

CONSERVATION AREA and
CHARACTER APPRAISAL
FOR SEAHOUSES

CONTENTS

	1	Introduction			
	2	The general legal background			
	Cons	ervation Area Appraisal			
	3	Location			
	4	Historic context and development			
	5	Landscape setting			
	6	General character			
	7	Building materials and detail			
	8	The boundary			
	Plans				
	(1)	The historic and architectural character of the proposed conservation area			
	Suggested Priorities for Management				
	9	Introduction			
	10	Listed building review			
	11	Building condition			
	12	Building additions and alterations			
	13	New uses for old buildings			
	14	New Buildings			
	15	Open space and landscape			
	16	Archaeology			
The Way Ahead					

1 INTRODUCTION

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough is an area of significant historic, architectural and archaeological interest and natural beauty. There is a wealth of nationally and locally significant buildings, townscapes and landscapes, which include castles, historic buildings, ancient monuments and landscape, coast and ecology protected by international, national, regional and local designations. The preservation or enhancement of these buildings and areas is important in terms of historic, cultural, social and economic fabric of Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough. It is also important that this environment is protected so that current and future generations may enjoy its special qualities.

There are various measures, statutory and non-statutory, which allow greater planning control to protect and manage the historic environment. These include the listing of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, listed building control, the scheduling of ancient monuments and the designation of conservation areas. Control and management is complemented by enhancement and environmental schemes and grant aid for conservation works.

Conservation areas are areas of historic and architectural character which are considered desirable to be preserved or enhanced. The setting of conservation areas may also be included in the designation. Local authorities are able to designate conservation areas to introduce more planning control and bring forward

proposals for their preservation and enhancement.

The conservation area appraisals are a means of defining the key elements that contribute to the character and appearance of conservation areas. An appraisal may take into account factors such as the history and development of the area, the street layout, the character and relationship of spaces between buildings, the contribution played by trees, open spaces and views in and out of the areas, local design characteristics, use of building materials and so on. In short, all the features which combine to help give a place its character and identity.

There is an urgent need to produce conservation area appraisals. They are a strategic and tactical priority to ensure considered decision making, a justified basis for enhancement and robust defence in negotiations and at appeals against refusal of planning permission. Appraisals may also raise public awareness of the need for conservation.

The second section 'Suggested Priority for Management' is concerned with management initiatives to help preserve and improve the historic environment of the proposed conservation areas. Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council has initiated the preparation of appraisals for Seahouses, North Sunderland and Wooler. Further appraisals may be undertaken in due course depending upon priorities and subject to the availability of resources.

2 GENERAL LEGAL BACKGROUND

The national legislative framework produced by the Central Government is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which covers all aspects of planning in relation to the historic environment, such as listed buildings and conservation areas. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 provides for the scheduling and protection of ancient monuments.

Complementary to this are statements of Government Policy and good practice guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) which aim to protect the historic environment from inappropriate development but at the same time providing for change and for the needs of people within these locations. Relevant guidance is set out in PPG6 - Town Centres and Retail Development, PPG7 -Countryside, PPG8 - Nature Conservation, PPG13 Transport and Planning, PPG 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment, PPG 16 -Archaeology and Planning, PPG 7 – Countryside, PPG 20 Coastal Planning and PPG21 - Tourism. Also relevant is 'By Design' which produced by the DTLR and CABE.

Local Authorities also play an important part in the conservation of the historic environment through policies and proposals included in the development plan for their area. Development plans are legal documents and are the most important to be taken into account when determining planning applications. The relevant development plan for Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough is the Northumberland County Structure Plan 1996 and the Adopted Berwickupon-Tweed Borough Local Plan. The emerging Deposit Draft Northumberland County and National Park Structure Plan is also a material planning consideration.

Other important guidance has been prepared by English Heritage on a wide range of topics concerned with the protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

Section 6 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)
Act 1990, as amended by subsequent legislation, places a duty on local planning authorities to determine which parts of their area are 'of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and to designate these as conservation areas. The appraisals of Seahouses, North Sunderland and Wooler have been prepared to justify the proposal; to designate these settlements as conservation areas.

CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION FOR SEAHOUSES

Conservation Area Appraisal



3 Location and Physical Setting

Seahouses is a coastal settlement located in the County of Northumberland and the Parish of North Sunderland, 20 miles to the southeast of Berwick-upon-Tweed and approximately 15 miles to the east of the Cheviot Hills.

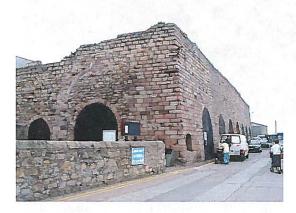
The proposed conservation area boundary to the northeast includes the harbour and environs, which is central to the historic and architectural character of Seahouses. The group of streets forming the focus for the former herring processing industry, including George Street, South Street, Union Street, Taylor Street, North Street, together delineate the proposed conservation area boundary which defines the edge of the developed settlement to the southeast. The southwestern edge of the proposed conservation area follows King Street as the area beyond is all recent development and therefore does not merit conservation area status.

The northwestern edge of Seahouses delineates the proposed conservation area boundary, including properties on Main Street and Seafield Road with Seafield House and environs, which has historic and architectural character.

