Dumfries and Galloway Council

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

Stranraer Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Draft Supplementary Guidance - January 2018
# Stranraer Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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Stranraer Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Background to the Appraisal

Introduction

The burgh of Stranraer was established in 1595 on the site of an existing clachan that had developed around the substantial tower house of the land owned by the Adair family.

Four centuries of development have followed that have created a town where the street pattern of the early burgh survives in the core, and interesting and high quality buildings from various periods provide a distinctive historic character and backdrop to people’s daily lives.

The Character Appraisal – Purpose and Justification

The Scottish Government has recognised the importance of the whole historic environment of Scotland and in its Scottish Historic Environment Policy notes that the “historic environment requires careful and active management to ensure its survival.” It is important to understand that neither the legislation governing conservation areas nor the subsequent body of government advice seeks to prevent development and change. Government policy 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.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to the proper stewardship of its historic areas and has prepared this appraisal to help inform the development and management of the town’s conservation area. This appraisal is not a manual that sets out exact actions nor is it a catalogue of good buildings. It is much more a prompt that helps in the process of developing an understanding of the conservation area and to stimulate good quality design and further development. It is the starting point for developing conservation area management proposals.

The aims of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, with the attendant Conservation Area Management Plan, are to:

- Identify and describe the elements that contribute to the area’s special architectural or historic interest;
- Describe how the character and quality of the historic built environment will be protected and enhanced, including preventing their erosion of character through small-scale inappropriate changes to buildings, streets and open areas; and
- Enable carefully managed change and evolution of the conservation area by encouraging development that makes a positive contribution to the area.

This appraisal will guide the Council in making planning decisions and, where opportunities arise, preparing and implementing enhancement proposals or supporting new development. Implicit in this document is the Council’s conviction that Stranraer must be allowed to develop and adjust to modern needs and the conservation area allowed to evolve just as the town itself always has done over the centuries.

The principal planning policy framework is the Local Development Plan and supporting Supplementary Guidance.

Adoption of the Appraisal

Text to be completed following the outcome of the Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee meeting and the public consultation exercise.

Using this Appraisal

The appraisal is published in three parts:

Part One – covers the historical development of Stranraer and gives a descriptive overview of the conservation area.

Part Two – considers the management of the conservation area and sets out a strategy for further development and enhancement of the area.

Part Three - Further Information and Appendices contain the background and general information that support the appraisal. It lists statutory designated sites and buildings, current policy, Council guidance and Strategic Studies that impact on the area.

Please remember that the descriptive parts of the appraisal are illustrative and may not necessarily cover each and every aspect that moulds the character of the Stranraer conservation area. The omission of any particular feature, building, space or other aspect of the area should not be taken to mean that it has no significance or is not relevant to the care and stewardship of the area.
The Value of the Existing Conservation Area

In describing the conservation area it is important to start with an appreciation of the general qualities of the town that gave the impetus for its designation as an area whose character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced. What are the key aspects that are valued and should be kept?

The detailed answers will emerge in the appraisal. Overall, Stranraer, as a historic burgh at the head of a sheltered sea loch, has seen varying periods of growth and prosperity as well as decline and has a legacy of fine buildings from a long period of historical development. The town possesses a rich and interesting townscape, high quality public and private buildings, complexity of streets and spaces that combine to bring a sense of identity that is unique and special.

It is generally acknowledged that the unique historic character, the varied and interesting architectural detailing, the relationship of spaces and other open areas and streets and the magnificent waterside setting are fundamental to the well-being of the town and in turn are highly valued. It is the ‘sum of the parts’ that makes Stranraer what it is and why all effort should be directed to its proper conservation and development.

The Conservation Area

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”.

The conservation area was first designated in 1977. The area is shown on the map on page 17. 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.

Proposed Amendments

In undertaking a number of consultation events for this Appraisal it has become apparent that some additional areas should be considered for inclusion in the designated area.

A public exhibition outlining the proposed changes to the conservation area boundary was held in Stranraer Library on 1st & 2nd October 2013. Following committee approval and subsequent 6 week consultation held from May 26th to July 7th 2014 further amendments to the boundary were made to form the finalised boundary.

Changes include:

Hanover Street
Boundary extended eastward along Hanover Street to its junction with Bellevilla Road.

Agnew Park and Waterfront
Boundary extended north to include Agnew Park, the West Pier, Market Street and Harbour Street to the land surrounding Burns House.

Issues Affecting the Conservation Area

Regeneration of Stranraer Town Centre
Dumfries and Galloway Council has identified the regeneration of Stranraer town centre as one of its priority projects.

The principal schemes include:

East Pier and Eastern Waterfront
The Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and appendices were initially adopted as supplementary guidance to the Wigtown Local Plan. As that plan has been replaced by the Local Development Plan the masterplan would no longer exist. However, as the masterplan is considered, by the Council, to remain up to date it has been readopted as supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan.
Stranraer Marina
The Stranraer Harbour Office Stranraer Marina is now complete and receiving positive reports from users. The meeting room is regularly used by the Council and a number of community groups. Design work is ongoing for the public slip way that will be located to the west of the West Pier; the design work will also include options for a hard standing and maintenance area for boats, boat hoisting provision and car park improvements to improve access in and around the harbour and Agnew Park and public realm enhancement. Work will also be undertaken to provide a harbour access ramp to enable full access to boats within the harbour and thus support the local economy.

Monitoring and Review of the Appraisal
The Appraisal is an important part of the future management of the conservation area. The description of the conservation area, the issues and conflicts identified and the scope for enhancement will be subject to change over the years.

Monitoring and periodic review of the conservation area as well as ensuring the effectiveness of this document in pursuing the Council's conservation policy is essential. This will confirm the continuing relevance of the conservation area designation and the success of management strategies. Useful indicators to be monitored may include:

- The numbers of buildings at risk from neglect and deterioration;
- The effectiveness and quality of repairs to buildings and improvements to public spaces;
- The design quality of new buildings, alterations and extensions;
- New uses for vacant buildings and reduction in vacant upper floor space;
- The quality of open spaces and other parts of the public realm;
- Vitality and viability of commercial areas, and the level of investment and progress of the implementation of particular schemes of enhancement, such as shop fronts or streetscape enhancement.

It is intended that monitoring indicators, based on the above, will be set out in the Conservation Area Management Plan.

Conservation Principles
The conservation guidance underpinning this Appraisal is founded on four principles that were established in the Council's Caring for the Built Environment – Conservation Area Guidance (See Appendix 1). These are:

- Development of the town or village should proceed through evolution;
- Repair is better than replacement and buildings should be regularly maintained;
- Repairs should respect the fabric, forms and technology of the original; and
- New work should complement the surroundings and not be an inopportune attempt at parody or pastiche.

These principles will be reflected in Council policy through the Local Development Plan and supporting Supplementary Guidance. This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the Supplementary Guidance – The Historic Built Environment.

It is important to ensure that any work undertaken in Stranraer town centre adds to and complements the special qualities of the conservation area so that it may be passed on, undamaged, to future generations.
Part 1 - Understanding the Stranraer Conservation Area

History and Development

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 1990s employment in the town has reduced with the closure of some main employers and in 1994 all rail freight in the town ended. The ferry port closed in 2012 with the relocation of the ferry terminal to Cairnryan.

With the development of mooring pontoons in 2008, a new marina facilities building in 2012 and further works to the marina planned, the town is beginning to develop as an attractive coastal town aimed at the recreational water development of the modern waterfront.

The core of the town has been designated as an Archaeologically Sensitive Area, which is shown on the map on page 17 (See also Technical Paper: Archaeologically Sensitive Areas and associated policy).

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).

It is important that the Council Archaeology Service is engaged early in the process of planning of any new development so that potential effects on the area of interest can be considered.

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

From the early 16th century the town began to grow as a port. Its creation as a burgh in 1595 reinforced its importance bringing the privilege of trading goods along with permission to erect a Tolbooth and Market Cross. Trade at this time was not limited to agriculture or fishing but also included weaving, coopering, tailoring and leatherwork amongst other merchant trades included weaving, coopering, tailoring and leatherwork amongst other merchant trades.

This early burgh was relatively small and effectively had only one street. This ran along the line of what today is known as George Street. It had a parallel back lane which today is known as Fisher Street, although at that time this faced directly onto the waterfront. Three small vennels ran from the main street to the sea.
The focal points of the town were the Tolbooth, Market Cross and Tron, which were 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 port in Loch Ryan. Royal status increased its territorial base as it was 24 miles from its nearest neighbouring burgh and the only main sea link between Scotland and Ireland.

Development of Stranraer – Medieval to 19th Century

The plan of a main street with supporting vennels was still in evidence in 1689. The majority of the housing by the end of the 17th century was generally single hearthed, indicating relatively small and simple dwellings.

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 the corner of Church Street and George Street. In the 19th century Stranraer harbour was established in response to the need for piers and shelter for the shipping. The west pier was completed in 1820, and work continued over the next few decades to deepen and lengthen the harbour.

In the mid-19th century an 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.

The manufacturing of items such as bricks meant that industry in the town, towards the end of the 19th century, was affecting its built environment. There is evidence that efforts were made to maintain the fabric of the traditional burgh centre, particularly in respect of access for all inhabitants to the town burn.

Development of Stranraer – Modern

By the end of the 19th Century Stranraer had expanded further to the east and south. From OS maps of the last 70 years it is evident that there is very little change to the layout of the town centre and its immediate surroundings.

Throughout this period the town centre has retained its characteristic of shops with housing above to the main street, with predominantly two storey housing to the secondary streets branching off it. The majority of these buildings have adapted only in terms of replacement windows and expansion into the roof space.

Up until the 1930’s there was insufficient sanitation in the town centre, with issues around the open burns involving sewage and livestock. This delay in bringing aspects of the town in line with acceptable modern standards meant it escaped the scale of redevelopment seen in many historic burghs in recent years.

The area around the waterfront has seen changes in the last 100 years. In the 1950’s further land was reclaimed. This time it was to the west of the harbour area and the 70m strip was formed into Agnew Park. This area received Millennium Funding in 2000 and was extensively redesigned and upgraded. The park today is an important public area on the waterfront.

The Burgh Survey, Historic Stranraer, by EPD Torrie and R Colemen published in 1995 gives a good overview of the historical development of Stranraer.
Historical Mapping Showing the Growth of Stranraer

Stranraer in 1640 by David Simon

Stranraer in 1860 by David Simon

Stranraer, town and harbour, towards the end of the 19th century - 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map (with proposed conservation area boundary overlain – green broken line)
Description of Conservation Area

Introduction
This section defines the key features of the conservation area, gives an overview of the town as a whole and considers its wider structural aspects. This is supplemented by more detail, where necessary, in the area appraisals that follow.

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 head of Loch Ryan. The enveloping higher ground, around the shores of the Loch, helps to frame views and so defines the setting for the town.

