



Historic England

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management

Historic England Advice Note 1



Summary

This revised guidance sets out ways to manage change in a way that conserves and enhances historic areas through conservation area designation, appraisal and management. It is intended to offer advice to all those involved in managing conservation areas so that the potential of historic areas worthy of protection is fully realised, the need for community and owner consultation examined, and the benefits of management plans to manage change, and achieve regeneration and enhancement, fully exploited. Advice on appraisal of conservation areas is also given, as assistance in demonstrating special interest and articulating character, guiding investment, and in developing a management plan.

It is one of a series of Historic England Advice Notes

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Front cover:

Berwick upon Tweed - general view from Spittal showing riverside walls

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Introduction

- 1 The purpose of this Historic England Advice note is to provide information on conservation area designation, appraisal and management to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment legislation, the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In addition to these documents, this advice should be read in conjunction with the relevant Good Practice Advice and Historic England advice notes. Alternative approaches may be equally acceptable, provided they are demonstrably compliant with legislation and national policy objectives.
- 2 The advice in this document, in accordance with the NPPF, emphasises that work in designating, appraising and managing conservation areas should be no more than is necessary, and that activities to conserve or invest need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected and the impact on the significance of those heritage assets. At the same time those carrying out this work need enough information to understand the issues (NPPF, paragraph 192). This is particularly important in light of the policy in paragraph 127 of the NPPF, alerting local planning authorities to ensure that conservation area designation is justified.
- 3 The contribution that historic areas make to our quality of life is widely recognised. They are a link to the past that can give us a sense of continuity and stability and they have the reassurance of the familiar which can provide a point of reference in a rapidly changing world. The way building traditions and settlement patterns are superimposed and survive over time will be unique to each area. This local distinctiveness can provide a catalyst for regeneration and inspire well designed new development which brings economic and social benefits which are valued by both local planning authorities and local communities in the almost 10,000 conservation areas which have been designated.
- 4 Change is inevitable, however, not necessarily harmful and often beneficial, and this guidance sets out ways to manage change in a way that conserves and enhances historic areas through conservation area designation, appraisal and management. Conservation areas can contribute to sustainable development under the NPPF in all its three dimensions (NPPF, paragraph 7). However, 497 conservation areas were judged by English Heritage in 2014 to be at risk through inappropriate new development, neglect or deliberate damage (the gathering of local authority information on conservation areas at risk has provided information on over 80% of conservation areas in England).
- 5 This Historic England Advice note supersedes *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: English Heritage Guidance* (2011).

1 Designation

Protection Offered by Designation as a Conservation Area

- 6 Conservation area designation introduces controls over the way owners can alter or develop their properties. However, owners of residential properties generally consider these controls to be beneficial because they also sustain, and/or enhance, the value of property within it. This has been confirmed by recent research by the London School of Economics; see G Ahlfeldt, N Holman and N Wendland, *An Assessment of the effects of Conservation Areas on Value*, London School of Economics, 2012 - <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current-research/social-and-economic-research/role-and-impact-of-heritage/value-conservation-areas/>.
- 7 These controls include:
- the requirement in legislation and national planning policies to preserve and/or enhance - see Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, paragraphs 002 (reference ID:18a-002-20140306); 025 (reference ID: 18a-025-20140306); 047 (reference ID: 18a-047-20140306)
 - local planning policies which pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area
 - control over demolition of unlisted buildings
 - control over works to trees
 - fewer types of advertisements which can be displayed with deemed consent
 - restriction on the types of development which can be carried out without the need for planning permission (permitted development rights)

Identifying Potential in Conservation Areas

- 8 Conservation areas may be identified in a number of ways, including:
- Historic characterisation studies in response to development proposals, for master-planning and as part of evidence collection for the local development plan
 - Local communities working on neighbourhood plans may identify areas which have a special interest to them but with historic associations previously not understood
- 9 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF cautions local planning authorities to ensure that an area justifies designation as a conservation area because of its special architectural or historic interest, so that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.
- 10 Further to the reasons given in the PPG as to their usefulness, regular reviews may also highlight areas where de-designation may be necessary through degradation of all or part of the conservation area (see paragraph 18 for boundary revision in such cases). With appropriate management procedures in place, the character and appearance of a conservation area should not change rapidly and the review might typically result in an addendum to the existing appraisal, recording:
- what has changed
 - confirming (or redefining) the special interest that warrants designation
 - setting out any new recommendations; and
 - revising the management strategy. The updated appraisal and related management proposals can then be re-adopted by the local authority