4 Historic Context and Development of Seahouses

There are indications of earlier human activity (see OS map 1920 reference to cists, urn etc found during excavations of reservoir). However, the earliest extant buildings are old cottages adjoining the Harbour Master's office, known as North Sunderland Seahouses which were in existence by the mid-18th century. Seahouses developed as a village in the 18th and 19th centuries. This resulted mainly from the lime burning industry in the 18th and early 19th century. The lime was transported from quarries in the south, delivered direct to lime kilns in the village and burnt by coal from pits to the north of Seahouses.

The finished product was transported by ship from the harbour, which was built for this purpose, then on to Scotland for agricultural land improvements. Evidence of this trade can still be seen in the extant old limekilns located by the harbour, built in the 18th century, which became redundant in the early 19th century on the decline of the industry.



18th century lime kiln

The grain trade also played an important part in the prosperity of Seahouses in the early mid 19th century with the developing of its harbours and construction of granaries which can still be seen adjoining the harbour, now converted to holiday homes.

The presence of a good natural harbour has been used for centuries by local fishermen particularly the herring industry, which brought further prosperity to Seahouses.



Packing herrings

A new harbour was built in 1886 to allow for the great expansion of fishing which was now its main source of income. Fishermen's cottages, smokeries and enclosed yards were largely developed by the 1860s as part of this growth. The population of Seahouses was up to 1000 people by 1846 reflecting this rapid expansion. Most of this development is located to the southeast being still intact today now mostly converted for residential use. apart from the notable exception of 'Swallows Fish Smokery' on South Street which is still functioning. The herring industry subsequently declined after the Second World War.



Swallow Fish Smokery, South

Of particular interest is the history of the lifeboat station, which is now a modern brick building constructed in 1991. There has however, been a lifeboat station in North Sunderland since 1827, and the present lifeboat 'Grace Darling' commemorates the name of one of the best known heroines of the Victorian age.

The railway came to Seahouses in 1898, reflecting the great prosperity that the herring fleets brought to the area and contributing significantly to the development of the tourist trade. The line subsequently closed in 1951 and the station is now the site of a car park.

Today tourism is one of the main sources of income for Seahouses. There are holiday flats, bed and breakfast establishments, caravan sites, amusement arcades, public houses, cafes and gift shops, all catering for the needs of tourism. Also thriving are boat trips for tourists out to the Farne Islands which is part of the replacement income for the former herring industry.

Whilst tourism has helped to sustain prosperity for Seahouses, the changing uses and expansion have resulted in some adverse effects on the historic and architectural character of the town. This includes insensitive alterations of buildings for new uses, for example, the change of use of the old granaries into holiday homes. This has resulted in the buildings' appearances having been changed so radically that their original functions are no longer recognisable.

There are many 20th century inappropriately designed extensions and most windows and doors have lost much of their original character by inappropriate replacement. The 20th century expansion of Seahouses for housing has resulted in visually incompatible development, which has introduced a suburban character to the village. Large volumes of traffic in the summer are difficult to assimilate into this modest sized settlement, resulting in a major intrusive feature in the area.



Traffic on Main Street

The plethora of garish shop facades and signs also seriously detract from the historic and architectural character of Seahouses.

Two large caravan sites at either end of settlement are also features which do not harmonise well with the settlement's historic and architectural character.

5 Landscape Setting

Seahouses lies within an area designated as the Coastal Zone in the Berwick-on-Tweed Borough Local Plan and within the North Northumberland Heritage Coast and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The surrounding coast is a 'Candidate Special Protection Area' (SPA), proposed RAMSAR site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

These designations emphasise the importance of the locale of Seahouses, not only because of its landscape value but also because of the outstanding natural and historic environment.

The geology of the local landscape is underlain by rocks formed approximately 300 million years ago in the carboniferous period and is mainly sedimentary limestone with coal crops. There are contemporary intrusions of igneous rocks in the Bamburgh area. The intrusion also forms the Farne Islands.



The Farne Islands

There are more recent postglacial areas of blown sand forming distinctive sand dunes on the seashore. To the south are deposits of alluvium, also formed in the glacial period.

This geology has formed a local topography, which is fairly flat, with an undulating hinterland, with Seahouses raised above the sea.

Views out of Seahouses include the distinctive landscape of the coastline to the north-west towards Bamburgh which is of steeply undulating, high sand dunes. These form an extensive, attractive backcloth to sandy beaches, divided by groups of rocks. The immediate seaward, maritime setting to Seahouses include the harbours and rocks with the distinctive flat feature of the natural limestone pavements on the shoreline. The harbour has an impressive and robust strong form.

The modern harbour is mostly concrete; although there are substantial areas of old stone harbour adjoining the shore.

The harbour and sea may be glimpsed sometimes through narrow gaps between adjoining buildings.

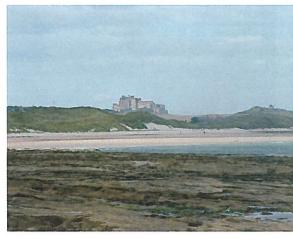
Inland, beyond North Sunderland to the south-west, is undulating arable and pasture farmland.

