

Dumfries and Galloway Council

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

# Stranraer Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

*Draft Supplementary Guidance - May 2018*



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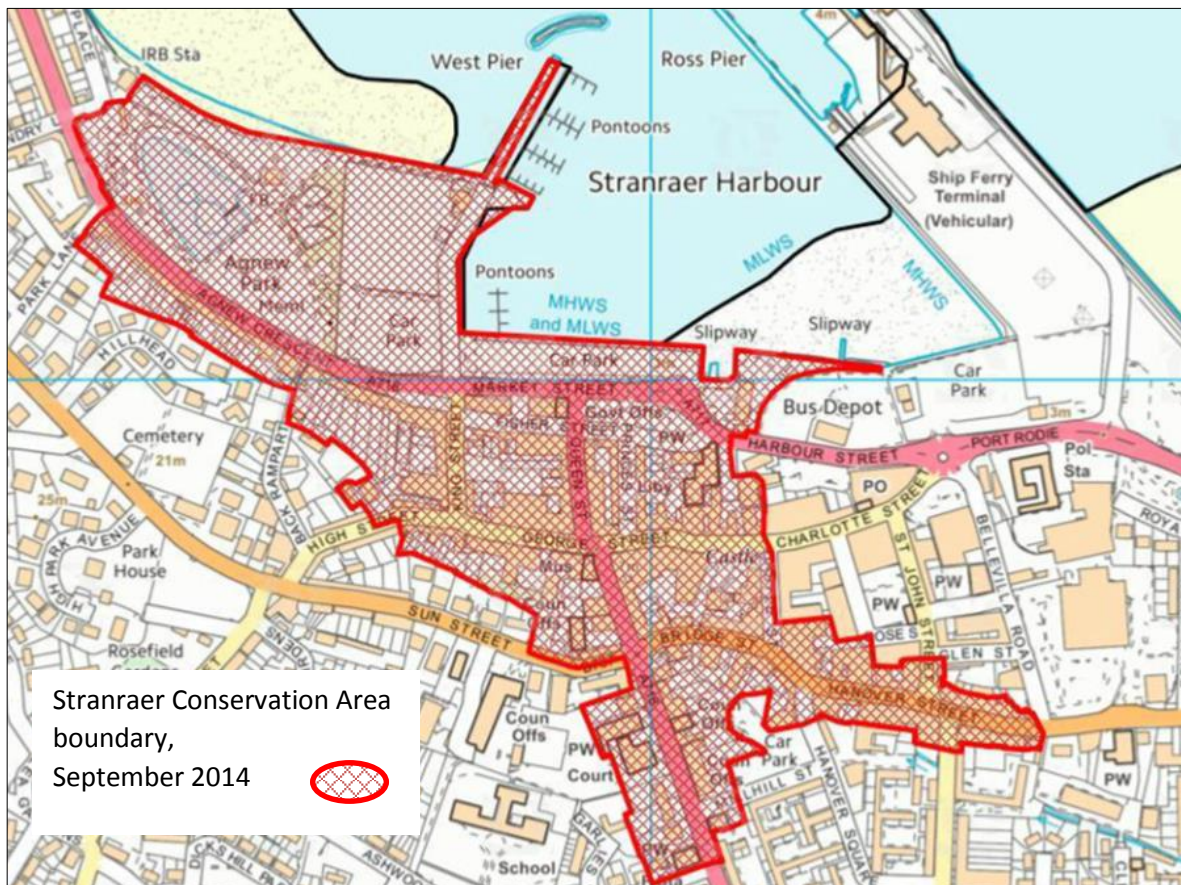
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## BACKGROUND

### 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 stakeholders to consider how change will affect many aspects of 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 weigh up the impact of, and shape, all proposals for alteration, demolition, new development, enhancement, upgrading or maintenance which affect Stranraer Conservation Area.



The burgh of Stranraer was established in 1595 on the site of an existing clachan that had developed around the substantial tower house on land owned by the Adair family. Four centuries of development have followed creating a town where the street pattern of the early burgh survives at its core, and where interesting, high quality buildings from a range of periods provide a distinctive historic character and backdrop to people's daily lives.

Stranraer Conservation Area was first designated in 1977 and the boundary amended in 2014. It covers the core of the old town, the waterside areas along Agnew Crescent as well as the later extension to the Old Town along Lewis Street. The boundary is shown on the map on Page 4.

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

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

Since the 1990s it has been recognised across and beyond the United Kingdom that historic buildings and the wider heritage make a very significant positive contribution to regeneration, especially in town settings. Many communities have regretted the loss of character of old streets and towns especially as more sensitive modifications to improve living standards would have been an equally successful alternative. 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 architectural elements can lead to a gradual erosion of the character of historic places. The historic environment is sensitive to change so taking the necessary steps to maintain and manage historic character will ensure that more of the positive effects of investment are carried forward.

30% of Scotland's population resides in small towns with a population between 2,000 and 20,000 and the Scottish Small Towns Report 2007-2013 uses the results of a survey from 33 such towns, in 20 local authority areas. The report drew attention to a number of issues including how run-down built fabric and inappropriate change to historic buildings has contributed to the economic decline of the towns that were surveyed. Among other things, the report led to a number of initiatives, addressing the backlog of investment in the historic fabric and character of small towns in order to support economic regeneration.

[https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/233/scottish\\_small\\_towns\\_report\\_2007-2013](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/233/scottish_small_towns_report_2007-2013)

There are examples across Scotland and the wider UK, such as those on the following page, where heritage led regeneration has brought about significant benefits to the environment and where attention to detail has been of great importance in achieving that benefit.

#### National Planning Policy

Scottish Government National Planning Framework 3 [NPF3] 2014 and Scottish Planning Policy [SPP] 2014 recognise the contribution made by cultural heritage to the economy, cultural identity and quality of life in Scotland. The planning system can help make Scotland a successful, sustainable place and achieve the goals of the national subject policy 'Valuing the Historic Environment' by encouraging maintenance and enhancement of historic places.

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 also sets out a presumption to retain buildings rather than permit demolition, if those buildings make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. 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)

**Dalkeith** town centre, Midlothian, has attracted £4 million in investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Environment Scotland, Midlothian Council and private owners. It has visibly benefited from regeneration work which has enhanced individual buildings and groups of buildings since 2007 and achieved or assisted the creation of 18 jobs and safeguarding of 25; trained 50 apprentices and building professionals in traditional construction skills; restored 28 historic buildings; improved 10 shopfronts; and the High Street public realm has also been improved.



Shop front design guidance has helped the benefits of the investment continue; and traditional building repair and maintenance guidance is provided to help owners look after their stone and lime buildings. Overall the scheme is considered to be a great success.



Councillor Martin Rawson from Derby City Council, England, said:

‘Derby City Council has relished working with Historic England over the last eight years to bring back so many historic buildings to their former glory. This has not only enhanced the attractiveness and uniqueness of Derby city centre but has also directly contributed to supporting the local economy where many of the streets, including The Strand and Sadler Gate, have achieved 100% occupancy. This project helps demonstrate the economic and social benefits of historic buildings in urban regeneration and we intend to celebrate our joint success ... with an event in Derby’.



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.

A conservation area is defined as *"an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"* (*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, S61*)

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."*

### 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 was first designated in 1977 and was reviewed as part of the Stranraer Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) in 2014 when the boundary was amended. A CACA was adopted as supplementary guidance to the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014 and will be superseded by this new guidance.

### Purpose of Stranraer Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

This document will replace the adopted supplementary guidance for Stranraer Conservation Area and is a combined character appraisal and management plan. It is not a catalogue of good buildings nor a manual of actions but it should help develop a better understanding of the conservation area; stimulate good quality design for development or other change; and provide a basis for new and consolidated approaches for the sensitive management of character.

Change within a conservation area is inevitable as buildings and spaces may need to adapt to accommodate new physical activities and social environments. An informed awareness of the key features of each conservation area is needed to manage that change. The aims of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan [CACA&MP] are to:

- identify and describe the elements and themes that contribute to the area's special architectural and historic interest;

- 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;
- note the effects of existing development within the conservation area boundary and the current physical condition of buildings, structures and spaces;
- enable and support carefully managed change and evolution of the conservation area by encouraging development that makes a positive contribution to character; and
- identify wider opportunities for enhancement.

### Structure and Use of this Supplementary Guidance

This CACA&MP will guide the Council in making planning decisions and, where opportunities arise, preparing and implementing enhancement proposals and supporting new development. Implicit in this guidance is the principle that Stranraer Conservation Area should be allowed to evolve and adjust to modern needs, in appropriately sensitive ways, just as the town itself has done over the centuries.

Part One: History, Development and General Character of Stranraer Conservation Area – covers the historical development of Stranraer and gives a descriptive overview of the conservation area. The important elements which contribute to the character of the conservation area are identified.

Part Two: Managing the Character Areas - considers the management of the conservation area and the challenges which threaten to erode character and initiatives with the potential to preserve or enhance the character.

The document is based on and incorporates much of the supplementary guidance which it supersedes. It considers the special historic character of Stranraer; the changing role of the town; its early origins; the documented development from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the variety of interesting streets, spaces and buildings that survive from different time periods.

Since 2014 there have been a number of successful funding bids for regeneration and enhancement of elements of Stranraer Conservation Area and adjoining parts of the town. There is a renewed focus on the character and quality of development in the town including the sensitive restoration, repair and repurposing of historic buildings and spaces. Funding bodies expect that the places where public investment has taken place will continue to be valued and appropriately looked after into the future. The management plan part of the guidance will help achieve this and ensure that activities and development are designed and implemented in a way which preserves or enhances the character of the conservation area. The document will also help people carefully consider what actions can be taken, or how they may be modified, to best protect improvements once they are implemented.

The supplementary guidance should be used by everyone before they make decisions about works or other changes within Stranraer Conservation Area, to prevent the



erosion of character by removal of small historic details or traditional materials or by using inappropriate maintenance techniques.

## **Part One: History, Development and General Character of Stranraer Conservation Area**

### Regional Context

Stranraer is situated at the southern end of Loch Ryan in the south-west of Scotland and is the second largest town in Dumfries and Galloway. It grew up on the strength of the sea links and extensive trade with Ireland, the Isle of Man, Wales and other parts of Scotland and England.

Stranraer currently has a population of around 10,850 inhabitants. It is the region's second largest town and an important economic centre for Wigtownshire.

Since the early 1990's employment has reduced with the closure of some main employers; in 1994 all rail freight in the town ended; and in 2012 the ferry port closed and the ferry terminals relocated to Cairnryan. In 2008 new mooring pontoons were provided and a new marina facilities building was completed in 2012 with further public realm and other works for the marina carried out since. Stranraer is beginning to develop as an attractive coastal town aimed at the recreational water user and celebrating the natural oysters and seafood of Loch Ryan.

### Archaeological Interest

This area has always been attractive for human settlement. Scatters of stone tools from around Loch Ryan and Luce Bay are evidence for early people gradually recolonising northern lands after the retreat of the glaciers. The importance and wealth of the area in the Neolithic period gave rise to the construction of a rare ritual site, comprising a massive timber circle, with many burials in and around nearby Dunragit.

Stranraer burgh was founded in 1595. An east west street was lined with plots for the newly appointed burgesses and a parallel back lane on the line of Fisher Street was linked by vennels and was dominated by the Castle of St John, built by the Adair family.

As well as buried remains, there may be the remains of early buildings embedded within more recent structures. There are a number of known features relating to the early settlement of the town but to date their exact locations have not been confirmed. These include a chapel, the Waulk Mill and a boat (originally found in 1683 and thought to be roman in origin due to its construction).

The history and development of the town have been studied and published by Historic Scotland in the Scottish Burgh Survey. This study identifies three zones: the core of the medieval town, 18th and 19th century expansion around the core and the development of the modern waterfront, designated as an Archaeologically Sensitive Area in the LDP.

### Development of Stranraer – Mediaeval

The first documentary evidence for settlements at 'Stranreuer' and 'Chapel' dates from the early 14<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> century the town began to grow as a port. Its creation as a burgh in 1595 reinforced its importance permitting 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 and leatherwork amongst other merchant trades. This early burgh was relatively small and effectively had only one street which ran along the line of what today is known as George Street. Fisher Street was a parallel back lane although at that time it faced directly onto the waterfront with three small vennels running from the sea to the main street (George St.). The focal points of the town were the Tolbooth, Market Cross and Tron, probably located at the junction with Queen Street and Church Street. In 1617 Stranraer became a free Royal Burgh giving it the right to be the only Loch Ryan port. This increased the town's importance, being 24 miles from its nearest neighbouring burgh and the only local sea link between Scotland and Ireland.