Significance and Conservation Areas

- 11 The different types of special architectural and historic interest which have led to designation include;
- Areas with a high number of nationally designated heritage assets and a variety of architectural styles and historic associations
 - Those linked to a particular industry or individual with a particular local interest
 - Where an earlier, historically significant, layout is visible in the modern street pattern
 - Where a particular style of architecture or traditional building materials predominate
 - Areas designated because of the quality of the public realm or a spatial element, such as a design form or settlement pattern, green spaces which are an essential component of a wider historic area, and historic parks and gardens and other designed landscapes, including those included on the Historic England Register of parks and gardens of special historic interest
- 12 Conservation area designation is not generally an appropriate means of protecting the wider landscape (agricultural use of land falls outside the planning framework and is not affected by designation as a conservation area) but it can protect open areas particularly where the character and appearance concerns historic fabric, to which the principal protection offered by conservation area designation relates.
- 13 A designation made solely to protect veteran trees is unlikely to meet the criteria of special architectural or historic interest as set out in the NPPF, and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) would be a more appropriate route for protection. Veteran trees may be a more problematic aim because the criteria for TPOs generally exclude trees which are 'dead, dying or dangerous'.

Community and Owner Consultation and Involvement

14 Local communities may be involved in many ways with conservation areas, not only by consultation of both communities and owners, obviously important in achieving support, and by proactive assistance in identifying the general areas that merit conservation area status and defining the boundaries, therefore adding depth and a new perspective to the local authority view. Communities can also

- undertake a great deal of the initial survey work, particularly where appraisals are initiated by local groups; and
- from their survey data, they can help the local authority develop a full appraisal in draft form

Historic England has recently published advice on heritage content of community-led plans in rural areas (<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/knowning-your-place/knowning-your-place12.pdf/>) and has funded the development of a toolkit currently being used in Oxford to assist groups of local residents to evaluate the heritage within their area (<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/CharacterAppraisalToolkit.htm>).

15 Publishing the draft appraisal on the council's website, accompanied by an electronic comments sheet/feedback form involves the wider community before the appraisal is too far advanced to exclude further influence on the outcome. It is good practice to include a report in the appraisal explaining:

- how community involvement and public consultation has been undertaken
 - how the input from the community was evaluated; and
 - how it has influenced the definition of special interest and the recommendations
- 16** Under section 70(8) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in addition to notifying the Secretary of State and Historic England, a local planning authority is required to publicise the intention to designate by a notice placed in the London Gazette and a local newspaper. The local authority must follow the same publicity procedures to vary or cancel a designation as required to designate. Involving the community at an early stage is advisable.

Finalising and Reviewing the Conservation Area Boundary

- 17** Before finalising the boundary it is worth considering whether the immediate setting also requires the additional controls that result from designation, or whether the setting is itself sufficiently protected by national policy or the policies in the Local Plan.
- 18** The special interest of areas designated many years ago may now be so eroded by piecemeal change or by single examples of poorly designed development that parts of the area may no longer have special interest. In such cases, boundary revisions will be needed to exclude them or, in exceptional circumstances, reconsideration of the conservation area designation as a whole. Conversely, the existing boundary may have been drawn too tightly, omitting areas now considered of special interest such as historic rear plots with archaeological potential, later phases of development (such as more recent housing), or parks, cemeteries and historic green spaces. In such cases the existing boundary may need to be extended.