There are no major areas of trees around Seahouses, but only isolated tree groups, some as shelterbelts, giving the appearance of a windswept flat landscape, exposed to the vagaries of the North Sea weather.

Seahouses, although located in a flat landscape, is not a dominant feature, although it can be seen from a distance, as there are few trees to hide its form. The village is at its most prominent viewed from the sea, with its substantial harbour walls and elevated townscape surmounting the harbour.

The most memorable prospects as seen from the settlement are open panoramic vistas across the sea to the horizon, focussing on views of the Farne Islands in the middle ground.

There are fine views of Bamburgh Castle to the north-west along the coast, with its vertical rectilinear stone blocks as startling dominant forms above the horizontal line of the sea. This contrasts with the steeply undulating, soft shapes of the sand dunes in the foreground.



Bamburgh Castle in the distance

Views out of the settlement to the west are of undulating farmland with the shadowy forms of the Cheviot Hills on the horizon.

There is a well-defined edge to Seahouses at the interface between the settlement and the sea with parallel development emphasising the strong shape and form of the harbour. There are straight edges between the country and settlement to the north-west of the Main Street and to the southeast of South Street.

To the south, sprawling new development, which has resulted in the coalescence of Seahouses and North Sunderland, has an irregular, unstructured boundary between the edge of the settlement and the surrounding countryside.

The northwestern end of the village is defined by extensive, recent ribbon development along Seafield Road.

6 General Character

Seahouses was largely developed in the early 19th century with a distinctive plan. This is a splayed grid iron layout with its shape influenced by the form of the original natural harbour. It has two principal straight roads including Main Street and North Street running at right angles to the shoreline. The distorted grid iron plan includes Union Street, South Street, Taylor Street and Crowe Street. This layout links to the main feeder roads including King Street, Seafield Road and Main Street.

The general layout of the original settlement is still fairly intact but has been doubled in size in the 20th century by the addition of housing development that has a random character and lacks the unified structure of the original plan of the settlement.



Area of suburban character

The sea forms a strong horizontal feature and is emphasised by the solid lines of the harbour which forms a robust and strong setting for Seahouses.

Areas of architectural or historic character in Seahouses may be divided into three zones of different character. These are now considered individually and include South Street, North Street and environs, Main Street and the harbour and environs.

South Street, North Street and environs include cottages, former sheds, stores and workshops which were mostly developed for the herring fishing industry. The buildings are up to two storeys high, built of stone and were either fisherman's cottages, or sheds for the processing and storing of herring, including smokeries. The only building still in use as a smokery is the two-storey property named 'Swallows Fish', a commercial enterprise which was built in the 19th century of sandstone rubble. It is two storeys high with a clay pantile roof. Smoke is still discharged through two openings in the stonework just below eaves level as part of the fish curing process.



Smokery ventilation at eaves level

There are substantial enclosed yards in this area which were used for fish processing and the repair of nets, and these are entered through archways under the sheds.



Archways to enclosed yards, previously used for fish processing

The layouts of enclosed yards with narrow access roads have a strong geometry and were well designed for their function, giving enclosure and shelter against the winds and gales sweeping in from the North Sea. The courtyards are paved with attractive original stone setts. Examples of the yards are Sunnieside Square, Braidstone Square and Craster Square (formerly called yards).



Original stone setts

Buildings in the area are simply crafted, have a strong functional character being unpretentious in detailing with little ornamentation. Their plan form is usually rectangular, terraced with slate or pantile pitched roofs and sash or casement windows. There are sometimes small later extensions. There is little private space with few front gardens, as development usually fronts directly onto the pavement or carriageway.

The one exception is North Street, which has some small front gardens.

Stone boundary walls are an important townscape element, which help to unify the street scene. Particularly distinctive are the occasional stone tightly curved boundary walls with half round copings, which form termination features at the end of terraces. These sometimes define a steep curve and bend in the carriageway at road junctions, giving a 'ball and socket' effect visually linking one street to another.



Curved boundary walls.

There is a continuing process of refurbishment in the area with the repair of old fisherman's cottages and conversion of the old warehouses and sheds, formerly functioning as herring processing buildings, into houses and holiday cottages.



Conversion of former herring sheds to residential use

Some cottages have been demolished, for example in North Street, having been considered to be beyond repair and replaced with a similar style.

Over the years the character of cottages and commercial properties have been eroded by inappropriate changes. This has resulted in the loss of original features on the cottages, particularly windows, which have been replaced by modern ones. The 'domestication' of former working premises has also resulted in the removal or original features relating to the herring industry, with inappropriate replacements of a residential character.

The Main Street is the focus of activity for Seahouses with shops, restaurants and amusement arcades serving the local population and visiting tourists. Although part of Main Street follows the original footprint of the early 19th century plan, a substantial proportion of the building is late 19th century or 20th century redevelopment.



Main Street is the focus for tourist activity

The carriageway is the main through route including the link to North Sunderland and is straight with a kink at its link with King Street. This is the widest road in Seahouses and is well defined by buildings on both sides.

The road opens out by a traffic island to the southeast and the townscape fragments, losing definition and unity. This end of the street is the main entrance to the car park and is a busy muddle of cars and pedestrians, particularly in the holiday season.