### Development of Stranraer – Mediaeval to 19th Century

The plan of a main street with connecting vennels was still in evidence in 1689. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the majority of the housing was relatively modest and simple, mainly with single hearths.

In 1770 the Town Council moved the Tolbooth and the Tron from the centre of George Street to relieve congestion. A new Tolbooth/Town House was built on Church Street/George Street corner. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Stranraer harbour was established in response to the need for 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-19<sup>th</sup> century a sea wall known as a breastwork was built and the area of land to the north of the town was reclaimed forming what today is known as the Breastworks.

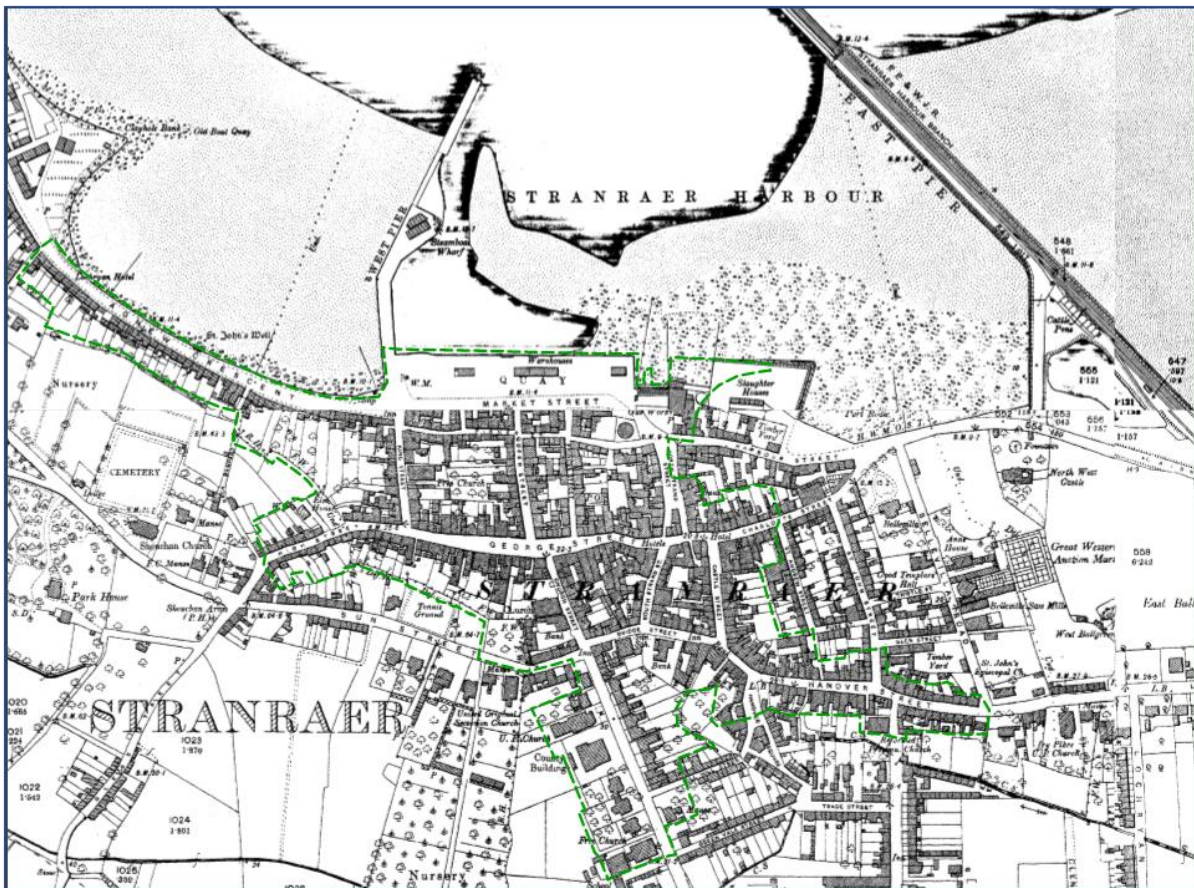
The railway reached Stranraer in 1861. This led to the construction of a second pier, known as the East Pier, to be completed 1863.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century industry in the town, such as brick manufacturing, affected the built environment but it seems that efforts were made to maintain the fabric of the centre of the traditional burgh especially keeping access to the town burn for all inhabitants.

## Historical Mapping showing the growth of Stranraer



Interpretive illustrations of Stranraer in 1640 and 1860, by David Simon



Stranraer, town and harbour, towards the end of the 19th century - 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map (Conservation Area Boundary overlain in green broken line)

### Development of Stranraer – Late 19<sup>th</sup> 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 of 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.

Up until the 1930's there was insufficient sanitation in the town centre, with contaminated open burns. The delay in modernising meant the town escaped redevelopment of a scale seen in many other historic burghs.

[The Burgh Survey, Historic Stranraer, E.P.D. Torrie and E. Coleman, Aberdeen, 1995 gives a good overview of the historical development of Stranraer.]

The area around the waterfront has seen many changes in the last 100 years. In the 1950's further land was reclaimed, to the west of the harbour area. The 70m strip became Agnew Park which was extensively redesigned and upgraded with Millennium Funding and is an important public area on the waterfront. Various parts of the harbour area were used for ferries to Ireland from the 1860s and the port was modernised during the 1970s through to the 1990s. Both remaining ferry companies moved to new ports at Cairnryan by 2011.



In 2009 an Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan was written for Stranraer Waterfront and adopted as Supplementary Guidance to the Local Development Plan in 2014. Although the economic climate has altered, the single vision: "*To reposition Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a distinctive and successful marine leisure destination*" remains relevant. Some change identified in the masterplan has begun but the delivery timetable has been very challenging and the strategy may need a refresh. Its 6 objectives are paraphrased below:

- *Reconnect town centre and waterfront*
- *Encourage high quality design*
- *Create a pedestrian friendly place*
- *Provide more access to the water*
- *Transform Stranraer 'the ferry town' to a 'leisure town'*
- *Attract substantially more visitors*

Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Government funding has been used to carry out enhancement works to Castle Square, West Pier and elements of the town and waterfront. Other initiatives have funding approved for regeneration, enhancement and repurposing 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. 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) has awarded funding for capital works which will 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**

The key features of the conservation area are defined for an overview of the town as a whole with wider structural aspects first. In the area appraisals that follow more detail is included where necessary.

### Setting

#### Topography and Landscape

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 higher land to the east from the Rhins of Galloway.

The geology and changes wrought by the ice ages have left a significant mark on the whole of the area. In particular changes in sea level have resulted in periods of denudation as well as raised land levels. This is seen in the raised beach deposits in the area.

Geological deposits that have influenced the historical development of the area include, gravel and clay for tile and brick making. However, the principal economic driver is agriculture, which has benefited from the mild climate producing good pasturage principally for fattening stock and dairying.

#### 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 higher ground helps to frame views and define the setting of the town.

The views from the Loch itself and from the pier heads back towards the town emphasise the relationship of the lower parts of the town to the harbour and along Agnew Crescent. The rising ground and key focal buildings - the Church, Castle and Town Hall - draw the eye up and beyond the immediate waterside.

The grid-like layout of the town centre gives a variety of views with those along the streets north-south axis terminating with the harbour, the water side or out to the open Loch. Sometimes, conversely, views up into the town centre, sometimes terminate with key buildings on George Street which runs east to west. Views along the main thoroughfares of George Street, Hanover Street, Bridge Street are varied often foreshortened by the alignment and curvature of those streets.

The tight, intimate character of parts of the conservation area, especially looking along Hanover Street, is among the qualities that define the rich and special character of Stranraer.

### Key Approaches to the Conservation Area

The most significant entrance points to the conservation area are on the main streets. Hanover Street progresses from the wide, straight London Road to the point beyond the traffic roundabout where the road narrows, increasing the intimacy which defines the character of this approach.

Lewis Street links to Church Street there is a similar pinch point, although the cleared sites and roundabout break the continuity.

From the west the drop down High street allows views across the town from its upper end but quickly narrows and focuses the view before opening out into the widening George Street.

Passing Sheuchan, close to the water's edge, the long curve of Agnew Crescent, with the open park opposite give a distinctive, sea front, feel that is in contrast with the other approaches. The trees along the street create a rhythm and a welcome suggestion of nature.

Around the former ferry port structures, traffic management arrangements and Market Street/Harbour Street parking areas have reduced the quality of this edge of the town. The approach gives views along Loch Ryan shoreline against the backdrop of the low hills of the Rhins of Galloway. The first pinch point is provided by the tourist information centre and the pub opposite it.

### Street Pattern and Form

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

Stranraer town centre has two principal east-west routes Charlotte Street/ George Street/High Street and further south and converging at Glebe Street is Hanover Street/Bridge Street/Sun Street - the varying width and alignment of these streets are important to the overall character of the central part of the conservation area.

Fisher Street was a narrow back lane to the medieval main street, now George Street, but it was originally adjacent to the waterfront. Market Street, Harbour Street and the area around were developed on reclaimed land in the 19th century.

From the east to west routes, regular planned streets namely Princes Street, Queen Street and King Street, which were the former vennels, lead to Fisher Street and the waterside. Along with North and South Strand Street these are the north-south links which give the central area a loose 'grid layout'.



Since the 19th century development of the waterside, Harbour Street, Market Street and Agnew Crescent became an east-west route adjacent to the Loch, to some extent separating off the town centre from the harbour.

The area around the Castle, opening up off George Street, has been pedestrianised and recently re-landscaped.

Beyond the immediate town centre radial routes and urban growth have created a more dispersed and modern street layout. The most significant of these is Lewis Street, a straight avenue, which was developed during the second half of the 19th century and leads out from George Street via Church Street.

### 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 footways mostly varied concrete slabs. However, it is possible that the original setts underlie the modern materials. Recent works in George Street and Castle Square have introduced concrete paving blocks along with granite paving and kerbs. Restricting the carriageway and the priority given to pedestrian flow from Castle Square across to South Strand Street has helped enhance this space within the conservation area and the space reads as a whole. Details of street furniture and surface materials may be reviewed as the scheme ages to determine if their use is appropriate elsewhere.

The use of high quality materials combining traditional and modern materials and design details must be used in future schemes however the detail will depend on the use of the space and the character and quality of surrounding buildings.

North Strand Street is currently a mix of modern concrete block paving materials in sharp contrast with South Strand Street.

### Open Spaces

There are many open spaces within and adjacent to the conservation area. Many are the legacy of redevelopment and loss of older buildings. Some resulted from the need to accommodate the growing port and provide access and parking. Other spaces were the legacy of minor road improvements at junctions to create roundabouts to help traffic flow.

Key spaces include:

- The water frontage comprising the car parks to the former ferry terminal – with the removal of the ferry terminal to Cairnryan these spaces have become less important for car parking;
- The demolition of properties east of Fisher Street and fronting Market Street and the town gas works has left a mixed area of car parking and under-used land. Much of the 19th century urban structure of this part of the town has been lost.
- A large area off Mill Hill Street again serves as a town centre car park. Here a fairly tightly developed area of housing, a mill and warehousing have been lost.

- Agnew Park – an important public open space immediately adjacent to the sea, developed in the later part of the 20th century on reclaimed land, providing a valuable area for recreation and leisure activity;
- Castle Square – Perhaps the most significant to the immediate town centre. Its function as a setting for the Castle of St John gives it special prominence; and
- Small graveyards situated off Church Street, the first town Kirkyard and, hidden from view the Presbyterian Church on Bridge Street, add to the diversity of open spaces.
- Outside the designated conservation area but of significance are Dalrymple Street and the large Sheuchan Cemetery at Sun Street, the latter significant to the setting of the conservation area especially when seen from the waterside.

There are many other smaller but also important spaces around the town, often at street junctions where, in some cases, buildings have been demolished. These spaces fulfil many functions including car parking but if properly managed and developed may offer interesting contrast to the built townscape and add greenery and some, quiet, restful areas.

#### Trees and soft landscaping

There are relatively few areas of trees or soft landscaping within the conservation area. The recent redesign 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 urban environment of Stranraer. However, scope exists in the larger open areas, especially around the waterfront, to introduce tree planting. There may also be scope to consider the special qualities of the climate in Stranraer to allow the introduction of more exotic trees.

Within the Conservation Area relatively few houses have private garden grounds that impact directly on public areas.

#### Gap sites and sites with derelict buildings

Gap sites on which development would be desirable include:

- Car park areas between Fisher Street and Market Street. Here the built edge of the town has been compromised;
- Corner of Fisher Street and King Street where recent demolition has left the area with a derelict appearance; and
- 30 Agnew Crescent. Site of demolished, clay dabbin built cottage, had planning permission for a new dwelling (2013).