Appraisal and Review

Benefits of appraisal

- 19 A character appraisal of an area undertaken prior to designation will have the following benefits, both before and after designation:
- As a tool to demonstrate the area's special interest
 - As explanation to owners, businesses and inhabitants of the reasons for designation
 - As educational and informative documents created with the local community, expressing what the community particularly values about the place they live and work in
 - Greater understanding and articulation of its character which can be used to develop a robust policy framework for planning decisions
 - Informing those considering investment in the area in guiding the scale, form and content of new development
 - When adopted it will be material to the determination of planning appeals and to Secretary of State decisions, including those where urgent works are proposed to preserve an unlisted building in a conservation area
 - Assistance in developing a management plan for the conservation area by providing the analysis of what is positive and negative, and in opportunities for beneficial change and enhancement or the need for additional protection and restraint (including the use of Article 4 directions)
 - Better understanding of archaeological potential, perhaps by identifying and mapping archaeologically sensitive areas and thus guiding development towards less sensitive locations

- 20 It is important to bear in mind that designation in itself will not protect an area from incremental change which can erode its character. Where appraisals have not been reviewed for some time, the special interest of the area may have changed or been diluted.

Preparation of the Appraisal and Review

- 21 Ideally, an appraisal will have been prepared prior to designation of all conservation areas or extensions to existing conservation areas in order to inform the designation process. The appraisal can then be reviewed regularly as part of the management of the conservation area, and can be developed into a management plan.

2 Managing Change in Conservation Areas

Managing Change through a Management Plan

22 Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places on local planning authorities the duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts. Regularly reviewed appraisals identifying threats and opportunities can be developed into a management plan, which can in turn channel development pressure to conserve the special quality of the conservation area. Both areas in relative economic decline and those under pressure for development can benefit from management opportunities that promote beneficial change.

Involving Others

23 Proposals for conservation and enhancement will be most effective when all the departments within the local authority understand the significance of designation and work corporately to ensure that development decisions respect the historic context.

24 Section 71 of the Act requires the local authority to submit the proposals for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate. There are major advantages, particularly in public support, in encouraging owners, residents' groups, amenity groups, businesses and community organisations to discuss the issues facing the area and how these might be addressed. Management plans, like appraisals, which are drawn up without effective consultation are likely to be misunderstood and ineffective.

25 Guidance (both printed and available online) which explains why the area has been designated, what constraints and opportunities result from designation (including restrictions on permitted development, the need for consent for demolition of buildings over 115 cubic metres and the need to give prior notice before undertaking works to trees) and what policies the local authority has adopted will help home owners, businesses and developers understand how the community wants the area to develop.

26 It is also important that utility companies, statutory undertakers and the highway authority are engaged from designation through to drawing up and implementing management proposals, as the character and appearance of conservation areas is often related to the treatment and condition of roads, pavements and public spaces and traffic management generally.

Generic Management Plans

27 Within a local authority area there may be a number of similar conservation areas. Development of a generic plan which can be adapted for individual conservation areas by inserting specific actions can maximise the use of resources in a proportionate way. The following sections relate to suggested components of a generic management plan.

Local Planning Policies

28 It is very helpful if the proposals map shows boundaries of existing conservation areas and changes/new designations when updated.

- The Local Plan would indicate where conservation objectives are key priorities and why and how those conservation objectives are to be integrated with social, economic and other environmental objectives

- Where there are gap sites or negative contributors within a particular conservation area, a Local Plan/area action plan may include specific proposals for new development while Article 4 directions may prevent further incremental loss

- Development management policies might include policies on:
 - protection of important views and vistas
 - criteria for demolition and replacement buildings
 - alterations and extensions to historic buildings
 - an urban design strategy for securing good design quality in new development
 - development/design briefs for key sites
 - development opportunities for sensitive developments within the conservation area

29 Protecting the character or appearance of an area will often be more effective if a flexible approach is taken to the requirements of the Building Regulations (Historic England advice on energy efficiency and historic buildings, for instance, can be found at <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/energy-efficiency-historic-buildings-ptl/eehb-partl.pdf>). Similar flexibility is needed in compliance with the Equalities Act 2010 and the Fire Precautions Act 1971, and highway policies where they would be in conflict with the preservation or enhancement of the area's character or appearance. However, through adaptation to provide inclusive access, for instance, may come long term beneficial use.

30 The Local Plan annual monitoring report will assess progress with the implementation of the management plan and the extent to which planning policies in the local development documents, including policies for the historic environment, are being complied with or are effective in delivering community aspirations. The assessment can then be used to modify and update policies and programme. Monitoring could also include following up and publishing information from time to time on the local authority's progress with implementing the proposals included in the management strategy for the area.

