Warkworth
Conservation Area Character Appraisal
Contents

1. Introduction 1
2. Historical Character 2
3. Conservation area boundaries 3
4. Character areas 3
   - The Medieval Core
   - The Butts
   - Woodlands
   - Station Road
5. The Setting 8
6. Building Characteristics 10
   - Construction Materials
   - Constructional Details
7. Ground and boundary treatments 12
8. Spaces, landscape and views 12
9. Key unlisted buildings 14
10. Negative factors and Management Recommendations 14
11. Summary of special character and appearance 15
12. Boundary Changes 2006 17

Appendices:

1. Conservation Area Boundary and Listed Buildings 19
2. Glossary
1. **Introduction**

Warkworth is situated in the South East of Alnwick District, Northumberland and is located approximately 35 miles North of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and 7 miles from Alnwick town. Road links are via the A1068 towards Amble in the South East and Alnwick in the North West. Public transportation links are via local buses to Alnwick and Newcastle, together with links to the rail services in Alnmouth. The National Cycle Network passes through Warkworth on the Coast and Castles Route. The majority of the conservation area settlement and the land to the north, south and east is part of the Northumberland Coast ANOB.

Warkworth Conservation Area was designated in 1972. Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines Conservation Areas as ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. The following report offers an analysis of the factors that contribute to this special character and appearance.

The Appraisal has been prepared in accordance with advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment and English Heritage Guidance on the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals. It is not intended to be comprehensive; the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
2. **Historical Character**

The physical development of Warkworth can be attributed to its location on a loop on the River Coquet, a situation that has parallels in Durham City where the development along a river meander creates a distinct defensive advantage. The valley through the north river cliff has been exploited to provide the gap for the road and bridges. The geological surface is predominantly glacial boulder clay overlying millstone grit shales and sandstones, which is reflected in the construction materials used in buildings throughout the village.

The earliest records of Warkworth settlement come from archaeological remains along the Coquet. Outwith the immediate area of modern day Warkworth, archaeological remains provide clues to the early development of the town. “Warkworth is famous for an unusual Neolithic cup and ring marked cliff that rises from the River Coquet at Morwick, the mysterious motifs contain rare spiral forms as well as simple cup marks. Their meaning is unclear but could have been religious or linked to tribal boundaries” (Keys to the Past). There are also Bronze Age finds in the immediate area of Warkworth, at Hilly Law and Walkmill.

The Sites and Monuments Record for the area contains finds from the Roman period (Samian pottery, coins and an altar near Gloster Hill). It is often assumed that there was an Anglo-Saxon settlement at Warkworth. The evidence for this relies heavily upon the fragments of a cross, found in the River Coquet. There is also historical and anecdotal evidence of a church and a palace for the Northumbrian king at the site that is now overlain by the castle. Although this is not improbable, no confirmed trace has yet been found”. (source: Keys to the Past).

Warkworth flourished in the medieval period as a harbour and market town. Pevsner described the layout of Warkworth as “entirely medieval”. Burgage strips run at right angles from the main streets of Bridge Street and Castle Street, running east towards the Butts and west to the Stanners. Key buildings are the defensive bridge and gatehouse at the north, leading up to the castle on the highest point at the south end of the village. The Church of St Lawrence has 12th century origins. An elaborate cave hermitage across the river from the castle is one of
the best-preserved examples in Britain. There was also a
deer park whose boundary bank survives in places as an
earthwork, but other sites connected to the castle, such
as a foundry and salmon fishery are only known from
historical documents.

In the 18th Century, new ideas in farming practice led to
many fine farmhouses and buildings being built in the
vicinity of Warkworth village, including Maudlin, New
Barns, Northfield, Southside and Sturton Grange (source:
Keys to the Past). The farming of agricultural land
continues to be important in the Warkworth environment
today.

Most of the properties in the conservation area today date
from the eighteenth century or later.

The well-preserved burgage plots; medieval remains,
impressive townscape and topographical location lead to
Warkworth having extensive historic interest. There are
distinct character areas which combine to form the
Conservation Area.