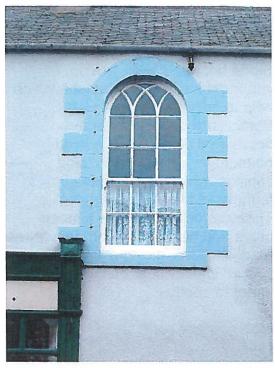


The Old Ship Inn

Views to the south west of the shopping street are contained by buildings at the junction with King Street. The prospect out to the northeast is of the harbour below and sea beyond, nicely framed by the Old Ship Inn.

Although most of the buildings are of a fairly plain design, their subtle variation in juxtaposition with each other and subtle changes in detail, creates a street scene of variety and interest. For example, although the roof runs parallel with the carriageway this is sometimes varied with gables facing the road giving an accent to the street scene.

The building facades are two storeys high and mostly of stone, often stained black by pollution. There is some classical detailing including stone canopies, but some early Victorian sash windows with glazing bars, one with basket weave styling at the window head.



Basket weave styling to glazing bars

Of some interest are the shop fronts, many modernised, some with original fronts or retaining earlier pilasters.

A rather quirky but delightful gothic style confection is the shop front on the single storey building to the south-west of the main shopping area, occupied by 'Barter Books'.



Shop front at Barter Books

Some of the fascias and advertisements in the area are rather garish and out of scale with the modest size of the adjoining buildings.



Modern shop fascia

The Old Ship Inn is a key building in the street scene, framing the view out of Main Street to the harbour. It is stone built with a pantile roof and reputed to be one of the earliest extant buildings in Seahouses and was originally a farmhouse.

A minor landmark on Main Street is the Methodist Church, which was constructed in 1925 in the classical style. The property was built of stone and is a distinctive feature in the street scene with its prominent steep gable facing the road, and a large semi-circular headed window with carved key stone and glazing bars. There are two adjoining doors with carved stone surrounds. The ends of the building are defined by polished stone pilasters surmounted by two stone urns.

Most of the buildings in Seahouses have little private open space, with just small back yards, the building curtilage directly onto the pavement, apart from some residential properties to the south-west of King Street which have very small front gardens.



Methodist Church on Main Street

There has been a recent substantial enhancement scheme on Main Street with repaving, including traffic calming and redefinition of the carriageway with cobbles and setts, also there are new lighting standards with lanterns. The paving scheme, although constituting an improvement, is rather complex in pattern and texture.

The harbour and environs as working port has a strong vitality and sense of place with the constant movement of boats giving an everchanging colourful scene. The many summer visitors to the area add further to this busy character. The kiosks selling fishing trips also contribute to this hive of activity.



Kiosks selling fishing trips

Seahouses is still used as a fishing port characterised by the stacked mounds of crab pots on the harbour side. The harbour is also used for leisure craft.

To the east away from the commercial activity and hustle and bustle of the harbour, the character changes to the quiet ambience of a residential area.

The strong form of the harbour is well defined both by its general structure with it angled stone and concrete walls enclosing the water below.



The old granary

The old granary, no 1 – 11 Harbour Road, contributes to the street scene. The stone buildings are three storeys high serving to emphasise the shape of the harbour. They were originally constructed in the early 19th century of random rubble stone, with squared

stone quoins and pantile roofs. It is difficult to recognise these buildings as former granaries because of somewhat radical and insensitive conversions for holiday flats. These alterations have obliterated functional features relating to its original use.

The substantial change in level between the harbour and its hinterland is defined in parts to the west by two levels of building; one above the other up a slope, and to the east by a grassy, steeply sloping bank.



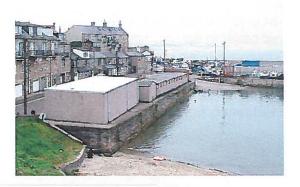
Changes ground levels between harbour and its hinterland

Another key structure is the listed limekiln, which is a dominant feature on the harbour side. The structure was built in the late 18th century in ashlar sandstone with seven semicircular headed arches, which gave access to the kilns to collect burnt lime.

The lighthouse forms a minor landmark located on the end of the harbour. There is a curious stone structure with a barrel-vault roof located beyond the shoreline on the rocks. This was originally used for gunpowder storage during the extension of the harbour in the late 19th century.

The buildings around the harbour have rectangular plan forms, many with extensions of varying size. They are mainly terraced being two or three storeys in height of stone with slate or pantile roofs. There is little private space with only small back yards.

The large low rise sheds with flat roofs on Harbour Road dominate the harbour space to the east. Their form and bland appearance appear discordant and inharmonious with the strong character of old buildings behind.



Large sheds on Harbour Road

The popular seating area by the Bamburgh Castle Hotel is in need of imaginative redesign to take full advantage of its fine location with panoramic views of the harbour and sea.



Popular sitting space by the harbour

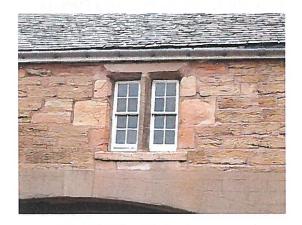
7 Building Materials and Details

Walls are mostly of a traditional sandstone finish, which is an important unifying element of old properties and their boundary walls. The sandstone has been quarried locally and varies in colour including grey, cream, yellow ochre and purple, sometimes with a pleasing touch of warmth, in pink or terracotta. The stone finishes and tooling vary with random rubble being particularly common on older buildings and warehouses in the local vernacular. Corners to buildings are usually finished with stone quoins, sometimes rusticated.