Guidance

- 31 General guidance can be developed quite easily from the appraisal. It might cover:
- controls, limitations and opportunities for enhancement including local plan policies (see paragraph 28)
 - topics relevant to conservation areas, such as retail policies
 - specific issues such as replacement windows and doors
 - parameters for extensions
 - design of shop fronts including the use of security shutters
 - outdoor advertisements
 - controls on permitted development (including Article 4 directions)
- 32 Site-specific design guidance and development briefs will encourage new development that complements the established grain, settlement pattern and character, while making a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area. Such guidance is particularly useful where the character of the area derives from its diversity, where imitative or ‘in keeping with existing’ styles would run counter to the way in which the area has traditionally evolved.

Regeneration Strategy

- 33 Having identified in the appraisal the scale of the problem and priorities for action, a regeneration strategy to focus economic activity and development in the areas where it can be of most benefit would:
- be based on thorough analysis of prevailing problems in the designated area; and
 - include the causes of under-use and fabric decay and realistic economic and valuation advice.
- 34 A more detailed assessment of the major structural and external elements of some or all of the buildings in the area may be needed to estimate the cost of bringing the physical fabric back into good repair. The availability of grant-aid will clearly be important. Further advice is available at <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/grants/our-grant-schemes> and <http://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/townscape-heritage>, and in the Heritage Alliance Heritage Funding Directory (HFD) at <http://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/fundingdirectory/main/fundinghome.php>.
- 35 Consideration might be given to initiatives which bring empty upper floors back into use within town centres, to help sustain activity within the area, as well as a strategy for the repair and restoration of architectural features to buildings.

Enhancement Schemes

- 36 Environmental improvements can be achieved through the following:
- the removal of negative factors such as obtrusive hoardings and unsightly poles and overhead wires and other matters noted in the conservation area appraisal
 - sympathetic landscaping and planting
 - the use of a Section 215 notice on the owner (or occupier) of any land or building whose condition is adversely affecting the amenity of the conservation area; and
 - the retention of features of local interest to maintain local character

Environmental Strategies

- 37 Audits and strategies can assist the management of conservation areas by ensuring that change enhances rather than harms them. Such initiatives include:
- **Highway signage and street furniture**
A detailed audit of the public realm to identify the best way to minimise physical obstruction and visual clutter and integrate new signs or street furniture in the design of the street as a whole (the Streets for All regional manuals show how streets can be managed to retain and enhance local character. Associated case studies give practical advice on solving common highway problems such as fixing signs and lights to buildings, and removing yellow lines).
 - **Traffic management**
Early engagement with highways departments can help to identify sympathetic traffic management designs and street lighting, thereby ensuring that any future programme of highway works brings about positive benefits for the conservation area even where there is no immediate budget for highways interventions (Manual for Streets 2 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets-2> -provides guidance on highway safety and street and road design which considers historic context). Statutory undertakers are responsible for carrying out the permanent reinstatement of the highway where they disturb it with the existing materials, or in the closest possible match, if the materials cannot be re-used.

■ Tree strategies

A good tree strategy will assess the amenity value of trees on private land, before there is pressure to remove them through the tree notification process, as well as suggest a proactive replacement programme for trees on public land so that successor trees are planted ready to replace those that are becoming diseased, dying or dangerous. The strategy could also usefully include measures to ensure trees are protected, and their growing environment enhanced, if opportunities arise during street works or other developments.

■ Open space and green infrastructure strategies

Such strategies help local authorities to plan and manage open space, both public and private, itself valuable green infrastructure assisting the adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

■ Conservation management plans

Conservation plans are recommended for individual historic gardens, parks and cemeteries.

■ Enforcement and remediation strategy

Regular monitoring of changes in the appearance and condition of a conservation area allows prompt action to be taken to deal with problems as they arise. Similarly, a dated photographic record created during the appraisal process will help with any later enforcement action. An Enforcement and Remediation Strategy giving priorities for intended action to secure repairs to, and full use of, buildings at risk in the conservation area will be informed by a detailed survey of building condition and occupancy (collection of local authority information on conservation areas at risk has provided information on over 80% of conservation areas).

