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Stranraer Conservation Area Boundary Map
Background

Introduction
This is a combined document which appraises and summarises the character of Stranraer Conservation Area and includes ways to positively manage that character.

The appraisal identifies features of importance but does not include every detail of built structures or spaces. The management plan suggests how themes and details might be preserved or enhanced. Together, the character appraisal and management plan will help everyone to consider how change will affect the character when proposals within Stranraer Conservation Area are being prepared. It should help design change that will have a positive impact on character. The guidance should be used to shape and weigh up the impact of proposals for alteration, demolition, new development, enhancement, upgrading and regular maintenance which affect Stranraer Conservation Area.

Conservation Areas were first introduced in the UK in 1967 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 provides the current legislative framework for their designation. S61 of the Act defines a conservation area as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” and local planning authorities are required to identify areas which merit this status.

It is both the buildings and the spaces which are of interest in a conservation area. Planning controls set out to maintain the integrity of the character of the whole conservation area by attending to large and small details. Development in a conservation area is expected to preserve or enhance character and this means that designs for new development must demonstrate how they achieve this by referring carefully to character and context.

Planning controls in a conservation area:

Current legislation requires that permission is sought for the following works within a conservation area:

Demolition of all or the most of a building requires Conservation Area Consent. The decision to allow demolition will depend on the intended use of the land afterwards and may require that a design has been prepared for any new buildings or other structures proposed on the site. Conservation area consent applications are made online.

https://www.eplanning.scot/ePlanningClient/default.aspx

Alterations or additions to buildings require Planning Permission such as small house extensions, roof alterations including dormers and roof windows, changes to chimneys, stone cleaning or elevation painting, rendering or other forms of cladding, provision of hard surfaces, or changing windows and doors. Development management decisions will consider the impact of the proposals on the appearance of the property, the effect on its neighbours and the effect on the character of the whole of the Stranraer Conservation Area. Sometimes alternative designs may be requested which will not have a detrimental impact on character but may achieve a similar outcome.

http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15329/Apply-for-planning-permission

Trees in conservation areas have special protection. Proposals to take branches off or fell a tree or carry out work to its roots need to
be notified to the Council giving sufficient time for the impact of the proposal on the character of the conservation area to be fully considered. Sometimes the trees will be considered important enough for the work to be refused or amended.

http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15334/Protected-trees

**Attachments** such as satellite dishes and other equipment have more restrictive controls in conservation areas where they have the potential to impact negatively on character. In most cases Planning Permission will be needed.

http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15329/Apply-for-planning-permission

**New buildings** proposed within a conservation area will need Planning Permission. The design and choice of material should take account of the site and the character of the surrounding buildings and spaces.

**Pre-application advice** may be sought in advance of finalising or submitting any proposals. The links to the guidance and forms are found on the following web page:-

http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15327/Planning-advice-and-enquiries

**Character Appraisal and Management Plan – Policy Context and Purpose**

Managing the character of a historic area supports and promotes it as an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Since the 1990s it has been recognised that historic buildings and the wider heritage make a very significant positive contribution to regeneration, especially in town settings. Many communities now regret the loss of character of streets in old towns where improvements to living standards could have been carried out more sensitively. Keeping local historic character is an important part of a community’s sense of place and supports many wider regeneration and investment initiatives. The accumulation of many small, unsympathetic changes to building elevations and alterations to architectural elements can gradually erode the character of historic places, which are sensitive to change. To make sure that the positive effects of investment in buildings and spaces within historic places are long term, it is necessary to sensitively maintain and manage historic character.

30% of Scotland's population resides in small towns with between 2,000 and 20,000 population. Survey results from 33 small towns, in 20 local authority areas, were included in the Scottish Small Towns Report 2007-2013. Among several issues the report found that run-down built fabric and inappropriate change to historic buildings has contributed to the economic decline of those towns surveyed. The report led to a number of initiatives, one of which is to address the backlog of investment in the historic fabric and character of small towns in order to support economic regeneration. (Chapter 8 of https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/233/scottish_small_towns_report_2007-2013)

There are examples across Scotland and Europe where heritage led regeneration has brought significant benefits to the economy and the environment and where attention to detail has been of great importance in achieving that benefit.

**National Planning Policy**

Scotland’s National Planning Framework 3 [NPF3] 2014 and Scottish Planning Policy [SPP] 2014 recognise that cultural heritage contributes to the economy, cultural identity and quality of life in Scotland. By encouraging maintenance and enhancement of historic places, the planning system can help make Scotland successful and sustainable and meet the goals of national policy including ‘Valuing the Historic Environment’.
SPP sets out that development within or outwith conservation areas which will impact on a conservation area, should preserve or enhance its appearance, character or setting. It includes a presumption to retain buildings rather than permit demolition, where they make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area; and, that conservation area appraisals should inform development management decisions. (SPP, 2014 paragraphs 143 & 144)

“The historic environment is a key cultural and economic asset and a source of inspiration that should be seen as integral to creating successful places. Culture-led regeneration can have a profound impact on the well-being of a community in terms of the physical look and feel of a place and can also attract visitors, which in turn can bolster the local economy and sense of pride or ownership.” (SPP 2014, paragraph 136)

Scottish Government’s Planning Advice Note PAN 71: Conservation Area Management, December 2004: “When effectively managed, conservation areas can anchor thriving communities, sustain cultural heritage, generate wealth and prosperity and add to quality of life.”

The legislation and advice for conservation areas does not seek to prevent development and change but is aimed at securing greater economic benefits from the historic environment whilst ensuring that it is cared for, protected and enhanced for the benefit of our own and future generations.

Local Planning Policy
Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to the proper stewardship of its historic areas and has prepared this document to help inform the development and management of the town’s conservation area.

Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan (LDP) was formally adopted on 29th September 2014. The Historic Environment section of the plan includes policies and accompanying text which refers to managing historic assets. Policy HE2: ‘Conservation Areas’ promotes a sensitive and informed approach to development within conservation areas. It refers to the intention to publish conservation area appraisals as supplementary guidance. Supplementary Guidance supports policies within the LDP.

Stranraer Conservation Area
The burgh of Stranraer was established in 1595 on the site of an existing clachan which had grown up around the Adair family’s tower house. Four centuries of development followed, creating a town where the street pattern of the early burgh has survived along with interesting, high quality buildings from a range of periods. These features provide the distinctive historic character which is the backdrop to people’s daily lives.

Stranraer Conservation Area was first designated in 1977 and the boundary amended in 2014. It includes the core of the old town, the waterside areas along Agnew Crescent and the later extension of the old town along Lewis Street. The boundary is shown on the map on Page 3.

Purpose of Stranraer Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan
Change within a conservation area is inevitable as buildings and spaces may require adaptation to accommodate new activities and social needs. Being aware of what contributes to the character of the conservation area is the first stage in managing change. This guidance will support and encourage property owners and occupiers, businesses, the Council and other organisations to make decisions which look after buildings and spaces within the conservation area in a manner which keeps or improves
its character and the condition of individual buildings and streets within it. It will also support the good design of new development and assist the preparation and implementation of enhancement proposals, when opportunity arises.

Successful funding bids for regeneration and enhancement in Stranraer, including the conservation area, have brought focus onto the quality of development, sensitive restoration, repair and repurposing of historic buildings and spaces. Funding bodies expect the value of investment to be long lasting. The guidance should help everyone to consider how best to maintain the fabric of their property in the long term.

In order to identify where heritage is at risk and draw attention to potential for restoration, Historic Environment Scotland holds records of historic buildings which are unoccupied and in declining condition. There are 4 buildings in Stranraer Conservation Area included although there are firm proposals for at least 3 of them. https://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/search/keyword/Stranraer

It highlights large and small historic themes and details, traditional materials and appropriate maintenance techniques; considers the early origins of the town; its development from the 16th century; its changing role; the interesting streets, spaces and buildings from different time periods which together give Stranraer its special historic character. Implicit in this guidance is the principle that Stranraer Conservation Area should be allowed to evolve and adjust sensitively to modern needs, as the town has done over the centuries.

Previous supplementary guidance is superseded and to be effective this guidance should be used by everyone before making decisions about physical changes within Stranraer.

**Aims of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan [CACA&MP]:**

- To identify and describe the elements and themes that contribute to the area’s special architectural and historic interest;
- To describe how character and quality of the historic built environment should be protected and enhanced, by preventing further erosion of character through small-scale inappropriate changes to buildings, streets and open areas;
- To note the effects of existing development within the conservation area boundary and the general physical condition of buildings, structures and spaces;
- To enable and support carefully managed change and evolution of the conservation area by supporting development that makes a positive contribution to character; and
- To identify wider opportunities for enhancement.
Part One: History, Development and General Character of Stranraer Conservation Area

This section covers the historical development of Stranraer with a descriptive overview of the conservation area. The themes and elements which contribute to the character of the conservation area are identified.

Part Two: Managing the Character Areas

This section considers the management of the conservation area and challenges to overcome to prevent erosion of character as well as initiatives and actions which have the potential to preserve or enhance that character.

Regional Context

Stranraer is the second largest town in Dumfries and Galloway currently with a population of around 10,850 inhabitants. It sits at the southern end of Loch Ryan and grew due to the importance of its sea links and trade with other ports in Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Wales and England. It continues to be an important economic centre for Wigtownshire.

Since 1990 some of the main employers have closed or moved. In 1994 rail freight to Stranraer ended and in 2012 the ferry port closed; the ferry terminals are now 6 miles north at Cairnryan. Since 2008 new mooring pontoons and marina facilities were provided and further public realm and other works for the marina have been carried out. Stranraer is emerging as an attractive coastal town, especially for the recreational water user, celebrating the natural resource, including the oysters and other seafood, of Loch Ryan.

Archaeological Interest

The area around Stranraer has been attractive for human settlement for a very long time and scatters of stone tools were found on the shores of Loch Ryan and Luce Bay, thought to be from people recolonising the area after the glaciers retreated, perhaps about 10,000 years ago. In the Neolithic period the area was wealthy and important. The remains of a rare, ritual site was discovered at nearby Dunragit consisting of a massive timber circle with many burials in and around it.

Since the late 16th century, Stranraer burgh has been dominated by the Castle of St John, built by the Adair family. An east to west orientated street, today’s George Street, was divided into plots for the new burgesses, and the street was linked by vennels to a parallel back lane, today’s Fisher Street.

As well as buried remains, there may be parts of early buildings embedded in more recent structures. There are a number of known features relating to the early settlement of the town but their exact locations have not been confirmed, including a chapel, the Waulk Mill and a boat (found in 1683 and probably Roman in origin).

The history and development of the town have been studied and published by Historic Environment Scotland in the Scottish Burgh Survey. It identifies three zones: the core of the mediaeval town, 18th and 19th century expansion around the core and the development of the modern waterfront, now designated an Archaeologically Sensitive Area [ASA] in the Local Development Plan Policy HE4.
Development of Stranraer – Mediaeval

The first documentary evidence for settlements at ‘Stranreuer’ and ‘Chapel’ dates from the early 14th century. The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland makes reference to the land of ‘Stranreuer’ being in the possession of Fergus de Mandeville. Stranraer, as we know it today, owes its location to two factors; the construction of the castle around 1520 by Ninian Adair, and its location at the south of Loch Ryan affording a close link by sea to Ireland.