Similarly the views from the Loch itself or from the pier heads back towards the town are also significant. The relationship of the lower parts of the town to the harbour and along Agnew Crescent, while the rising ground and key focal buildings such as the Church, Castle and Town Hall draw the eye up and beyond the immediate waterside.

The nearly grid-like layout of the town centre gives a variety of views. Views along streets on the north-south axis terminate either with the harbour, the water side or out to the open Loch, or conversely, up into the town centre, sometimes terminating with key buildings situated on George Street that runs east west.

Views along the main thoroughfares, such as George Street and Hanover Street / Bridge Street are complex and varied. Often these are 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 principally on the main streets. The increasing intimacy of Hanover Street progressing from the wide, straight, London Road to the point beyond the traffic roundabout where the road narrows defines the character of this approach. There is a similar pinch point where Lewis Street links to Church Street, though the roundabout and cleared sites adjacent 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 redevelopment of much of the area around the ferry terminal and provisions for traffic management and access to the port have lessened the quality and impact of the approach along the coast from the east; though the retention of the former warehouse frontage building helps to retain a sense of arrival by giving a visual pinch point with its strong gable forming an important architectural element in the street scene.

From further round the coast, on the A77, the distant town centre is gradually revealed against the backdrop of the low hills comprising the Rhins of Galloway but with the port strongly positioned in the foreground.
Street Pattern and Form

The Street pattern in Stranraer reflects its complex historical development. Its origins as two separate settlements on either side of the town burn and its relationship to Loch Ryan are key factors. The line of the burn is now marked by North and South Strand Street.

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.

Although Fisher Street was only a back lane to the medieval main street, now George Street, it was originally adjacent to the waterfront; as evidenced in Woods map of 1843. Market Street, Harbour Street and the area around were developed on reclaimed land in the 19th century.

From the east / west routes, regularly laid-out, planned streets, namely Princes Street, Queen Street and King Street, lead down to Fisher Street and thence the waterside. These with North and South Strand Street make up the principal north-south links. Overall the central area could be defined as a loose ‘grid layout’.

Following the 19th century development of the waterside, Harbour Street, Market Street and Agnew Crescent now comprise the third principal east-west route adjacent to the Loch. This, to some extent cuts off the town centre from the harbour.

The area around the Castle, opening up off George Street, has been pedestrianized 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 long straight avenue like road, which was developed during the second half of the 19th century and leads out of the centre from George Street via Church Street.

Roads and Street Surfaces

There is little evidence of original or traditional surfacing materials throughout the town centre as Roadways are predominantly hot rolled asphalt.

Footways mostly concrete slabs of varying format. However, it is possible that the original setts have simply been overlain with the modern materials.

Recent works in George Street and Castle Square have introduced concrete paving blocks along with larger format granite paving and kerbs. The restriction of the carriageway and the priority given to pedestrian flow from Castle Square across to South Strand Street has helped to change the character of the space in the conservation area. Making the carriageway less dominant allows the space to read as a whole. Details such as the use of bollards and materials should be reviewed as the scheme ages to help determine whether or not 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 detailed implementation will be dependent on the individual circumstances, use of the space and 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 public spaces include:

- 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 – Developed in the later part of the 20th century on reclaimed land this provides a valuable recreational area and public space;
- Castle Square – Perhaps the most significant to the immediate town centre. Its function as a setting for the Castle of St John gives it a 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;

- The waterfront 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.

There are many other smaller but also important spaces around the town, often at street junctions where, in some cases, buildings have been demolished.

Such spaces fulfil many functions; not just the obvious ones of car parking but can often, if properly managed and developed offer interesting townscape contrast with the tight urban feel of the town centre as well as adding greenery with 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. Scope exists on the larger open areas, mainly around the waterfront, to introduce additional 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 to 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 cottage which has 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 depend on whether or not the street is primarily commercial, retail, industrial or residential. Also, its function, for example as a primary traffic route, will also influence its character;
- The building line and its relationship with the street – Most buildings 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, which in the older medieval parts were largely consistent and relatively narrow. 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. However, this is dependent on architectural detailing, materials, form and placement of the whole building.

Many streets are closed terraces of mainly 2-storey domestic scale buildings. These mostly have a regular traditional fenestration and rhythm of openings based on Georgian proportions.

This regularity is broken in the central commercial area, in George Street and Hanover Street in particular by individual larger scale buildings, usually of commercial significance, such as banks or larger shops.

Roofscape

As views are afforded over the town from the higher ground to the south the appearance and character of the roofscape is very important.

The very varied nature of the roofscape is due to 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.

The character and quality of the roofscape is enhanced by a number of architectural embellishments such as skews, skewputts, traditional dormers and eaves detailing.

Another crucial element in the roofscape is the presence of chimney heads. These are varied and usually fairly massive in form. 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 roofscape; in the case of the George Hotel a leaded pyramidal tower and at the Museum the bell tower and spire.

Modern buildings

20th century development should be respectful of the scale and massing of surrounding buildings. Whilst modern architectural expression is welcomed some more recent development has not been well integrated into the traditional streetscape. Some examples of buildings that are considered to be at odds with their historic setting are noted in the character area appraisals below.

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.

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. Commercial success has also driven the display of architectural exuberance in many of the buildings, often banks or former banks. These are juxtaposed with more modest earlier properties. Sometimes former houses were developed into shops and, especially in George Street and Castle Street/Charlotte Street older buildings have given way to more modern development. Most of this newer development was purpose-built commercial and retail, some with accommodation above.

Building Types

Within the Conservation Area there are several different types of buildings each with a distinctive form. These 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:

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.

Perhaps the most significant public buildings are the Castle of St John and the Old Town Hall, now the museum. The George Hotel occupies a prominent position and has added stature due to its size and architectural embellishment. The Golden Cross public House though smaller and less prominent is important in closing the view along Church Street.

Churches also form an important part of this group, all very different in their design and scale. They include St. Ninian’s Church, Gospel Hall on Lewis Street and the Old Parish Church on Church Street.

Other Civic and Public Buildings include the Sheriff Court and a modern example of the new Pumping Station at the waterfront.
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
This group of buildings are the most common type in Stranraer comprising mostly traditional dwellings. The streets running down to the waterfront and Agnew Crescent are excellent examples of this type. 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.

Victorian
From the mid-19th Century until the start of the 20th, the majority of building occurred towards the south of the historic town centre. This includes the expansion along Lewis Street, and the larger grander buildings constructed there.

Victorian Scottish Architecture is recognisable by its mix of styles, which often refer back to previous historic styles. This can be clearly seen in 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 also good examples of domestic Victorian Architecture with their imposing size and generally well-proportioned plans.

Large Commercial
Stranraer does not have a great number of large commercial buildings within the conservation area. Some, of note, are described in the area appraisals below. Architecturally these vary from plain warehousing to more ornate banks.

Modern
The majority of modern development has taken place out with the conservation area. A number of infill and redevelopments have impacted on the conservation area. These include development on Castle Street / Charlotte Street, Hanover Street, and George Street. Much modern development, particularly from the middle part of the 20th century, is characterised by broad horizontally proportioned structures.

These replaced traditional, vertically proportioned, narrower buildings.

Architectural Details, Materials and Finishes

Roofs: Despite some modern materials the overall impression is that of the ubiquitous use of natural slate. The type does vary but is predominantly grey, grey-green or grey-blue. Although some slate was quarried locally there is now no evidence of this and most slates appear to be from Cumbria, Lancashire or Wales. Slates are laid variously in random widths with diminishing courses or in regular widths and coursing dependent on the age of the roof and the type of slate used.

Latterly imported slates and concrete tiles have been introduced as repairs were needed to the older roofs. Some slates are a poor match for those traditionally used: of particular note in this respect are the thinner, even, black Spanish slates and the industrial, blue Welsh slates. Because of their uniformity and colour, their use can have a negative impact of the appearance of the area.

Windows and doors: The windows of traditional buildings were mainly timber sash and case usually with glass areas subdivided with astragals; 12-pane or six-over-six, in earlier buildings and 4 or 2 panes during the Victorian period. Doors were timber, and usually frame and panel construction. Earlier detailing included six panels while later doors tend to have four panels. Lesser doors, such as to pends were usually plain boarded. Overall many windows and doors have been replaced by less appropriate modern styles in a range of materials, including mahogany, aluminium and uPVC.

Architectural embellishment: There is relatively little architectural embellishment on the majority of buildings, especially on the terraced housing. Simple, raised margins help define openings, banding gives sense to the structure by defining internal floor levels.

Skews and skewputts give definition to roof edges and divisions in terraces.

Door cases, mostly modelled on Classical detailing, help to emphasise the main access point of larger properties.

More ornate carving is to be found but usually on buildings of higher rank and prestige.
Masonry: Relatively few buildings are finished in bare masonry. Of those that are, most small domestic buildings, such as 10 Market Street are in whinstone with sandstone dressings.

The Sheriff Court, in contrast, is ornately detailed in rock-faced red sandstone and finely worked buff/golden ashlar sandstone for the quoins, window surrounds and other detailing. St. Ninian's Church, adjacent, uses whin as the principal material with red sandstone for the dressings and detailing.

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

Further variety may be seen in the use of materials, with brick, squared and coursed whin, sandstone as well as fine ashlar fronted buildings. Examples of the latter may be seen at 32 Charlotte Street and the fine sandstone fronted building adjacent or at 32 George Street.

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 whin walling.

Render and Harl: By far the majority of buildings throughout the conservation area are smooth rendered or finished in wet-dash harl and painted. Some more modern interventions include the intrusive dry-dash also known as pebble dash.

Originally renders and harl were lime based that would allow the buildings to breathe. These may also have been lime washed. The colour of these renders would have had a restricted palette of colours, although some of these such as ochre could still be quite bright.

Colour and Painted Façades: Painting is a traditional finish for the facades of historic buildings and this is demonstrated by many of the buildings in Stranraer. There is now a great variety of colours with some modern strident shades, though the majority are based on white and off-whites.

This is evident in Princes Street and King Street. On some properties in George Street and Queen Street darker colours have also been used, but their earthier palette means that they add some warmth to the streetscape.
Shop Fronts
Shops have been a feature of the town centre since at least the late 18th 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.

Shop fronts are significant elements in the streetscape of the conservation area. Their presence at eye level makes them the most prominent feature and they greatly influence the appearance of the area. Stranraer is fortunate in possessing some finely detailed shop fronts, with fascias and pilasters typical of the Victorian or Edwardian period, especially on Hanover Street.

Earlier shops were usually contained within a single building width. This led to the development of the typical frontage still seen today of a display window, often divided by mullions and transoms, and a door, often recessed, to one side. This would be contained in a frame of pilasters and cornice and fascia that in much altered and manifold forms were loosely based on Classical architectural elements: the pilasters often representing columns and capitals with the fascia and cornice the entablature.