3. Conservation area boundaries

The Conservation Area boundary broadly cover the
following areas:

North - Victorian villas to the South of Station Road
South - Recreational ground to Morwick Road and
housing North of Beal Bank (including Woodlands)
East - the mean high water mark of the River Coquet to
Helsay and the edge of The Butts
West - the eastern boundary of the River Coquet
meander

The boundary covers different phases of development in
the village, including key buildings such as the Castle and
the Church of St Lawrence, and also encompasses the
setting of the Castle and surrounding burgage plots.

4. Character areas

Four distinct areas of different character can be identified
within Warkworth Conservation Area. These are:

- The Medieval Core
- The Butts
- Woodlands
- Station Road
The Medieval Core

Warkworth Market Place was probably laid out in the medieval period, though there are no documentary records of it. The street in front of the church widens, and is shown on a map of 1623.

A visually dramatic entrance to the Conservation Area from Birling is created through a heavily wooded area with high banks on either side, emerging to views of the bridge ahead and rising up to the castle on the hill in the distance. Views from both the modern bridge and the old bridge along the river are impressive and an important part of how one appreciates the setting of the Conservation Area.

The Castle and especially the Keep are the historic symbols of Warkworth. It dominates the surrounding, predominantly low lying countryside just as it was designed to do. Elegant and architectural rather than simply military, it does not rely on mass alone to impress. It is sophisticated, well preserved and symbolic while simultaneously aloof and detached from the life of the village.

Bridge Street contains the Grade II* Listed Bridge End House together with its decorative boundary railings. This is a seventeenth century house heightened in the eighteenth century.

The narrowness of Bridge Street and the height of the buildings that abut directly onto the footway create an enclosed feel to the street until one approaches Castle Street and Dial Place. At the end of Bridge Street adjacent to the Market Cross stands the former Co-operative society building, which is now the Greenhouse shop and represents a sympathetic treatment of an important corner site.

Dial Place is a large open space with the Market Cross at the south end and St Lawrence’s church at the north. St Lawrence’s churchyard and St Lawrence’s Church is a true time line of Warkworth. There are clearly discernible architectural phases, and the building and its grounds are still in use for its original purpose after eight hundred and fifty years. The riverside setting of the Church, and the narrow wynds, which are in the immediate vicinity of the Church, create pleasant public spaces from which to appreciate this fine building.
The sense of Dial Place and the Market Place as a public space is now diminished due to the use of the area as a car park. Parking in historic areas is always at a premium, and the Stanners is also used as an overflow. There is much opportunity to improve this space, as at present the tarmac and white lines does not do much to preserve or enhance one's experience of this historic village.

Bridge Street and Castle Street are on the A1068, simultaneously a lifeline and an intrusion. The down side is thundering heavy traffic negotiating narrow carriageways lined with parked vehicles. The upside is the continuing use of a road in place for nearly a thousand years bringing life and vitality to the settlement as it has throughout history.

Buildings on the west of Dial Place tend to be higher and more formal than those on the east. Sash windows have been replaced in the unlisted buildings in many places with facsimiles that lack the detail of the original openings.

At the bottom of Castle Street is the Market Cross with St Lawrence’s as the backdrop. This area has become the “commercial heart” of Warkworth with pubs, shops, post office, restaurants and facilities. A Listed K6 telephone kiosk also is present, together with an original post box although the Post Office has been relocated elsewhere in the village. There is also a community notice board.

The buildings on Castle Street tend to be highly individual and vary greatly in age and style. Together they have a key role in the townscape and castle setting. However, only a few buildings are individually of great architectural merit. The Community Hall is also located in Castle Street, providing facilities that are in need of improvement to meet the modern needs of all residents (Spence and Dower (2003).

Castle Terrace is in a more formal late Victorian style than Castle Street, and is greatly overshadowed both physically and architecturally by the Castle. Aligned directly on the footpath, the buildings are marred in parts by modern alterations, which are not entirely in keeping with the original buildings.