38 It is advisable for local authorities to use their statutory powers if unlisted buildings that contribute positively to the special interest of a conservation area are falling into decay and where use of the powers would be a positive step. Information on serving urgent works and repairs notices is available in Historic England's step-by-step advice, *Stopping the Rot* (<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/stoppingtherot/acc-stopping-the-rot-guidance.pdf/>); neglect and enforcement are also mentioned in GPA 2 – *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*, paragraphs 45-48 (<http://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa2-managing-significance-in-decision-taking/>).

3 Appraisal of Conservation Areas

Introduction

39 The benefits of appraisal have been set out in paragraph 19 of this advice note and this section gives further details. This need not be an overly long or costly task. The objective is to understand and articulate exactly why the area is special and what elements within the area contribute to this special quality and which don't, conveying this succinctly and in plain English, accessible to all users. With scarce resources it may be better to complete appraisals for several conservation areas in reasonable detail rather than in full detail for one conservation area.

Research

40 The techniques for tracing the historic development of an area and assessing the condition of the historic environment and heritage assets within it are set out in *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments in a Planning and Development Context* (<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-place-planning-develop/understanding-place-haa-planning-dev-context.pdf/>) and in greater detail in *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessment: Principles and Practice* (<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-place-principles-practice/understanding-place-haa.pdf/>). The following issues will be

of particular relevance to the analytical framework of an appraisal:

- current and past land use
- communication types and patterns
- social and economic background
- aspect, geology and relief
- distribution, type and condition of designated and non-designated heritage assets
- density, types and forms of buildings, gardens and green spaces
- place names and earliest references

41 Documentary and other sources might include:

- Ordnance Survey and other maps
- trade directories
- the [Historic England Archive](#)
- aerial photographs
- historic environment record (HER) data
- historic characterisation studies

Further information on using these sources can be found in section 4.4 of *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessment: Principles and Practice*.

Presentation

42 Graphic presentation is both immediate and far more accessible for users; it usually results in a more succinct document. Where issues cannot easily be presented graphically, complementary text is necessary. Aside from photographs or drawings of buildings and characteristic local details, it is useful to include maps or sketches showing the following:

- the conservation area in its wider setting, whether within a larger settlement, or in the context of a rural landscape hinterland
- the area's historical development, also identifying places or buildings with particular historic associations
- current uses, for example, related to different historic building types (residential, commercial, industrial)
- townscape analysis: for example, spatial issues such as important views into and out of the conservation area, landmarks, and open or green spaces; or temporal issues, including pre-urban landscape features (such as the lines of former field boundaries) which survive in the current townscape
- designated and undesignated heritage assets, including buildings of townscape merit and unlisted buildings or groups of buildings that contribute positively to the character or appearance of the area, scheduled monuments and areas of archaeological interest (this could be combined with the townscape analysis map, depending on the size and complexity of the area)

Adoption

43 Following consultation and revision of the appraisal and the resulting management proposals to take account of public responses, they can be adopted formally in accordance with the local authority's internal procedures (many authorities find a single A4 summary sheet for each conservation area a useful addition to the full document).

44 Adoption of the appraisal as part of the Local Plan is a matter for the local planning authority; some authorities have adopted appraisals and management plans together as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) (see <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents>) whereas others regard the appraisal itself as part of the evidence base and adopt the management plan including development management policies in the Local Plan as SPD. Planning inspectors have accepted appraisals as material considerations of considerable weight in appeals whether or not they have been adopted as SPD.

Content

45 The content suggested below can be adapted to suit local circumstances.

■ Introduction

Explains

- the background to the appraisal
- describes the general identity and character of the conservation area and when it was designated
- its place within the wider settlement or surrounding landscape
- the scope and nature of the appraisal, and
- the dates of survey, adoption and publication
- Any significant sources of information might also be mentioned

■ Planning Policy Context

To provide a context for the appraisal, the national and local policy framework is useful as well as a brief explanation of what a conservation area is, how and why it is designated, a summary of the implications of designation for members of the community looking at the appraisal for the first time and information about the public consultation.