From the late 19th century and into the 20th century larger shop units were being created. These tended to be broader, often by the amalgamation of two or more premises, with more simply detailed, quite basic, shop fronts. Large plate-glass windows set in aluminium or PVC frames and glass doors and the absence of the framing provided by pilasters and cornice resulted in a simplification of design that in more recent years has led to a diminution of the character and quality of the streetscape.

Advertising and signage was also made to be 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.

Many of the traditional 19th century shop fronts have been further enlarged or reconfigured to become fully glazed and the entrance doors relocated.

A few national multiple retailer and other businesses have also established a presence in the town. In most cases they have imposed their corporate image and detailing for shop fronts. This is usually unsympathetic to the traditional character of the area.

One of the most common and damaging interventions has been the addition of over-large fascias and advertising hoardings. These have a detrimental impact on the quality of the streetscape and are damaging to the conservation area.

The Council is developing detailed guidance on traditional shop fronts and how new fronts can be successfully integrated into older centres. This will appear as Supplementary Guidance in association with the Local Development Plan. In the interim a brief appraisal of shop fronts may be seen in the Dumfries Conservation Area Appraisal.

Some original shop fronts remain
Character Areas

Introduction

This section looks at the conservation area in Stranraer in greater detail and has been arranged by the character areas as shown on the map on page 17. The definition of these areas is based on a visual assessment taking into account the more obvious structural differences across the town centre, the historical development of the town and the nature and visual character of the streets and adjoining back land. Some aspects of each character area will flow between areas and the boundaries and definitions are not rigid but the broader distinctions should help in developing a management rationale for these areas.

As well as a general description the section on each character area includes summary sub-sections regarding:

Key positive aspects – to pick out those elements that are especially important to the character of the conservation area and which must be borne in mind in any further works or when considering development proposals that 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 – these are intended to highlight aspects that are tending to have a detrimental or otherwise negative impact on the character and quality of the conservation area.

These, some broad and some specific, will inform the action lists in Part 3 of the appraisal that identifies ways in which the positive management of the conservation area can proceed.

Buildings at Risk are buildings that by their external appearance, or evidence of underuse might be considered at risk. That means they are suffering from, or likely to suffer from, poor maintenance regimes. As a result their condition and appearance is deteriorating to such an extent that this has a negative impact on the character and economy of the conservation area.

Development Opportunities – to show where specific considerations are required in any development proposals. This is not exhaustive and only covers key sites or redundant buildings where development would have a significant impact on the area.

Detailed development guidelines are set out in Supplementary Guidance, which should be read in conjunction with this Appraisal.

Enhancement Opportunities – Enhancement opportunities are suggested but it should be noted that this appraisal does not commit the Council to any specific funding for the projects suggested. These are intended to be taken forward to the Conservation Area Management Plan to enable consideration to be given to implementation, funding and prioritizing of projects.

The character areas are shown on the map on the next page.
Stranraer Conservation Area Character Areas

Key

Category A • Listed Building
Category C • Listed Building

Charter Areas - A Town Centre, George Street and Environs
B Lambs Street
C new Crescent and the Waterfront
D former SU and King Street/1-11 West Street
E to Market Street, old Sun Street
The town centre character area encompasses the main retail zone of Stranraer including Charlotte Street, George Street and Castle Street. Other secondary streets in the area include Church Street, South Strand Street and North Strand Street.

George Street
George Street is at the 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 varying width and curvature of the street provides interest and ever-changing vistas and views along the street. 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 traditionally proportioned. Most buildings in the central area have shop units, cafes and restaurants or offices at ground floor level. There is considerable variation in eaves and roof lines which gives views along the street a complex and interesting aspect. All development is at the back of the footways.

The scale and architectural importance of buildings increases towards the central section of the street. This is 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 particularly dominant from several vantage points.

The majority of its listed buildings are concentrated in this central section.

Some interventions and alterations to buildings have been intrusive and out of character with adjacent buildings. Loss of traditional detailing, such as original windows or modern shop fronts and signage, have also impacted negatively on the character of the area.

High Street
Further west George Street becomes the High Street twisting upward on rising ground. The buildings on this street are predominately residential single storey three bay houses, most of which have been developed to include accommodation in the attic space.

These are dominated in the background by the bulk of Mount Ryan overlooking the town centre and harbour area.

Its principal contribution to the character of the conservation area is way in which the street turns on the rising ground offering changing views back across the town's roofscape.

Castle Street
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 premises running to Bridge Street.

It is a straight street with the view up to Bridge Street terminating in the architecturally interesting Clydesdale Bank at 89 and 91 Hanover Street.

The terrace on the west side, is split by a pend, however the strong continuous frontage of the buildings is not affected. The buildings are rendered or harled and painted.

The view down towards George Street terminates in the architecturally interesting 54 Charlotte Street, which though altered at ground floor level retains fine sandstone ashlar and paired arch headed windows to the first.

The Castle of St John and its open setting dominate the northern end of the street and its relationship to George Street and South Strand Street.

North and South Strand Street
North and South Strand Street are two of the oldest streets in the town centre. They mark the line of the burn that separated the medieval settlements.

The east side of South Strand Street forms part of the green space and hard landscaping around the castle. The west side comprises a long 2-storey row of modern shop units in a simplified traditional arrangement. Steep roofs and skews help to define and give rhythm to the block but the lack of chimneys is notable. The street is wholly pedestrianized.

North Strand Street is accessed from George Street by an arched pend and a narrow pedestrian street.
On the west side of this street a 2-storey row runs back from the George Street frontage and terminates in an earlier single-storey cottage. Beyond is a modern library building in sandstone and render with prominent wall-head gabled dormers and central raised tower.

The east side of North Strand Street has 3 separate buildings and a classically derived 5-bay, buff sandstone villa dominates the street. Adjacent, to the north, is a more traditional 4-bay house, now converted to a club. Although not fully appreciated within the confines of the narrow street the tall chimney gable to 21 and 23 North Strand Street provides an important landmark for this area.

The view along the narrow open pend to the east is closed and dominated by the Castle of St John.

Church Street
Church Street links George Street with Lewis Street and is a principal route into the town from the south.

A narrow junction at the end of George Street belies the architectural importance of the street. There are several significant and relatively large buildings. The ‘B’ listed former Old Parish Church (1838-41) opens directly onto the street. Its stepped buttressed and pinnacled front makes this an important building in the streetscape.

Several buildings have finely detailed architectural embellishments. Of note amongst these is no. 21-25 with its Roman Doric doorpiece and pilastered ground floor.

**Important Buildings:**
There are many individual buildings of note throughout the area. They may not necessarily have prominent or elaborate architectural features but their worth lies in their contribution to the streetscape and their relationship to each other. A few of the more prominent buildings include:

**Stranraer Museum,** a category 'A' listed building, 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.

**The 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.

**45-47 George Street** is situated 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.

**60-62 George Street with 32 Queen Street,** though 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.
On the other corner, opposite, the Golden Cross public House again proclaims the importance of key landmark buildings in the street defining also the junction. Its height, accentuated by the stepped gable and gable chimneys give it prominence.

21-25 Church Street with doorpiece, pilasters and architraved windows lends elegance to the street. Opposite the more massive but plain fronted 12 Church Street has a particularly imposing Doric columned doorpiece.

The 1897 Victoria Jubilee Fountain is a focal point in Castle Square. This historic object, although no longer functioning as a drinking fountain, has been re-sited and now sits on a large stepped plinth, which doubles as an informal seating area in the square.

17 North Strand Street is an early 19th century, five bay two storey classical villa. With its imposing sandstone ashlar front it is the largest building in the street and was originally built as a bank.

On Church Street, the Old Parish Church, along with graveyard. The church has recently been taken over by the Holy Ground Community as their World Mission Prayer House.

Adjacent stands Dunbae House, set back behind quadrant walls and iron railings. It has an interesting classical front with pediments over windows and doors.

5 and 7 High Street. Built in 1726 this 2-storey, 3-bay rectangular plan building sits, unusually, gable end to the street. The broad chimney gable marks a distinct and rare break in the regular frontage and is dominant in the streetscape.

General Observations
As the main retail area this is a well-used public area and adjoins an important public open space, Castle Square and in the Castle itself an important visitor attraction. Next to the port area, this is the most visited part of the town and so is important in forming a wider public perception of the town.

The character of the area should be considered at all times of the day. Well-considered lighting can greatly enhance the character of the conservation area during hours of darkness.
Town Centre - Key positive aspects

George Street is the commercial heart of the town, and important to its general economic prosperity.

Attractive ever-changing streetscape – The variable nature of the street and buildings coupled with this as the primary town centre location provide a special character that, for the most part, has not been damaged by major redevelopments.

In recent years work has been undertaken to assist in the regeneration of the town centre. The introduction of new businesses into previously empty shop units assists in improving the quality of the streetscape. This is of particular note at the corner of North Strand Street and George Street where a new café has opened in a previously empty shop.

Good quality and wide variety of key buildings with the Castle of St John as the foremost building – as noted above, these add a special vitality to the architectural character of the area. The castle in particular acts as a focal point and with its setting offers opportunities for activities, displays and events to enliven the street.

Issues and Conflicts

Insensitive alterations, especially the addition of over-large roof extension and dormers together with the loss of traditional architectural elements and poor condition of individual buildings have damaged the character of the area. Large extensions on the front elevations of prominent buildings in George Street, for example, now dominate the street scene and impacted negatively on the historic character. The loss of the unifying character of traditional windows, materials and other details is now impacting on the visual quality of the area.

The poor quality of some parts of the streetscape. The wider aspect of streets across the conservation area, their layout and ever-changing widths and alignment are of considerable interest. However poor street surfacing has undermined their visual quality.

Traffic, traffic management, parking provision and traffic engineering have played a major and mostly negative role across the town.

In turn the resultant street furniture, signage and paving materials have been largely installed in response to the needs of traffic rather than aesthetically developed from the historic character or the needs of pedestrians.

Pedestrian barriers in many locations but especially such as those at the head of Church Street, impact negatively on the streetscape. There is a need to rationalise signage and consider the impact of signage and traffic management on the wider conservation area.

The variety and poor detailing of modern shop fronts is a significant threat to the character and appearance in and around George Street. These have affected the scale at street level and eroded some of the street’s special character. The modern and corporate style of some of the signage is also out of keeping with this location. This is particularly damaging on those commercial properties which span more than one feu with one large sign.

The lack of a clear coherent pedestrian route through North and South Strand Street. In addition the potential strength of this key route across the town centre has been weakened by the introduction of parking areas in North Strand Street.

This needs to be reviewed and the materials and street furniture chosen and located so the character of these streets is linked visually. Similarly at the Bridge Street end of South Strand Street an access road and parking has split the natural flow along these streets.