#### Townscape

Townscape is the physical appearance of the combination of buildings, streets, spaces and uses or activities taking place therein. Townscape arises from:

- Uses and activities - The character of the street will be influenced by the street is primarily commercial, retail, industrial or residential and its importance for traffic.

- The building line and its relationship with the street – Most buildings in Stranraer are at the back of the footways but further out, for example in Lewis Street, building lines are more variable often including small front gardens.
- Roofscape – Complexity of rooflines and forms especially when seen from higher vantage points.
- Width and proportion of façades - Plot sizes were broadly based on the original feus [mediaeval plots] which in the older parts were relatively narrow and consistent in size. Modern building practices have tended to override this traditional pattern.
- Massing and building height – Massing defines the size of the building and how the volume enclosed is arranged. Variations in massing and building heights are dependent on, age, use, historical development, the importance of the building and the location within the town.
- The stylistic qualities of traditional buildings and traditional detailing - Despite the diverse range of building styles, there is an underlying consistency provided by traditional proportions, materials and detailing.
- Materials – Generally there is a consistent and limited range of traditional materials.

### Building Façades

The street façades of buildings are the most obvious defining elements of the Stranraer townscape and the whole building form and its placement in relation to others, the use of materials and the architectural detailing are important contributing elements.

Many streets are closed terraces of 2-storey domestic scale buildings. These have some regularity in the rhythm and pattern of openings and traditional fenestration, based on Georgian proportions. In the central commercial area, George Street and Hanover Street in particular, the regularity is interrupted by larger scale individual buildings, usually of commercial significance, such as banks or larger shops.

### Roofscape

The views from the higher ground to the south over the town means that the appearance and very varied nature of the roovescape is very important to the character of Stranraer Conservation Area as it reflects a wide range of building styles and ages. The gentle topography of the town together with its layout provides an ever-changing and sometimes intricate vista. From closer views within the town, the character and quality of the roovescape is enhanced by a number of architectural embellishments such as skews, skewputts, traditional dormers and eaves detailing.

Traditional chimney heads are another crucial element of the roovescape. They vary in size and shape but are most often fairly massive in form, sometimes shared between two buildings. Most are surmounted by clay chimney cans, some of which are ornately detailed.

A small number of buildings, notably the George Hotel and the Museum have further architectural elements that punctuate the roovescape: in the case of the George Hotel a leaded pyramidal tower and at the Museum the bell tower and spire. There are

further noteworthy raised elements of the roofscape at The Golden Cross, the Sheriff Court and buildings on Hanover Street and the corner of South Strand Street, among others. Equally notable is where there are no chimneys or raised roof elements on continuous rows of roofs which are distinctly less characterful than those that have them.



Groups of buildings without chimneys or roofscape detail and below with those details

### Buildings

Buildings within the designated conservation areas are of a diverse nature reflecting a wide mix of styles and ages and different periods of economic prosperity and confidence. A number of other buildings, including some on George Street, have been altered. In some cases their proportions and front elevations have been changed in a manner that is out of character and scale with neighbouring properties.

Commercial success has encouraged 'architectural exuberance' in many buildings particularly banks or former banks, often contrasting significantly with more modest, earlier properties adjacent to them.

Some shops were early conversions from original houses, especially in George Street. In Castle Street/Charlotte Street older buildings have given way to more modern development. Most of this newer development was purpose-built commercial some with accommodation above.

### Modern and modernised buildings

Modern architectural expression is welcome where it is sympathetic to the traditional pattern and form of the traditional buildings in a street. However some recent

development has not integrated well into the traditional streetscape for a variety of reasons, some of which have been alluded to above as a result there are many examples of buildings that are at odds with their immediate setting and which do not enhance or preserve historic character.

#### Modern buildings

A number of buildings, including some on George Street, have been altered. In some cases their proportions and front elevations have been modernised in a manner that is out of character and scale with neighbouring properties. Other buildings have replaced original roofing materials with concrete tiles and introduced or replaced dormers with a range of shapes and sizes and materials that are incongruous with the building they are on and neighbouring buildings in the street. Some of these are historic changes but most are relatively recent.

#### Landmark or Key Buildings

There are several landmark or key buildings scattered across the conservation area. Their landmark status can vary from their sheer size and aspect to simply being important in certain views or as part of a setting for the area. The most prominent are in the table below.

Castle of St John	Castle Square
Old Town Hall	Now the museum, George Street
George Hotel	George Street
Golden Cross Public House	George Street
St Ninian's Church, Gospel Hall	Lewis Street
Old Parish Church	Church Street
Sheriff Court	Civic building on Lewis Street
Pumping station	Modern building at the waterfront

#### **Building Types**

Within the Conservation Area there are several different types of buildings each with a distinctive form which tend to be grouped in similar areas or streets. The most significant building types are identified below, with examples and descriptions of their typical form. The main identifiable stylistic groups include:

#### Tenements

Tenements, usually of 3 storeys, are principally found along the main shopping streets such as George Street, Charlotte Street, Hanover Street and Bridge Street. In some the upper floors no longer have a residential use and are now used as office accommodation or storage for retail premises on the ground floor.

#### 18th and 19th Century Vernacular

These are the most common building type in Stranraer comprising mostly traditional dwellings, the streets running down to the waterfront and Agnew Crescent being good examples. These buildings are a mix of 2-storey, 1½-storey and single storey. Many of the latter have been increased in height or the attics converted and used for bedrooms usually by the addition of dormers. They often have symmetrical 3-bay

elevations. There are one or two 'clay dabbing' buildings remaining on Agnew Crescent but they are no longer readily distinguished from the others.

### Victorian

From the mid-19th Century until the early 20th, most building was towards the south of the historic town centre including the expansion along Lewis Street, where large, grand buildings were constructed.

Victorian Scottish Architecture is recognisable by its mix of styles, which often includes previous historic styles such as the Tudor style of the Sheriff Court in Lewis Street and the Gothic Style of the neighbouring St Ninian's Church. The villas of Lewis Street and Bridge Street are good examples of domestic Victorian Architecture with imposing size and well-proportioned plans.

### Large Commercial

Stranraer does not have a great number of large commercial buildings remaining within the conservation area. However, the former Grain Store on Bridge Street is plain warehousing in style and others are the more ornate banks.

### Modern

The majority of modern development has taken place outwith the conservation area however, infill and demolition with new development have impacted on the conservation area such as those on Castle Street/Charlotte Street, Hanover Street and George Street mainly from the middle part of the 20th century. It is characterised by broad horizontally proportioned structures with no or little articulation which replaced narrower, vertically proportioned buildings.

## **Architectural Details, Materials and Finishes**

Roofs: Despite the incursion of some modern materials, the overall impression is that natural slate is used universally. The slate geology, thickness and size varies but it is predominantly grey or with a hint of green or blue. Although some slate was quarried locally it has not been available for several decades. Instead slates were delivered by sea from north-west England and Wales and perhaps from further north. Traditional Scottish slated buildings were laid in random widths with diminishing courses and with a very substantial degree of overlap for better weatherproofing. Other roofs are laid using more regular width slate and coursing. The pattern and style of roofing is part of the architectural and historic character of buildings and groups and depends on the age of the roof and the type of slate used. Traditionally skew stones were used to weigh down the slates at the edges of a roof and are commonly found in the conservation area although many have also been removed. They are usually sandstone, in a single or several pieces, but occasionally other stone or concrete is used. Skew stones are both practical and aesthetic and their retention or replacement should be encouraged. Ridge cappings were traditionally sandstone which had enough embodied weight to hold the slates in place with a little lime mortar; some may also have been lead. Galvanised metal ridge cappings began to be used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Imported slates and concrete tiles have been used in the last few decades for repairs or replacement of older roofs. They introduce a different texture and pattern at odds with the traditional slate roofs. Some slates are a poor match, because of their uniformity of size and different colour. The thinner, even sized, dark blue-grey and black Spanish slates and the industrial, blue Welsh slates, have a negative impact of the appearance of buildings and 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 glass areas. Earlier buildings had 12-panes (six-over-six) due to the limited glass sizes available as a result of the method of manufacture. In the Victorian era new ways of making glass allowed bigger pane sizes so windows would have 4 panes or 2 panes. Little imperfections in the glass show how it was made and are of historic interest to buildings.

Doors were timber, and usually framed and panel construction. Earlier detailing included six panels while later doors tend to have four panels. Lesser doors, such as those leading to pends were usually painted, plain, vertical boarding. Overall many windows and doors have been replaced by less appropriate modern styles in a range of materials, including mahogany, aluminium and uPVC. Sometimes these are designed to mimic traditional doors but include a margin around the outside or a fanlight within the door which spoils their proportions.

Architectural embellishment: There is relatively little architectural embellishment on the majority of buildings, especially on terraced housing. Simple, raised margins help define window and door openings, banding gives sense to the structure by is sometimes used to mark where the floor level changes. Door cases, mostly modelled on Classical detailing, help to emphasise the main access point of larger properties. Skews and skewputts give definition to roof edges and divisions in terraces. More ornate carving is also found but on buildings of higher rank and prestige.

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 or random rubble or roughly course rubble whinstone walling. Locally what is known as whinstone is usually greywacke or dolerite. Relatively few buildings are finished in bare masonry but where they are the pattern of walling commonly uses two contrasting stones with margins and quoins being different. Rock-faced red sandstone is used for the Sheriff Court, with fine, ornately worked buff/golden ashlar sandstone for the quoins, window surrounds and other detailing. Saint Ninian's Church beside it uses whinstone as the principal material with red sandstone for the dressings and detailing.

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.

Other materials used were brick, which was manufactured in Stranraer and seen in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings including the Category B Listed former Grain Store off Bridge Street.

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

Originally buildings were coated in lime based harl (lime render) which allowed the stone and lime masonry construction to 'breathe'. The lime render would normally be lime washed annually. They had 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 crept in with the use of brick for façades and began to be used on stone where lime render would have been better for the health of the building fabric.



Colour palette in Princes Street and Queen Street, 2017

Colour and Painted Façades: Most buildings have been painted. There is now a great variety of colours with some strident modern shades, though the majority are based on white and off-whites as seen in Princes Street and Kings Street. On some properties in George Street and Queen Street darker colours have also been used, but their earthiness adds some warmth to the streetscape.

Shop Fronts: Shops have been a feature of the town centre since at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Retail premises and associated uses such as cafes, public houses and offices offering services directly to the public are an important part of the conservation area. Earlier shops were usually contained within a single building width and sometimes had simple openings in the form of a slightly enlarged window. 5/7 High Street still has this very simple shop front.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century most shops were adapted to include display windows with decorative timber surrounds of what is now considered to be a traditional format. Shop fronts have become very significant in the streetscape of the conservation area as their presence at ground floor and eye level makes them the most noticeable feature and often why people are in the town. As a result their design and condition greatly influence the appearance of the area.

Stranraer is fortunate in possessing some finely detailed shop fronts, with fasciae and pilasters typical of the Victorian or Edwardian period, especially on Hanover Street. Some individual modernisations of shopfronts are themselves of interest as uniformity within the whole conservation would detract from local and historic character.



Variety among the shop fronts within the Stranraer Conservation Area

The typical traditional frontage layout depends on the size of the building of which it is part and on its age and the materials used. Cast iron and bronze were sometimes used instead of or in combination with timber. Each shop has a display window, sometimes divided by mullions or transoms or both; and a door, usually recessed, placed either centrally or to one side. The whole is framed by pilasters (with decorated consoles) to both sides and sometime around the door too, some form of masonry or decoratively clad stall riser below and with a cornice and fascia above for a hand written sign or individually formed lettering. The overall design was loosely based on the columns, capitals and entablature of Classical architecture and occurs in locally stylised forms across Europe.

From the late 19th century and into the 20th century larger shop units were becoming fashionable which were broader often formed by amalgamating two or more bays of a premises or adjoining buildings. Large plate-glass windows, some of which are of historic interest, were introduced. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed the simplification and lack of detail, the use of aluminium or PVC frames, the entrance doors being relocated and fully glazed, along with the loss of the decorative traditional framing provided by pilasters and cornices resulted in a reduction in the local, historic character and quality of the streetscape.

Advertising and signage became more dominant using new materials and lettering coupled with internal illumination. In Stranraer the main concentration of commercial properties is in George Street, Bridge Street, Charlotte Street and Castle Street and Hanover Street. There is a mixture of retail, food outlets and public houses. Several well-detailed original shop fronts remain.

A few national multiple outlet businesses have also established a presence in the town. In most cases they have imposed their standard corporate image and detailing which is usually unsympathetic to the traditional character of the Stranraer Conservation Area. In other places across Scotland and the UK the same businesses have been required to take a more sensitive approach and have managed to create a corporate presence without detriment to the historic environment.