From the early 16th century the town grew as a port with its creation as a burgh in 1595 reinforcing its importance. This new status permitted erection of a Tolbooth and Market Cross and the privilege of trading goods. Trade at this time was not limited to agriculture or fishing but included weaving, coopering, tailoring, leatherwork and other merchant trades. The early burgh was relatively small, really only one street running along the line of George Street. The parallel back lane, Fisher Street, faced directly onto the waterfront at that time with three small vennels running from it to George Street. The focal points of the town were the Tolbooth, Market Cross and Tron, probably located at the junction of Queen Street and Church Street. In 1617 Stranraer became a free Royal Burgh giving it the right to be the only Loch Ryan port.

Development of Stranraer – Mediaeval to 19th Century

The plan of the main high street with connecting vennels was still in evidence in 1689 and by the end of the 17th century it is known that the majority of the housing was modest and simple, mainly with single hearths. In 1770 the Tolbooth and the Tron were moved by the Town Council from the centre of George Street, to ease congestion and a new Tolbooth/Town House was built on the corner of Church Street and George Street.

In the 19th century Stranraer harbour was established to provide much needed piers and shelter for shipping. The west pier was completed in 1820 and work continued over the next few decades to deepen and lengthen the harbour. In the mid-19th century a sea wall, known as a breastwork, was built and the area of land north of the town was reclaimed.
The railway reached Stranraer in 1861. This led to the construction of a second pier, East Pier, completed by 1863.

In the 1860s new industry came to the town, including the Rankin brothers’ Clashmahew brick and tile manufacturing at Black Parks. Although the new local material affected the built environment and there are many brick buildings from the 19th century, efforts were made to continue the use of older traditional materials. Access to the town burn was also maintained for all its inhabitants.

**Development of Stranraer – Late 19th Century to Modern**

By the end of the 19th Century, Stranraer had expanded further to the east and south but OS maps of the last 70 years show very little change to the layout of the town centre and its immediate surroundings. Throughout this period the town centre has retained its characteristic building uses on the main street: shops with housing above and predominantly two storey housing along the secondary streets branching off it. The majority of these buildings have adapted only in terms of replacement windows and added dormers to facilitate expansion into the roof space.

Until the 1930’s there was insufficient sanitation in the town centre, with contaminated open burns but the delay in modernising sanitation discouraged redevelopment of a scale seen in other historic burghs. [An overview of the historical development of Stranraer is found in The Burgh Survey, Historic Stranraer, E.P.D. Torrie and E. Coleman, Aberdeen, 1995.]

In the last 150 years, the area around the waterfront has seen many changes. Parts of the harbour were used by ferries to Ireland from the 1860s; the port was modernised during the 1970s. In the 1950s further land was reclaimed to the west of the harbour, becoming Agnew Park which is an important public area on the waterfront which was redesigned and upgraded with Millennium funding.
An Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan for Stranraer Waterfront, 2009 was adopted as Supplementary Guidance to the Local Development Plan in 2014. The economic climate has altered, but the vision remains: “To reposition Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a distinctive and successful marine leisure destination.” Changes identified in the masterplan have begun in a challenging economic climate.

Scottish Government in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council has funded enhancement works to Castle Square, West Pier and elements of the waterfront. Funding has been approved for regeneration and enhancement schemes and finding new uses for parts of the built heritage:

2016 - Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) was confirmed for Stranraer. CARS is a grant programme which financially assists the owners of traditional buildings in a conservation area to restore, repair and reinstate original fabric using traditional skills. Stranraer CARS is jointly funded by Dumfries and Galloway Council and Historic Environment Scotland. Stranraer CARS requires that a Management Plan is provided.

2016 - Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) awarded funding for works to facilitate the future use of two prominent Listed buildings in the conservation area, as part of the wider regeneration and enhancement of Stranraer.
Description of Stranraer Conservation Area

This is an overview of the town along with the key features of the conservation area. Further detail is set out in the character area appraisals.

Setting

Topography, Landscape and Location

The town is situated on gently sloping north facing ground on the southern shore of Loch Ryan. Immediately to the west and south of the conservation area the ground rises to the low, rolling landscape of the isthmus that separates the Rhins of Galloway in the west from the higher land to the east.

The geology and the changes to the land from the ice ages have left a significant mark on the whole of the area. Sea level changes caused lengthy periods when vegetation was absent or when land levels were raised which is visible in the raised beach deposits in the area. Geological deposits including gravel have influenced the historical development of the area allowing clay for tile and brick making. However, its location close to the mild air of the Gulf Stream produces good pasture for cattle and dairy cows, making agriculture the main local economy and influencing the appearance of the surrounding landscape.

Significant Views, Panoramas and Viewpoints

The most significant views are those from the higher ground to the south which see the town in its setting at the foot of Loch Ryan. Around the shores of the Loch the high ground frames views and defines the setting of the town. From Loch Ryan and from the pier heads towards the town, the inter-relationship between the town, the harbour and the sea front can be seen. The eye is drawn up beyond the immediate waterside to key focal buildings: the Church, Castle and Town Hall. The grid-like town centre layout allows a variety of views, some along the north to south streets ending at the harbour, the water side or the open loch. Conversely, views up into the town centre may terminate with key buildings on George Street. Views along
George Street, Hanover Street and Bridge Street are varied and often foreshortened by bends in those streets.

The tight, intimate quality of the conservation area, especially looking along Hanover Street, is one of the special characteristics of Stranraer.

**Key Approaches to the Conservation Area**

The main entrance point to the conservation area from the east is from the very straight London Road at the traffic roundabout where it becomes Hanover Street which is much narrower with increasingly intimate character.

From the south, Lewis Street is a straight and relatively wide roadway and at Church Street it narrows down significantly. From the west, High Street slopes downwards giving views across the town before meeting George Street. From the north-west, along the sea, the curve of Agnew Crescent and the open park has a distinctive seafront character in contrast with the other approaches. The park-side trees create a rhythm and a welcome natural element. From the north-east, the former ferry port structures, traffic management arrangements and Market Street/ Harbour Street parking areas dominate, reducing the quality of this approach. However there are longer views along the Loch Ryan shoreline against the backdrop of the low hills of the Rhins of Galloway. The tourist information centre and the pub opposite close down those views.

**Street Pattern and Form**

The street pattern in Stranraer reflects its origins as two separate settlements either side of the town burn, along the line of North and South Strand Street. Its location at the southern end of Loch Ryan is also key to how the form of the town has evolved.

Stranraer town centre has two principal east to west through routes. The northernmost route comes from the east as Charlotte Street, George Street and High Street and the southern is Hanover Street, Bridge Street, Sun Street. The way in which the width and alignment of these streets varies over their lengths makes an important contribution to the character of Stranraer Conservation Area.

Fisher Street was a narrow back lane in the mediaeval town parallel to George Street. The former vennels, Princes Street, Queen Street and King Street run from George Street to Fisher Street and Market Street and Harbour Street on the waterside. With North and South Strand Street leading to Harbour Street the central area has a loose grid layout as seen in the figure below.
The 19th century development at the waterside to some extent separated the town centre from the harbour despite the linking streets. In the same period Castle Square, at the east end of George Street, lost many older buildings. It has recently been pedestrianised and re-landscaped creating a strong focal point in the conservation area.

Beyond the routes radiating from the town centre the urban growth has a more dispersed and modern layout, including Lewis Street, which is a straight avenue mainly developed during the second half of the 19th century.

**Roads and Street Surfaces**

There is little evidence of original or traditional surfacing materials throughout the town centre. Roadways are predominantly hot rolled asphalt and the footways are laid with a variety of shapes of concrete slabs. It is possible that original setts or cobbles underlie the modern materials. The varying quality of surface materials detracts from some spaces and the setting of buildings.

In the new scheme in George Street and Castle Square the concrete setts, granite kerbs and paving have been used in a way which indicates priority to pedestrian movement from Castle Square to South Strand Street, helping the success of that space. In contrast with South Strand Street, North Strand Street has standard modern concrete paving on the pedestrian surfaces and patched asphalt on the driving surfaces. All the surface materials may be reviewed over time and their use considered for other spaces.

Other footways and surfaces within the town such as some lengths in Church Street have retained some of the earlier granite kerb stones but for the most part these have been replaced with concrete kerbs.

**Trees and soft landscaping**

There are relatively few areas of trees or soft landscaping within the conservation area. The recent re-design of Castle Square allowed the introduction of hornbeams and a multi-stem silver birch, both of which are native species. Generally trees do not feature in the streets of Stranraer but in the gardens and green spaces there are a number of mature trees of significance. Important trees are found rear of Dunbae House and along the periphery of Agnew Park. The particularly mild climate of Stranraer supports the growth of some exotic trees. In the larger open areas, especially around the waterfront, there is space for trees to be introduced.

Within the Conservation Area relatively few houses have private garden grounds that impact directly on public areas although along Lewis Street there are shrubs and trees in front of dwellings which contribute to character.
Open Spaces

There are many open spaces within and beside the conservation area. Some are the legacy of demolition of older buildings when space was needed to accommodate more parking for the growing port. Others were left over from road improvements. There are also much smaller spaces at street junctions or where buildings have been demolished. The spaces have a range of formal and informal uses including car parking. Differently managed, small spaces could provide green backdrops, information about the town and quiet restful areas.

Key spaces include:

- Water frontage car parks for the ferry – ferry moved so spaces less important;
- Market Street, site of former town gas works/demolished buildings - a car park, disrupts the 19th century street pattern;
- Millhill Street and Hanover Square, former tightly developed area of housing, warehousing and mill - serves as a town centre car park;
- Agnew Park, important public open space immediately beside beach, on reclaimed land with large car park - provides valuable recreation and leisure area;
- Castle Square, very significant public space in town centre, provides setting for the Castle of St John;
- Church Street, first town kirkyard, a historic space behind a modern wall in the setting of Church and Museum – opportunity to improve access and historic information;
- Sun Street, former garden rear of Dunbae House with a small number of significant mature trees – used as a car park;
- Dalrymple Street, Reformed Presbyterian Church, Graveyard - just outside the designated conservation area; and
- Sheuchan Cemetery, Sun Street, outside the designated conservation area but part of its setting.

Gap sites and sites with derelict buildings

Gap sites on which sensitively designed development would be desirable include:

- the car parks between Fisher Street and Market Street where the built edge of the town has been compromised;
- corner of Fisher Street and King Street where recent demolition has left a derelict appearance; and
- vacant site of the demolished, clay dabbin cottage, 30 Agnew Crescent which breaks the otherwise continuous frontage.

Townscape

The combination of buildings, street layout and spaces and the uses of buildings in Stranraer create a unique townscape. The important features are as follows.

- The building line for most streets is directly at the back of the footways although there are exceptions such as in Lewis Street where there are small front gardens or spaces.
- Plot widths and the proportions of the building façades were based on the original mediaeval feus which were narrow and regular creating a rhythm however modern building often ignores this traditional pattern, undermining historic character.
- The mass of buildings including height, width and form varies depending on the use of the building e.g. civic, commercial or domestic, its location in the town and its historic importance. Domestic buildings are mainly 2 storey, other buildings are taller, some having raised elements. Distinctive architectural design techniques are used to break up otherwise bulky buildings.
Roofs vary in form or shape and dormer windows, chimneys and towers are important visual landmarks – Castle, Museum and churches.

The styles and architectural designs of buildings and traditional detailing are diverse, from simple to ornate, however there is consistency provided through traditional proportions, materials and detailing and in how each building addresses its context.