Building at risk: 5 - 7 High Street – prominently sited on the lower part of the street appears to be unused and deteriorating.
George Street and area - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

Enhancement Opportunity 1: Improve the coherence of North and South Strand Street by building on the work already undertaken in Castle Square, to create a unified principal pedestrian route through the town centre.

Enhancement Opportunity 1a: Remodel North Strand Street to reduce the dominance of car parking following on from work undertaken in Castle Square, to support enhancement opportunity 1 above.

Enhancement Opportunity 1b: Provide screening for the electricity substation and waste bins in North Strand Street to help create a more attractive space for pedestrian and public use. The possibility of on-street seating and refreshments should be considered in association with adjacent restaurants, public houses and clubs.

Enhancement Opportunity 2: Undertake small-scale sensitive enhancement schemes in the small open spaces such as on the corner of King Street and George Street - With appropriate and sensitive landscaping and planting these area can offer pleasant, restful spaces for seating, and quite repose as well as complementing the otherwise urban street scene.

Enhancement Opportunity 3: Improve and repair the entrance to Dunbae House including restoration of iron railings the contribution of the entrance court and gateway to the character of Church Street is very important.
Aspects of George Street and Environs
Lewis Street comprises the southern part of the Conservation Area away from the town centre. It is an extension of Church Street and quite distinct in its character. It is a long straight road and a main route to the south.

It was developed during the earlier part of the 19th century with substantial terraced and detached villa style housing. These villas give the street a very distinct characteristic of grandeur that is less apparent in the surrounding streets. The majority of buildings are set back from the road. A further setback at no. 29 adds visual interest to the street.

The east and west sides of the street are quite distinct in their own characters. The west side appearing 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. Many original architectural features remain. Large, deep chimney heads, most surmounted with numerous cans are an important part of the roofscape in Lewis Street. The majority of the buildings are painted render with architraves around openings; most are white or cream.

The houses to Lewis Street have small front gardens with cast iron railings and gates, many within stone gate piers, which contribute positively to their setting.

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

**Important Buildings:**

*Sheriff Court House*, of 1874, is the largest and most ornate building on the street, sitting in a slightly elevated position. It was originally constructed as the New Town House, and has a Tudor style with a mix of stone colours and textures.

*The War Memorial*, of 1920, a bronze statue of a Royal Scots Fusilier, set on a Creetown granite plinth, at the front is a focal point, and a reminder of important historical and social events.

*St Ninian’s Church*, adjacent, occupies an elevated site. Built about 10 years after the Sheriff Court it is also made of dressed stone. Its style is Gothic. It is imposing and benefits from the retention of trees and a low boundary wall at the pavement to anchor its location in the streetscape.

19, 21, 23 and 25 Lewis Street are good examples of early to mid-19th century terraced housing. Details include a greater degree of ornamentation around doors and window architraves. On no. 19, the heavy oriel window and neo-Jacobean gable are mid-19th 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* at the edge of the Conservation Area dates from 1843, and is a modest scale single storey three bay building. Its entrance elevation is quite distinguished by its pagoda style finials and bell cote.
A Victorian Pump Head has been sited to the North West end of the 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.

**General Observations**

The character of the street is formed by the mix of public and domestic properties with different scale and building type on either side of the street. There is an avenue like quality to the street.

**Lewis Street - Key positive aspects**

High quality range of 19th century buildings - set on a strong linear axis leading from the town centre.

**Issues and Conflicts**

The massing and detailing of the modern block of flats on the corner of Sun Street, which dates from the 1970's, is out of scale and character with the rest of the street. Good management of the property, including painting the façade and appropriate boundary treatment, together with judicious planting, could mitigate the impact.

Changes to properties, the loss of traditional detailing and intrusive colours on painted frontages are eroding the historic traditional qualities of the street.

Adaptations for the commercial use of the properties are sometimes unadvisedly made. These include poorly detailed access ramps, opening up of frontages and intrusive signage.

The access ramps at St Ninian’s Church are poorly detailed and have basic industrial quality rails and are wholly out of character and intrude detrimentally on the setting of the church.

**Lewis Street - Development and Enhancement Opportunities**

**Enhancement Opportunity 4: Develop a landscaping scheme at the junction with Sun Street and Bridge Street** – the implementation of a scheme to improve the visual gateway leading from Church Street to Lewis Street could greatly enhance this part of the conservation area. It would also enable the setting for the Pump head to be improved.

The large concrete paved area contrast sharply with the green area opposite; a comprehensive scheme for the whole of the junction area could bring considerable visual improvements that might also provide amenity spaces for pedestrians to use and enjoy.

This would also provide an opportunity to reconsider and rationalise the signage, lighting and pedestrian control barriers.
C - Agnew Crescent and the Waterfront

Agnew Crescent comprises the north western part of the conservation area. It forms a strong built edge at the boundary of the town facing Loch Ryan. It partly takes in the smaller separate settlement of Clayhole. It is very prominent when entering the town from the west and also from Loch Ryan.

In the 19th century the buildings and a narrower roadway were adjacent to the waterside, albeit inter-tidal flats. Since the reclamation and development of the park the houses have lost their immediacy to the waterside.

The Crescent comprises a terrace of 19th century domestic scale buildings of varying heights. They range from small, possibly originally fishermen’s houses to, in comparison, large Victorian villas. These appear to reflect the growing fashion for development overlooking the sea side during that period.

The character of the terrace changes becoming more commercial between Back rampart and King Street. Here Inns and warehousing can still be evidenced. Modern interventions include the addition of modern dormers, changes to doors and windows and the use of more strident colours. A new, large, colourful, 4-storey block of flats now dominates the corner with King Street where the building line steps forward to become Market Street.

The waterfront buildings extend eastward along Market Street to Queen Street.

Thereafter demolition of buildings on Fisher Street and the removal of the town gas works has left open areas now used for car parking. Agnew Park and the West Pier contribute to the open aspect along the waterfront.

Modern developments, road improvements associated with the use of the port and other clearances have had a considerable impact on the eastern part of the area. The intimacy of the 19th century development evidenced from the 2nd Edition ordnance Survey mapping is now lost as are the myriad of smaller industrial buildings ranging from the slaughter house to timber yards and warehouses.

Key vistas are along the Crescent, from both ends and from the waterfront. Although it is beyond the conservation area the narrow closed two-sided traditional development of Clayhole provides an important gateway to the conservation area.

Agnew Crescent

Important Buildings:

The workshop at 3 Agnew Crescent has a degree of prominence. Whilst its scale is in keeping with the larger properties to each side, its function gives it a prominence on the street. The large garage doors emphasis its industrial function.

10 Market Street is an early 19th century building on the corner with Queen Street whose varied façade gives architectural interest.

11 Market Street, built in the later 19th century, has a striking block pediment pilaster door piece with a foliated tympanum.

28-30 Harbour Street now houses the tourist information office. This late 18th century four bay rectangular-plan symmetrical house closes the view down to the waterfront along North Strand Street. This building also helps to form a visual pinch point and closure on the approach to the conservation area from the east.

Buildings at Risk

Harbour Office and weighbridge. This is an interesting category ‘C’ listed art deco single storey building with central clock tower. The harbour office has recently moved to a new office and therefore the future of the old building is uncertain. Proposals for retention of the former Harbour Office are encouraged.
General Observations

Agnew Crescent is a picturesque street in Stranraer and contributes positively to the waterfront experience and giving a strong urban line to the town rising to the south.

The waterfront and Agnew Park are important to the setting of the conservation area. They provide recreational space with extensive views up Loch Ryan. The increasing use of the water for recreational boating is also a factor that will contribute to the character and appreciation of the conservation area.

The Harbour Office and weighbridge is currently outwith the Conservation Area, and it is suggested that the boundary be extended to include this and the rest of the waterside area.

Agnew Crescent - Key positive aspects

Its location, opposite Agnew Park, on the waterfront and the curve of the street enhances its picturesque nature. This comes from the variety of building forms and colours.

Wide panoramic views of both the town centre and the immediate environs – The waterside is highly significant to the character of Stranraer. It offers much potential to accommodate activities as well as being of high landscape value.

Issues and Conflicts

The width of the roadway and the conflict with traffic flow means that there is a risk of the town centre and activities being detached from the waterside and environs.

The large expanse of car parks at the waterfront creates a very empty streetscape and separates the town from the waterfront. Since the relocation of the ferry port this has become a much more desolate area as there is not the daily amount of traffic previously catered for.

Traffic, traffic management and traffic engineering necessitated by the development and needs of the port have had a negative impact on the area, especially towards the eastern end.

Street furniture, signage and paving materials have until recently been largely installed in response to the needs of traffic rather than with an aesthetic developed from the historic character or the needs of pedestrians. There is a need to rationalise signage and consider the impact of signage and traffic management on the wider conservation area.

Insensitive alterations and loss of traditional architectural elements on buildings along the street have damaged the character of the area. The loss of the unifying character of traditional windows, materials and other details is now impacting on the visual quality of the area.

Agnew Crescent - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan (Smith Scott Mullan Associates) was agreed in November 2009. The Masterplan set out a single vision:

‘To reposition Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a distinctive and successful marine leisure destination’

The regeneration proposals set out the vision to develop an attractive seaside town and a high quality service hub for residents, businesses and visitors. To achieve this public, private and community partnerships will be required to attract investment to:

Develop Stranraer/Loch Ryan as a centre of excellence for marine leisure and green tourism:

Agnew Park

Following extensive public consultation through the summer in 2013, design options are being developed to improve the Agnew Park facilities building, improve services to the park and undertake enhancements to the public events space. Colleagues in DG Design are currently working up a mini Masterplan so further consultation can be undertaken around the concept designs. Realm enhancement work will also be undertaken to provide a harbour access ramp to enable full access to boats within the harbour and thus support the local economy.
Loch Ryan Management
Solway Firth Partnership has been commissioned to establish a better understanding of how different parts of Loch Ryan are used so that potential conflict arising from the changing patterns of use can be managed, wildlife can be protected, and appropriate development opportunities can be identified. Using marine planning techniques The Solway Firth Partnership have conducted structured interviews with a range of key stakeholders representing a wide variety of interests; and have used a questionnaire to gather information on issues including usage trend, and how the loch is used through the seasons, also how the loch can be developed as a resource for the community and as a driver for economic change. The final results of this work will be available for public consideration in March/April 2014.

The ambition is to make the waterfront a place where people choose to live, work, play and visit and create opportunities for new business, retail, homes and leisure developments.

Stranraer Townscape Heritage Initiative
The Conservation Area Character Assessment and subsequent management plan is being submitted to Council in 2014. The revised conservation area has been adopted by the Council and will help form the cornerstone of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for capital funding for the restoration of some of our listed buildings, a shop front scheme and employability and business opportunities.