Over-large fasciae are one of the most common and damaging interventions to business elevations either through alteration or by ignoring the framed dimension of an existing shopfront. Shop front security is another area where roller shutters are detrimental to the character and vitality of the street. There are often alternatives available which keep the character. The Council has guidance on shop fronts and security on the website.

A selection of traditional shop fronts and features in Dumfries and Galloway on which new or reinstated shopfront design might be based in Stranraer.



Advertisements: Well-designed, well-kept and proportionate advertising on or away from shop fronts, such as 'A' boards or hoardings, significantly improve the character

of a historic street. Conversely, signage that is not designed in context has significant detrimental impact on the quality of the streetscape and the character of the conservation area.

Street Furniture and Signage: Throughout Stranraer Conservation Area there are a large number of planters and seats, bollards, road markings, and traffic and other directional signs. While there is a need for many of these items both structures and instructions there are also those that are redundant, repetitive and which could share space or purpose with a similar structure. Where improvement works have taken place, the design of some of these items has a theme and enhances the character of the spaces and the conservation area.

## Part Two: Managing the Character Areas

Five character areas have been identified on which the following sections are based. Each area has significant variation in detail and the degree of change that has taken place. The original architecture or vernacular style and age of individual buildings contributes to the historic character and modern or changed buildings impact differently on the overall character of Stranraer Conservation Area. Within each area the features which should be given careful consideration are identified so that development, maintenance and change contributes in the most positive way to character.

Each character area includes a summary description and the following:

Key buildings or other positive assets – elements particularly important to character which must be borne in mind in any further works or when considering development proposals which would impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area. Their significance should not be lessened or their setting marred by insensitive development or by inappropriate changes to the elements themselves.

Issues and conflicts – highlighting aspects that have a detrimental or otherwise negative impact on the character and quality of the conservation area which will part of the actions in the appraisal for positive management of the conservation area.

Buildings or spaces at risk - there are a number of buildings which appear to be at risk in Stranraer Conservation Area although not all appear on the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland. Some are in the process of being sold or have planned improvements and work may already be underway. They are identified due to their external appearance and evidence of under-occupancy or having suffered recently from poor maintenance. The table below picks out key buildings, regardless of ownership, where condition and appearance at this time continues to have a negative impact on the character, perception and economy of the conservation area.

<b>Building/Space at risk</b>	Comments
Grain Store, 9 Bridge St	recent planning permission sought for conversion
George Hotel, George St	recently purchased by D&G Council for restoration
48 Hanover St	ground floor in use as chemist shop but upper floor appears derelict
17 North Strand St	recently vacant sandstone commercial building for sale at auction, condition reasonable
Graveyard, Church St	condition of headstones is declining
Dunbae House, Church St	recently vacated and for sale, in poor order
Harbourmaster's Office and Weighbridge, Market St	combined restoration and extension work has begun

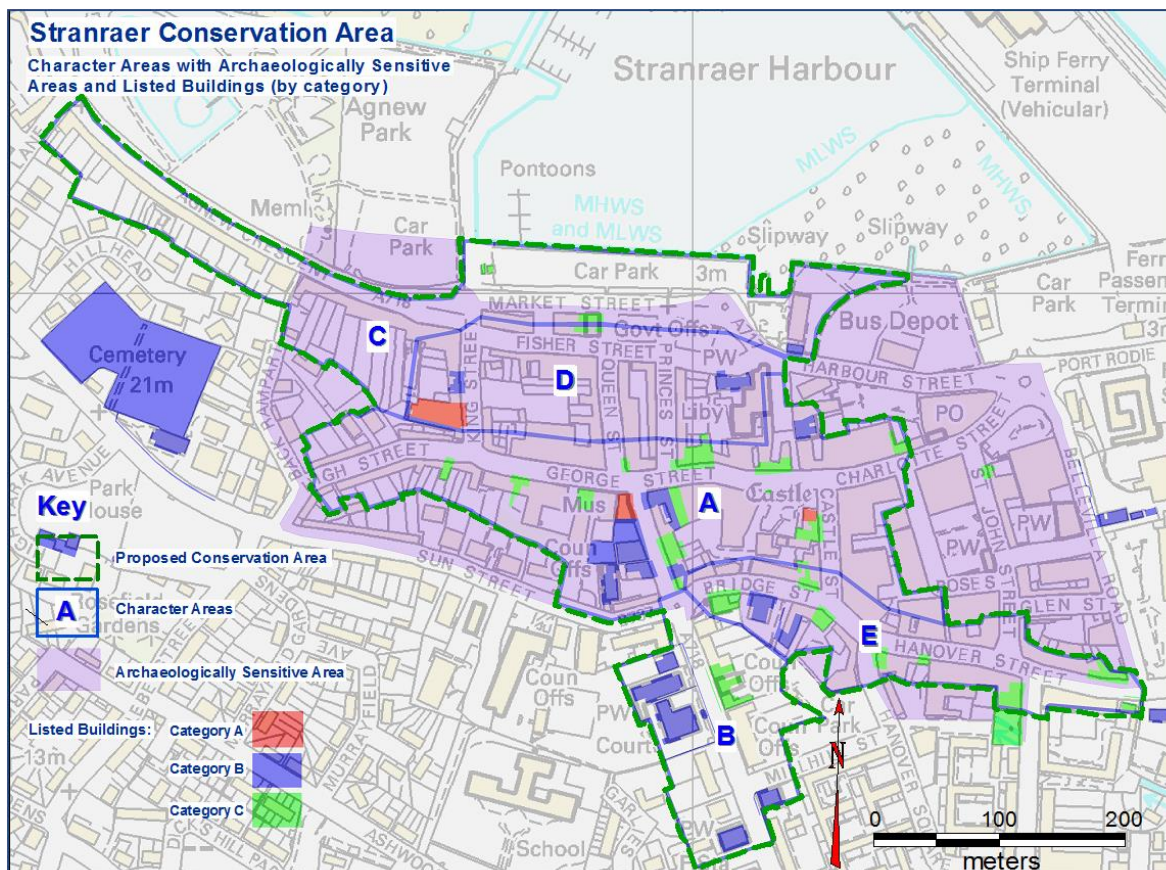
Development Opportunities – to outline specific design requirements for development proposals on known vacant sites where new buildings or structures would have a significant impact on character.



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.

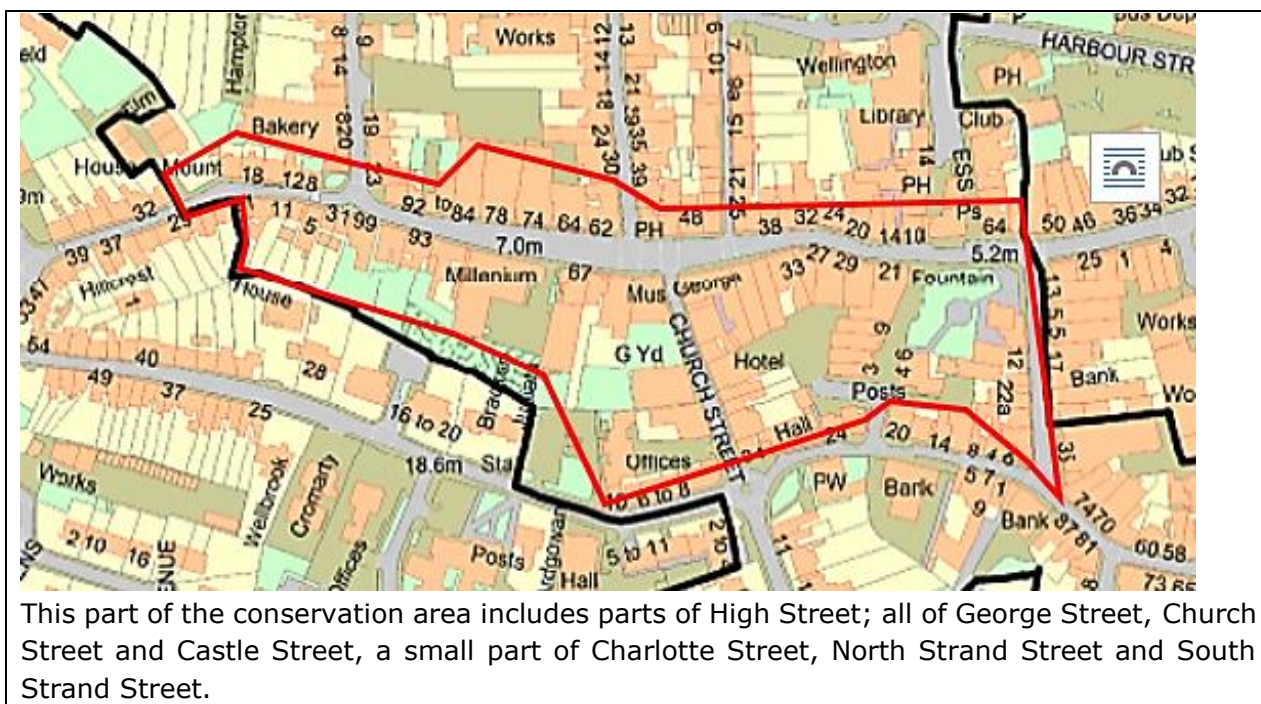
### Character Areas

Stranraer Conservation Area is considered in greater detail looking at the character areas 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

## A. TOWN CENTRE, GEORGE STREET AND ENVIRONS



This is the commercial part of the town centre dominated by retail, office, pubs and cafés, the museum and a community building. Some upper floors are in use as flats with separate entrances at ground floor and there are also some under-used upper floors.

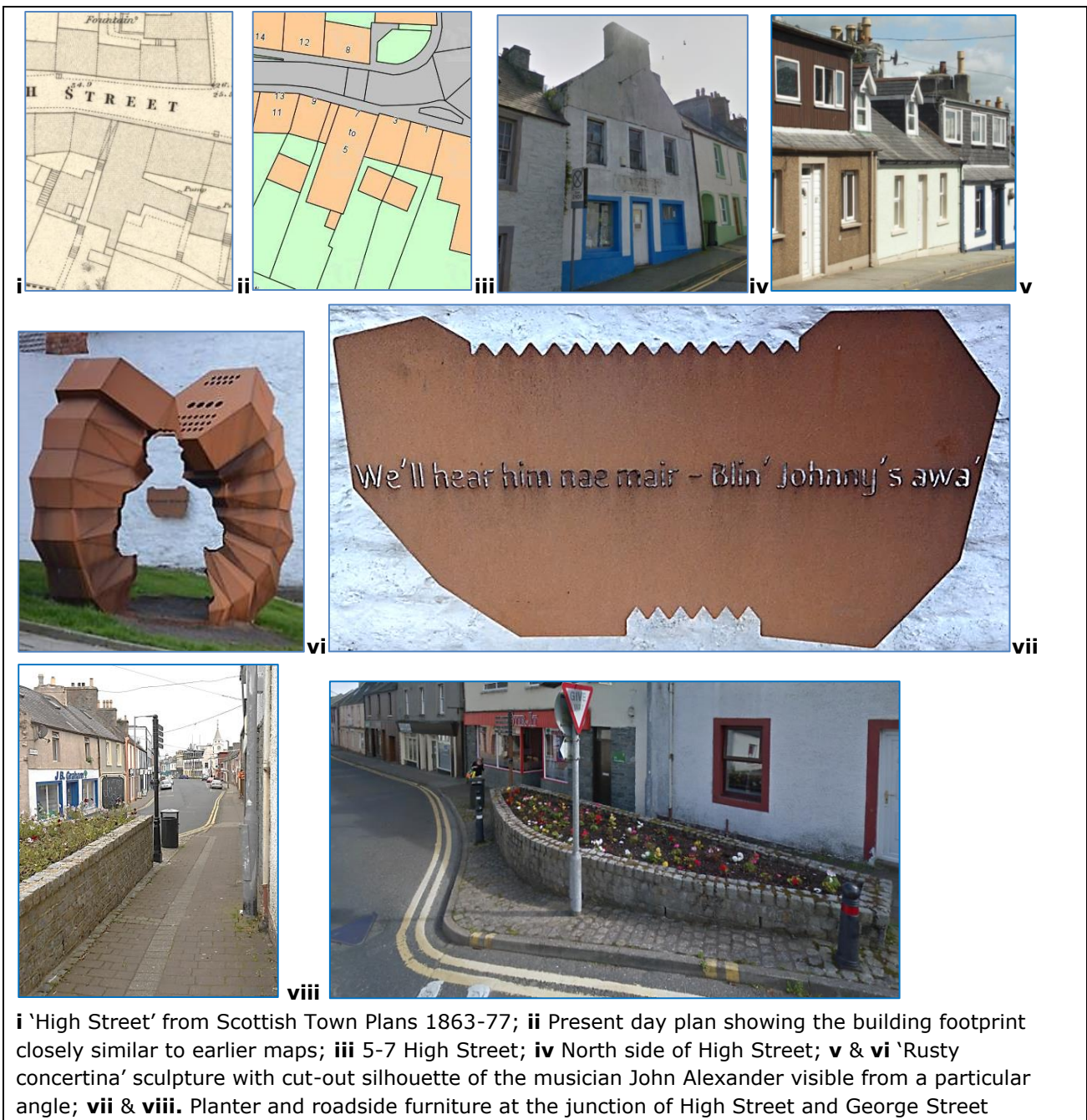
**High Street** slopes sharply downwards from west to the east. It is narrow with modest terraced dwellings either side those being a mix of single storey, two storey or dormer cottages, mainly of traditional three bay construction with attic conversions but also a few more recent dwellings. There is variety in the elevation colours and textures with some exposed coursed rubble stone but renders and paint which conceal traditional materials. The dwellings are dominated in the background by the bulk of Mount Ryan overlooking the town centre and harbour area.