Materials are from a limited range with red sandstone used for more formal civic buildings and other stones, either painted, harled or rendered, being the most common. Roofs are slate mostly of relatively regular sizes but with occasionally with a graded traditional Scottish roof.

**Building Façades**

The street façades are a defining element of the Stranraer townscape, including their physical form, position relative to others, materials used and architectural detail. Many streets are closed terraces of 2-storey domestic scale buildings some with rhythm and regularity in their pattern of windows and openings, based on Georgian themes. In the central commercial area, e.g. George Street and Hanover Street, larger scale individual buildings such as banks or larger shops interrupt the terraces.

**Roofscape**

From the higher ground to the south over the town, the appearance of the roofscape has a varied and distinctive character, reflecting a wide range of building styles and ages.

The roofscape in Bridge Street and Agnew Crescent when punctuated by interesting shaped chimneys and towers and the roofscape where they are absent in George Street.
The gentle topography of the town together with its layout provides an ever-changing and sometimes complex vista. From close view, the quality of roofscape is clear in the detail of simple or embellished skews, skewputts, traditional dormers and eaves. Traditional chimney heads are key elements of the roofscape, varying in size and shape but often very large where shared between two buildings. Most have clay chimney cans, some with ornate detail.

A small number of buildings, e.g. the George Hotel and Museum, have architectural elements that break the rooflines including pyramid shaped roof tower, spire or bell tower. There are further noteworthy raised roofscape elements at The Golden Cross, Sheriff Court, the building on the corner of Hanover Street and Hanover Square and on the corner of Hanover Street and South Strand Street. Where chimneys or raised roof elements are absent, especially on a run of adjoining roofs, character is noticeably reduced.

Buildings

Within the designated conservation area, buildings are a diverse mix of styles and ages reflecting different periods of economic prosperity and confidence. A number of buildings, including some on George Street, have been altered with changed proportions and front elevations and are now out of character or scale with nearby properties.

In the past, commercial success was displayed in the architecture, particularly new banks, which often contrasted significantly with relatively modest, earlier properties beside them. Some shops appear to be early conversions from houses, especially in George Street. In Castle Street/Charlotte Street older buildings were removed to allow modern commercial/residential development where the design is not in keeping with Stranraer’s traditional character.
Landmark or Key Buildings

There are several landmark or key buildings scattered across the conservation area. They vary in their impact due to their size, aspects being important in views or as a focal point. The most prominent are in the following map and table.

Modern and modernised buildings

Modern architecture when carefully designed can be sympathetic to the traditional pattern and form of historic buildings either through copy or contrast. Some recent development has not integrated well with the traditional streetscape for a number of reasons, either because it has a monolithic design at odds with the traditional plot widths, without design features to visually integrate with the immediate setting or due to poor replication.

Buildings, including some on George Street, have been altered by changes to doors and windows, addition of dormers or substantial changes to the elevations resulting in an appearance that is out of character with neighbouring properties. In a number of places, original roofing materials have been replaced with concrete tiles which have a different texture and pattern to slate. New and altered dormers have a range of shapes, sizes and materials, some incongruous with the building they are on and with neighbouring buildings. Many of these changes pre-date the requirement for planning permission.

Building Types

Within the Conservation Area there are several different types of buildings some with a distinctive form and others which may be found in similar groups.
Tenements
Tenements are mainly found along the shopping streets, e.g. George Street, Hanover Street and Bridge Street usually 3 storeys where some upper floors were originally residential but are now offices or storage for the business at ground floor. Characteristically they have a doorway or pend for access.

18th and 19th Century Vernacular
The most common building type in Stranraer Conservation Area, particularly the dwellings along the streets between George Street and the waterfront and Agnew Crescent, date from the late 18th and early 19th century. They often have symmetrical 3-bay elevations and are a mix of 2, 1½ and single storey. Many have converted attics usually by addition of dormers. There are two ‘clay dabbin’ buildings remaining on Agnew Crescent, now indistinguishable from their neighbours.

Victorian and Edwardian
From the 19th until the early 20th century, development took place mainly south of the historic centre. Along Lewis Street grand buildings were constructed using distinctive Scottish Victorian Architecture, with older architectural themes such as the ‘Tudor’ Sheriff Court and the ‘Gothic’ St Ninian’s Church, in Lewis Street. There are imposing, well-proportioned dwellings from this period in Lewis Street and Bridge Street and some embellished banks, shops and office buildings in Hanover Street and George Street.

Large Commercial
The former Grain Store on Bridge Street is a plain 19th century brick warehouse and there are a number of ornate banks, mainly stone built. Stranraer does not have many large commercial buildings remaining within the conservation area.

Modern
The majority of modern development has taken place outwith the conservation area, however demolition with new development or infill has impacted on the character of the conservation area, e.g. buildings on Castle Street and on the corners of Hanover Street/Dalrymple Street and Hanover Street/John Street, built in the mid-20th century where they replaced narrower built frontages and the eaves lines jar with traditional roofs.
Architectural Details, Materials and Finishes

Roofs: The overall impression is of the universal use of natural slate, however there are some modern concrete tiles in use. The slate geology varies, as does thickness and size. It is predominantly grey in colour, sometimes with a hint of green or blue. Locally quarried slate has not been available for several decades so it was delivered by sea from north-west England, Wales and quarries further north in Scotland.

The pattern and style of roofing depends on the type of slate used and is part of the architectural and historic character of buildings and groups. The most traditional Scottish roofs use a range of sizes from very large, thick slates (colloquially called heavies) of random widths and laid with a very substantial overlap from the next course above. The slates diminish in size, and thickness, as courses progress up the roof. This is very effective for weatherproofing and creates a very distinct pattern. Modern roofers do not always replicate this pattern when replacing roofs so they are gradually being lost. Other slate roofs use more regular slate sizes and courses.

Skew stones, usually sandstone, commonly weigh down slates at the gable edge of the roofs in the conservation area although some have been lost. Skew stones are both practical and decorative. Sandstone ridge cappings were the traditional material for ridges, as they have enough embodied weight to hold slates in place with a fillet of lime mortar. Lead may have been used occasionally. From the late 19th century, it became common to use galvanised metal ridge cappings.

Imported slates, concrete tiles and terracotta ridges have replaced some materials for repairs or replacement of older roofs but have a different texture and pattern from traditional slate roofs. Poor matches of slate size and colour make changes more visible and have a detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area.

Keeping the variety of traditional slates and slating patterns, skew stones and ridge cappings is an important part of preserving the character of the conservation area.

Windows and doors: Windows in the elevations of traditional buildings were mainly timber sash and case usually with astragals (glazing bars) subdividing the glazing into panes. Early buildings had 12-panes (six-over-six) due to the limited glass sizes available as manufacturing was by blowing glass or creating cylinders which were flattened and cut when hot. Victorians invented new methods which allowed bigger pane sizes e.g. 4 panes (two-over-two) or 2 panes (one-over-one). Imperfections are of historic interest and show how the glass was made. It should be expected that some of the historic glass is preserved in some windows.
Doors are painted timber, usually of framed and panel construction. The earlier designs have six panels and later doors have four, the proportions of frames and panels being historically significant. Sometimes glazing was included in place of the upper panels. There are often glazed windows above doors (fan lights). Back doors and pend doors are traditionally plain painted, vertical boarding. Many doors have been changed to the detriment of the character of the conservation area. This also applies to windows where significantly less appropriate modern designs with poor detailing, in a range of materials e.g. unpainted hardwood, aluminium and uPVC, make a poor attempt to mimic traditional doors but without proper consideration of proportions or details.

Architectural embellishment: The majority of the buildings in Stranraer are plain and unembellished, especially terraced housing, although careful examination may uncover small unique details. Simple raised margins define window openings; banding is sometimes used to mark floor level changes; some door cases are modelled on Classical details and on larger or prestigious properties there may be ornate carving. Roof edges and divisions in the terraces are marked by plain or decorative skews and/or skewputts.

Masonry: Quality materials and detailing is usually reserved for the principal or front elevations. Exposed gables and rear elevations show a greater variety of materials often using locally made bricks, random or roughly coursed rubble whinstone (usually greywacke with occasional granite-like dolerite). Relatively few buildings are bare stone but contrasting stones or paint are commonly used on the margins and quoins. The Sheriff Court uses rock-faced red sandstone with honey sandstone for the details and Saint Ninian’s Church uses whinstone with red sandstone dressings.

The earliest extant stone building is the Castle of St John which has been built and rebuilt over many hundreds of years, with considerable variety in the stone and construction methods.

Brick, manufactured in Stranraer, is used in 19th and early 20th century buildings including the former Grain Store off Bridge Street.

Render, Harl and Paint: The majority of buildings throughout the conservation area are smooth rendered or finished in wet-dash harl and painted or painted stone. Some more modern alterations and buildings use dry-dash (pebble dash) which is out of character in Stranraer Conservation Area due to its surface texture.

Originally building elevations were covered in a lime harl (lime render) which allowed the solid stone and lime walls to ‘breathe’. Lime render was normally lime-washed every year in a restricted natural mineral based colour palette of white, grey, buff and cream, but also yellow/orange shades (ochre) which could be quite bright. Cement based render has crept in with the use of brick for façades and on stone where lime render would be better for the long term health of the stone fabric.

The majority of painted façades use subtle pale colours or off-whites, e.g. Princes Street and Queen Street with occasional strident or dark colours which interrupt the otherwise warm natural and earthy colours of the street they are in.

Colours used in Queen Street
**Shop Fronts:** Shops have been a feature of the town centre since at least the late 18th century and premises offering services directly to the public are an important part of the conservation area. Early shops were usually a single feudal plot in width, sometimes with very simple openings such as an enlarged window. The 18th century 5 to 7 High Street (below) has kept its very simple shop front.

From the 19th century most shops were adapted to include display windows with decorative timber surrounds of a form now considered to be a traditional format. Shop fronts are very significant in the streetscape of Stranraer Conservation Area as they are at ground floor often the most noticeable feature of the building and shopping is a reason people visit the town. Their design and condition greatly influence the appearance of the area.

There are some finely detailed shop fronts, with fascia and pilasters typical of the Victorian or Edwardian period, on Hanover Street and George Street. Some vintage alterations to shop fronts are of interest. Uniformity between shop fronts within the whole conservation would detract from local and historic character but returning some frontages to more appropriate design would enhance the character.

A traditional frontage relates to the size of the building of which it is part, its age and the materials used. Cast iron and bronze were sometimes used but most are timber. Display windows are sometimes divided vertically; the door is usually recessed, either central or to one side; the whole front is framed by pilasters with consoles to both sides and sometimes around the door; there is a masonry stall riser below the display window; and, a cornice frames a fascia for hand drawn or raised individual letters to be applied.

From the late 19th century, into the 20th century, larger shop units became fashionable often using two or more bays of a single building or one adjoining. Large plate-glass windows, some of historic interest, became common. Simplification of shop fronts, lack of detail in the design, use of plain aluminium or uPVC frames, relocation of entrance doors, reduction in height or removal of stall risers, loss of traditional framing by pilasters and cornices has gradually reduced the local, historic character and quality of the streetscape. Over-sized advertising and signage using new materials and internal illumination has covered the traditional fascia of many shop fronts. A slight adjustment to the size of fascia signage would allow it to remain within the traditional frame.

The main concentration of commercial properties is in George Street, Bridge Street, Castle Street and Hanover Street where there is a mix of retail, food outlets and public houses and where several well-detailed shop fronts remain.