Rusticated stone quoins on corner of building

Window and door surrounds usually have deep reveals and are finished with larger squared stones and large flat stone lintels. Occasionally ashlar sandstone is used on more distinguished buildings. There are sometimes chamfered reveals and mullions, often on later buildings. Stones are occasionally tooled with stugged or droved finish.



Chamfered reveals and mullions on window

Some of the sandstone has suffered considerable weathering along its bedding plane, giving an exaggerated pattern of parallel lines, where projections of harder stone stand proud of their eroded surface, looking as though they had been tooled. There is little stone ornamentation, particularly on older vernacular buildings including fisherman's cottages or working buildings.



Stone carved brackets supporting door head

Some stone ornamentation may be found on Main Street with curved brackets supporting stone door heads, and carved detail on the Methodist Chapel including stone urns. The stone segmental archways giving access to the herring processing yards are particularly characteristic to the area.

Changes and modifications to stone work over the years which can still be identified, particularly to the buildings formerly used for the herring industry, indicate their original function.

Examples are the filling in of former large openings low in the walls around the yards, which were used to receive the herring into the processing sheds, tipped from carts. There are also small squared openings, now blocked in, just below eaves level, formerly used for ventilating herring smokeries.



Blocked in openings originally used for receiving herring



Close up of blocked in opening



Concrete lintel used for refurbishment work

More recent alterations which detract from the character of the original stone work is the use of concrete for replacement cills or lintels. Another feature all too common on old stone buildings is the repointing of stonework with hard cement mortar, using the wrong kind of joint, often ribbon pointing. This is not only aesthetically inappropriate but may eventually damage the stonework.



Stonework damaged by inappropriate pointing

Pointing should be carried out with a lime sand mix with flush or concave pointing. A few buildings are constructed of brick, which is also used for chimneys.

Render is occasionally used, some with classical detailing including rusticated quoins and ashlar lining.

Roofs on old properties in Seahouses are usually slate with 45degree pitches, mostly gabled with occasional hipped roofs. The colours of the slate vary from grey to a purple tinge. Ridge pieces are mostly commonly the traditional form with clay pantiles.

Guttering is usually of half-round cast iron or replacement plastic. A few buildings, particularly former industrial sheds, may have pantiles, usually with a shallower pitch than slates. These pantiles, often in terracotta, give an attractive warm contrast to the cooler coloured grey and purple slates elsewhere.

Some of the old slates and clay pantiles have been replaced by modern concrete tiles, which are much heavier and thicker in profile and a poor match for the originals.



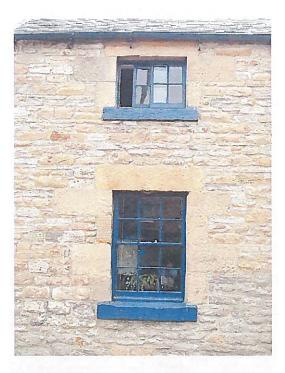
Oriel window on building at the corner of Main Street

There are sometimes dormer or oriel windows which add variety and modelling to the roofline, (see previous illustration) although some modern dormers when of a larger scale, may dominate the roof, detracting from its original character and appearance.

Chimneys are mostly of yellow or red brick, but a few buildings retain their original stone stacks and pots are commonly of the cannon type.

There are sometimes flat stone copings as a finish to gable end walls.

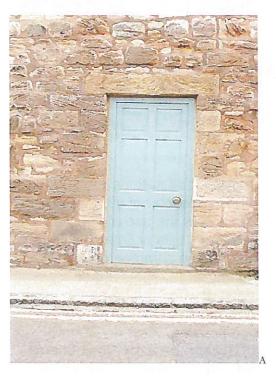
Windows are mostly of the sash type on old buildings. There are rare examples of earlier buildings with glazing bars and twelve panes of glazing, but most are late 19th century with two glazing bars, and unusually there are horizontal sliding windows.



Horizontal sliding window with glazing bars

Many traditional buildings in Seahouses have suffered serious erosion of their architectural or historic character by the insertion of inappropriately designed window replacements with modern profiles for example; top hung or pivot windows.

Recent PVCu window replacements particularly detract from the appearance of traditional buildings.



panelled door with a classical design

Doors are mostly modern, some with PVCu replacements in inappropriate pastiche Georgian designs, but there are a few remaining original panelled doors with a classical design.

Old shopfronts are rare in Seahouses but there are some original pilasters with curved brackets supporting fascias between modern shopfronts. Street detail includes some elegantly designed lighting lanterns on Main Street which generally fit into the Victorian character of the street scene. However, these are tall compared with adjoining buildings.

The recently completed paving and traffic-calming scheme includes setts, concrete slabs, cobbles and bollards on Main Street. Although the scheme is an improvement it is a rather complex mix of patterns and materials.

There is some original floorscape detail of particular interest in enclosed yards adjoining South Street formerly used for herring processing and net repair.