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 roofscape. 5-7 High Street is Category C Listed with a traditional Scottish neplus gable with wallhead chimney and harled elevations; it forms a focal point and break in the terrace.

There are a number of aspects of the design of new buildings which are not in keeping with the traditional buildings such as the wide format windows. In addition, traditional buildings have had a number of unsympathetic changes including addition of modern dormers, doors and windows with different shapes, formats and materials. Some roofing materials are no longer traditional slate.



Other more recent features are *Blind Johnny's* Monument at the junction of High Street, George Street and King Street where the end terrace was demolished; and a large stone planter.



**i** 'High Street' from Scottish Town Plans 1863-77; **ii** Present day plan showing the building footprint closely similar to earlier maps; **iii** 5-7 High Street; **iv** North side of High Street; **v** & **vi** 'Rusty concertina' sculpture with cut-out silhouette of the musician John Alexander visible from a particular angle; **vii** & **viii**. Planter and roadside furniture at the junction of High Street and George Street

The character of the street would benefit from the removal and repositioning of a number of attachments such as aerials, satellite dishes, wires and entry points for different services.

**George Street** is at the commercial heart of the conservation area. Aligned east/west it was the main street of the early burgh. Rising towards its west end it widens in its central section where the Tolbooth used to be located. The layout indicates the origins of this street as the main market place of the town. The Tron, a

weights and measures store and occasional jail, and a cross were once located in the widest part of the street now known as The Cross. The varying width and curvature of the street provides interest and ever-changing vistas and views along it. The sense of closure on the approach to Castle Square from the west heightens the impact of the open space, itself dominated by the Castle of St John.

Buildings are mostly 2-storey with traditional proportions and designs and variations in the details of the elevations, roofs and format of windows. They have shop units, cafes and restaurants or offices at ground floor level and related storage residential above. A number of pends or passages lead to the rear of properties. There is considerable variation in roof lines, at both eaves and ridge, which creates complex and interesting views along the street. All development is at the back of the footways. The scale and architectural importance of buildings increases towards the central section of the street as seen in buildings such as the Museum, the George Hotel and numbers 50, 45 and 30 George Street. The Museum and the George Hotel are dominant from several vantage points.

Some of the quality of the street frontage towards the western end of George Street has diminished as interventions and alterations to buildings have been intrusive and out of character with adjacent buildings. Loss of traditional detailing, such as original windows and shopfronts, has impacted negatively on the character of the area as has modern signage, changes to elevation finishes, poorly positioned aerials and wires and poor maintenance, all having some detrimental effect on character. Unoccupied and under-occupied buildings are often in poor condition, detracting from the streetscape.

As a result of gradual change to the types of use at ground floor, many shop fronts no longer respect the architecture of the whole, part or group of buildings they occupy; however there are some very good examples of traditional shopfronts of a particular age or individual style.

The middle section of George Street has fine historic buildings, some of which would benefit from restoration of the original architectural detail. Interesting small features are visible above street level such as window embellishments and mouldings and the Tudor rose, thistle and shamrock finials on the Golden Cross.

At its eastern end, George Street curves south and down to Castle Square. The reveal of the castle and public square is important. Buildings along this route are a mix of two and three storeys, however there is one single storey, flat roofed shop building where the gap above detracts from the streetscape.

The streets leading into and away from George Street are narrow, part of original historic character. Where there are buildings of historic interest the street frontages need to remain unchanged, and the constrained carriageways retained. New uses for buildings or sites which require more generous access arrangements should be very carefully considered as they should not compromise that historic character.



**i** Late 19<sup>th</sup> century view of George Street looking east from the direction of High Street

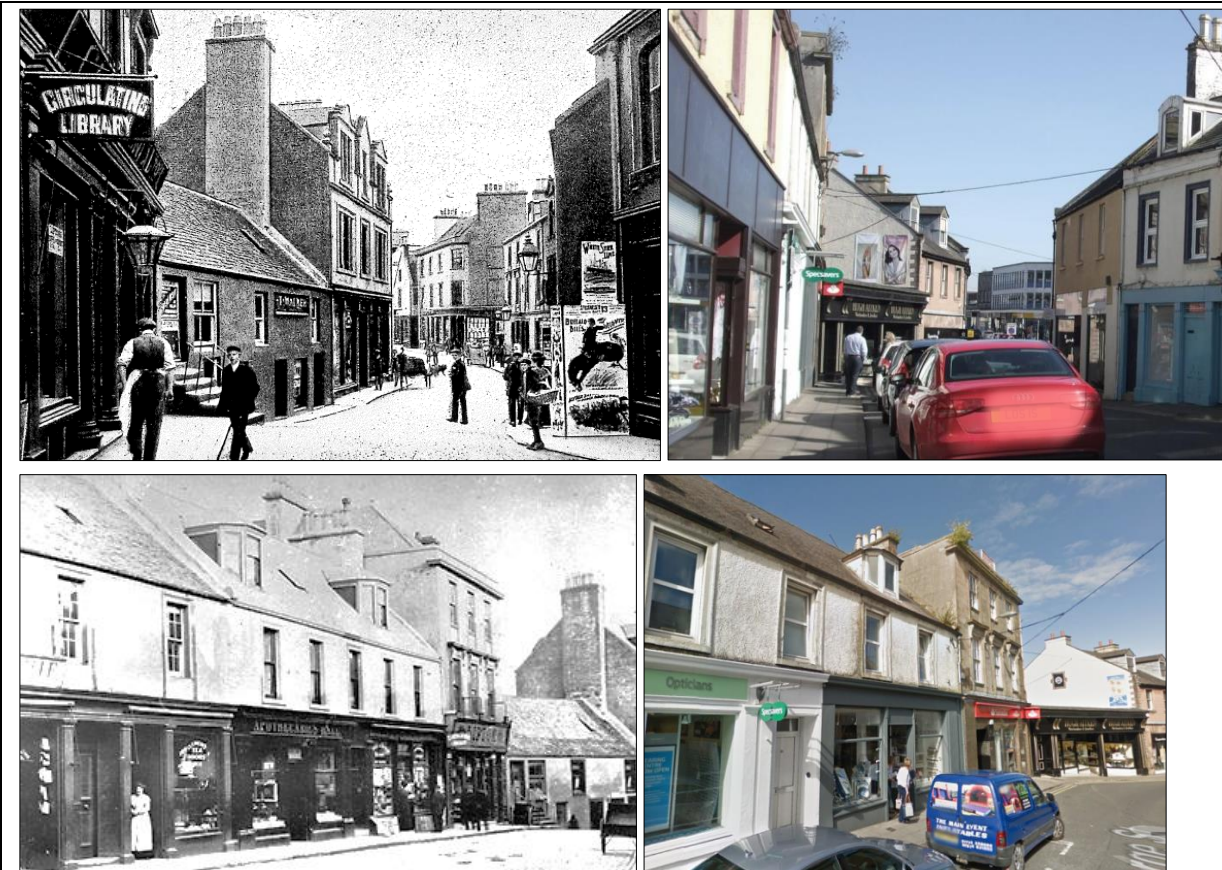
**ii** Looking east again but closer to the junction when the drinking fountain was still located there – this part of the street was known as The Cross

**iii** Looking west from Castle Square to George Street

Below: A selection of buildings and architectural details in George Street.







Views

from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century of the 'pinch-point' in George Street towards Castle Square; many buildings were demolished, significantly altered or replaced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Historically, the shop fronts in the George Street area were not uniform; they varied in size and detail. The variety and common themes seen in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs are a good starting point for changes.

Modern buildings, poor maintenance and insensitive alterations to 19<sup>th</sup> 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. Due to the narrow carriageway, traffic uses it in one direction only. The narrow junction with George Street belies the architectural importance of the street as there are several significant and relatively large fine historic buildings including the Category B Listed Dunbae House, set back with loosely, mews style terraces on one side of the approach. The B listed former Old Parish Church (1838-41) which 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. Of note amongst these is no. 21-25 with its Roman Doric pilastered door-piece.

Any future development which relies on Church Street for access will need to consider how to retain the width of the street.



Side elevation of Museum, former Town Hall, at the beginning of Church Street and Dunbae House at the other end of Church Street

**Castle Square** is the area around St John’s Castle where George Street, Charlotte Street, Castle Street and South Strand Street meet. It links through to Market Street and the seafront via North Strand Street. A significant, local characteristic is that Castle Square is not immediately seen due to the curve of the streets so coming upon it is a pleasant revelation.

The castle was built for Ninian Adair but acquired by the Kennedy family in 1595. The early square was a crowded busy trading place with many more buildings around the 16<sup>th</sup> century castle. Over the centuries buildings were replaced or altered and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century many were demolished and the space left open.

As a result of the centuries of changing activity, the area has high archaeological potential which should be taken into consideration when foundations or utility trenches are being dug for any reason.

There are many buildings which appear to date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century near the castle, particularly on Bridge Street. However, some of the roofline interest has been lost particularly where chimneys have been removed from terraces. Chimneys can be found a use as stove flues or for forms of ventilation and should be included in new buildings or when alterations are proposed to reinstate this aspect of character.



George Street and South Strand Street absence of chimneys in the roofscape around Castle Square

The enhanced public space at Castle Square has many detailed elements and street furniture which are part of an overall design theme. They include the precision and pattern of surface materials, seating, bollards, bins, bike stands, lighting, tree guards,



railings, signage and planting. The theme will be most effective if it is continued and strictly adhered to.

**South Strand Street** forms one side of Castle Square and themed street furniture is continued into part of it. There is public parking behind the street and the views into it have a number of detracting characteristics, including a concrete block wall alongside the entrance. The rear access to the George Hotel is in view, with some elements which are in poor condition. Views into the parking area could be significantly enhanced and continue to provide parking with collaboration between surrounding property owners. Future development should be carefully designed to carry on the character of the traditional buildings at both the front and rear of the street to be attractive and characterful in areas on view to the public.

**North Strand Street** is accessed from Castle Square through an arched pend leading towards the sea front and the handsome tourist information building. On the eastern side are three buildings of individual historic interest which make an important contribution to the character and quality of the conservation area. Category B Listed 17 North Strand Street is a particularly fine building with few visible alterations and should remain so.

On the west side buildings have mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century frontages except the modern building which houses the library and flats. Replacement windows and doors, elevation alterations and poorly detailed dormers have eroded the character of the traditional buildings.

The layout of the street for parking cars and storing bins and the mix of bollard types should be given some consideration and be part of an agreed or established design theme. It is an important pedestrian route from the sea front to the centre of Stranraer Conservation Area.

Harbour Street pedestrian crossing is not directly aligned with North Strand Street and a more innovative pedestrian route encouraging easy walking between the library and waterfront may be beneficial. North Strand Street opens to a car park on its west side.

**Castle Street** links George Street with Bridge Street. The castle stands at its north end on the west side of the street with a row of traditional 19th century two storey retail and business premises running south to Bridge Street. The east side of the street is dominated, at both ends of the street, by modern retail units. However, the central section retains its largely traditional character, with some change through modern interventions.

The straight street has a view south to Bridge Street stopped by the granite fronted 89/91 Hanover Street. On the west, the terrace is split by a pend however the strength of the continuous frontage does not falter. Building frontages are painted, rendered or harled. The range of shopfronts includes some of individual local interest where proposals to alter the design should be discouraged although restoration should be encouraged where possible.

The view north is stopped by the ashlar fronted 54 Charlotte Street with paired arched windows above a modern plate glass shopfront. Reinstating a traditional shopfront and windows would benefit the character of the conservation area. St John's Castle in its open setting dominates the north end of the street.

**Important Buildings.** There are many individual buildings of note throughout this character area some of which have been referred to above. Not all have prominent or elaborate architectural features but each contributes positively to the streetscape. They are included in the table below.