National businesses impose standard corporate livery and detail which is often unsympathetic to local character, however in other places the same businesses have been able to take a more sensitive approach and create a corporate presence without detriment to the historic environment.
Shop front security can be very detrimental to the character and vitality of the street. In particular, external roller shutters can conceal the most interesting parts of the shop. There are a range of alternatives available which preserve character. The Council has guidance on shop fronts and security on the website.

Shop fronts in Stranraer on which new shop front design might be based.

**Advertisements:** Well-designed, well-kept and proportionate advertising on shop fronts, on the fascia designed for that purpose and using hanging signs, enhances the character of a historic street. Conversely, signage that is not designed in context, and where too much information is provided in the same place, has a detrimental impact on the quality of the streetscape and the character of the conservation area. Away from the business premises, carefully designed, small hoardings may be acceptable where they meet other amenity and traffic requirements and there is potential for the use of modern advertisement technology if placed carefully. A-boards that are removed from the street at the end of a business day may occasionally be acceptable where they do not cause a hazard to pedestrians or other traffic or add to the general clutter.

**Street Furniture and Signage:** Throughout Stranraer Conservation Area there are a large number of planters, seats, bollards, road markings, and traffic and other directional signs. Many of these items are needed to meet regulations in terms of the structure and the instructions they provide. There is repetition and some redundant signage and places where an existing structure could be used to attach a sign; with care a bin could also function as a bollard for example. There is great variation in the designs but in enhanced spaces such as Castle Square and Agnew Park design follows a theme. Adopting an appropriate design theme in the conservation area and applying it as strictly as possible will enhance character.
Part Two: Managing the Character Areas

Five character areas have been identified on which the following sections are based. The elements of individual and groups of buildings and the pattern of development are different in each area. Each area has also experienced different degrees of change. The original designed architecture or vernacular style, the age of buildings, streets, spaces and trees in each area contribute to its particular historic character. Modern and modernised buildings may impact on character. Within each area, features and themes which should be given careful consideration are noted, so that development, maintenance and change can be managed in a way that contributes to character in the most positive way.

Each character area includes:

General character – description of the themes and characteristics of the majority of the buildings in the streetscape. These are the main elements of character that should be preserved or enhanced.

Key features – buildings or other elements important to character which should be carefully considered when new proposals come forward. The significance of these features and their setting should not be lessened or marred by insensitive development or inappropriate change.

Issues and conflicts – aspects of change, development or maintenance that have a detrimental or negative impact on the character and quality of the conservation area, helping formulate some of the actions needed for positive management of the conservation area.

Buildings and spaces in poor order - there are a number of buildings which appear to be at risk of deterioration within Stranraer Conservation Area. Some may be in the process of being sold or have planned improvements or work may be underway. Their external appearance and evidence of under-occupancy singles them out along with apparent poor maintenance. Key buildings are included and comments on condition are made when there is concern.

Development opportunities – to outline specific design requirements for development proposals on known vacant sites where new buildings or structures would have a significant impact on character.

Enhancement opportunities – Enhancement opportunities are suggested to enable all decision makers, groups and owners to focus on actions that may be taken to enhance the character of the conservation area.
**Character Areas**

The 5 Stranraer Conservation Area to be considered in greater detail are shown on the map below:

- **A** - Town Centre, George Street and Environs
- **B** - Lewis Street
- **C** - Agnew Crescent and the Waterfront
- **D** - Fisher Street, King Street to Princes Street
- **E** - Hanover Street to Sun Street
This is the commercial part of the town centre dominated by retail, offices, pubs and cafés at ground floor; and the museum. First floors and some second floors and attics are in use for shop storage, flats or offices with separate entrances at ground floor, however there are also under-used upper floors.

**High Street** is narrow and slopes downwards from west to the east lined with modest terraced dwellings either side. They are a mix of single and two storey cottages, mainly of traditional three bay construction some with attic conversions. Roofs are mainly slate. The elevations vary in finishing material in terms of colour and textures as they are mainly painted render on whinstone and occasional exposed rubble stone dwellings.

Alterations include modern dormers, doors and windows with different shapes, formats and materials including non-traditional roofing materials. There are a small number of more recent dwellings with design elements which have differed from the immediate character such as wide format windows.

High Street’s principal contribution to the character of the conservation area is the way in which the street curves on rising ground offering changing views back across the town’s rooftops. 5-7 High Street is Category C Listed with a traditional Scottish nepus gable with wallhead chimney and harled elevations; it forms a focal point and break in the terrace.

A recent feature is Blind Johnny’s Monument at the junction of High Street, George Street and King Street where the end terrace was demolished.

The character of the street would be enhanced by the removal and repositioning of a number of attachments to buildings e.g. aerials, satellite dishes, wires and entry points for different services. There may also be benefit from looking at the traffic signage and markings in conjunction with other parts of the conservation area.
George Street is aligned east to west and was the main street of the early burgh. Its central section widens where the Tolbooth was located; market trading took place; a cross and, until the 1780s, ‘the Tron’ were sited to store weights and measures and used as a jail. The Town Hall (now the museum) was built in 1792 and took on the functions of court house, meeting and trading place. The views change with the width and curve of the street, narrowing on the approach to Castle Square allowing the Castle of St John and its enhanced open setting to be revealed.

Buildings on George Street are mostly 2-storey based on traditional late 18th and early 19th century proportions and designs. All front elevations are directly at the edge of the footway. The mix of shop units, cafés and offices at ground floor and office storage and residential above provides variety in the uses and the appearance of the elevations. Roof heights vary as do the details of the size and shape of chimneys and dormers, where present. The scale and architectural importance of buildings increases towards the central section of the street such as the Museum, the George Hotel and former banks which are dominant in some views. Other features are pends, or passages, leading to the rear of some buildings. Small details are visible above street level such as window embellishments, mouldings and the rose, thistle and shamrock finials on the Golden Cross pub. All together it is an interesting streetscape.
Towards the western end of George Street, interventions and alterations to buildings have resulted in the reduction of their architectural quality, having less historic character than other nearby buildings. The loss of traditional details such as original windows and shopfronts, has impacted negatively on the character of the area. Several unoccupied and under-occupied buildings are in poor condition and modern signage, changes to elevation finishes, and small items such as aerials and wires which have been badly positioned have a cumulative detrimental effect on character.

At ground floor, some shop fronts no longer relate to the architecture of the whole building, part or group of buildings but there are also some good examples of shopfronts that do as they are traditional or of individual design or particular age.

Many buildings would benefit from sensitive restoration of original architectural detail and materials.

At its eastern end, buildings are a mix of two and three storeys, again with variety and many traditional details. There is a gap in the streetscape where a single storey, flat roofed shop building is sited and although this was a single storey pitched roof in the past, the gap above it detracts from the streetscape.

The streets leading into and away from George Street are narrow, part of the original historic character. Where there are buildings of historic interest the street frontages should remain unchanged, and the constrained carriageways be retained. New uses for buildings or sites which require more generous access arrangements should be very carefully considered so as not to compromise that historic character.
Shop fronts in George Street historically vary in size and detail. The variety and common themes seen in late 19th and early 20th century photographs would be a good starting point for enhancements.

Modern buildings, poor maintenance and insensitive alterations to 19th century buildings detract from the character of this part of the conservation area.

**Church Street** links George Street with Lewis Street and is a principal route into the town from the south, although one way due to the narrow carriageway. There are several relatively large and fine historic buildings of architectural significance. The B listed former Old Parish Church (1838-41) opens directly onto the street with a historic graveyard beside it. There are interesting facades on the east side too where several buildings have finely detailed architectural embellishments e.g. one building elevation has a Roman Doric pilastered door-piece. The architectural details in this street are individual to each building and one of its most important characteristics along with the narrowness of the street.
**Castle Square** is the recently enhanced setting of St John’s Castle where George Street, Charlotte Street, Castle Street and South Strand Street meet and it links to Market Street and the seafront via North Strand Street. The square was once a crowded trading place with more buildings around the castle but over centuries buildings were demolished, altered and replaced and in the 20th century the space was left open. The 19th century fountain has been repositioned in this space.

The area has high archaeological potential due to the centuries of changing activity.

Buildings near the castle appear to date from the late 18th and early 19th century particularly on Bridge Street. The proportions and architectural detail contribute to the character of the street. However, some of the roofline interest has been lost particularly where chimneys have been removed. Existing chimneys should be retained and found a use e.g. stove flues or for ventilation, and reinstated when the opportunity arises.

The enhanced public space at Castle Square has an overall design theme which the street furniture is part of, including the seating, bollards, bins, bike stands, lighting, tree guards, railings, signage, planting and the precision and pattern of surface materials. The design has a very positive impact and this will continue as long as all changes are in keeping with the established theme.

**South Strand Street** forms one side of Castle Square and part of it is included in the enhancements. At the southern end is an area of public parking but the views into it have a number of detracting features, including an unfinished concrete block wall. The appearance of the parking area could be enhanced and with collaboration between all of the owners. The rear access to the George Hotel is in view which is currently in poor condition. Future development should carefully reinforce the character of the traditional buildings at both the front and rear of the street particularly where visible to the public.
North Strand Street leads from Castle Square through an arched pend to the waterfront and the handsome tourist information building. North Strand Street opens to a car park on its west side. The east side of the street has buildings of individual historic interest e.g. the unaltered B Listed 17 North Strand Street. On the west side, building frontages appear to date from the 19th century but with alterations e.g. changes to windows, doors and dormers. In the middle of the street there is a white painted stone building with many original features remaining.

The overall height and scale of the modern library and residential building is appropriate, however some of the design features jar with the traditional features of the remainder of the street, e.g. the raised central portion, uncharacteristic half-dormer windows and visual impact of two chimneys over the whole roof length.

The layout of the street for parking cars, the storing of bins and bollard designs should be given careful consideration in this area ideally as part of an agreed or established design theme. Harbour Street pedestrian and cycle crossing is not directly aligned with North Strand Street. There may be a more innovative pedestrian route which would encourage walking between the town centre and the library and waterfront.

This is an important pedestrian route from the sea front to the centre of Stranraer Conservation Area where careful attention to detail would benefit the character of the conservation area.

Castle Street has traditional 19th century buildings retail, office and residential on both sides. The traditional buildings are directly at the edge of the pavement, however the east side of the street is dominated, at both ends, by modern retail units with storage or flats above which are not in keeping with the traditional and are set back from the footway. The four 19th or early 20th century buildings are of different heights and simple designs, a mix of red ashlar or render at first floor with commercial frontages beneath. The continuous terrace on the west of the street has a strong presence with painted, rendered or harled elevations, slated roofs and large shared chimneys and only two dormer windows. The shopfronts are of individual local interest and should be retained.
There is a direct view to Bridge Street to the elegant grey granite fronted bank building on Hanover Street and to Charlotte Street to an ashlar fronted shop with paired arched windows above a modern plate glass shopfront.

Proposals to repair and restore the shop fronts would be of benefit as would the replacement of modern with traditional details. Reinstating the original design of whole shopfronts and windows above would benefit the character of the conservation area.