Arts and Interpretation
The Art works project depicting Blind Jonnie – a famous local musician, is progressing – the commission has been tendered and an Artist has been selected to take this project forward. Gordon Rodgers has been selected to draw up the initial concepts for the design.

Enhancement Opportunity 5: Develop / implement the Stranraer Masterplan

The East Pier
The Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and appendices were initially adopted as supplementary guidance to the Wigtown Local Plan. As that plan has been replaced by the Local Development Plan the masterplan would no longer exist. However, as the masterplan is considered, by the Council, to remain up to date it has been readopted as supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan.

Enhancement Opportunity 6: Consider rationalisation of some of the underused open areas and former ferry car parks to create a more intimate environment to be enjoyed by walkers and for passive enjoyment.

Enhancement Opportunity 7: Consider the role and structure of planting throughout the area to maximise the setting and landscape quality of the area to create a green edge to the urban townscape behind and provide an attractive setting for the town and coast line.

Enhancement Opportunity 8: Consider minor changes to the street layout and materials at key gateways into the conservation area these would give visual pinch points to highlight the historic central area.
Historically the rear enclosures of properties fronting Fisher Street were at the water's edge or opened onto a narrow quayside adjacent to the old pier. This is shown on Wood's Map of 1843.

The area is a formally laid out section of the town with three parallel streets linking George Street to Fisher Street and the waterside.

The area is predominantly domestic consisting of 2-storey terraced housing lining the streets at the back of narrow footways. Buildings are similar in massing and scale but with some variation in eaves lines and ridge heights.

Fisher Street is more mixed, possibly reflecting its origins and association with the sea. Some industrial buildings remain though recent developments have seen the insertion of an architecturally modern house in place of workshops. To the north side the buildings are mostly the rear elevations of workshops and industrial buildings facing onto Market Street.

Across the four streets buildings are predominantly two storey, three bay terraced houses. Due to the relatively narrow width of the streets and sloping topography there is a strong urban feel and special local character. The majority of properties are harled or painted render with a wide variation in colour and tones; mostly relatively subdued though more recently some strident tones have been introduced.

There are very few pend entries giving these streets a strong unbroken boundary line between house and footway.

Both Queen Street and Princes Street now open onto informal car parks at their northern end. None of the original, traditional surfacing materials are evident all having been replaced with asphalt and concrete slabs.

King Street

Being a little wider and having more variation in its buildings King Street is distinct from both Queen Street and Princes Street.

The site of a former Church is now a car park. Opposite a fine 2-storey house is taller than adjacent dwellings and gives some definition to the street. The bakery and adjoining house nearby are of considerable historic importance.

Queen Street

Of similar character to the other streets, Queen Street is regular in its layout and architecture. Buildings are all 2-storey mostly domestic. A few have shops or other businesses at ground floor.

Its entry from George Street is marked by two interesting and contrasting buildings (noted above under George Street).

On the east side of the street is a large, pedimented, commercial building set back slightly from the main building line that nevertheless provides a dominant focal point amongst the domestic rows.

The junction with Fisher Street is marked by a house whose gable faces Queen Street; this with the adjoining smaller building and linking in to 10 Market Street provides an interesting and varied frontage.

Princes Street

Is altogether narrower and more regular than other streets, consisting of continuous terraces of modest properties which are mostly 2-storey, 3-bay. A pair of single-storey houses with over-large attic dormers remains.

The street is truncated where it meets Fisher Street, the area now given over to car parking.

All properties are rendered or harled and painted; some in strident blue which is out of place in the local streetscape.

Important Buildings:

King Street, Gillespie's Bakery and Shop is one of the few examples of a listing working commercial and retail property. The timber, gabled, commercial entrance with two double doors breaks the otherwise regular frontage. It has one of the largest individual footprints in the town centre, comprising extensive works to the rear.

14 King Street is an early 19th century prominent house with considerable architectural character due to its Ionic pilastered doorpiece with dentilled cornice and mixture of canted and segmental arched dormers. It also retains most of its original glazing.
Wellington House is the only prominent major building on Fisher Street though it is the rear of this building, partially hidden behind a high stone wall which faces the street.

14 King Street is an early 19th century prominent house with considerable architectural character due to its Ionic pilastered doorpiece with dentilled cornice and mixture of canted and segmental arched dormers. It also retains most of its original glazing.

55 Fisher Street has a classical pilastered entrance doorway.

General Observations

These streets are key in linking the town centre and waterfront both physically and visually. They have a strong urban character reinforced by their narrowness.

They are also very visible from the waterfront, and afford excellent views from this area up to the town centre.

Fisher Street - Key positive aspects

This area represents the early expansion of the town and the formalisation of the street pattern. Modest architecturally, their importance is in linking the town centre to the waterfront.

The domestic scale of properties in this area is relatively compact which creates a close and welcoming atmosphere, typical of Scottish coastal towns developed in this period.

Issues and Conflicts

The primary threat to the character of the terraces is the loss of original twelve pane sash and case windows, timber panelled front doors and inappropriate or unsympathetic colours being used on the main façades. Whilst a variety of colours should not be discouraged, the impact of ill-considered colours in such a narrow street can be negative rather than positive on the streetscape.

Insensitive alterations and loss of traditional architectural elements coupled with the use of modern materials and detailing is tending to damage the historic character and uniform detailing.

Fisher Street, King Street to Princes Street - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

The principal development site lies to the east of Fisher Street fronting Market Street – the area will need to be considered in relation to the development of the East Pier. However the site also links through to the town centre and its development must reflect the historic character and layout of adjacent areas. Small redevelopment sites are also emerging along Fisher Street. Scale and historic townscape qualities need to be carefully considered in any new proposals.

Enhancement Opportunity 9: Consider the progressive implementation of a streetscape enhancement scheme, to improve the quality and character of the street surfaces. The principal aims would include providing a welcoming approach to the waterside and making the area attractive to residents. Traffic management and parking may need to be reviewed.

The historic building line on the east side of King Street is interrupted by access to car parks for the commercial properties on George Street. The impact of this gap could be improved by a redesigned gateway, planting on the King Street entrance or partial redevelopment of street side plots.
Hanover Street is the principal route into the town from the east. Its narrow, tight urban form begins abruptly where it changes from the spacious, wide London Road at the junction with Bellevilla Road. As it meanders through the town centre it continues as Bridge Street and then after the junction with Lewis Street, becomes Sun Street.

The road is initially relatively straight but as it approaches the central area at Castle Street it drops and winds first to the right then rising to the left to meet Sun Street. This has the effect of creating a closed intimate urban character the impact of which is heightened by the narrowness of the street, the closeness of buildings and the almost uninterrupted building line, broken only for the roads leading left and right.

There are limited views along the street with the street alignment allowing the buildings to be revealed in a more subtle way as you move along its length.

Buildings are predominately 2-storeys, of varying scale and size, with a few remaining single-storey buildings towards the eastern end. In the central area a small number of buildings are 3-storey. There are many dormers indicating a widespread use of the attic floors. The building line is consistently at the back of the narrow footways.

Most of the street right through to Sun Street was well developed by the mid-19th century. However, the building styles and forms represented on the street frontage now show a nearly continuous development and re-development over the last two centuries.

Buildings with clearly 18th century origins stand juxtaposed with mid and late-19th century buildings, the latter with more ornate detailing and often much larger in scale. More modern buildings, some less successful architecturally, also punctuate the streetscape.

Finishes are varied giving a very mixed and eclectic feel to the character of the Street. Rendered, painted façades stand next to elegant ashlar fronted buildings.

The streets have a key junction with Castle Street and a secondary one with Hanover Square. The buildings to the south of Bridge Street are fairly imposing in their scale and impact. Two of these are banks. Uses in the area are predominately commercial, but with a strong mix of residential, particularly on upper floors, along its length.

Hanover Street Hanover Street retains a small-town high street character with several small shops, restaurants, public houses and other businesses. Several of the shop fronts are well-detailed traditional fronts; though a large number have been unsympathetically modernised.

The street is an important entry to the town centre and conservation area. Consideration should be given to an extension of the conservation area to take in the east end of Hanover Street.
Bridge Street
The curve and dip of Bridge Street give this a closed character that is heightened by the large 3-storey tenement building. This sits opposite an imposing bank and next to low 2-storey and ½-storey buildings.

Together the wide range of building styles and massing gives Bridge Street a complex urban character.

Sun Street
Though only a short part of one side of the street is in the designated area, Sun Street is an important part of the structure of the town. It continues the main east/west route from Hanover Street and rises onto the ridge overlooking the town centre.

Two modern developments at the western end highlight different approaches to modern architectural design. One overtly of its time and giving little recognition of the traditional scale and form of older parts of the town while the other seeks to use traditional scale and simplified detailing to blend in to the regular townscape. The latter when seen from across the road looking towards Church Street seems to bear a better relationship with the terraces opposite.

Important Buildings:

49-55 Hanover Street, late 19th Century, is described by Gifford as “Ruskinian Gothic, with carved beasts peering down from its end oriel.”

77 Hanover Street, dated 1902, a prominent corner building rising to 3 storeys its French pavilion roofed square tower gives it a strong presence in the streetscape. Although architecturally different the corner tower is mirrored in the very prominent block at 20 Bridge Street on the corner with South Strand Street.

Grain Store (9 Bridge Street) is currently in a state of disrepair and is listed on the Buildings at Risk Register Scotland. This brick 3 storey, L-shaped building is relatively plain, but it is of historic interest. It is exposed to view from Hanover Square and Mill Hill Street and is a key part of the historic townscape.

15 Bridge Street and 89-91 Hanover Street, two 19th century banks, are still in use for their original function.

Imposing in scale, and showing ornate and elegant detailing they provide a strong architectural statement in the street.

The Grapes Public House comprises two characterful two storey buildings of different date form. The taller 2-storey building, with windows having moulded architraves, stands in contrast to the lower ½-storey building where wall-head dormers break the eaves line. The buildings are united visually by the use of Pilasters and cornice to define window and door openings along the ground-floor frontage.

General Observations
An important commercial street that complements the principal central area around George Street. It has a high quality streetscape comprising closely set buildings of many styles and periods.
**Hanover Street - Key positive aspects**

The range and number of smaller shops gives it a distinct character that makes this part of Stranraer feels more like a traditional high street.

Ever-changing views and short vistas with variety of buildings and increasing architectural presence towards central area, the range of buildings, their scale and massing combined with the topography of the street give a high quality townscape.

**Issues and Conflicts**

Insensitive alterations and loss of traditional architectural elements and insensitive modern shop fronts and signage have damaged the character of the street right through from London Road to Sun Street.

The poor quality of the streetscape and dominance of vehicular traffic means that the pedestrian environment is compromised.

The entrance to Hanover Street from the east has been compromised, visually, by the accommodation of the Supermarket, the open space for car parking and the roundabout of pedestrians.