Stranraer Museum	Category 'A' Listed, 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.
George Hotel	A former coaching inn, is a legacy of the prosperous era of travel when Stranraer was an important staging point on the crossing to Northern Ireland. Its grandeur and architectural exuberance make it an important element in the street.
George Street 45-47	Category C Listed adjacent to the George Hotel and the stalk-topped ball finials on pedestals above the dies help to give this building prominence on George Street and closes the view along Princes Street.
George Street 60-62 with Queen Street 32	Although not Listed the striking corner building at George Street and Queen Street makes an important contribution to the architectural variety and interest of the area with its rhythm of bays and prominent bell-cast cupola.
Church Street 12	Category B Listed opposite is more massive and plain fronted with an imposing Doric columned door-piece.
High Street 5/7	Built in 1726, Category C Listed 2-storey, 3-bay rectangular plan building with nepus gable end with chimney facing the street marks a rare break in the regular frontage
St John's Castle	Category A Listed 16 <sup>th</sup> century origin stone tower house
Church Street, Dunbae House	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.
Bridge Street, Old Parish Church and Graveyard	Category B Listed whinstone church with sandstone frontage built by 1840; L shaped churchyard with 19 <sup>th</sup> century grave stones
North Strand Street 17	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.
1897 Victoria Jubilee Fountain	An historic object and focal point in Castle Square but no longer functional and re-sited onto a plinth providing informal seating.
Church Street 31	Category B Listed with door-piece, pilasters and architraved windows lends elegance to the street.
George Street, Golden Cross Pub	Category C Listed on the opposite corner proclaims the importance of key landmark buildings in the street and defines the junction. Its height and the stepped gable and chimneys give it prominence.



Key considerations for general management and enhancement.

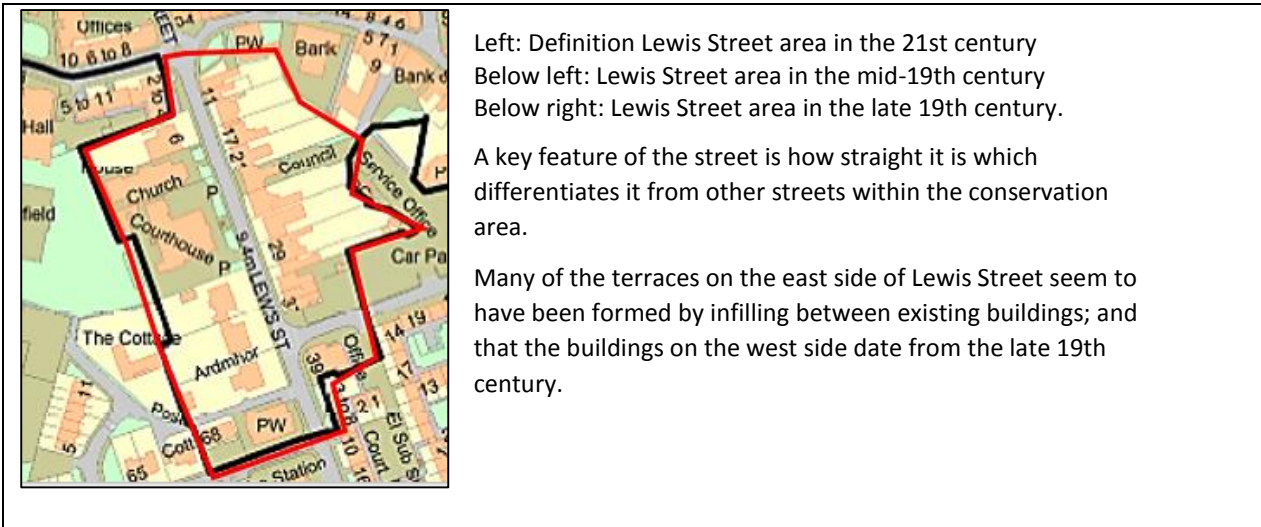
- Retain the significant view to frontage of George Hotel and along curve of George Street to Stranraer Museum from High Street
- Consider the necessity for volume of signage and street furniture in small areas
  - reduce the quantity of signage and furniture
  - improve the appearance of retained signs and furniture
  - develop a conservation area design theme for signage and furniture
- Encourage sensitive maintenance, repairs and restoration of buildings
  - retain, restore and seek reinstatement of chimneys
  - seek reinstatement of traditional doors and windows
- Seek to improve poor format shop fronts
  - replace less appropriate modern shopfronts

- ensure new shopfronts relate well to whole building or group
- encourage the use of traditional materials and techniques
- require shop front security to be sensitively designed
- Agree good practice for attachments to buildings with owners, occupants trades and utilities (pipes, cables, satellite dishes, alarms)
- Carefully select road and footway surfacing materials suited to character
- Carefully consider archaeological potential when foundations or utility trenches are to be excavated
- Influence good design for new and improvements to the massing of existing and new buildings

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



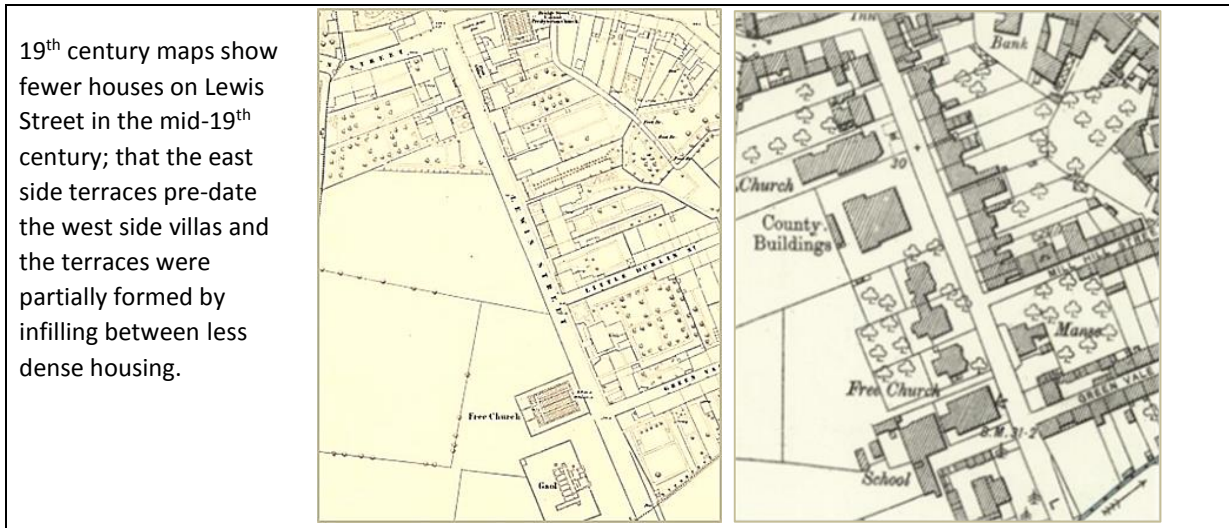
Left: Definition Lewis Street area in the 21st century  
 Below left: Lewis Street area in the mid-19th century  
 Below right: Lewis Street area in the late 19th century.

A key feature of the street is how straight it is which differentiates it from other streets within the conservation area.

Many of the terraces on the east side of Lewis Street seem to have been formed by infilling between existing buildings; and that the buildings on the west side date from the late 19th century.

**Lewis Street** is in the southern part of the Conservation Area away from the town centre although it is an extension of Church Street. It is quite distinct in character being a long straight road and a main route to the south. It was developed during the earlier part of the 19th century with substantial terraces on the east side and detached villa style housing and civic buildings on the west side giving each side a different character.

The space and architecture of the villas and civic buildings on the west give the street grandeur that is not apparent in the surrounding streets.



19<sup>th</sup> century maps show fewer houses on Lewis Street in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century; that the east side terraces pre-date the west side villas and the terraces were partially formed by infilling between less dense housing.

On both sides the majority of buildings are set back from the road. The east of Lewis Street is dominated by rows of terraces although they are not all from the same building period. Two dwellings at the northern end are sited at the back of pavement but other properties are set back from the street in terraced groups behind a continuous wall with railings above. As a result there is a well-established building line and frontage character. A further step back at no.29 adds visual interest. The terraces of Lewis Street have small front gardens with detailed



commonly designed cast iron railings and gates, many within stone gate piers, which contribute positively to their setting and local character.

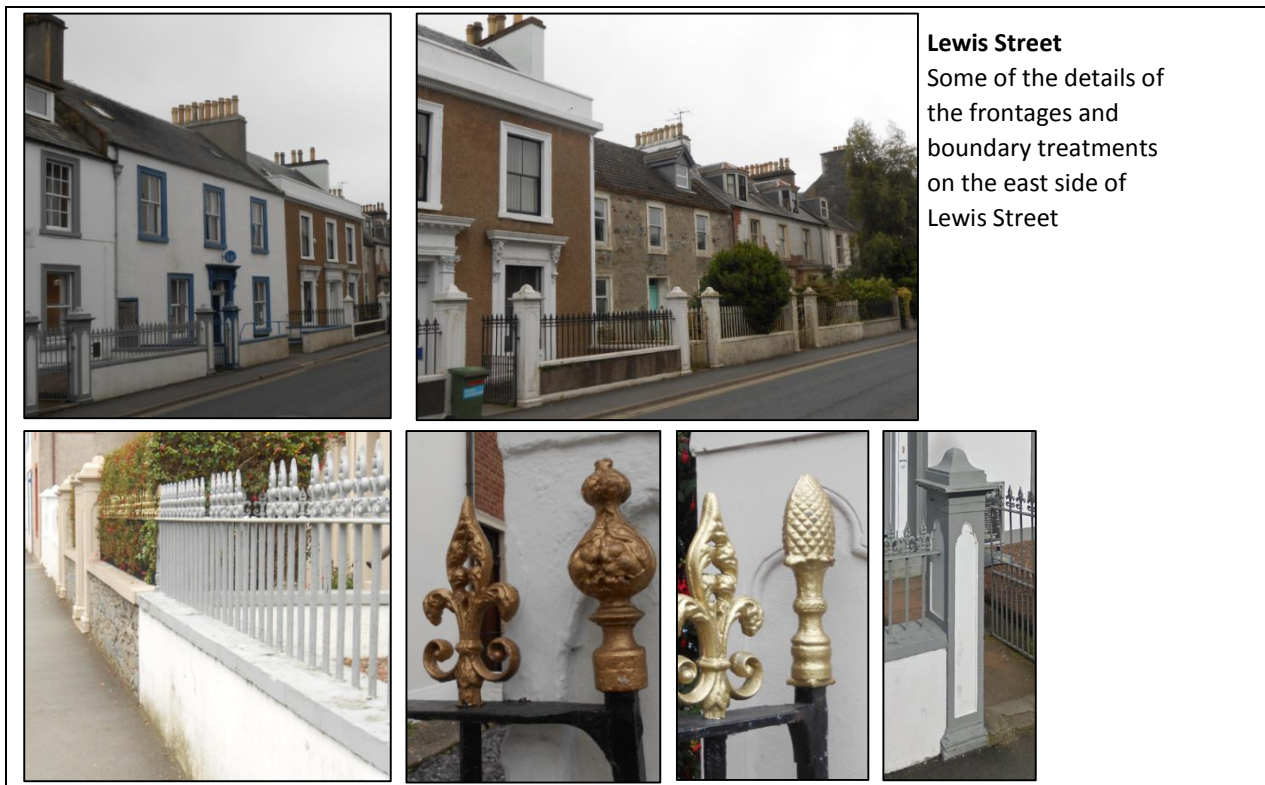
The west side appears grander with a predominance of detached villas and public buildings, while the east side is of a smaller domestic scale with its terraces of 2 storey T-plan houses. There is more architectural embellishment to those on the west side, whereas the east side of the street is more modest with the exception of the boundary walls.

On both sides of Lewis Street, many original architectural features remain such as the large, deep chimney heads, surmounted with many cans which are an important part of the roofscape. The majority of the buildings are painted render with architraves around the openings in a palette of white or cream.

Although 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 – there is coherence among the buildings. The large shared chimneys with multiple cans are important to the character of the street and should be retained.

The front walls have distinctive gate piers of identical design and the railings have a variety of embellishments. 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.





On the west side of Lewis Street there are some important civic buildings and significant, individual residential villa style properties. They are set back from the pavement with frontage boundary features.

The 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

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.

The colours used for the elevations along Lewis Street are mainly from a simple and natural palette: off-white paint, off-white render or unpainted stone. 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.