East of Castle Terrace is the Sun Hotel, dated c1820. The garden in front of the hotel is delineated by listed early nineteenth century low iron railings an example of good
quality metalwork. Adjacent to the Sun Hotel, one can access the Ember Path that affords views of the rear elevations of Castle Street along a narrow public walkway. It emphasizes that Castle Street is much more than property frontages. From the Ember Path looking east we see out over the ends of the burgage plots – the Butts – cultivated strips in use since medieval times now used by residents as allotments and garden space. The quality of boundary walls lining the Ember Path is high, and this has enabled the protection of the burgage plots.

To the west of Castle Street runs the Stanners, which opens out onto the River. Tall mainly stone boundary walls line the uppermost parts of the Stanners area at the rear of Castle Street and one can glimpse views up into the main area of the village from the lanes adjacent to the car parking. Some modern infill exists and fronts Castle Street (such as Hotspur Court), and most properties such as those at Brewery Lane turn their back on the Stanners and run parallel away from the River towards Castle Street. One exception to this is Number 1 The Stanners, a Grade II Listed Building, which has a garden area fronted by a low stone wall (Grade II Listed). This is a House and former cottage with pantile roof constructed in the 18th Century.

A number of buildings in the Medieval Core suffer from poor quality stonework repairs and insensitive alterations. There are a number of examples of poor glazing and Upvc windows.

**The Butts**

The Butts is separated from the historic core by the intervening and predominantly undeveloped burgage strips that run away from the Ember Path. While the Butts have some buildings of the eighteenth century, most development dates from the latter half of the nineteenth century of later. The fisherman’s shed at the south end of The Butts was used to store salmon nets and was built for the Duke’s fisherman.

Most properties in the Butts face onto the River, and share common design features that give a unified appearance. This includes the use of chimneystacks, sash windows and slate roofs, and fine ashlar frontages. Gable ends are often constructed in random rubble.

Buildings of further note include the URC church, and the Old School. The Butts also has some late twentieth century development. The house that stands at the
corner with Ember Gardens has a somewhat suburban determination to be detached and consequently could be seen to be out of context with its neighbours. New terraced dwellings near the bridge attempt to encompass some of the traditional elements of the Warkworth streetscape (Bridge View). New housing is presently being developed in the area that was formally a Builder’s Yard at Wellfield. This area has fine views along the River loop.

One problematic aspect of the Butts is the lack of formal car parking facilities; the grassed banks of the Coquet are often used as car parking which represents an intrusive element in the views along the River.

**Woodlands**

The Woodlands area is a development of predominantly inter-war housing, including terraces, semis and detached dwellings within the setting of the Castle. The design is arts and crafts in influence, with stone and render and leaded glass being used, together with tiled roofs.

As the development approaches Beal Bank House marking the southeast limit of the Conservation Area, the style changes to a more conventional run of 1930s red brick semis of a type prevalent outside the conservation area. Beal Bank House is itself typically Edwardian in sandstone and slate.

The approach into Warkworth from Morwick Road affords spectacular vistas of the Castle and its grounds across the cricket ground and the adjacent grazing fields. This area represents an important aspect of the Woodlands character area by virtue of its amenity value and the contrast in density of development from that opposite in Magdelene Fields.

**Station Road**

This area is quite separate from the main village and is situated on the north cliff of the Coquet valley. It was developed from the nineteenth century and consists mostly of large villas in substantial grounds running down to the river.

Mostly in sandstone and slate, there are some very fine and ornate period examples. It is a feature of these large villas that they are secluded and private behind high boundary walls and only fleeting glimpses can be had of
most in gaps between trees or along driveways. Intermixed with the large villas are also a limited number of small cottages.

A key feature of development in this area is the steeply sloping wooded gardens formed on the river cliffs which give character and setting to the view from the Stanners.

Some new housing has been constructed within this area (Hermitage Drive), which is immediately outwith the Conservation Area, but forms part of its approach from the North. These are large villa style developments.