**Building at risk - Grain Store** – Unused former warehouse set behind the Bank fronting Bridge Street (see note above).

**Hanover Street to Sun Street - Development and Enhancement Opportunities**

Enhancement Opportunity 10: Implement shop fronts repair and improvements scheme with emphasis on the retention and reintroduction of traditional frontage.
Part 2 - Managing the Conservation Area

Managing the conservation area is a delicate balance involving a wide variety of initiatives. The aim is to protect those aspects that are cherished and contribute to its historic character. In addition it must allow good new development to enhance the area as well as secure its economic future.

Management of the conservation area must also be based on an assessment of the significance of character of the present area and understand the risks to that character.

Assessing the Significance

Introduction
The purpose of this section is to identify those elements of the Stranraer Conservation Area (as amended) that are highly significant and underpin its character. The following section draws together the features, open spaces, vistas and significant buildings referred to in the previous description of the conservation area.

This analysis, together with the Issues and conflicts noted in the area descriptions above, will help to inform the more detailed or site specific management of the area.

Guidance on how development should proceed within historic settings and how the existing qualities and character of the region’s historic built areas can be kept is contained in the Supplementary Guidance - The Historic Built Environment being drawn up under the Local Development Plan.

Overarching Features and Assessment of Townscape

A number of broader features of the conservation area are important to its character and appearance. They need to be considered in any scheme of development.

The complexities underlying the townscape of Stranraer are what give the area its richness and character but it is one that is united by simple traditional detailing in the older buildings.

Although recent development has tended to be more generic and less closely tied to local traditions and details, the townscape overall imparts a special quality that give the town an identifiable sense of place and one that helps to set Stranraer apart from similar towns elsewhere.

To that end it can be argued that the townscape of Stranraer is highly significant and worthy of good stewardship in accordance with this appraisal and supporting planning guidelines.

Broader features of the conservation area and the townscape that are important include:

- Wider area vistas, views and panoramas, particularly of the conservation area and town centre, when seen from the waterside and on the approach across the Loch.
- The quality of the townscape being the combined effect of streets, spaces, buildings and their architectural form, scale, massing and details as enhanced by the rising topography.
- The historic pattern of streets, their hierarchy and building plot boundaries and divisions.
- The quality, diversity and traditional integrity of the historic buildings of the town.

Assessment of Spaces

The principal open spaces across the conservation area are significant in underpinning the character of Stranraer town centre. Their retention and sensitive management is fundamental to maintaining this character.

Such spaces work at two levels; first as areas that people visit, use and enjoy being in. Secondly, they work in a wider context contrasting with and providing a setting for adjacent urban areas.

The most important spaces and vistas that need to be considered in how any proposal for development might impact on them include:

- The open aspect of the waterfront and Agnew Park;
- Castle Square;
- Small, sometimes enclosed, grave yards; and
- The High Kirk of Stranraer and Sheuchan Cemetery in providing foreground interest in views down on to the town as well as providing a setting above the rising townscape when seen from the piers and waterside.
Other spaces that may not have the direct positive impact of those listed above, but whose significance lies in their management and scope for improvement through judicious development or landscaping include:

- Market Street / Fisher Street car park;
- Areas adjacent to road junctions at King Street, Bridge Street and Lewis Street;
- South Strand Street;
- Car parks off King Street and Mill Hill Street (this adjacent to designated area and very important to setting).

Assessment of Buildings

Some of the more significant individual buildings have been noted in the character area appraisals above. Overall it has been noted that despite many changes and some modern intervention the majority of older buildings in the conservation area have a rich character and fine detailing and setting that is both significant and worthy of protection.

Aspects of buildings and groups of buildings, having high significance, that need to be considered in any proposal for development include:

- The setting and views of the Castle. These are mostly relatively confined but do include views along South Strand Street and glimpses of the upper parts of the building from the harbour or higher vantage points to the south of the George Street;
- The setting and context of the Museum in George Street. This is a highly significant historic building;
- The setting and impact of churches, especially that of the High Kirk and the former Church of Scotland on Church Street; and
- The intimate, ever-changing townscape vistas along the winding streets, especially Hanover Street and George Street. Here key buildings briefly become focal points as the viewer travels along the street.

The more important individual buildings have been highlighted in the character area descriptions above.

Due to the significance of the townscape and buildings across the area, any supporting design statement for development in the conservation area will need to include reference to buildings and spaces that may be impacted either directly or indirectly.

Designated Buildings and Areas

Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings have statutory protection. They are designated at national level by Historic Environment Scotland. These areas and buildings have been assessed as having special significance.

In considering development that might impact on these, apart from direct physical impacts, it is important to consider aspects such as setting, both nearby as might be affected by development on neighbouring sites as well as more distant impacts where the designated site or building has a wider townscape value. An example of this would be the views along George Street that encompass the Museum and then on to the rising levels of High Street.

Another example might be any of a myriad of views and viewpoints from, or along, the waterfront where the backdrop of the town is key. Development, say of a larger or taller building that might interfere with this relationship, either on the waterfront or in the lower streets, Market street or Fisher Street, say, would need to be very carefully considered and if necessary modelled to gauge the wider impact.

Accessibility for All

There is a need to incorporate physical changes to buildings, entrances in particular, to allow for safe and convenient access for all users of the town centre. This may impact on the design of existing frontages, or in the case of new buildings may, in part, determine certain aspects of the design. Whilst there should be no impediment to incorporating access requirements, consideration does need to be given to the visual impact of elements such as ramps and railings, which should be sensitively incorporated into the townscape.

In rare cases, where for example a fine stepped entrance may be an important part of the architectural make-up of the building, alternative, less intrusive means of accessing the building may need to be found. Such measure may include the use of an alternative access door or the use of temporary arrangements.

Further guidance is given in Supplementary Guidance – the Historic Built Environment.
Potential Threats to the Area

As with all developing and economically active town centres Stranraer faces a number of challenges. Wider economic challenges, the retraction of town-centre retailing and changing public expectations are combining to put pressures on the town that were not there before.

The loss of the ferry service and changes at the port initially provoking a downturn in investment has been a further threat to the townscape. Hopefully the promotion of Stranraer as a centre for leisure boating and investment in pontoons and associated development will bring much needed investment. However, conflict with the historic character of the area needs to be sensitively resolved.

These pressures and changes affect investment in the area and so cumulatively impacts on the economic well-being of the area.

There is also a legacy of a time when the need to protect the historic built environment was not recognised to the same extent that is being encouraged today. The resultant development in the town centre and around the port and leading into Charlotte Street together with incremental changes, although undertaken with the best of intentions, are not always as we might now wish for.

In the area appraisals above a number of issues and conflicts were identified. These are here brought together for clarity. Any that are specific to a location are noted separately below.

Wider challenges or threats to the character of the conservation area

Gap Sites, other vacant sites and the open aspect of car parks – This includes the loss of individual buildings and more widely the loss of enclosure and widespread demolition, principally a legacy of the mid-20th century as part of improvements associated with the port and industrial clearances. Some of the sites are now used for car parking.

Underused and vacant buildings and poor condition of some buildings - Across the conservation area there are examples of buildings that for a variety of reasons are either no longer suited to modern needs or have simply been neglected.

Sometimes the issue is simply a lack of regular maintenance of, say the rainwater goods, which quickly leads to blockages and water damage to other parts of the building.

Their deteriorating condition and poor appearance harms the appearance of the area and can have a knock-on effect on the viability of neighbouring properties.

Insensitive alterations to traditional buildings and use of inappropriate materials – Often the result of misguided, but well intentioned, works or repairs using inappropriate materials or less durable modern materials and detailing such works can have a damaging effect on a traditional building. The use of cement mortar, for example, can exacerbate a dampness problem even though the original intention might have been preventative.

Loss of architectural detailing and loss of original features – This is a fairly widespread issue across the conservation area. Some losses result from neglect and poor maintenance where original fabric or architectural elements deteriorate to the extent that they need to be replaced and the replacement is inappropriately detailed or specified. In other cases it may be the result of misguided attempts to improve the property, again using wrong details and specification.

Large scale modern buildings or out of scale extensions - This can include buildings that may not necessarily be over-large in themselves but whose design or layout impacts on the smaller scale of the historic environment.

Traffic management measures that are inappropriate to the setting or context of the surrounding area – There are necessary legislative standards that have to be met, however, there is still scope to consider the types of works and materials that whilst still serving to improve traffic safety can be undertaken in a visually sensitive manner using, sometimes, traditional materials. To help minimise the visual ‘clutter’ and stop the proliferation of signs and posts, street signage and information or direction signs can be placed in coordinated groups, on shared poles or placed on existing structures.

Poor streetscape, poorly maintained surfaces and visual clutter – Whilst it sometimes is the result of traffic management measures poor streetscape can arise from many agencies,
The variety and poor detailing of modern shop fronts and inappropriate alterations to older frontages is a significant threat to the character and appearance in and around George Street and Hanover Street. These have affected the scale at street level and eroded some of the streets’ special character. The modern and corporate style of some of the signage is also out of keeping with this location. This is particularly damaging on those commercial properties which span more than one feu with one large sign.

All too often older shop fronts have been altered using modern materials and a lack of appropriate design and detailing. Equally important is the detrimental impact of security shutters. These are having a marked impact on the character and quality of the streets of central Stranraer.

The Council’s Shop Fronts guide, which is in preparation, will give guidance on the essential elements and design criteria that need to be considered if the quality of the shopping environment is to be maintained. Pressure from the larger multiple chains for standardised treatment of frontages should be resisted.

Plant and equipment, such as air-conditioning units, and telecommunications equipment attached to buildings or set inappropriately in public areas – These are becoming increasingly intrusive. Even when placed on the rear or less important elevations of individual buildings, these installations often impact on the minor back streets to the properties.

Energy efficiency and the introduction of renewable technologies – A variety of installations but mostly roof mounted solar panel could have a very significant impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Development that restricts or detrimentally impacts on the more important vistas and views into or out of the conservation area – It is important that the assessment of new development takes into account wider views as well as immediate neighbour impact.

Specific Threats
Some of the wider threats mentioned above are highlighted by specific cases within the conservation area where, for example, a poorly maintained building is blighting its immediate surroundings, or inappropriate interventions in recent decades have significantly impacted on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Such examples should also form the first level of potential enhancement schemes or at least management of the sites to reduce their negative impact. As such they are included in the suggested enhancement schemes below. However, as most are in private ownership, liaison and detailed discussion and potentially further support from public bodies may be necessary. This may also have funding implications for the Council that need to be considered separately from this appraisal. These include:

The lack of a clear coherent pedestrian route through North and South Strand Street. In addition the potential strength of this key route across the town centre has been weakened by the introduction of parking areas in North Strand Street

The massing and detailing of the modern block of flats on the corner of Sun Street, which dates from the 1970’s, is out of scale and character with the rest of the street. Good management of the property, including painting the façade and appropriate boundary treatment, together with judicious planting, could mitigate the impact.