■ The Definition (or Summary) of Special Interest

If character areas or zones have been identified these will be described in detail and the special interest of each area evaluated further on in the document but the sum of these values can be articulated in this section. The values attributed to the area by the local community and all those with a stakeholder interest (ideally through

involvement at the earliest stages and at the very least through the formal consultation) will be an important consideration. Key elements in defining the special interest are likely to be:

- the relationship of the conservation area to its setting and the effect of that setting on the area
- the still-visible effects/impact of the area's historic development on its plan form, character and architectural style and social/historic associations
- how the places within it are experienced by the people who live and work there and visitors to the area (including both daily and seasonal variations if possible)
- architectural quality and built form
- open spaces, green areas, parks and gardens, and trees
- designated and other heritage assets, their intrinsic importance and the contribution they make to the townscape
- local distinctiveness and the sense of place which make the area unique.

46 Some authorities, such as the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, have developed their own templates to use which can be a useful tool when carrying out a number of appraisals over a short time: see <http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/living-and-working/historic-buildings/conservation-areas/careview-farfieldmill-full-final.pdf>.

Ways to assess these elements are described in more detail below.

Assessing Special Interest

Location and setting

47 Any historic landscape characterisation coverage will assist with this part of the appraisal (<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/approaches/research-methods/characterisation-2/>). General character and plan form need to be described, e.g. linear, compact, dense or dispersed. Where the conservation area only covers part of a village, town or city, it is helpful to include the geographical and historical context in relation to the character and appearance of the whole settlement as well as a factual description of the location of the conservation area and its wider setting and brief references to economic profile, general condition and existing or potential forces for change.

48 The following may be significant contributors to character:

- Views of rivers, the sea and surrounding hills and glimpses of landscape from urban streets
- open spaces, church towers and prominent public buildings
- a uniform building height resulting either from past influences or planning restrictions
- distant views of the settlement and those in the approach to it may also contribute
- adjacent designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) or Areas of High Landscape Value, where penetrating or abutting the built-up area, should also be noted and explained

Historic development

49 Map regression (comparing successive historic maps, including the Ordnance Survey sequence) is a starting point for historical analysis, and archaeological and urban morphological methods can help to

reconstruct the earlier stages of historical development, often still influencing the current townscape (paragraph 2.32 of *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessment: Principles and Practice* gives useful questions about the historic development of an area).

50 Though some conservation areas are made up largely or even entirely of C20 development (e.g. Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities), the twentieth century is often the most undervalued and vulnerable period of building and landscaping and it will be important for the appraisal to recognise, where appropriate, the contribution made by more recent buildings.

51 Once this analysis has been completed the results can be shown on a map which illustrates key periods in the area's history and highlights the survival of those historic elements which have determined the form of the conservation area today (for instance, a medieval road pattern, former defensive lines, watercourses, canals, railways, burgage plots or other significant boundaries, estate walls, formal layouts, and the relationship of buildings to open spaces). Supporting text can summarise how the settlement has developed and a list of books and other sources describing local history may be helpful.

52 Information on historic associations from the museum, record office or local library may also be important and local knowledge can be as valuable as formal records for relatively modern settlements.

53 Archaeological remains, whether above ground structures, earthworks, or buried deposits, often contribute directly to sense of place as well as representing a potential resource for research, interpretation and education. Mention in the appraisal and management plan may be useful both as information for developers and for their

conservation and protection. Historic characterisation approaches such as intensive or extensive urban surveys (see *Understanding Place: An Introduction*) provide useful further information, usually held in the local HER. To identify archaeological potential, it may be helpful to include a map or deposit model showing archaeologically sensitive areas.

Architectural quality and built form

- 54 Here describe any dominant architectural styles, the prevalent types and periods of buildings, their status (i.e. nationally designated or locally listed) and essential characteristics, and their relationship to the topography, street pattern and/or the skyline. Individual buildings or groups that contribute positively to the character or appearance of the area and those that are distinctive, because they are rare or unique, can be identified on a map. The range of traditional roofing, walling and surface materials in the area may be characteristic of the local vernacular and it will be important to note the textures and colours and the ways in which they have been used. Surviving historic surfaces and historic or unusual street furniture are likely to contribute to character and special interest.
- 55 Surviving or former uses within the area might also have influenced plan form, urban grain and building types, for example grand terraces with mews, villas set in generous gardens, workers' back-to-back housing or industrial buildings connected with particular activities, local trades or specialised markets. The influence of historic patronage can be described here (e.g. estate workers' housing or a philanthropic model settlement).