5. The Setting

Areas which are outwith the Conservation Area form part of its setting, and the historical development of the village.

The southern boundary of the conservation area runs along the north side of Morwick Road including the pasture field in front of the castle and the cricket club to the west. It excludes the houses on Morwick Road although they form the backdrop to views from the Castle. The houses themselves are typical red brick semi detached housing. They have no special merit but have some townscape significance in the setting of the conservation area.

To the rear of Morwick Road is the Magdelene Fields development with some later infill. The layout is of cul-de-sacs with bungalows. It can be seen stepping up Beal Bank in views from the A1068.

Further west along Morwick Road there is a mix of large Edwardian houses to the north side with later twentieth century housing on the south. Of particular note is the robust grade two listed Old Barns Farm. There is a further, final spur of development to the north at Heatherleazes, again based on suburban rather than rural principles.

Birling is the natural gateway into Warkworth from the north but detached from the meander loop. Houses are in sandstone, dating predominantly from the early nineteenth century. The area is characterised by the burn that has carved the valley in the river cliff and which can be appreciated in a number of locations from the public road. Dwellings are perched on steep slopes or set back from the roadway in heavily wooded areas.
Also north of the loop is Old Helsay, a stone built farm of the early nineteenth century.

Although not often seen because of its limited access, the setting of the Conservation Area from the Helsay side is particularly fine, allowing views along the River and across the Butts to the Castle, with the trees framing the view.

Birling, the Old Cemetery and Old Helsay could form a logical extension to the conservation area, as it has historical associations with the agricultural development of Warkworth and form part of its setting.

Summary of Historic Features

- Norman church Medieval harbour and market town
- Farming developments of the 18th Century
- Original buildings from 18th century onward
- Victorian villas in Station Road area
- Coquet loop location
- Archaeological evidence for Neolithic cup and ring marked cliffs
- Bronze Age finds at Hilly Law and Walkmill,
- Samian pottery, coins and Roman alter near Gloster Hill
- Anglo-Saxon settlement origins
6. Building characteristics and Local Details

Materials

Warkworth is predominantly constructed in stone. The building frontages are in a number of finishes including ashlar and dressed stone and random finishes on front elevations are very rare. Sadly there are many examples of inappropriate cement repairs to stonework and this seriously detracts from appearance as well as contributing to the further decay of the buildings. Care should be taken when extending existing buildings or in infill development to ensure use of a suitably sympathetic style of stone in the correct size and appropriately bonded. The layout and bonding of the different types of stonework contributes immensely to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and new developments should reflect and respect these characteristics. Materials used on the rear of properties in the centre of the village is also important as the hill setting means that they are visible from many points within, and when approaching, the conservation area.

Roofscape is varied and interest is added by chimneys constructed with handmade brick or rendered stone. Dormers and roof lights at the frontages are rare. The most common roofing material is Welsh slate, available from the end of the eighteenth century. There is also some Westmoreland slate, most notably on St Lawrence’s church and on Station Road. However, there is a significant quantity of red pantile. Some roofs have been recovered in cement tiles.

Brick is less common in the conservation area although the grade two listed Hermitage Inn is constructed in brick with render. Old brick is also present in rear elevations of Castle Street, for chimneys and rear boundary walls, and along the Ember Path.

After the mid nineteenth century large quantities of factory brick became available and several properties at the north end of the Butts are constructed in such brick. Woodlands has a brick string course. Most development outside the conservation area after 1930 is constructed in brick.

Render is relatively common. In a number of properties, render has been used to disguise different building phases.
There is a tradition of high quality iron work seen at its best in the altar screen of St Lawrence’s, the gates of Bridge End House and the railings at the Sun Hotel.

**Constructional Details**

Building ornamentation is not lavish and is often confined to decorative door surrounds, however a number of typical details are shared among Warkworth properties, combining with the material styles to create the character of the village.

The use of datestones and carved stonework is present in a number of properties.