The width of the roadway at the waterfront and the conflict with traffic flow means that there is a risk of the town centre and activities being detached from the waterside and environs.

The large expanse of car parks at the waterfront creates a very empty streetscape and separates the town from the waterfront. Since the relocation of the ferry port this area is under used and its open character is relatively stark and unwelcoming.

The entrance to Hanover Street from the east has been compromised, visually, by the accommodation of the Supermarket, the open space for car parking and the roundabout of pedestrians.
Management Options

Introduction
The purpose of this section is to set out some of the conservation area management options open to the Council.

• Review of conservation area boundary;
• Conservation area management plan;
• Planning policies and guidance;
• Enhancement schemes.

The Management Plan will be the primary document that sets out the strategy for the future stewardship of the area. However, a number of issues arising from the Appraisal are noted below and it is intended that these should be taken forward to the Management Plan. That will include the identification of resources and establishing priorities for action.

Review and Recommended Alteration to Boundary
A review of the existing boundary of the conservation area has been undertaken as part of this appraisal.

Following public consultation the Council determined to extend the conservation area to include sections of Hanover Street and Agnew Park and Waterfront.

See Plan on page 17.

Conservation Area Management Plan
The protection of the conservation area would benefit from a separate, detailed management plan that would guide the prioritisation and development of conservation and enhancement initiatives.

Whilst some aspects of the short to medium term management of the Stranraer conservation area are set out in this appraisal a more detailed Management Plan should also be developed based on this appraisal. Its main aims will be to:

• Develop further the potential schemes referred to in this Appraisal as outlined in the section ‘Conservation Area Enhancement’ and define new enhancement schemes;
• Set priorities for projects and enhancement schemes;
• Assist in identifying potential funding and other resources for further enhancement of the area;
• Consider how to promote wider engagement of community and public interests and to promote awareness of, and interest in, the importance of the conservation area and the quality of the historic built environment to the well-being of the town.

Provide a framework within which the many bodies, public and private, and individuals, especially those responsible for the care and repair of properties in the Stranraer conservation area can work together to achieve the wider aims set in this appraisal and as enshrined in legislation, namely, to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Some critical sites and areas may need to be the subject of their own plans and guidance documents or development briefs. The Stranraer Waterfront Masterplan Report is a good example of the approach required in such a complex but important area of the town.

It is therefore recommended that a Conservation Area Management Plan is prepared based on the finding of this Appraisal and the above framework and aims.

Planning Policies and Guidance
This document will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance under Local Development Plan 2 but as an appraisal it offers only limited planning guidance. Its purpose is to stimulate and develop an understanding of the historic environment of Stranraer, and of the sense of place.

The Appraisal, under the framework of current legislation and government advice, and supported by a more detailed Conservation Area Management Plan and further Supplementary Guidance, seeks to promote an attractive mix of old and new, which matches the quality of the historic environment, with high quality new design that respects and enhances the area for the benefit of all both now and in the future.

Appendix 1 sets out the primary policy documents that impact on the management of the conservation area. These include:

• The Local Development Plan (LDP2) – with supporting Supplementary Guidance;
• Caring for the Built Environment – Conservation Area Supplementary
Also detailed are further studies and strategy documents that impact on the town centre:

- **Stranraer Masterplan 2009**;
- **Stranraer Traffic Assessment 2011**;
- **Stranraer Waterfront and East Pier – Design and Development Brief – January 2013**.

In addition the national framework for policy in respect of the historic environment is given in:

- **Scottish Planning Policy 2014**
- **Scottish Historic Environment Policy - 2016**

The Council is also developing Supplementary Guidance under the emergent Local Development Plan 2. This will give detailed policy guidance in respect of development that impact on the historic environment.

Proposals for new buildings within the conservation area must now be accompanied either by a Design Statement (local developments) or a Design and Access Statement (major and national developments). Design and Access Statements set out the rationale behind the design and access arrangements of new development. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 imposes a duty to consider the needs of disabled people in development proposals.

Further statutory powers are also open to the Council. See Appendix 1 Section 1.3.

**Developing further guidance**

Some enhancement schemes can be considered to have a general scope and may be applied widely across the area. These include:

Improve the design and quality of new and infill development – Through development management, based on guidelines in this appraisal, the Conservation Area Management Plan and the Supplementary Guidance ensure that new development follows the basic design criteria established and evident in each character area. These will include massing, proportion and use of materials. Modern design will be encouraged if it contributes positively to the area and does not overwhelm or distract from the historic townscape.

Improve the design of new shop fronts and encourage the reinstatement of traditional shops – In line with guidance on shop fronts, contained in the Supplementary Guidance, ensure that good traditional shop fronts are retained and sensitively repaired, and manage signage to ensure that it is part of the design of the shop front especially in the use of traditional fascias. Where new shop fronts or redevelopment of existing inappropriate shop fronts are proposed ensure that the design of the new front is appropriate to the setting and the building. In some case well-proportioned simple modern frontages may be a welcome design solution.

The use of intrusive security shutters should also be prevented. These, when closed, have a significantly detrimental impact both visually and in creating dead frontages that discourage use of the street when shops are not trading.

Encourage property owners to undertake property repairs regularly and in a manner that is based on sound conservation principles especially in the case of older buildings and using traditional materials and techniques – In line with advice in the Supplementary Guidance and other conservation publications such as the Historic Environment Scotland series ‘INFORM Guides’.

The Conservation Area Management Plan will consider whether or not other initiatives can be resourced that may include grant funding and staff resources to develop a more detailed building by building appraisal that would enable the prioritisation of repair assistance and other, possibly statutory, measures. See the note in Appendix 1 on Further Strategies that outlines other measures open to the Council.

**Public Realm Improvements**

*Continuation with street surface renewals and maintain existing traditional elements* - Considerations might include whether or not distinctive materials or detailing should be used in different areas in order to differentiate parts of the town centre.

Where traditional materials exist, either overtly such as the granite kerbing, or perhaps hidden, such as granite setts under tar macadam these should be retained and reinstated. Where they cannot be used in situ, setts should be recovered and cleaned for re-use elsewhere.

The Conservation Area Management Plan will consider this aspect in greater detail and in consultation with the Council’s Roads Services a design guide for such works will be developed.
Upgrading and improving the environment public realm areas – This is a general aspiration but as some areas are publicly adopted they can be upgraded by the Council as funding permits; though many may also require the co-operation and support of the adjacent landowners. Some of the public realm areas that could be considered include the smaller car parks in the centre and spaces such as at the junction of George Street and King Street.

Consideration should also be given to the design and quality of street furniture. The variety of bus shelters, lamp standards, bollards, pedestrian barriers, waste bins and other, often intrusive, structures and elements leads to a discordant and visually cluttered effect. The quality of the townscape could be greatly enhanced by a carefully detailed and co-ordinated approach to these elements. Any historic items that remain should be retained. New items do not necessarily need to be ‘historic’ in design as this usually means a poor copy of earlier highly detailed forms. Good simple modern units using high quality materials should be installed.

The role of public art could also be considered and where appropriate good quality artworks installed on suitable sites provided that they enhance and contribute in a positive way to the area. An added bonus would be their relevance to the area or to historic characters associated with the area.

Improvement of traffic management measures especially signage and lighting – As with street furniture above, a co-ordinated approach to traffic management would help to reduce clutter. Rationalisation of signs would enhance the street scene allowing buildings and views to dominate again. Regular audits of signage should be undertaken to identify unnecessary signage.

The Conservation Area Management Plan will consider this aspect in greater detail and in consultation with the Council’s Roads Services a design guide for such works will be developed.

Other Initiatives

Promote a wider appreciation of the built historic environment including the promotion of training for property owners and contractors – Broader Council wide initiatives that are promoted through the development of Supplementary Guidance under the emergent Local Development Plan will be considered. Such initiatives will not only focus on the implementation of good conservation practices but will also promote the wider understanding of the historic built environment and develop an appreciation of its value to the area and its communities.

Develop and build on the Town Centre History Trail. Currently there is a town centre history trail with information plaques at key locations. However this is somewhat lost and a more cohesive scheme could be considered to give these more appeal and raise awareness.

The Conservation Area Management Plan will consider whether or not initiatives such as these can be resourced. This may include the promotion of training for property owners and contractors, the production of informative material on the conservation of the town, the promotion of heritage trails and guides specific to Stranraer town centre.

The Council has started to develop technical guidance on aspects of traditional building conservation and repair. It is proposed that these should be extended as part of the Council’s offering to enable better understanding of the principles.

It should be noted that this appraisal does not commit the Council to any specific funding for the projects suggested above. Separate consideration of funding and priorities will need to be given by the Council based on the development of a prioritised programme once a detailed management plan has been developed and funding streams identified.
Conservation Area Enhancement Environmental Improvement Schemes
At present Dumfries and Galloway Council are working on a number of enhancement schemes in Stranraer. They are summarised below, and updates to this or further schemes should be included in future revisions of this CACA as necessary.

*East Pier and Eastern Waterfront*
With the loss of Stranraer ferry port Dumfries and Galloway Council, in partnership with Stena Line, are promoting the redevelopment of the area as a town extension. It is envisaged that this will be a mixed development including residential, retail, commercial and leisure elements. The Council has produced the Stranraer East Pier and Waterfront – Design and Development Brief which aims to guide the development and deliver high quality development appropriate to its location adjacent to a historic town centre.

*Stranraer Marina*
Dumfries and Galloway Council has been developing a marina facility in the harbour adjacent to West Pier since the provision of the first pontoons in 2009. It plans to increase the size of this facility, possibly in partnership with third parties.

*Breastwork and Market Street*
In line with the recommendation of the Stranraer Masterplan the Council plans to carry out a series of environmental improvements in the area.

Facelift Initiatives
This initiative supports and encourages the repainting of facades and shop fronts. Exact details of support have still to be confirmed but it is anticipated that this may be financial, technical, organisational or in relation to acceptable colours. In relation to colours this should be considered as part of a more comprehensive town wide scheme.

Location Specific Enhancement Opportunities
This Appraisal highlights opportunities for action under each Character Area and suggests localised enhancement opportunities.

However, they are presently not funded and may include works that impact on both public and private buildings and areas. The responsibility for initiating works generally rests with the property owner.

The specific local enhancement opportunities arise from the issues and conflicts identified in the appraisal should be taken forward to the management plan.

The list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive but is intended to serve as a starting reference point for further action to be explored in the Conservation Area Management Plan.