### Important Buildings.

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

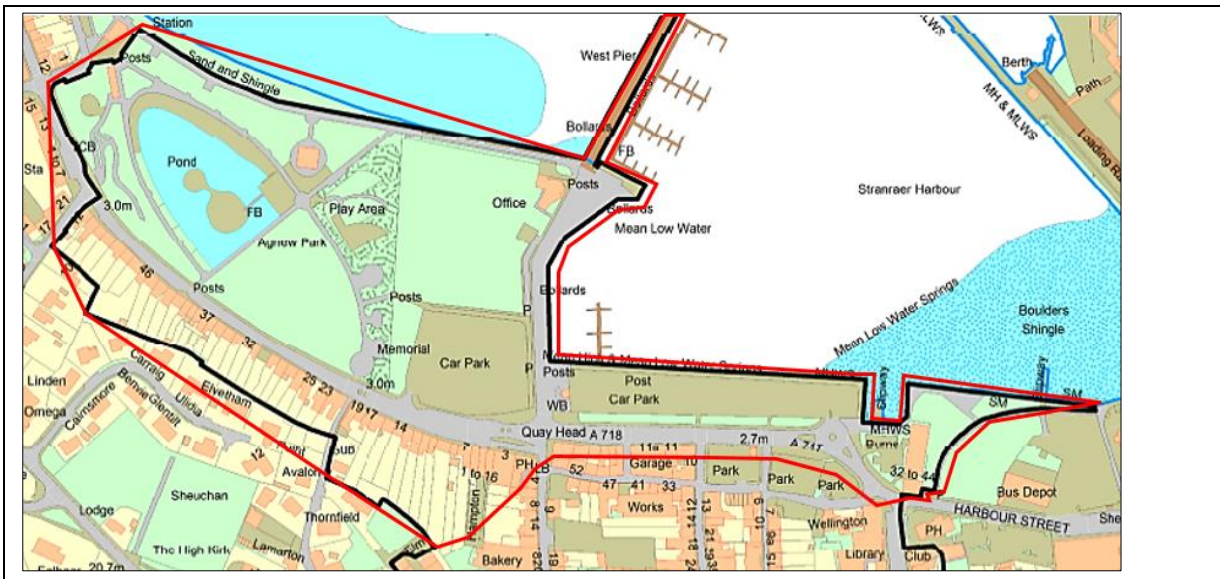
Sheriff Court House, built 1874	The largest and most ornate building in the street, sitting slightly elevated position; originally constructed as the New Town House. It has a Tudor style with a mix of stone colours and textures.
The War Memorial, of 1920 at the Sheriff's Court	A bronze statue of a Royal Scots Fusilier, set on a Creetown granite plinth, a focal point and memorial to historical and social events.
St Ninian's Church, late 19 <sup>th</sup> century	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.
Lewis Street, 19, 21, 23 and 25	Good examples of early to mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century terraced housing. Details include a degree of ornamentation around doors and window architraves. On no. 19, the heavy oriel window and neo-Jacobean gable are mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century additions. 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.
The Gospel Hall, the mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century	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.
Victorian Pump Head, North West End of Lewis Street	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.

### Key considerations for general management and enhancement

- retain, repair and reinstate traditional frontage boundary treatments and details
- retain and reinstate traditional roof edge details
- retain chimney heads and chimney cans
- retain and 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

**C. AGNEW CRESCENT AND THE WATERFRONT**  
 Agnew Park, Market Street and Agnew Crescent



**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 21<sup>st</sup> century café building behind a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century metal framed pavilion, and a new boat building shed for making and maintaining coastal rowing boats.



Examples of St Ayle's skiffs –coastal rowing boats to be built repaired and raced in Loch Ryan

The three buildings form a cluster but vary significantly in form and have minimal impact on views north towards the sea-front and marina or towards the town from the shore. There is an avenue of whitebeam trees around the perimeter of the park and a small number of exotic trees which seem to grow well in the local climate.

The landscape around Loch Ryan and the views of the boat masts are part of Agnew Park's character. Development that would disrupt these views should be discouraged. It would also be likely to interrupt views from Agnew Crescent.

There is significant consistency in the design of the street furniture used within the park which should be continued – 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** forms the southern edge of the Breastworks Carpark; in the 1820s the sea-wall (breastwork) was created and the landward area filled in during the mid-

19<sup>th</sup> century. Before the 1820s, Fisher Street was on the waterfront. Buildings from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier, including a timber yard, were removed and much of the land is now used for car parking.



Views from and within Agnew Park, summer 2017

Among the surviving buildings are two Category C Listed north facing stone buildings, both with individual detailing which make a positive contribution to character.

The modern three storey block west of them has maritime influenced detail but more imaginative and sensitive design relevant to the location could be found for the access gates and plain white wall lying between them.

To the west 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 style of development could be a useful basis for sensitive design on the frontage of the car parks at the corner of North Strand Street and Market Street, however three storeys would be a more appropriate scale.

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 at North Strand Street. An open burn once ran into Loch Ryan from this area, site of an early settlement (clachan) with waulk mill, church and burn crossing points. The town has completely changed over the centuries and there is potential for significant archaeology. New development should allow for below ground investigations to take place to gain knowledge of the earlier layout of the town.



The tourist information centre is a Category B Listed, painted stone building which faces south onto Harbour Street. Sadly, this is the lone survivor from the 19<sup>th</sup> century trading port which was so important to the town; the warehouse north of it was replaced with a modern building of similar footprint and scale at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Agnew Crescent** was formerly known as Neptune Street and ran along the shore edge. It was separated from the sea when Agnew Park was created. The perimeter trees around the park filter the views out towards Loch Ryan and, although mainly a residential street, it has a range of building types and sizes. At the east end, where King Street joins it, the buildings are set back from those on Market Street, the first two buildings are commercial – a 19<sup>th</sup> century pub beside what was previously a warehouse and the next building is an apartment block with a courtyard behind. The space in front of these buildings is a short road layby with a long pedestrian refuge between it and the road. It is opposite the entrance to the harbour weighbridge area, west pier and marina and is not very welcoming. It would benefit from better pedestrian friendly and aesthetic improvements.

The buildings are directly at the back of the pavement along the western part of Agnew Crescent. This is 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. Most 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 also a variety of ridge cappings; sandstone ridges are traditional in stone built houses and should be retained or replaced with the same. Skew stones are present on many of the roofs and are traditionally sandstone which should be retained and repaired, or replaced with the same. 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 spiked or rafter brackets to attach the rones 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.

Agnew Crescent, 3 (Workshop)	Its scale is similar with properties either side, but its function gives it prominence as the large garage doors emphasise its industrial use.
Market Street 10	Early 19th century, bare stone building on corner of Queen Street of historic and architectural interest.
Market Street 11	Category Later 19th century, bare stone building with striking pilaster and pediment door piece and foliated tympanum.
Harbour Office and Weighbridge	Category C Listed single storey <i>art deco</i> building with central clock tower.
Harbour Street 28-30 (Tourism Office)	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

#### Key considerations for general 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.

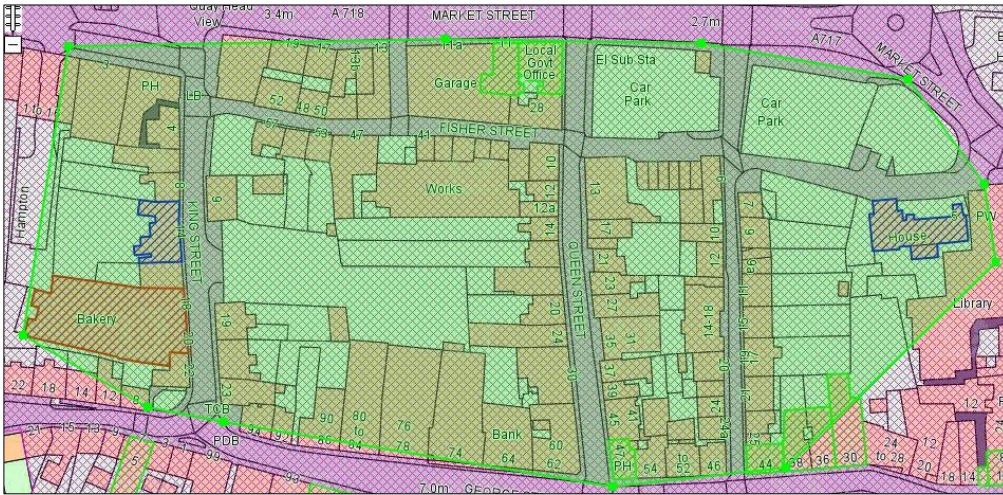
- Dormer extensions - carefully designed to maintain the character of individual properties and ensure sufficient similarity with appropriate dormers in adjoining houses, or houses of the same original design.

- 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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** is widest of the three connecting streets and includes more variety in the buildings. The street slopes down to the north towards the sea. Most buildings are two storeys although they vary in height. Buildings are built to the back of the pavement on both sides with no exceptions. There are a few dwellings with ornate window and door mouldings and two single storey dwellings at the northern end. Part way down on the eastern side there is a wide, walled access to a car park and, at its junction with Fisher Street, a site where buildings were demolished but development of the site has not yet taken place. Neither of these sites make a positive contribution to the character of King Street or the conservation area due to the unkempt nature of the parts most visible from the street. Opportunity to improve the appearance of these sites in the short term should be taken if at all possible.



There are a number of features in the street that should be retained and the opportunity should be taken to restore and reinstate features which have been damaged or lost. This includes original format windows and decorative stucco mouldings on buildings.

Gillespies, the bakery and shop is of significant national and local historical interest recognised by its Category A Listing. Restoring the shop and bakery building and reinstating original materials where they have been lost would improve the historic interest of the bakery and have potential to attract more 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.



Above - private car park entrance  
Below - development site

**Queen Street** is an interesting mix of commercial and residential buildings with a variety of facades from different decades. It slopes up from Market Street and is narrow with the building line is continuous to the back of pavement, except no.21 which is set back a short distance and notably out of line with its neighbours. The street is an important thoroughfare for pedestrians and one way for vehicles in a southerly direction towards George Street. The roof heights of the buildings vary

although they are generally two storey. 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 20<sup>th</sup> century *art deco* styled building which has retained its original form, although altered and now with signage which is not sympathetic to the architecture building.



Further north along Queen Street is a pair of coursed and snecked whinstone buildings with sandstone window dressings; they have shops below and dwellings above. The shop fronts are glazed brown brick [faience] which although not of the same period as the building are of interest in their own right. The fascia projects and slopes and is clad in vertical timbers. This is a shopfront from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Unusual in the largely 19<sup>th</sup> century town, is a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century *art deco* influenced building with classical pedimented frontage and simple ironwork detail in the openings along the frieze. It appears to have been a commercial building. The glazing in the large windows has been altered but the building retains its original character. The opportunity exists to ensure that this building keeps its unique identity.



At the north end of Queen Street where it meets Fisher Street and then Market Street a large open car park changes the character. Opportunity to reinforce the enclosure of the street in this area would be welcomed. As with King Street keeping to a design code for street furniture and footway surface and road markings would benefit the character of the conservation area.

**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. There is a modern residential block in the middle of the west side of the street which looks different but fits reasonably 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 by the addition of unsympathetic dormers. There are a number of arched pends featuring in the street. Darker painted 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.

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 it is staggered as it crosses 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.





Fisher Street through 150 years.

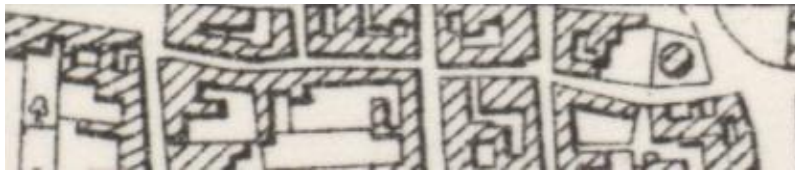
Maps from National Library of Scotland, reproduced under Creative Commons Licence



Scottish Town Plans 1847 – 1895; Stranraer 1847



OS 1847



OS 1893



OS 1907



OS 1938



OS 2017

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.