Open space, parks and gardens, and trees

- 56 This part of the appraisal describes open spaces within or immediately outside the conservation area, their enclosure, and their visual, and/or other sensory contribution to the character of the place. The relationship between public space (such as a market place, street, square, public garden or car park) and private space (gardens, courtyards or playing fields), the qualities they offer and the ways in which the spaces were and are used, and the identification of key settlement edges, are all part of this analysis.
- 57 Some open spaces, parks and gardens may be included on the Historic England *Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest*. Domestic gardens, especially planted front gardens, can make a significant contribution to the character of many conservation areas. Trees, hedges, boundaries and street greenery are important elements of many conservation areas, not only in public places, but on private land as well. Identification of important single trees and groups and a description of their location and species, age and assessment of condition and potential lifespan will assist in developing a strategy for protection, maintenance and replanting.

Character zones

- 58 Discernible character areas or zones are often evident in larger conservation areas and may already have been defined using a historic characterisation approach such as Historic Area Assessment. They may reflect the predominant historic character that survives from earlier periods or the original function, class distinctions, design or current uses (e.g. residential, industrial, commercial, civic or transport-related). The sub-areas may overlap or have 'blurred edges', for example where a 19th century

development is partly on historic urban plots and partly in former fields, creating ‘zones of transition’ between areas of consistent character.

- 59 Character areas identified and illustrated on a plan will provide not only a detailed description of the physical constituents but also an evaluation of the significance of the sub-area concerned and a summary of its special interest, in the context of the area as a whole, or of the wider settlement, if the conservation area covers only a part of it.
- 60 If there are no recognisable zones the appraisal might highlight the influence that change over time has had in the development of the area, as a whole, particularly if there is diversity and contrast in architectural styles (note might also be made, if relevant, of the impact of different national and international planning and architectural movements on the area).

Positive contributors

- 61 Most of the buildings in a conservation area will help to shape its character. The extent to which their contribution is considered as positive depends not just on their street elevations but also on their integrity as historic structures and the impact they have in three dimensions, perhaps in an interesting roofscape or skyline. Back elevations can be important, as can side views from alleys and yards. It will be helpful to identify those key unlisted buildings that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area, as well as those which clearly detract from it and could be replaced. A checklist of questions to help with this process can be found in Table 1. A positive response to one or more of the following may indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution, provided that its historic form and value have not been eroded.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it have landmark quality? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it associated with a designed landscape, e.g. a significant wall, terracing or a garden building? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it have significant historic associations with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it have historic associations with local people or past events? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area? |

Table 1
Checklist

Locally important buildings

62 Recommendations for new local listings could form part of the appraisal or, if there is no 'local list', the appraisal might recommend the introduction of local criteria for identifying important unlisted buildings (<http://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/good-practice-local-heritage-listing/>). Local constructional or joinery details, including characteristic historic shop-fronts and unusual local features, often contribute to local distinctiveness.

An audit of heritage assets

63 An audit of heritage assets will be helpful in larger, more complex areas, where there is a wide range of historic structures, and/or in areas with an industrial heritage, importantly including a description of condition. Tabulate the results and include them as an appendix to the appraisal, and/or on a map. Where significant change to public space is proposed, an audit of the public realm may be appropriate, noting in the appraisal if such an audit needs to be undertaken.

Assessment of condition

64 The appraisal also offers the opportunity to record the general condition of the area, that is both its economic vitality and the physical condition of the historic buildings, other heritage assets and the public realm, identifying:

- buildings at risk or in a serious state of disrepair
- buildings where in rare cases matters of deliberate neglect may arise
- front gardens lost to hard-standing for cars
- lost architectural features and fenestration
- gap sites eroding special character

In some cases, it may be appropriate to map and photograph surviving original architectural features and fenestration – distinctive local detailing, doors, windows, roof coverings, trees - to aid future monitoring and enforcement (*Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessment: Principles and Practice*, paragraph 2.4.2 sets out some useful questions to help with this part of the appraisal).