*Note: Advice on new development and making changes to existing buildings in the conservation area is contained in the Supplementary Guidance on the Historic Built Environment being developed under the Local Development Plan which should be read in conjunction with this appraisal.*
Part 3 - Further Information and Appendices

The Appendices contain more detailed information on:

- **Policies, Further Studies and Strategies** – listing policy documents and studies that have relevance to the town centre
- **Statutory Designations** - Scheduled Sites and Listed Buildings;
- **Glossary of Terms.**

In addition the following information may be of assistance if you need to pursue any particular aspect raised in the appraisal.

Contacts:

To discuss development proposals
Phone the Council on 030 33 33 3000 and ask for the Area Planning Officer at

Sun Street, Stranraer. Or write to:

Council Offices, Ashwood House, Sun Street, Stranraer, DG9 7JJ.
Email: pe.wigtown.stranraer.planning@dumgal.gov.uk

To discuss broader conservation issues arising from this Appraisal:

Phone the Council on 030 33 33 3000 and ask for the Heritage Policy Officer.

Or write to

Council Offices, Kirkbank House, English Street, Dumfries DG1 2HS
Email: listedbuildings@dumgal.gov.uk

External Publications:

Historic Environment Scotland have produced a comprehensive and very informative series of leaflets and guidance under the initiative ‘INFORM’ that cover many aspects of repair and maintenance of older properties.


hs.cgoutreach@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Historic Environment Scotland Technical Advice Notes (Enquiries on above link).
Appendix 1 - Policies and Strategies

This section outlines the legislation that impacts on the conservation area and relevant principal policy documents and studies.

Council Policies and Guidance

Local Development Plan
The Council's Local Development Plan 2 is being prepared with adoption targeted for 2019. The LDP2 will be supported by Supplementary Guidance on a diverse range of issues including the Historic Built Environment.

Historic Built Environment Supplementary Guidance
This document intends to assist individuals and organisations who wish to develop proposals in the historic environment. It provides steps to follow which are the necessary to find a balance between preservation and change.

Other Studies and Strategies

(Smith, Scott, Mullan Associates.) Formulation of an Urban Design Strategy and Master Plan to guide the redevelopment of Stranraer Waterfront.

Stranraer Traffic Assessment 2011
(MVA Consultancy) An assessment of transport issues in Stranraer Town Centre and Waterfront in relation to the proposals in the Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Master Plan.

Stranrae Waterfront Coastal Flood Risk Assessment, May 2011 (Terrenus CDH Ltd) This document gives a detailed assessment of coastal flood risk in Stranraer and recommends various mitigation measures.

Stranraer Waterfront and East Pier – Design and Development Brief – January 2013
This document builds on the Stranraer Waterfront Masterplan and Urban Design Guide giving a refined layout and more detailed design and development guidance.

Statutory and Other Powers
The Council also has statutory powers to assist with the management of the built environment. Ranging from development management to the service of notices requiring that a building owner undertakes basic repairs to powers enabling the compulsory acquisition of land or buildings that may be required to enable the proper planning and development of an area. Most of these powers are discretionary and are usually dependent on financial and other resources being available to enable direct action by the Council. The principle powers that impact on the management of conservation areas are outlined below.

Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006
Planning consent is required for most forms of development and the Council, as planning authority, has a statutory duty to consider development proposals. Development Management is the process through which decisions are made on applications for planning permission. The process is governed by law and operates within a framework of guidance from Scottish Government, together with policies and advice set out in the Council’s planning policy documents. (See paragraph 1.1 above). The primary objectives of the Development Management Service are to:

• Ensure that any development, which involves change to our physical surroundings, is appropriate for its function and location.

• Give information and advice on planning. Consider planning applications for development and monitor progress. Determine planning applications either under delegated powers or by making a recommendation to the Planning Applications Committee.

Where planning permission is refused defend the decision at any subsequent appeal or public inquiry. Investigate breaches of planning control and, if appropriate, take enforcement action. There are a number of other measures that the Council can invoke ranging from the control and removal of advertising placards or posters to the compulsory acquisition of land to enable certain development to take place. Of most direct relevance is:

Section 179 - Notice requiring the proper maintenance of land. This means that if it is considered that the amenity of the area is being adversely affected by the condition of adjacent land or buildings the Council can require the owner or occupier to abate the adverse affect.
This is limited to a remedy of the adverse effect and cannot necessarily remove or improve the underlying cause. For example, it may be able to have debris removed from a site or require a building to be painted but cannot enforce the restoration of the building which might be the main cause of the issues relating to the site.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997

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

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

Compulsory acquisition of ‘A’ listed building, under section 42, following the service of a Repairs Notice and failure to comply with that notice. The Council may proceed to acquire the building, usually with a view to passing it on to a body such as a Buildings Preservation Trust, to enable its proper repair and restoration.

Section 49 – Urgent works to preserve unoccupied listed buildings. The Council may serve notice on an owner of its intention to undertake emergency works necessary to stop the deterioration or loss of ‘A’ listed building and to recover the cost of such works from the owner. The Council is limited to only undertaking the minimum works necessary which would for the most part only comprise temporary measures such as blocking off windows, fixing temporary roof coverings or propping unsafe masonry etc.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2014

This Act of the Scottish Parliament makes provision about housing standards and provides for the giving of assistance by local authorities in connection with work carried out in relation to houses. Key elements of the Act that may be relevant to Conservation Areas are set out below:

Chapter 2 requires a local authority to prepare a strategy for dealing with housing that is below the Tolerable Standard and to prepare a Scheme of Assistance to improve house conditions.

Chapter 4 defines the statutory repairing standard that has to be met by a private landlord.

Chapter 5 describes how the local authority can use work notices and gives a power to carry out the required work when the owner fails to do so.

Chapter 6 gives the local authority the power to issue maintenance orders to ensure they are kept to a reasonable standard.
**Appendix 2 - Listed Buildings**

The following table shows buildings that are statutorily listed within Stranraer Burgh. The category of listing is shown in the right hand column. These buildings are indicated on the Character Area Map in the Appraisal. Buildings can be added or removed from the list at any time so there is a risk that this list may become out of date during the lifetime of this document and therefore readers are encouraged to check the listed status of properties by contacting the Council or visiting the Historic Environment Scotland website: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

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Appendix 3 - Glossary of Terms

Glossary of Terms Used in The Appraisal and Appendices

**Aggregate**
Small stones or rock chippings used in mortar for harling.

**Ashlar**
Finely worked stone, where the blocks are cut to even faces having a square edge and laid in even course with narrow joints.

**Astragal**
Commonly the glazing bar between window panes. It is also a classical moulding.

**Bell Cote**
A small housing for a bell or bells, usually of masonry at a gable, but sometimes a timber structure on the roof-ridge.

**Buttress**
A brick or stone structure built against another structure to support it.

**Clachan**
A small village or hamlet.

**Cornice**
Mostly used to refer to the decorative junction between the walls and ceilings. It is also a classical architectural feature and a projecting band of stonework to mark an upper storey of a building.

**Cupola**
Small domically roofed structure crowning a roof or dome.

**Denudation**
The process by which the removal of material, through means of erosion and weathering leads to a reduction of elevation and relief in landforms and landscapes.

**Dormer**
Window projecting from the roof slope. Dormers can be wall-head or wholly in the roof.

**Facade**
The face or front of a building.

**Fascia**
A wide band of material covering the ends of roof rafters in a building.

**Fenestration**
The arrangement of windows in a building.

**Finials**
A distinctive section or ornament at the apex of a roof, canopy, etc. on a building.

**Gable**
Peaked external wall normally at the end of a pitched roof, also usually at right angles to the front wall.

**Granite**
Dense, crystalline rock used for building. Main source in Dumfries and Galloway is Dalbeattie and Creetown; both are of a distinctive grey colour.

**Harl**
Scottish form of roughcast, external finish to walls. It consists of lime and aggregate and thrown or “dashed” against the wall. Also known as wet dash.

**Isthmus**
A narrow strip of land connecting two larger land areas.

**Lime putty**
Lime mortar before the addition of sand or aggregates. It is make by slaking quick-lime in water.
**Margin**
The framing in stone of window and door openings. Sandstone was most commonly used as it could be worked to give good even and flat surfaces against which the joinery could fit.

**Massing**
The cumulative volume of individual or groups of buildings; their apparent size and volume.

**Mortar**
Traditionally made from lime putty and sand or other aggregate is used to bed building stones.

**Pagoda**
An ornamental structure of that design, erected in a park or garden.

**Panelled Door**
Form of joinery construction used in later and higher quality doors with timber framing panels. Doors are commonly 4 or 6 panelled.

**Pends**
Openings or passageways through or between buildings from the street to rear courts or yards.

**Pilasters**
The flat version of a column, consisting of a slim rectangle projecting from a wall; used also of plain piers or pilasters without classical orders which are more correctly termed pilaster strips.

**Rail**
Horizontal member in window sashes and doors. Meeting rails are the two elements that meet, usually at the centre, when sash and case windows are closed. (see **Style** below).

**Render**
Smooth coating, usually on external, walls. Usually refers to cement mortar render a modern and cheaper alternative to stucco.

**Ridge**
The apex or upper meeting between two roof slopes.

**Sandstone**
One of the main building stones of the area ranging from deep red to light buff and grey. It is mostly of a high quality and can be carved to produce fine architectural details.

**Sash and case**
Traditional form of window with two sliding sashes balanced by weights in the timber case.

**Scale**
Used in connection with buildings and townscape the relative size.

**Secondary glazing**
Inner glazing fixed separately from the main window to provide insulation and soundproofing.

**Skew**
Part of a gable wall which is above the roof slope, it is usually capped by flat bedded skew stones.

**Skewputt**
The bottom most stone of a line of skew stones. It is sometimes decoratively finished and usually projects from the wall.

**Slates**
Thin flat stones used to cover roofs and used as hanging to walls and dormer sides.

**Slates, grading**
The method of laying slates in diminishing sized courses up the roof slope. One advantage is that the larger, thicker, slates having fewer joints are at the lower part of the roof.

**Stucco**
Fine grained, hard plaster used for precise decorative finishes to walls.

**Style**
The vertical side element of window sashes and doors. (see **Rail** above).

**Tympanum**
An architectural element located within the arch or pediment.
Notes

1. Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), December 2012. Para 1.2;
2. SHEP. Para 1.13 and 1.14, for Key Outcomes and Key Principles;
3. Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997;
5. See: www.dumgal.gov.uk/LDP;
6. Design and Access Statements, Notes for Guidance (DAS 1.11), Dumfries and Galloway Council. This guidance note gives details of the legislative requirements for Design and Access Statements and outlines what is needed to comply;
7. Supplementary Guidance, supporting the policies in the emergent Local Development Plan are now in preparation. They include Supplementary Guidance; Design Guidance for the Historic Built Environment, and Supplementary Guidance; Design Quality of New Development. These are region-wide policy documents that provide the necessary further detail for policies in the LDP. Their purpose is to help deliver a higher quality development and to enable a greater understanding of the quality of the historic built environment.