There are many individual buildings of note throughout this character area. Not all have prominent or elaborate architectural features but each contributes positively to the streetscape. Some of these buildings would benefit from restoration, repair or enhancement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Name</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stranraer Museum</td>
<td>A Listed</td>
<td>Dates from 1777 and was previously used as a Tollbooth, Town Hall, drill hall, armoury, Athenaeum and fire station. It replaced the old Tollbooth and Tron that stood in the centre of George Street. It would benefit from restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Hotel</td>
<td>B Listed</td>
<td>Former coaching inn, a legacy of the prosperous era of travel as a staging point on the crossing to Northern Ireland. Its grandeur and architectural exuberance make it an important element in the street. It has fallen into very poor condition, although will be subject of a restoration programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Street 45-47</td>
<td>C Listed</td>
<td>Adjacent to the George Hotel and the stalk-topped ball finials on pedestals above the dais help to give this building prominence on George Street and closes the view along Princes Street. It would benefit from improvements to signage and elevation condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Street 60-62 Queen Street 32</td>
<td></td>
<td>A striking early 20th century corner building which contributes to architectural variety and interest with its rhythm of bays and prominent bell-cast cupola. It would benefit from reinstatement of some of its early 20th century features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Street 5/7</td>
<td>C Listed</td>
<td>Built 1726 probably as a bakery, 2-storey, 3-bay rectangular plan building with nepus gable end with chimney facing the street; unusual break in the regular frontage; in poor condition and in need of restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Street, Dunbae House</td>
<td></td>
<td>Set back behind quadrant walls and iron railings with a classical front with pediments over windows and doors and a round stairwell to the rear. The building is in need of repair and restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Street, Graveyard</td>
<td></td>
<td>L shaped churchyard beside Category B Listed church with 19th century grave stones. The brick wall on the street frontage is not sympathetic to the graveyard. Restoration of the graveyard would be beneficial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Strand Street 17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Category B Listed five bay two storey classical villa with imposing sandstone ashlar front. It is the largest building in this street, built as an early 19th century bank. It is in need of some external restoration and repair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Street, Golden Cross Pub</td>
<td></td>
<td>Category C Listed important landmark building defines the junction. Its height, stepped gable, chimneys and details give it prominence. In need of restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Street, 58/60</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ashlar shop building; important in view from Castle Street. In need of restoration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key considerations for general management and enhancement.

Views
- Significant views to frontage of George Hotel and along curve of George Street to Stranraer Museum from High Street should be retained

Signage and Street Furniture
- Signage and street furniture should be considered in terms of reducing clutter, improving the appearance of retained signs and furniture and developing a conservation area design theme for all signage and furniture

Buildings
- Maintenance, repair and restoration of buildings should be encouraged
- Chimneys should be retained, restored and reinstated when opportunity arises
- Traditional format of doors and windows should be reinstated and repair of original encouraged
- Good design for new and improvements to the massing of existing and new buildings should be encouraged through the pre-application process
- Good practice for attachments to buildings should be agreed with owners, occupants trades and utilities (pipes, cables, satellite dishes, aerials, alarms)

Shop fronts
- New shopfronts should relate well to the whole building or group of buildings
- Proposals for poorly designed shop fronts and non-traditional materials should be resisted, and less appropriate modern shopfronts replaced when opportunity arises, encouraging the use of traditional materials and techniques

Road surfaces and repairs
- Road and footway surfacing materials should be appropriate to character
- Utilities should be carefully monitored in respect of surface reinstatement

Archaeology
- Archaeological potential should be considered when building foundations or utility trenches are required

Potential actions for enhancement
- Encourage a carefully designed pitched roof above the flat roofed single storey shop
- Seek improvement to the appearance of the rear of buildings and facilities around the South Strand Street car park
- Consider a different approach to the pedestrian crossing in North Strand Street
- Develop action plan for decluttering the signage and street furniture
B. Lewis Street

Lewis Street is the southern extension of Church Street. It is quite distinct as a character area as a long straight relatively wide street. Substantial terraces were developed on its east side during the early to mid-19th century and detached villa style housing and civic buildings on the west side later in the century. The architecture of and space around the villas and civic buildings give the street grandeur that is not apparent in the surrounding streets.

19th century maps show fewer houses on Lewis Street in the mid-19th century and that the east side terraces pre-date the west side villas. It also shows that some of the terraces were formed by infilling between existing less dense housing.
On both sides buildings have some form of garden frontage space as they set back from the street in terraced groups behind a continuous wall with railings above, creating a well-established building line and frontage character. A further step back in the terrace from 27 to 31 adds visual interest. The terraces have small front gardens with detailed commonly designed cast iron railings, gates and stone gate piers, which contribute to local character.

Building heights and detail vary and some loss of original features has taken place such as the format and materials of windows and doors and new or altered dormers, however there is coherence among the buildings with retained architectural features such as the large, deep chimney heads, with many cans which are an important part of the roofscape. The majority of the buildings are painted render with architraves around the openings. The street has a natural palette of white, cream or off-white paint, off-white render or unpainted stone.
Important Buildings.

The following key buildings are important in creating the distinctive character of Lewis Street.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Street, 19, 21, 23 and 25</td>
<td>Good examples of early to mid-19th century terraced housing. Details include a degree of ornamentation around doors and window architraves. This property also shows fine brickwork laid in English Garden Wall bond. The front gardens, many with dwarf walls and iron railings, enhance the streetscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gospel Hall, the mid-19th century</td>
<td>At the edge of the Conservation Area, built 1843, this is a modest scale single storey three bay building. The elevation is distinguished by pagoda style finials and bell-cote. The frontage area is not defined and would benefit from sensitive enclosure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Pump Head, North West End of Lewis Street</td>
<td>Originally a public pump, presented to the people in Stranraer in 1875 by a local blacksmith, it has been moved on a few occasions. It may have come from a nearby line of well/pump heads that followed a line of springs or a burn immediately to the west. The setting and surrounding of the pump would benefit from enhancement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff Court House, built 1874</td>
<td>The largest and most ornate building in the street, sitting slightly elevated position; originally constructed as the New Town House. It has a Tudor style with a mix of stone colours and textures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The War Memorial, of 1920 at the Sheriff’s Court</td>
<td>A bronze statue of a Royal Scots Fusilier, set on a Creetown granite plinth, a focal point and memorial to historical and social events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Ninian’s Church, late 19th century</td>
<td>Occupies an elevated site and built about 10 years after the Sheriff Court also of dressed stone. It is of an imposing Gothic style and benefits a low boundary wall and retained trees which are important in the streetscape.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key considerations for management and enhancement of Lewis Street

The 19th century Gospel Hall at the southern end of the street has lost the enclosure of its frontage space; using appropriate design and surface materials re-creating a boundary would enhance its character.

There are two elevations in the street where a less textured render would be more in keeping with the building. This kind of detail should be carefully considered when future decisions are being made.

The three large detached stone houses have individual designs. Some architectural elements have been altered, but the houses have front bays, front gardens, stone boundary walls, gate piers and railings. The details of the boundary and the treatment of the surfaces and spaces in front of the buildings are integral to the character of the street.

Chimneys with multiple cans are important to the character of the street and should be retained.

Retention of the walls and railings is important to the character of the street and, when the opportunity arises, should be repaired or reinstated.

Some of the properties have shrubs or trees which in many respects contribute positively to the character of the street. However, some have grown large and there may be risk of damage to the fabric of the dwelling or garden wall, therefore management of vegetation in the front garden area may be necessary.

Carefully considered modern design can work well in historic places, but in this case the form of and use of materials in the three storey apartment blocks on the edge of the conservation area are not sympathetic to the traditional buildings. They do not contribute positively to the character of the conservation area.

- retain, repair and reinstate traditional frontage boundary treatments and details
- retain and reinstate traditional roof edge details, chimney heads and chimney cans
- retain, repair or reinstate appropriate windows and doors when opportunities arise
- use appropriate traditional or contrasting design for new building work
- use carefully chosen materials for elevations and outside surfaces in new development
- use traditional format windows and doors in new development
- restrict the range of colours and textures for elevation finishes
- carefully choose colour, pattern and texture for external surfaces and new garden features
- manage vegetation in front garden areas to prevent damage to buildings or boundaries – regular pruning of trees, shrubs and climbers
- take opportunity to enhance incongruous modern flats
- take any opportunity to create sympathetic enclosure in front of Gospel Hall
- retain and augment tree planting near churches
Agnew Park is a recreational and leisure area created when Clayhole bay was reclaimed in the 1950s. It is open to the promenade and sea to the north and to south bound by Agnew Crescent wall and trees. The park has a 21st century café building, a mid-20th century metal framed pavilion, and a new boat building shed for coastal rowing boats. The three buildings form a cluster but vary significantly in form.

The landscape surroundings of Loch Ryan and the views of the boat masts are part of Agnew Park’s character; views north towards the sea-front and marina or towards the town from the shore. The avenue of whitebeam trees around the perimeter of the park and a small number of exotic trees make an important contribution to green space and vegetation in the whole conservation area.

Similar to other areas, the consistency in the design themes of street furniture within and around the park should be continued e.g. bins, benches, street lamps. If ad hoc provision of benches, planters, memorial plaques or other features is required, their design, location and materials should coordinate with the existing.

**Market Street** was created and the landward area filled in during the mid-19th century. Buildings from the 19th century and earlier, including a timber yard, were removed and much of the land is now used for car parking. Two adjoining north facing
unpainted stone buildings make a particularly positive contribution to character. There is a modern three storey block which has maritime influence in its design. The site in between would benefit from development that would create a more interesting frontage than there is at present.

Where Market Street meets King Street, there are a range of two storey dwellings with a variety of details and alterations, book-ended by a modern 4 storey apartment block which turns the corner onto King Street. Adaptation of this combination of development styles, up to 3 storeys, would be a useful basis for sensitive design at the corner of North Strand Street and Market Street, which are open car parks at present.

Buildings on the south side of Market Street backing onto Fisher Street have a narrow front to back footprint; reinstating built development of similar footprint would reinforce the original character and allow car parking behind the buildings.

**Harbour Street** joins Market Street at its east end former line of an open burn and site of an early settlement (clachan) with waulk mill, church and burn crossing points. There is potential for significant archaeology in this area.

The lone surviving building from the 19th century trading port is now the tourist information centre a painted stone building which faces south. The large scale building north of it replaced the last warehouse at the end of the 20th century.
**Agnew Crescent** was formerly Neptune Street running along the shore only separated from the sea when Agnew Park was created. The perimeter trees around the park are important to character. It is mainly residential but has a range of building types and sizes. Where King Street joins Agnew Crescent, there are two commercial buildings, a 19th century pub and a former warehouse, and an apartment block with courtyard behind fronting the short road layby. There is a long pedestrian refuge between the layby and the road, opposite the entrance to the 1930s weighbridge area and waterfront which would benefit from improvement.

The buildings are directly at the back of the pavement along the western part of Agnew Crescent, an aspect of character that should be continued. The buildings vary in age and design with a mix of interesting local vernacular architecture and are mainly houses or flats. They are significant in the context of the historic development of the town.

Changes that have already taken place have altered the uniformity of groups of dwellings particularly at roof level where various dormers have been added. They may differ from each other and be at odds with the original design of the building. To restore and maintain character, future alterations to buildings should ensure that individual buildings retain architectural elements and that terraces and pairs use designs which match, retain and restore their shared details as far as possible.

Contemporary design may be appropriate for some new development but it should seek to preserve the general form of the established buildings and retain the visual connection with the sea.

Traditional slate roof coverings and skew stones have mostly been kept, with a few notable exceptions where the roofs now have pantiles or plain concrete tiles.