65 Generic issues that underlie obvious problems such as:

- the effects of heavy traffic
- a low economic base resulting in vacancy and disrepair of buildings
- pressure for a particular type of change or development
- as well as specific examples (such as buildings at risk, or uncontrolled, inappropriate advertising)

will provide evidence and identify the need for additional controls, particularly Article 4 directions, to prevent further erosion of the area's special interest and support its potential capacity for beneficial change.

Identifying the boundary

66 An important aspect of the appraisal (and review) process will be considering where the boundaries should be drawn (and whether the boundaries of an existing conservation area should be re-drawn). An explanation of why the boundary is drawn where it is (or extensions are suggested, in the case of existing conservation areas), and what is included and what is excluded, is helpful. The position of the conservation area boundary will to a large degree be informed by the considerations identified in paragraphs 17-18 (Finalising and reviewing the boundary). As spaces contribute to enclosure, as well as framing views of assets and defining settings, a unified approach is

desirable to their management as well as suggesting that in almost all situations the conservation area boundary runs around rather than through a space or plot. It will generally be defined by physical features and avoid for example running along the middle of a street, though including the boundary wall of a property which is otherwise not included can in itself cause problems when applying conservation area policies in development management decisions.

A plan for further action and generic guidance

67 This section of the appraisal presents an overview and summarises the main problems and pressures identified in the appraisal that will be addressed through a management plan.

References, appendices and contact details

68 This section lists references to the principal sources of historic and local information, a short glossary of relevant architectural and vernacular terms, an audit of heritage assets, the criteria used for assessing the contribution made by unlisted buildings in the conservation area, useful names and addresses (of both national and local organisations) and the local authority's contact details for enquiries and comments.

Appendix 1:

Article 4 Directions

1 Minor development such as domestic alterations and extensions can normally be carried out without planning permission under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO). Article 4 of the GPDO gives local planning authorities the power to limit these ‘permitted development rights’ where they consider it is necessary to protect local amenity or the wellbeing of the area. Using the provisions of Article 4 of the GPDO brings certain types of development back under the control of a local planning authority so that potentially harmful proposals can be considered on a case by case basis through planning applications.

Assessing the Need

2 The specific requirement on local authorities under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to carry out a conservation area appraisal provides a robust evidence base on which to assess the need for and scope of an Article 4 direction. Ideally a conservation area management plan

developed from a conservation area appraisal may identify areas where removal of ‘permitted development rights’ is necessary to prevent the loss of characteristic architectural detailing or gradual erosion of the character and appearance of the conservation area through inappropriate development. Historic characterisation approaches such as Historic Area Assessment will also provide evidence for using Article 4 directions outside conservation areas.

Scope

3 It is only appropriate to remove permitted development rights where there is a real and specific threat and exclude properties where there is no need for the direction to apply. Article 4 directions are most commonly used to control changes to elevations of buildings in conservation areas fronting a highway, waterway or open space but they can also be used to control other forms of development which might harm the significance of heritage assets.

Monitoring and Enforcement:

- 4 Article 4 directions are more likely to be effective if:
 - there is a dated photographic record of the properties affected for the purposes of tracking any subsequent changes
 - guidance is provided for homeowners on how the direction affects them with advice on appropriate repair and alteration
 - the local authority undertakes regular monitoring for compliance and appropriate enforcement
 - the need for the Article 4 direction is reviewed if circumstances change.

Impact on Resources

- 5 Increase in planning applications is likely to be minimal as clear, concise controls, backed up by appropriate guidance, tend to encourage like-for-like repair or replacement in matching materials, which do not require planning permission (*RPS Planning Research into the use of Article 4 directions on behalf of the English Historic Towns Forum* October 2008, paragraphs 3.18-3.19).
- 6 Compensation claims have been extremely rare. The RPS 2008 study found no evidence for any compensation payments actually being made (*op. cit.*, paragraphs 3.20-3.21).
- 7 In terms of the cost of preparation, integrating proposals for Article 4 directions with local plan preparation and conservation area appraisals minimises costs.
- 8 Government guidance on making Article 4 directions can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance, paragraphs 036 (reference ID: 13-036-20140306) to 053 (Reference ID: 13-053-20140306).

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