This includes a surface of tightly packed random shaped, flat stones with squared larger stones defining the tracks formerly used by carts. The surrounding lanes including South Street and environs were formerly covered by a surface of small random shaped flat stones.

The surface has been partly replaced by gravel adjoining new development and in refurbishment schemes.



Gravel replacement of original stone floorscape.

Some fragments of stone paving still exist created by embedded small narrow stones on their edges. This can be seen on Taylor Street where the stones define a drainage channel and demarcation of the road from the pavement. There are rare examples of original stone kerbs as most have been replaced by concrete.



Fragments of original stone floorscape on South Street

Over the years, because of the constant disturbance of the surfaces by statutory undertakers and general neglect, there are only fragments of the original surface left, and the road is in a poor condition.



Fragments of original small stone paving on Taylor Street

Overhead wiring seriously detracts from the character of parts of the street scene in Seahouses.

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL FOR SEAHOUSES

Suggested Priorities for Management

8 Introduction

- 8.1 The Seahouses proposed conservation area appraisal identifies the main elements of architectural, townscape or historic interest in the settlement which makes a positive contribution to its architectural or historic character, and are worthy of preservation or enhancement.
- 8.2 The appraisal also examines negative factors, namely, those features which detract from Seahouses architectural and historic character and may, by careful management, be improved or enhanced. This section is not only concerned with opportunities for improvement, but advising the local community on the best way to look after their precious heritage with advisory publications. Other important management issues include the prioritising of actions by this council regarding further survey work, assessments, appropriate conservation policies and their phased implementation.
- 8.3 It is outside the remit of this appraisal to produce a detailed strategy for the management of this proposed conservation area. However, the following general guidance will form a useful framework to progress appropriate measures for the preservation and enhancement of Seahouses historic and architectural character.

9 Listed Building Review

9.1 There are two listed buildings in the proposed Seahouses conservation area, designated in May 1969, with an addition to the list in October 1997. It is considered that as the listing survey was completed some years ago, apart from the recent addition, a review should be carried out, bearing in mind changing standards and more sophisticated qualitative assessments. Although it is outside the remit of this appraisal to produce a full survey of buildings it is considered the following buildings should be focused on. A particular asset to Seahouses heritage is its number of old herring processing sheds still remaining which are important to the industrial archaeology, social and economic history of Seahouses. These buildings, together with the stone surfaces to the adjoining yards, should be considered for listing.

9.2 A building-by-building analysis recording historic and architectural importance and general condition would be necessary not only for submission to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) for possible listing but also providing useful information on building repair and the need for funding, and development control policies on building additions and alterations.

10 Building Condition

- 10.1 There has been little serious building dereliction found during the initial survey. However, a detailed building survey (as outlined above) is needed to give a more accurate assessment of the condition of old buildings in Seahouses, based on the 'listed buildings at risk' survey produced by English Heritage. This will give information as a possible basis for funding priorities towards the cost of building repairs.
- 10.2 The satisfactory repair and maintenance of old buildings requires expertise in the use of traditional materials and detail. This is sometimes lacking, for example, the use of cement mortar, with ribbon pointing, instead of a lime based mix, and concrete lintels instead of stone replacements.
- 10.3 It is suggested that detailed information is made available to the public on the appropriate repair and maintenance of old buildings in a repair guide.

11 Building Additions and Alterations

- 11.1 Seahouses is similar to other historic settlements in its general standard of design of building additions and extensions, which are usually built to improve amenity or achieve more space. Sometimes these changes detract from the buildings' character because of their inappropriate size form or detail. There are adequate controls for extensions, alterations or demolitions of listed buildings, as Listed Building Consent is required for these changes. However, successful implementation of these controls relies on awareness by owners and agents of these constraints on changes to listed buildings.
- 11.2 Although there is national guidance on alterations to listed buildings for example 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 15', it would be appropriate to publish design guidance for The Borough of Berwick-on-Tweed, taking into account local distinctiveness.

- 11.3 Unlisted buildings, although they may contribute to the historic or architectural character of a conservation area, do not have the same controls over their change as listed buildings. There is currently concern about the serious erosion of the character of conservation areas by the removal of original timber windows and replacement with inappropriate PVCu materials, which does not require planning permission on privately owned houses. It is recommended that as a matter of urgency, an Article4 (2) Direction is considered for Seahouses following designation. This would ensure that defined alterations to unlisted buildings, such as the previous example, may be excluded from 'permitted development', and require 'Planning Permission'.
- 11.4 It would also be appropriate to include advice on the design of alterations on unlisted. Buildings in conservation areas within the design guide already referred to.

12 New Development

- 12.1 Seahouses has already been recently developed with substantial areas of housing, mostly on the periphery of its historic centre. New development varies in its quality of design, and success in harmonising with the character of the old settlement. Housing sites have been designated in 'The Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Local Plan', all located within the existing structures of recently built estates. Should further development be considered in the future within the boundary of the proposed conservation area of Seahouses, careful assessment of its location will be needed to help ensure that important townscape elements defined within the appraisal, such as open spaces, vistas, landmarks and building groupings are protected from inappropriate change.
- 12.2 Design guidance for new development would be useful in helping ensure that high standards of design are achieved in the Borough. It is envisaged that the guide would cover the whole of Berwick- upon-Tweed Borough but take into account local distinctiveness. It could also be part of a comprehensive publication including alterations and extensions.