There are a variety of ridge cappings; sandstone ridges are traditional in stone built houses and should be retained or replaced with the same. More recently, galvanised ridge cappings have become traditional. Skew stones are present on many of the roofs and are traditionally sandstone. They should be retained and repaired, or replaced with the same material and form. Some traditional roof edges have been replaced by modern soffits and fascia boards, a change which should be discouraged because it is unnecessary and an unsympathetic detail on traditional buildings. Traditional cast iron half round guttering is more robust than modern plastic gutters and using spike or rafter brackets to attach the rhones is relatively straightforward when replacement is needed.
To the seaward edge of the street, on the perimeter of Agnew Park inside the boundary wall, the regularly placed trees create a rhythm and soften the streetscape. The trees should be protected from removal or inadvertent damage during road, utilities or development work.

There is one vacant site on Agnew Crescent where a building was demolished with retrospective consent and nothing has been built to replace it. The gap it has left is detrimental to the character of the conservation area. Development of a terraced house of a design based on one of the buildings either side – a single storey or a dormer cottage dwelling would enhance the streetscape. In some places retaining and designing relatively uniform groups of buildings may be most appropriate, but in others the uniqueness of individual buildings may need to be preserved.

**Important Buildings.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Details</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Agnew Crescent, (Workshop)</td>
<td>Its scale is similar with properties either side, but its function gives it prominence as the large garage doors emphasise its industrial use. Future proposals should retain the industrial character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Market Street</td>
<td>Early 19th century, bare stone building on corner of Queen Street of historic and architectural interest. This building should not be painted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Market Street</td>
<td>Category Later 19th century, bare stone building with striking pilaster and pediment door piece and foliated tympanum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbour Office and Weighbridge</td>
<td>Category C Listed single storey art deco building with central clock tower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-30 Harbour Street (Tourism Office)</td>
<td>Category C Listed late 18th century four bay symmetrical rectangular-plan house which closes the view from North Strand Street and helps form a visual pinch point on approach from east</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key considerations for management and enhancement.**

Much of the character can be kept by careful attention to details through discussion and amendments during the development management process or by incentives to make improvements through grant schemes when they are available as set out below.

- **Dormer extensions** - carefully designed to maintain the character of individual properties and ensure sufficient similarity with appropriate dormers in adjoining houses, or houses of the same original design.

- **Windows and doors** – while it is unlikely that all of the changes to the original glazing format, opening mechanisms or materials of windows or doors can be reversed, taking the opportunity to require careful thought for each proposed change in the future will preserve character and set good example for others.

- **Elevations** – some of the textured render finishes on the front and gable of buildings will be problematic for stone buildings in the future and are not sympathetic to the building; opportunity should be taken to improve the choice of finish to elevations to contribute positively to character and building fabric.
Downpipes and services – changes to internal layout affects the external equipment needed so careful attention to alterations is required to reduce the visual impact of pipes, utilities equipment, alarms, wires, aerials and satellite dishes, and opportunity to require removal of redundant or unsightly equipment should be taken.

Roof lines – show a variety of changes with many chimney stacks retained but often altered and the cans missing or replaced. These are the kind of detail which can be addressed when planning permission is sought for alterations.

Trees – ground breaking work will need to be very careful in the area of root spread to avoid damage and ultimate loss of individual trees and careful management in terms of replacement of failures.

Vacant sites and under-used buildings – careful design to keep to the established building line and minimise unenclosed space in the frontage will be required to maintain the character of this area.

Parts of Agnew Crescent in 2017 and Agnew Crescent on the sea edge before Agnew Park was created from Clayhole bay in the early 20th century.
D. Fisher Street, King Street to Princes Street

This area of the town was much closer to the sea before breastwork sea wall was built and the landward side filled in during the late 19th century. The three streets, King Street, Queen Street and Princes Street run between George Street and Fisher Street and now Market Street in a formal grid pattern. The vast majority of the buildings are two storey dwellings, some now subdivided into flats. However, among them there are some commercial buildings with interesting features which contribute to the rich variety of the town.

King Street, the widest of the three connecting streets has variety in the buildings. Most buildings are two storeys although they vary in height with two single storey dwellings at the northern end. All are built to the back of the pavement on both sides. There are some ornate window and door mouldings.

There is a wide access to a car park which disrupts the frontage and a corner site where buildings were demolished but development has not yet taken place neither of which make a positive contribution to character. Improving the appearance of these sites in the short term would be helpful.
There are a number of small architectural features in the street that should be retained and where similar features have been lost or damaged, the opportunity should be taken to restore and reinstate them, including original format windows and decorative stucco mouldings.

The Category A Listed bakery and shop dominant the south end. Restoring the buildings and reinstating original materials would improve the building and potentially attract visitors.

Footway surfaces, street markings and the street furniture in King Street would benefit from being part of a wider theme for the conservation area. This would create more integration with the rest of Stranraer Conservation Area and raise the quality of the approaches to and from the seashore.

Queen Street has an interesting mix of commercial and residential buildings with a variety of facades from different decades. It is narrow with a continuous building line at the back of the pavement, except no.21 which is set back a short distance and notably out of line with its neighbours. It is an important thoroughfare for pedestrians and one way for vehicles towards George Street. Roof heights vary although they are generally two storey. Most buildings are rendered some with a range of shades of paint. A number of unusual small shops and larger buildings give Queen Street special character.
The Golden Cross public house turns the corner with George Street and is three storeys high with distinctive crow stepped gable windows. This building would benefit from restoration of its very individual mouldings and finials.

Opposite, at 60-62 George Street and turning the corner into Queen Street is an early 20th century art deco styled building which has retained its original form, although altered and now with signage which is not sympathetic to the architecture of the building.

There is a pair of coursed and snecked whinstone buildings with sandstone dressings; with shops below and dwellings above. The early 20th century glazed brick shop front is of some interest even if not from the same building period.

There is a mid-20th century art deco influenced commercial building with classical pedimented frontage and simple ironwork detail. The opportunity exists to ensure that this building keeps its unique identity.

Where it meets Fisher Street and Market Street the large open car park changes the character. Opportunity to reinforce the enclosure of the street in this area would be welcomed. A design code for street furniture and footway surface and road markings would benefit the character.

**Princes Street** is very narrow with mainly 2 and 1½ storey houses with a variety of details. The architecture is simple and there is a colourful palette of painted renders and window margins in use. A modern residential block in the middle of the west side of the street fits relatively well within the street. Unfortunately there are virtually no original windows left and many alterations have been carried out at roof level to chimneys and unsympathetic dormers added.

There are a number of arched pends featuring in the street. Strong coloured renders should be discouraged and the opportunity to reinstate windows of an appropriate format, recessed into the wall in a traditional manner would be beneficial to the character of the street. Any further roof level alterations should be carefully designed and opportunity to improve the existing should be taken.
Where Princes Street meets Fisher Street the street is not defined by buildings but runs through a surface car park which diminishes the character of the street.

**Fisher Street** is loosely parallel with Market Street but staggers across each of the three streets. It is very narrow and has been densely developed on either side for decades as seen from the historic maps. Some traditional dwellings remain, mostly on the south side, but over the years some areas have been over-developed and other properties allowed to fall into disrepair. There are a number of small businesses along the street that have been ingenious with the use of space but the materials do not enhance the character of the street. The narrow street is dominated by elevations in poor repair, garage doors, rear and front entrances to small warehouses or yards and private parking areas. There is a four storey modern apartment building at the corner with King Street which dwarfs other buildings in the street.

**Important Buildings:**

There is a variety of commercial and residential buildings in this part of the conservation area which make a positive contribution to character set out in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **King Street**
Gillespies Bakery and Shop | Category A Listed working commercial bakery and shop. It has a timber, gabled, commercial entrance with double garage doors but otherwise has a regular frontage and one of the largest individual footprint buildings in the town centre, as there are extensive works to the rear. |
| **King Street, 14** | Early 19th century prominent house with considerable architectural character due to its Ionic pilastered door-piece with a dentil cornice and mixture of canted and segmental arched dormers. It also retains most of its original glazing. |
| **Fisher Street, Wellington House** | Category B Listed prominent large residential building though partially hidden behind a high stone wall which faces the street and the frontage is perpendicular to the street |
| **Fisher Street, 55** | has a classical entrance doorway with pilasters |

**Key Considerations for General Management and Enhancement.**

Managing this part of the conservation area will rely on the encouragement of private owners to make changes and very careful consideration of proposals for change by service providers. Taking steps to make modifications which restore lost character will be beneficial to all of the streets. The particular vernacular or architectural style of individual buildings will also need to be considered when alterations and extensions are being proposed.

The following principles and actions will help preserve and enhance the character of this part of the conservation area:

- New development should follow the back of pavement building line in Fisher Street, King Street, Queen Street and Princes Street and boundary features which reinstate the building line should be encouraged;
- Car parks should have perimeter development to improve the enclosure and reduce the dominance of cars.
Unsightly areas of bin storage, unkempt land and private signage should be tidied in the short term and arrangements made to reduce the detriment to the local environment in the long term.

- Retain, repair traditional timber windows in traditional buildings and reinstate when possible.

- Restore and repair shopfronts of interest and ensure that the ground floor links architecturally with the floors above.

- Use agreed themes/design code for street furniture and signage, pavement surfaces and road markings.

- Retain and repair details appropriate to the architecture of individual buildings.

- Discourage the use of strong colours which contrast with nearby frontages by developing an agreed colour palette and resist painting of bare stone;

- Enhance pedestrian experience between the waterside and the town centre.

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**E. Hanover Street to Sun Street**

**Hanover Street, Bridge Street and Sun Street** run east to west in that order and provide the main vehicular route to the town centre from the south and west. Moving and parked traffic dominate, despite the streets being relatively narrow with the majority of buildings being built up to the back of the pavement. There is a rich variety of architectural styles and many ill-advised, unsympathetic alterations, however the streets have significant historical and visual interest.

The supermarket carpark and road arrangement dominate the eastern edge of the conservation area.

Category C Listed Morland is the first building within the conservation area set back and unusual with a raised ‘ground floor’ up steps. Its dormers are quite top heavy, elevations are painted stone and render, behind a painted stone wall. This building should be given careful consideration when development is being proposed nearby.
**Hanover Street** begins with the Category B Listed 2 storey stone terraces on the north side of the road. There are variations in heights and roofline details with some large shared chimneys with multiple cans. A number of the buildings are significantly altered but the character of the street continues as a busy commercial street with residential above and with few exceptions buildings on both sides are immediately at the back of the footway.

The concentration of shop fronts and other commercial frontages increases and there is great variation in their appearance. Some have been replaced with modern materials and designs while the basic structure of a traditional shop front has been concealed by new fascia or minor alterations in others. A small selection of largely original 19th or early 20th century designs remain. Returning shop fronts and advertisements to original proportions would be beneficial to character.

A number of interesting, individual architectural features have survived in the street which should be retained and restored: the curved glass of 77 Hanover Street, the carved stone animals on 51-55 Hanover Street and French pavilion style roofs.

Where Hanover Street meets Dalrymple Street and St John’s Street modern two storey buildings with continuous, curved frontages and flat or parapet roofs and no roofline features are at odds with traditional building form, massing and material.
Bridge Street, which crosses the town burn, continues the busy and complex mix of building styles and changing heights. It has an interesting topographical rise and fall with a curved street. Behind the frontages are a number of interesting warehouses and spaces.

1847 Ordnance Survey of Bridge Street. French pavilion roofed tower at the junction of Bridge Street and South Strand Street.

Sun Street rises to the west from the junction of Lewis Street, Church Street and Bridge Street. On its southern side there is modern development which does not fit well with the traditional form of buildings in the conservation area.