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 adentil 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
- The car parks at the bottom of Queen Street and Princes Street should have perimeter development to improve the enclosure and reduce the dominance of cars in the view
- Boundary features which reinstate the building line should be encouraged when possible
- Unsightly areas of bin storage, unkempt land and private signage should be tidied in the short term and arrangements made to reduce the detrimental 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

- Avoid the use of strong colours which contrast with the local pale palette of render and natural stone
- The opportunity to enhance the pedestrian experience on the routes between the waterside and the town centre would be beneficial

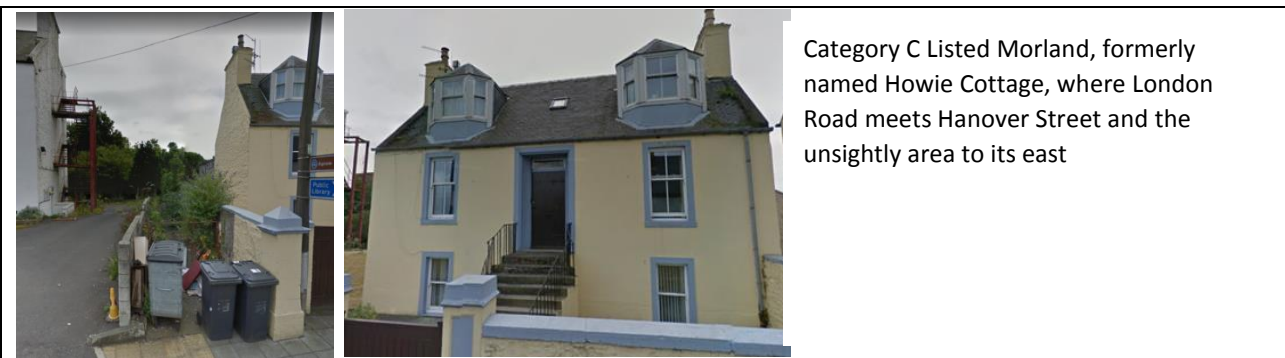
### E. Hanover Street to Sun Street



**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 right 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.

In 2014, the conservation area boundary was extended to include 2 Hanover Street and 'Morland' on London Road. The supermarket carpark and road arrangement otherwise dominates this edge of the conservation area.

Morland is an unusual dwelling with entrance to the 'ground floor' up steps, a basement storey below and a dormer floor above and is Category C Listed. Its elevations are painted stone and render, set back behind a painted stone wall. The character and detail of this building should be carefully considered when development is being proposed nearby. For example the open parking, waste storage and modern concrete wall to the east of the building and the poor condition of the fire escape from the former pub next door are a poor entrance to the conservation area. There may be opportunity to improve these when planning applications are submitted.



Category C Listed Morland, formerly named Howie Cottage, where London Road meets Hanover Street and the unsightly area to its east



**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 exception buildings on both sides are immediately at the back of the footway.

Map of Hanover Street from Scottish Town Plans 1847-1895, Stranraer 1847

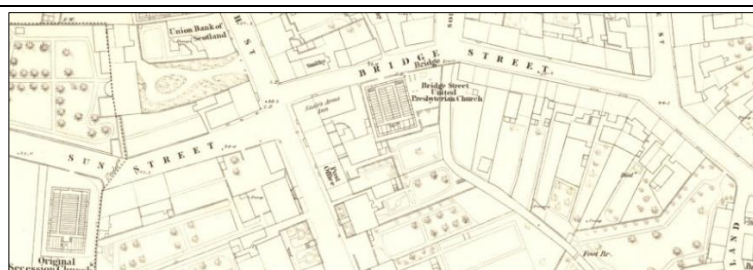


Travelling west the concentration of shop fronts increases and there is great variation in their appearance and between other commercial frontages. Some have been replaced with modern materials and designs while the basic structure of a traditional shop front has been concealed by new fascia or minor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

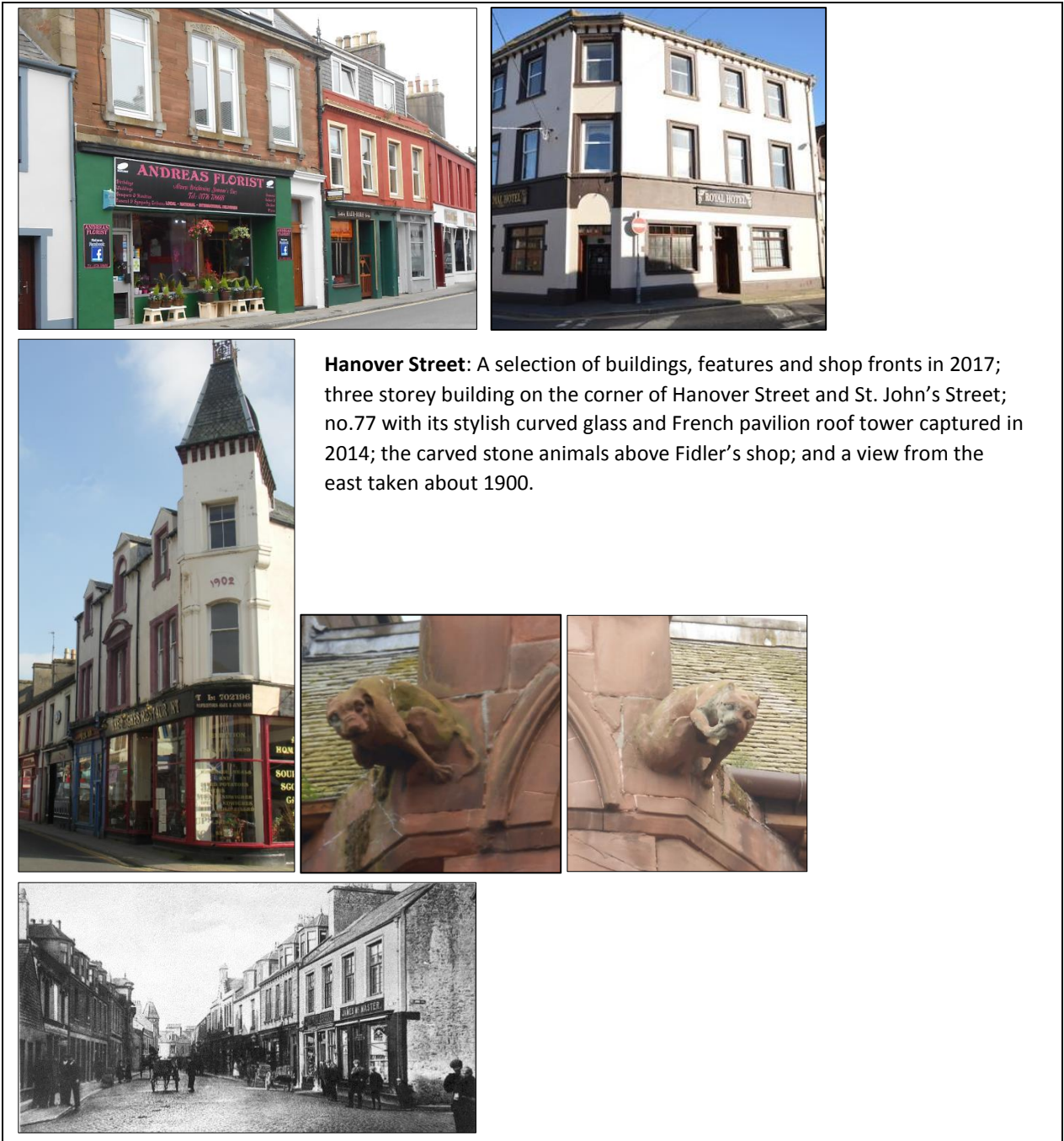
A number of interesting, individual architectural features have survived in the street which should be retained and restored: the curved glass of 77 Hanover Street, the carved stone animals on 51-55 Hanover Street and French pavilion style roofs.

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**, so called because it bridges the town burn, continues the busy and complex mix of building styles and changing heights. It has an interesting topographical rise and fall and the street curves. Behind the frontages are a number of interesting warehouses and spaces.



1847 Ordnance Survey of Bridge Street. A further corner building with a French pavilion roofed tower at the junction of Bridge Street and South Strand Street.



**Hanover Street:** A selection of buildings, features and shop fronts in 2017; three storey building on the corner of Hanover Street and St. John’s Street; no.77 with its stylish curved glass and French pavilion roof tower captured in 2014; the carved stone animals above Fidler’s shop; and a view from the east taken about 1900.

**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 has not been designed to 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.

Important Buildings:

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.

Hanover street, 49-55	Late 19th Century, is described by Gifford as "Ruskinian Gothic, with carved beasts peering down from its end oriel."
Hanover Street, 77	Dated 1902, a prominent corner building rising to 3 storeys its French pavilion roofed square tower gives it a strong presence in the streetscape.
Bridge Street, 20	Although an architecturally different corner tower from 77 this prominent block corners South Strand Street with a tower
Bridge Street, 9 former Grain Store	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
Bridge Street, 15	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.
Hanover Street, 89-91	Category C Listed late 19 <sup>th</sup> 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.
The Grapes Public House	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.

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 rear of Dunbae House
- open up access to the green space 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 roofscape - 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 where 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. Pursuing which can be pursued. 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 may need to be explained in terms of the



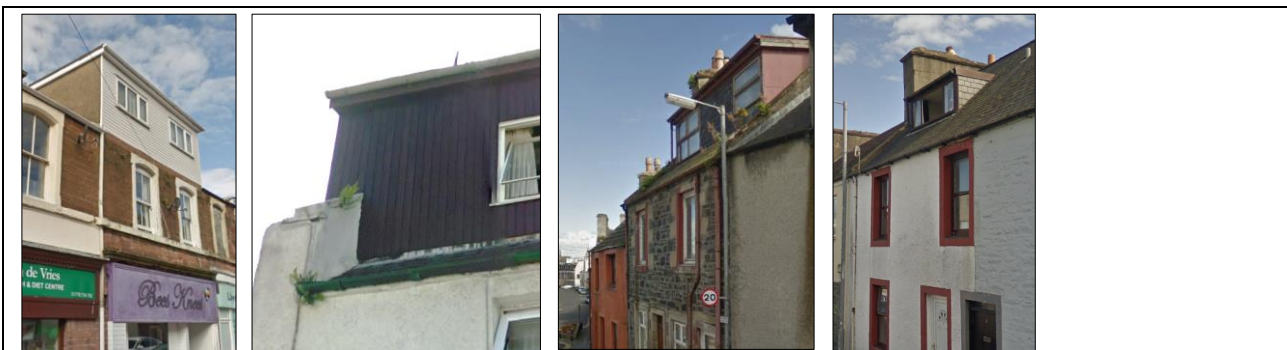
new guidance and that good design, retention and reinstatement of traditional historic detail to groups of buildings and streets in the conservation area can improve the general appreciation of the conservation area with consequential benefits.

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

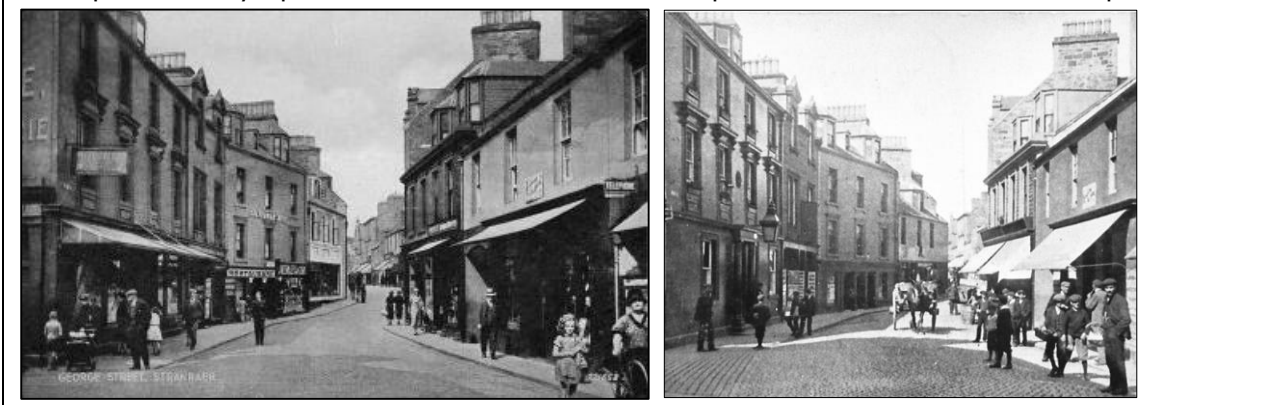
Support should be given for taking action under the planning legislation where breaches of planning control involving change which adversely affects the character of Stranraer Conservation Area, particularly in areas where regeneration and restoration schemes are underway.

### 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.



Examples of unsympathetic dormer extensions compared with traditional roofscape



### 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 with good repair and maintenance will prevent this.

### Windows and shop frontages

The poor condition of traditional 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 fasciae.

### 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.

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

### **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
- Level of investment in enhancement schemes
- Progress of enhancement schemes
- Effectiveness and quality of repairs and improvements to public spaces
- Quality of open space and the public realm
- Design quality of extensions
- New uses for vacant and under used buildings and/or reduction in vacant upper floor space
- Vitality of streets
- Viability of commercial areas
- Additional financial turnover

### **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.

*“The designation of a conservation area is a means to safeguard and enhance the sense of place, character and appearance of our most valued historic places.”*

*Planning Advice Note 71 – Conservation Area Management, Scottish Executive, December 2004.*



Dumfries and Galloway Council  
**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2**

*Draft Supplementary Guidance - May 2018*