13 New Uses for Old Buildings

13.1 Buildings 're-inventing themselves' is an important part of the evolution of a settlement where the social, economic and cultural well being of the community may benefit, whilst helping secure a viable future for the property.

- 13.2 A creative and flexible approach is important when considering the new use for an old building by all concerned with its future. It is important that any change of use or alteration ensures that not only the historic and architectural integrity of the building is preserved, but the historic character of the conservation area is also retained.
- 13.3 A substantial number of redundant buildings in Seahouses, mostly of former use relating to the herring industry, have been changed to residential use. Some are with conversions which detract from the historic and architectural character of the original building.

14 Open Spaces and Landscape

- 14.1 Trees will have extra protection in Seahouses by the designation of a conservation area, as prior notification will be required for the felling or lopping of most trees.
- 14.2 The increase in vehicular traffic over the years has resulted in the erosion of the visual quality of streets and open spaces in Seahouses, by the intrusion of parked cars. Also traffic signs have resulted in an ugly clutter in the street scene.
- 14.3 A feature which has an adverse affect on the historic and architectural character of Seahouses is the presence of ugly overhead wiring which affects parts of Seahouses. This issue should be considered for action, subject to the views of the local community
- 14.4 It is considered that the local community should be the movers behind any enhancement scheme in Seahouses, with this Council being one of the enabling agencies.

15 Archaeology

15.1 Knowledge about Seahouses' coastal landscape and previous human occupation is understood through the discovery and analysis of archaeological remains. Archaeology therefore, represents a unique insight into the past and provides a finite and non-renewable resource that can be vulnerable to damage and destruction. Appropriate management is therefore, essential to ensure that archaeology survives and continues to provide information about the past.

15.2 The Character Appraisal is a snapshot in time. Archaeological records have helped with the appreciation of the landscape and built form both above and below the ground. Opportunities for futher archaeological study will continue to inform the character of the conservation area. National, regional and local policies exist through the planning process to ensure that adequate provision is made to continue to record and protect where necessary, archaeological remains.

The Way Ahead

- 16.1 The *Draft* Conservation Area Appraisal recommended that the proposed designation of Seahouses be the subject of consultation with the local community and the appraisal submitted for their comments. Seahouses would then be designated following a positive response, and subject to approval by Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council.
- The consultation process was undertaken via a publicised event that took place on the 8th and 9th April 2005. Both the Seahouses and North Sunderland Draft Appraisals, together with maps and supporting documentation showing the proposed conservation area boundaries were publicly displayed. The consultation period concluded on the 3rd May 2005 and comments received were then analysed and reported to the Council's Policy (Corporate Services and Regeneration) Committee on the 29th June 2005. The boundary and contents of this document have been revised following input from the community consultation.
- 16.3 Following possible designation, a survey should be carried out assessing the need for an Article 4(2) Direction for Seahouses and appropriate categories to be excluded from permitted development.
- 16.4 The consideration of the need to remove ugly overhead wiring, with approaches to the relevant power companies to promote a phased programme of the undergrounding of cables.
- 16.5 A survey to establish the architectural and historic importance, and condition of older traditional buildings in Seahouses, as a basis for submission to D.C.M.S. of possible buildings for listing, establishing a' buildings at risk' list and ascertaining the possible need for repair grants for historic buildings.
- 16.6 The publication of a detailed design guide for the Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed. This would identify differing guidance for areas of different distinctive character, and focus on the special needs of conservation areas.

It is recommended that guidance is published on the appropriate repair of 16.7 old buildings and that Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council encourages the local community to identify projects to enhance Seahouses.

Appendices

- (A) Glossary
- (B) Listed buildings and Ancient Monuments
- (C) Old Ordnance Survey Maps.

Appendix (A)

Glossary of terms

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abutments The solid part of a pier or wall **Burgage Plot** A tenure of land from an against which an arch abuts overlord for a yearly rent. The burgage plot commonly refers to the distinctive long narrow plot of land including a property found in old town centres, often mediaeval in origin Architrave The lowest of 3 main parts of Burnt umber A dark brown colour usually. entablature. The moulded used to describe a paint colour frame surrounding a door or window. Area A designation by the Country **Buttress** A mass of masonry or Outstanding Agency (formerly Countryside brickwork projecting from or **Natural Beauty** Commission) under the built against a wall to give extra National Parks and Access to strength the Countryside Act 1949. Their primary purpose is the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. Arrises A sharp edge produced by the Canopy A projection or hood over a meeting of 2 surfaces. door, window, tomb, altar, pulpit niche etc Ashlar Hewn blocks of masonry Cannon chimney A plain tubular chimney pot wrought to even faces and pot resembling a miniature cannon square edges lain in horizontal barrel made of fired clay. courses with vertical, fine joints, usually polished on the face. Balustrading Short posts or pillars in a series Capitals The head of a column, pilaster supporting a rail or coping etc in classical architecture Barge boards Projecting boards placed Casement A metal or timber window with against the incline of the gable window the opening frame hinged of a building and hiding the vertically. ends of roof timbers Basalt A fine grained sometimes Castellated Decorated with battlements glassy basic igneous rock (volcanic) Cat slide Basket weave A glazing bar is a slender A single pitch roof glazing bars moulded section in timber subdividing a window of small panes. 'Basket weave' is the distinctive curved interlocking

glazing bars at the head of a pointed arch window.