On the northern side, the rear of Dunbae House is accessed from Sun Street and the full height circular bay window of the stone built house is visible. There are a number of significant mature trees in the former garden which are not common in the Stranraer Conservation Area. This area was a formally laid out garden in the 1840s as seen in the town plan and a small number of mature trees remain. There are now several small modern buildings and extensions at the rear of Dunbae House which have not been designed sympathetically to the setting of the Category B Listed building.

In this part of the conservation area there are a number of very elegant buildings, some of which have retained the majority of their original features and others which have been unsympathetically altered with modern style dormers and windows which neither reflect the architecture or history of the buildings they are in nor maintain any form of historical continuity in the street elevations.

The variety and individual details of the buildings and how they present to the street are key elements of the character of the conservation area. Reinforcing traditional forms and materials in the street is essential to retaining and enhancing that character.
# Buildings of particular interest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morland</td>
<td>Unusual three storey dwelling, painted stone and render, behind a painted stone wall. Setting should be given careful consideration when development is being proposed nearby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanover street, 49-55</td>
<td>Late 19th Century, is described by Gifford as “Ruskinian Gothic, with carved beasts peering down from its end oriel.” The stone of this building may benefit from restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanover Street, 77</td>
<td>Dated 1902, a prominent corner building rising to 3 storeys, its French pavilion roofed square tower gives it a strong presence in the streetscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Street, 20</td>
<td>Although architecturally different from 77 this prominent block corners South Strand Street with a tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Street, 9</td>
<td>Category B Listed painted Stranraer 3 storey brick warehouse, vacant but intact and key townscape building seen from parts of Hanover Square and Mill Hill Street; has proposals for conversion to residential and café use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Street, 15</td>
<td>Category B Listed 5 bay symmetrical T-plan Palazzo-style bank, with later additions to rear, built 1874 of ashlar sandstone with whinstone to rear – of imposing scale, and showing ornate and elegant detailing which provides a strong architectural statement in the street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanover Street, 89-91</td>
<td>Category C Listed late 19th century hammer dressed granite bank with arched windows in dormers and an archway to a pend; prominent as it terminates the view south along Castle Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grapes Public House</td>
<td>Category C Listed characterful two storey side by side buildings of different date and form. 2-storey building has windows with moulded architraves in contrast to lower 1½-storey building where wall-head dormers break the eaves. Visually united by use of pilasters and cornice around ground-floor window and door openings on frontage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Key considerations for general management and enhancement.

- Ensure that the individual details and variety of buildings are retained
- Ensure that new buildings keep to traditional building lines and historic layouts
- Reinforce traditional building forms and materials in the street
- Carefully manage and retain trees in this area including succession planting in advance of loss of mature trees
- Consider modification and removal of the small modern buildings and extensions to rear of Dunbae House
- Open up access to the green space to rear of Dunbae House
- Improve the graveyard on Church Street visibility into and potentially permit access
- Support the sensitive conversion and reuse of upper floors in Hanover Street and Bridge Street and the Grain Store in particular
- Support restoration and reinstatement of original or appropriate designs for commercial frontages and resist the loss of traditional shop fronts
- Consider a design code for street furniture and signage as part of the whole conservation area
Management and Enhancement in the Conservation Area

General Summary

The combined Stranraer Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan has identified aspects and features of streets, buildings and spaces that contribute positively to the special character of Stranraer Conservation Area; and places where certain features and practices have lessened that special character because they are insensitive. New development needs to respect the character of the streets, taking into account variations between heights or repeated roof features in adjoining and nearby buildings. The footprint and form of new buildings should be carefully designed so as not to lose the existing character.

The elements of character include:

- the historic pattern of development - traditional layout of streets and building blocks;
- the hierarchy and uses of streets;
- historic links and routes between the town and the sea;
- topography - how it allows or hides views and vistas;
- the townscape – building blocks, spaces, heights, massing, architectural form and detail of buildings; and
- the rooftops - shapes, chimneys, dormers, high points and details in the view.

The document has identified a number of recommendations for preservation or enhancement of the different character areas which in combination would be of benefit which would be achieved through decision making or by seeking funding. They can be summarised in the following points:

- an identified need for management of the conservation area
- improving the condition of historic buildings
- improving the condition of shopfronts
- encouraging new uses for vacant buildings
- exploring options for improved pedestrian connectivity
- promoting new development in gap sites
- improving the public realm
- greenspace improvement and tree strategy
- reducing graffiti and flyposting
- preserving, exploring and interpreting the local archaeology
- developing a range of traditional building skills in the local workforce
- using local history as a resource for learning in the community
- minimising the impact of telecommunications equipment
- providing public art in public spaces
- providing interpretation of locally significant places and events

Small changes have the potential to incrementally affect the character of the conservation area so managing all aspects of the historic centre of Stranraer is essential to the successful regeneration of the town. This includes the public spaces and roads and any alterations carried out to visible roofs and elevations, whether owned privately, by businesses or by organisations. All the details matter as the elements of character are individual to each street, space and building or group of buildings and the variety gives Stranraer its local identity.
Putting measures in place to coordinate management and enhancement.

There are a number of common issues in the individual areas which have the potential to, or have already undermined some elements of character.

Other programmes and strategies, with different objectives and missions may take an approach which could interfere with traditional historic fabric or designed details. However, there are usually alternative methods which can be substituted or compromises that can be made to ensure that the widest environmental and regeneration goals are met. Looking at these collectively is of benefit to the whole conservation area and will enable stakeholders and decision makers to see how they can each contribute to the wider goals of improving the environment and historic interest of Stranraer.

Improving the public realm

There have been a number of very successful public realm improvements as part of the regeneration programme for Stranraer and there are more coming forward. However there remains a risk that the utility companies will need to open up some of the improved surfaces to carry out repairs or new installations.

Street Furniture

Coordinating the placement of street furniture and temporary decorations will assist the management of visual clutter including bollards, seating, signage, lighting, high level lights and floral displays. Sharing attachment equipment and apparatus between signs and furniture and using the smallest symbols necessary will reduce the number of items that need to be maintained and repaired. Agreeing a design code across the Council and other organisations would be a useful action to take forward in the immediate future.

Utilities

General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 as amended, Part 13 Development by Statutory Undertakers sets out the development that the utilities companies are permitted to carry out without planning permission. There are few restrictions on this except were above ground equipment is being provided. However, the Scottish Roads Work Register requires utilities companies to notify the roads authority in advance of works and there are additional expectations placed in terms of disrupting historic areas and reinstating surfaces. It is the Council’s responsibility to ensure that the duty of the utilities companies is followed therefore joint discussion between affected parties and agreement about how this works in practice would be a useful way forward.

Roads Authority

Within the conservation area Dumfries and Galloway Council is the road authority and it is important that they are fully aware of the desire to reduce new road signage and what is already there.

Alternative and integrated approaches to signage and road markings may need to be considered with the historic environment in mind. Involving user groups and other parts of the Council involved in regeneration work before making decisions which might cut across that work is essential just as they would expect to be consulted where schemes and proposals affect the roads and road safety.

Resurfacing and surface patching also has the potential to impact on the character.

Street lighting, position and appearance of CCTV and attachments for festive decorations should also be considered in terms of the impact on the physical environment of the conservation area. There may be opportunities to reduce the individual poles and to reduce light pollution in the area.
Consultation and discussion leading to a shared agreement or code of practice for replacement and maintenance of equipment and surfacing to keep an attractive environment in the streets of the conservation area would be beneficial.

**Telecommunication equipment**

Satellite dishes, aerials and other antennae have the potential to be detrimental to the appearance of individual buildings and groups and therefore the overall character of the conservation area. There is usually an alternative position for the erection or attachment of equipment or another means of providing the same or a similar service. There is often potential for sharing equipment. Discussions with the service providers may establish some protocols which will reduce the detriment to the buildings within the conservation area. Discussions with property owners to ensure the removal of redundant equipment and cables should be worthwhile.

**Planning and Enforcement**

Taking a strict, carefully considered approach to changes that need consent in the conservation area will be very beneficial to character, even where less sympathetic change has been allowed in the past. This new guidance is an opportunity to emphasise the importance of sensitive design where the retention and reinstatement of traditional historic detail to groups of buildings and streets in the conservation area can improve the overall character of the conservation area with consequential benefits.

This applies to elevation treatments, form of extensions, window and door replacement, changes to shopfronts, roof and chimney works.

Support should be given for taking action under the planning legislation where breaches of planning control involving change which adversely affects the character of Stranraer Conservation Area, particularly in areas where regeneration and restoration schemes are underway.
Advertisements and Signage

The Town and Country Planning [Control of Advertisements] [Scotland] Regulations 1984 (as amended) are stricter within conservation areas than in other places. Intervention in the design of advertisements when first submitted for consent is very worthwhile in terms of trying to create a threshold of acceptability within the conservation area.

Litter, graffiti and unauthorised advertising

It has been long established that small unsightly changes in a place can lead to a disproportionate perception of decline. The regime for dealing with these needs to be discussed with Council’s services and community groups that may be willing and able to become involved.

General deterioration in the condition and character of buildings

Within the conservation area and around its perimeter there are a number of buildings that have fallen into poor condition. Evidence for this may start with chimneys being removed to reduce water ingress however good repair and maintenance will prevent this.

Windows, doors and shopfronts

The poor condition of traditional windows is also evidence of a lack of regular maintenance. Painting and small putty or timber repairs to windows would prevent their decline and reduce the pressure to replace them in new materials, often with formats and opening mechanisms that are not traditional. The same lack of maintenance can also apply to traditional doors, shopfronts and the fascia.
Traditional chimneys and dormers

There are a number of different styles of dormer windows and roof extensions in the conservation area. The majority are additions to the roof and not original, but some have a more traditional design and make a positive or neutral contribution to the character of the conservation area. The large and flat roofed box dormers on the roof slopes fronting the street are the least successful in terms of their appearance although they create significant internal space. The poor appearance is made worse by the use of low durability materials which often do not perform well in the wet Stranraer climate, are in poor condition through lack of adequate maintenance and are not replaced when they fail.

The importance of the roofscape, including roof level features and details, has been highlighted in the Stranraer Conservation Area Character Appraisal. Chimneys and their clay pots are an important positive feature contributing to the traditional appearance of the roof. They are sometimes shared and mark the end point of one building and the beginning of another; they may be an integral part of a symmetrical design of a single building or a group. Although chimneys may not be in use, they can have a useful function for ventilation of traditional buildings or as part of the heating system for the building. The repair and reinstatement of chimneys should be supported and promoted in the conservation area.

Vacancy of buildings

In the conservation area owner occupiers need to be encouraged to maintain their buildings to reduce the likelihood of them becoming vacant or partially used and where upper floors are used without regular occupation by people, such as for storage it puts them at risk as damage and deterioration may go unnoticed. Demand for housing in the Conservation Area is relatively low, as housing for owner occupiers and social rental is met by more recent development. There are a number of relevant services within the Council and other public organisations who could facilitate and encourage and help remove barriers to the re-use of upper floors.

Practical support is available for private owners to create residential units for vacant buildings through the Council’s Town Centre Living Fund and to restore traditional buildings within the conservation area through the Stranraer Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme. It would be helpful to formally coordinate the proposed methods of repair and restoration so that the schemes work to support each other.

