ Materials ‣ Past and current uses ‣ Orientation and density – possibly reflecting past uses ‣ Types of public and private open space (advice available in PAN 65 Planning and Open Space) ‣ Characteristics of each area of open space – changes in level, surface materials, planting, degree of enclosure, feature or focal points ‣ Tree Preservation Orders ‣ Extent of tree and hedge cover ‣ Nature of any dominant species ‣ Landmark trees ‣ Parks, gardens and designed landscapes. ‣ Record and explain any different character areas – Individual policies and action plans may be required for different character areas.

Negative Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identify any negative factors
Building by Building Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Record (in written and photographic format) details, condition and alterations at a particular point in time – this can inform decision making and provide a valuable monitoring indicator and enforcement tool
Buildings at Risk Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Note vulnerable buildings that contribute to the character of the area › Advise the Scottish Civic Trust to add to the Buildings at Risk Register › Survival of traditional surfaces
Public Realm Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Appropriateness of street furniture and signage e.g. should reflect the character of the area, be practical, be well maintained, define the area etc. › Effect of traffic and utilities engineering – inappropriate replacement surfaces, signage clutter, visually intrusive cabling etc.
Surveys of Specific Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Record aspects of distinctiveness e.g. typical shopfronts, boundary treatments, building details, materials etc.
Sensitivity Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Highlight vulnerable areas, buildings or issues
Assessment of Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Compare significance of the conservation area in the local, national and international context – this can be a useful tool when sourcing funding and considering development applications
Opportunities for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identify sites where development could enhance the special qualities of the area › Reflect opportunities in the development plan › Prepare briefs or design statements for particularly sensitive sites
Opportunities for Planning Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Assess the need for boundary refinement › Assess the effects of permitted development › Identify the need for the implementation or review of Article 4 Directions › Identify need for urgent works, building repair or amenity notices
Opportunities for Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Bring forward proposals for enhancement identified earlier in the appraisal e.g. new or restored surfaces, street furniture, planting, underground wires, traffic management changes etc.
Conservation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A strategy may include: guidance on many aspects of managing change, details of any changes required to development plan policies, funding sources and opportunities; staffing resources, briefing for specific developments or sites, links with other strategic aspirations, and details of a monitoring and review mechanism
Monitoring and Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Consider and put in place appropriate monitoring indicators and agree a mechanism for review. Photographic surveys are an excellent means of recording change – they can also be a useful development control and enforcement tool

Information Sources

For historical information, the lists of buildings of special historic or architectural interest, the inventories published by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, books in the Buildings of Scotland series, the RIAS guides, Burgh Survey and other local histories are a useful starting point. Local Authority Sites and Monuments Records provide information, particularly on archaeology, and references to further material. The National Monuments Record, held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, includes drawings, historical photographs and aerial photographs as well as historical accounts. For some specific places there may be archives or transactions of historical societies, which are usually held in the local history section of public libraries. The National Library of Scotland Map Library has a vast collection of historical maps.

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Enquiries

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www.scotland.gov.uk/planning

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