Bell-cote	A framework on a roof from which to hang bells	Chamfered	An arris or angle which is pared off and resembles a small splay.
Bipartite	Double eg bipartite sash windows – 2 sash windows side by side	Cill	A horizontal piece of timber or stone forming the bottom of a window or door, designed to throw off water.
Bronze Age	A period in history divided into the early, mid and late bronze age. Approximately 1,900 BC to 500 BC.	Coadstone	Artificial cast stone, widely used in the 18 th and early 19 th century for all types of ornamentation.
Cock and hen coping	A finish to the top of a stone boundary wall with every other stone projecting above the wall as a coping finish.	Hip roof	A roof with sloping ends instead of vertical ends.
Coping	A capping or covering to a wall	Hipped dormer	A window placed vertically in a sloping roof with a sloping roof.
Cornice	A moulded projection which crowns an entablature, moulding wall or opening.	Nave	The western limb of a church, west of the crossings flanked by aisles.
Coursed stone	Stone laid in horizontal courses	Ogee	A double curved line made up of a convex and concave part pantiles.
Crenellated	A parapet with alternating indentations and raised portions, for example a battlement.	Orders	In Greek, Roman and Renaissance architecture, an assembly of parts consisting of columns with bases, capitals and entablature.
Dentil	A small square block used in series in lonic, Corinthian and Composite columns.	Pantiles	A roofing tile of curved s- shaped sections
Diamond panes	Lozenge shaped panes of glass in wooden glazing bars or lead surrounds.	Parapet	A low wall placed to protect any spot where there is a sudden drop for example a house top
Drip stone or hood mould	A projecting moulding to throw off the rain on the face of a wall, above an arch, doorway or window.	Pastiche	Generally used as a derogatory term to describe a poor copy of an architectural element
Droved	An approximately parallel series of grooves in stone work made by a hammer and bolster	Patina	The weathered appearance of a building material
Entablature	In classical architecture the superstructure of an Order consisting of architrave, frieze and cornice.	Pediment	a low pitched gable over a portico, door or window
Eaves	A lower edge of a sloping roof which overhangs the face of a wall.	Pilaster	A shallow pier or column, projecting very slightly from a wall
Finial	A formal ornament at the top of a canopy, gable or pinnacle (often in the form of a fleur de lys)	Plinth	The projecting base of a wall or column pedestal usually chamfered or moulded at the top
	• /		•

Gable dormers	A window placed vertically in a sloping roof with a gabled roof	Pointing	Raking out of old mortar joints in brickwork or masonry and replacing with new mortar.
Gable head stack	A chimney stack rising directly form the gable wall of a building	Portico	A roofed space, open or partly closed, forming the entrance and centre-piece of the front of a building
Gothic arched window	A window with a pointed arch	PVCu plastic	A modern material commonly used for replacing old timber frames.
Punched stone	A stone face made flat with a blunt pick.	Saddle back roof	A tower surmounted by a pitched roof with gable ends.
Quoins	The dressed stone at the corner of buildings, usually laid so that their faces are alternatively large and small	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	The most important national sites in nature conservation or geomorphological terms, notified by English Nature. Under the Wildlife and
			Countryside Act 1981/
Rainwater goods	Gutters and down pipes which channel rainwater from the roof of a building.	Squared dressed stone	Stones squared and worked to a finished face
RAMSAR site	Site of international importance under the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as a water front habitat	Street scene	The street seen as a whole, defined by its constituent parts e.g. buildings, walls, roads etc
Random rubble	Unworked stone work	Stucco	A kind of plaster work
Reconstructed stone	Artificial stone	Tooled	Marks made by tooling or cutting into stone
Reveal	That part of the surround which lies between the glass or door and outer wall surface.	Traceried	The ornamental intersecting work in the upper part of a window.
Rock faced stone	Stone squared, with a rough finish to simulate a rugged rock appearance	Vernacular	Nature or indigenous, not designed or taught
Romanesque	The style current until the advent of Gothic, origins conjectured between 7 th and 10 th centuries AD	Vista	View of features seen from a distance
Rusticated	Masonry cast in large blocks separated from each other by deep joints	Voussoirs	A brick or wedge shaped stone forming one of the units of an arch

O

E

П

Appendix (B)

Listed Buildings and Ancient Monuments

NU 23 SW

NORTH SUNDERLAND

SEAHOUSES

9/186

Limekilns at Seahouses Harbour

22.12.69

 Π

Limekilns. Probably late C18. Ashlar 7 Large round arches now with boarded double doors. Canted corner on right. Tow more arches on left return.

Interiors of arches are corbelled down to small round-headed drawing eyes.

Listing NGR: NU2198732147

Appendix (C) Old Ordnance Survey Maps

Buildings, Spaces Or Features in Need of Enhancement Significant View Points Into and Out of the Settlement Open space contributing to the street scene Key Buildings or Landmarks Conservation Area Boundary Buildings of Group Value Listed Buildings

The Historic & Architectural Character of the Proposed Conservation Area of Seahouses