In addition to providing funding and practical support, engaging owners and the wider community with the overall ambitions for regeneration of the town and promoting the benefits, both economic and environmental, is a crucial element of management.
**Sustainable design and construction**

To preserve the character of the conservation area the design of new buildings and extensions will often need to take the buildings immediately adjacent into account. While this may not require exact replication of existing buildings, certain characteristics of those surrounding buildings will normally be expected to be repeated as follows:

- the building line
- the proportions of architectural elements to the building and each other
- the patterns of window placement in the elevation
- the window opening mechanism
- the window reveals
- the roofline features – dormers, chimneys, gables
- the traditional skews
- the traditional slating patterns

However it is important that the elements of new development are durable, energy efficient and that they can be varied in small ways to create individual properties rather than large blocks of buildings that are identical in every detail.

**Proposed Future Actions**

- Agree a design code for street furniture, surfaces, lighting and other public sector equipment with services of the Council and outside providers.
- Coordinate the grant support programmes for the repair, restoration and reuse of buildings to ensure that conditions and standards of work are appropriate for historic buildings and modern living.
- Seek to apply the code of practice for reinstatement following utilities work in a strict manner.
- Carry out a tree survey and management strategy.
- Refresh the protocol for the careful use of development management powers to control development details and remove unauthorised development.

**Monitoring the Impact of Management**

The success of conservation area management may be assessed using a combination of the following indicators, however it is acknowledged that there are multiple combined factors which may contribute and not all are easily measured or separated from each other:

- Reduction in number of buildings at risk from neglect and deterioration
- Effectiveness and quality of repairs to buildings
APPENDIX 1

How individuals and property owners, lessees and tenants can help preserve and enhance the character of Stranraer Conservation Area

Each building or part of a building within the conservation area, its condition and its appearance makes a contribution to the character of the street or space and to the whole of Stranraer Conservation Area. Looking after every building in the correct way will keep the character and appearance and the draw for visitors, businesses and potential new residents. Owners and occupiers can considering carefully in advance how needs and wishes can be met in a manner that preserves or enhances the character of the conservation area through the choice of designs and materials and the maintenance techniques that are used. There are always different ways to achieve the same thing.

Maintenance should always form part of the annual budget for a building.

The roof should be maintained in a condition that ensures rain does not enter the building from the top and slowly allow damage to the supporting timbers and the ceilings below them. Slipped tiles should be attended to promptly and replaced or re-nailed into place using the same technique and material as for the remainder of the roof. Applying sticky materials will only be a short term solution and make it difficult for further repairs to be carried out.

Looking after traditionally constructed stone and lime elevations.

Traditionally constructed solid stone walled buildings with lime mortar in the joints between the stones all through the wall are the most common building type in Stranraer Conservation Area. The stone is usually greywacke, locally called whinstone. Red sandstone is used for decorative work such as ashlar facings, window and door surrounds and corner stones. There are a number of solid brick buildings from the 19th century and more recent brick, concrete block and render buildings.

Solid wall stone and lime buildings do not work in the same way as modern brick and cement mortar because stone and lime should allow moisture from inside the building to find its way to the exterior through the lime joints and to some degree through the stone itself. The walls also wet and dry on their exterior surface.

Where they have been rendered it was traditionally lime render which allows the ‘breathability’ of the walls to continue. Paints on the exterior should also be breathable. Preventing breathability results in moisture being trapped in the wall. There are many materials that can be used to insulate a building from the inside which still allow this movement of moisture. Attempting to seal a traditional building is completely counter-productive. Owners, lessees or tenants should be assertive with trades that advise otherwise. Further details can be found in the Council’s parallel supplementary guidance and from publications by Historic Environment Scotland at their conservation centre, The Engine Shed.


https://www.engineshed.scot/

Inappropriate use of Portland cement

In the past there was poor understanding of the way stone and lime work together and the effect Portland cement has on the wetting and drying cycle of stone walls. Many buildings were
repainted using cement based mortars and the stone has since begun to decay because it was unable to dry through a lime mortar joint.

Some buildings have been clad in hard, impermeable cement based renders but although they are intended to be resistant to water, over time, small cracks and fissures allow rainwater to creep in behind the cement render with no way for the stone to dry out from the outside. Natural hydraulic lime render, on the other hand, allows the stone behind to dry gradually through it and small cracks are self-repairing. Lime render/mortar cures by a gradual process of absorbing carbon dioxide from the air in moist conditions and slowly turning back to limestone [calcium carbonate]. It is widely available although some trades are not confident using natural hydraulic lime and it cannot normally be used in the coldest months. Replacement of cement based mortar pointing with hydraulic lime pointing is sometimes sufficient to help internal damp problems once the sources of water have been removed.

Damp in stone and lime buildings

Injected damp proof courses are virtually ineffective on stone walls. They are designed to interfere with the natural wetting and drying functioning of the wall and it is almost impossible to inject chemicals into the uneven joints as in most stonework the lime mortar joints do not follow through the wall from front to back. The same is not true of brick buildings. Electrolytic damp deterrents may be effective for a relatively short period.

Sources of damp

It is necessary to regularly check that rhones and downpipes and other rainwater channels such as hidden valleys and drains at ground level are intact and not blocked by debris. Where there are blockages they should be cleared and where there are leaks, repairs can be made by trades experienced in the required work. If there is hard ground or raised planting areas up to the edge of a stone or lime rendered building there may be moisture trapped which can appear on the inside walls. Proper drainage around a building is the best way of preventing damp.

Cast iron rainwater goods should be repainted and their fixings checked to ensure they are in good condition and in full working order.

Where vegetation has taken hold on chimneys and on ledges it should be carefully removed to prevent the growing roots causing gaps in the masonry.

Chimneys are an excellent way of ventilating a building and very much part of the character of the roofscape. Lead safes are a useful way of reducing water penetration through the masonry of a chimney.

Windows, doors and timber details

Timber elements including windows and doors should be painted regularly with traditional weather resistant paint, small areas of putty replaced and any damaged timber cleaned out and the gaps filled. Larger areas of damage can be repaired by splicing in good quality timber. Historic windows used high quality slow grown soft, or hard wood, and if they are kept painted survive much longer than most replacement windows will. Sliding sash and case equipment on windows can be tightened up and weather strips can be applied. Doors should also be kept properly painted and the weatherboards at the bottom given particular attention.

Timber shopfronts should also be kept in good order especially if they are traditional in design. The traditional fascia should be used for the shop sign. Hanging signs may also be appropriate if carefully designed and placed. Trying to include too much information on signage however, is not considered to be either attractive or effective.
**Alterations that affect the exterior**

When carrying out internal alterations the position of pipes and vents which need to be on an external wall should be given careful thought as the more attachments, pipes and vents there are the less attractive the exterior of the building will be. The same applies to alarms and telecoms equipment. If there are changes being made and all the necessary permissions have been sought, any old equipment including wires should be removed at the same time.

**Repairs**

Repairing the masonry on elevations can usually be carried out without permission as long as the correct methods are used so that there is no change taking place sometimes referred to as ‘like for like’. Sandstone may need specialist trades where there are any carved mouldings or surface tooling. Dressing back ashlar to a smooth surface may be sufficient. Artificial stone repair mixes should be avoided where possible as it is possible they may cause long term damage. Sealants should never be applied to traditional stone and lime walls.

**Further information:**


APPENDIX 2

Statutory and other powers for management of Conservation Areas.

The Council has statutory powers to assist with the management of the built environment ranging from development management controls, service of notices requiring that a building owner undertakes basic repairs, and powers to enable the compulsory acquisition of land or buildings required to enable the proper planning and development of an area. Most of these powers are discretionary and usually depend on the resources available to enable action by the Council. The principle powers that impact on the management of conservation areas are outlined below.

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

Planning consent is required for most forms of development and the Council, as planning authority, has a statutory duty to consider development proposals. Development Management is the process of making decisions on applications for planning and other permissions which is governed by law and a framework of practice guidance from Scottish Government. The national planning policy, the policies of the Local Development Plan, supplementary guidance and planning advice are the basis on which the decisions are made. Development Management sets out to:

- ensure that the use of land or buildings and the design is appropriate for its location;
- inform and advise on planning matters;
- consider and determine planning and related applications, either under delegated powers or through recommendation to Planning Applications Committee;
- defend the planning decisions of the Council at appeals or public inquiry;
- investigate breaches of planning control and, if appropriate, take enforcement action.

There are a number of other measures that the Council can use ranging from the control and removal of advertising placards or posters to the compulsory acquisition of land to enable certain development to take place.

Section 179 - Notice requiring the proper maintenance of land. This means that if it is considered that the amenity of the area is being adversely affected by the condition of adjacent land or buildings the Council can require the owner or occupier to abate the adverse effect, within strict limitations such as removal of debris or require painting of a building but not restoration of the building.


The two principal forms of action that a Council can take relate to the condition of listed buildings:

Section 43 – Service of a Repairs Notice setting out works necessary for the proper preservation of the building. These can be wide ranging and include the full restoration to a useable condition of any listed building that is deemed to be under threat of loss or serious damage through neglect. This is normally followed by:

Compulsory acquisition of ‘A’ listed building, under section 42, following the service of a Repairs Notice and failure to comply with that notice. The Council may proceed to acquire the building, usually with a view to passing it on to a body such as a Building Preservation Trust, to enable its proper repair and restoration.
Section 49 – Urgent works to preserve unoccupied listed buildings. The Council may serve notice on an owner of its intention to undertake emergency works necessary to stop the deterioration or loss of ‘A’ listed building and to recover the cost of such works from the owner. The Council is limited to undertaking only the minimum work necessary which usually comprises temporary measures such as blocking off windows, fixing temporary roof coverings or propping unsafe masonry etc.

**Housing (Scotland) Act 2006**

This Act of the Scottish Parliament makes provision about housing standards and provides for financial and management assistance to be given by Councils in connection with work carried out in relation to houses so that they meet minimum standards for occupation. The Act is relevant to the Conservation Areas as set out below:

- gives the local authority the power to designate a Housing Renewal Area and to implement an Action Plan to improve that area;
- requires a local authority to prepare a strategy for dealing with housing that is below the Tolerable Standard and to prepare a Scheme of Assistance to improve house conditions;
- defines the statutory repairing standard that has to be met by a private landlord;
- describes how the local authority can use work notices and gives a power to carry out the required work when the owner fails to do so; and
- gives the local authority the power to issue maintenance orders to ensure they are kept to a reasonable standard.
Listed buildings

Listed buildings within the conservation area are indicated on the map below.
The following table shows buildings that are statutorily listed within the whole of Stranraer Burgh. The category of listing is shown in the right hand column. Buildings can be added or removed from the list at any time so there is a risk that this list may become out of date during the lifetime of this document and therefore readers are encouraged to check the listed status of properties by contacting the Council or visiting the Historic Scotland website: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/search-for-a-listed-building/

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<td>LONDON ROAD, STAIR PARK GATEPIERS AND GATES</td>
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<td>25 LONDON ROAD INCLUDING BOUNDARY WALLS, GATEPIERS, GATE AND RAILINGS</td>
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<td>41763</td>
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<td>37 LONDON ROAD, HELENSLEA INCLUDING BOUNDARY WALLS, GATEPIERS, GATE RAILINGS AND OUTHOUSE TO REAR</td>
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<td>41762</td>
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<td>LONDON ROAD, ST ANDREW’S CHURCH (CHURCH OF SCOTLAND) AND GRAVEYARD INCLUDING BOUNDARY WALLS, GATEPIERS, GATES AND RAILINGS</td>
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