Windows are traditionally timber sash and case and painted, with fenestration varying depending on the age of the property or the degree of change which has occurred to the façade historically (with improved glass technology, less astragals were used and it is common to see properties with Georgian style 6 x 6 pane designs and Victorian 2 x 2 pane designs in the same building). This shows the natural evolution of the building. Attempts to unify the window style should be resisted.

Doors tend to be four or six panelled with decorative mouldings. Some have glazed upper panels and incorporate quite elaborate door furniture. Decorative door surrounds are present in some properties in the Conservation Area.

Some of the Victorian properties have porches (such as *St Lawrence Terrace*) with wooden detailing such as bargeboards.

Buildings vary in height, but tend to follow the natural topography (e.g. Castle Street housing follows the contours of the land to slope up from Dial Place towards the Castle). This leads to a stepped appearance where one is able to view parts of gable ends, juxtaposed with fairly simple chimneys. Bridge Street and Castle Street have mostly two storey buildings, but there are some three-storey buildings in Dial Place. The villas in Station Road have three storey elements in parts.

Public houses and shops have painted signage with hanging signs. A number of properties that were once shops have been converted into residential properties, although the shop fronts have been retained. Shop fronts are an important element of the townscape, and should
any further conversions occur, efforts should be made to secure the retention of former shop fronts.

A large number of properties in Castle Street have archways that lead through to back yards. This detail emanates from the time when a number of coaching inns were located in the village, and travelling visitors used stabling facilities provided in the town. Number 5 Castle Street is one example of a Listed property with coach entrance to the main street and stabling to the rear; the buildings of Warkworth have evolved to reflect the historical development of land uses throughout time.

7. **Ground and boundary treatments**

Early photographs show Castle Street in setts with a rammed earth carriageway.

Today, paths and roadways are generally poor in quality, constructed in concrete slab and tarmac and with few areas of original surfacing surviving. The medieval bridge has a combination of stone and setts, creating a dramatic (now pedestrian) entrance.

Public pathways are clearly marked, and generally well maintained.

The west side of Castle Street has a raised pathway, with a series of steps down onto the Road. There is an opportunity to create a more imaginative streetscape, which better responds to the character of such a historic and special village with architectural interest.

8. **Spaces, landscape and views**

The contrast between open space and buildings is an essential component of character, giving meaning and context to buildings.

It should be noted that the built and natural environments intermingle to produce striking views from the riverside. While the sea is not frequently in view, it has a profound influence on the character of Warkworth, influencing the tidal stretches running past the village.

Views into and out of the Conservation Area are highly important, and affect the manner with one appreciates the village as a whole and Conservation Area from afar.
As discussed in section four, the Castle is an integral part of the way in which one views the village. Spence and Dower comment that it "rises above the ridges to the South and North, signalling the presence of something exciting and hidden in the landscape ahead" (Spence and Dower (2003) page 43). The major long distance view of Warkworth is to be had from the A1068 from Amble. Here the castle is at the centre with Magdelene Fields to the left and the historic village to the right. Farm buildings at Old Helsay merge with the village and are read as one although separated by the Coquet.

The open spaces and riverside walks in the Conservation Area form a pleasant environment for locals and visitors to enjoy. The small wooden signs encourage exploration by pedestrians, and walks are available from the town centre to the beach and beyond.

**Summary of architectural/townscape details:**

- Date stones and carved stonework
- Timber sash windows, painted with varied fenestration
- Doors; four or six paneled with decorative mouldings (Some with glazed upper panels and elaborate door furniture)
- Decorative door surrounds, some fanlights
- Occasionally Victorian properties have porches with wooden detailing
- Variations of height, but tending to follow the natural topography and are mostly 2-3 storey
- Painted signage with hanging signs
- Shop fronts have been retained when converted to residential
- Archways on Castle Street that lead through to back yards.
9. **Key unlisted buildings**

St Lawrence Terrace is a small terrace of largely unaltered Victorian buildings situated just off Bridge Street on the Riverside “Monks Walk”. These properties have group value and contribute positively to the Conservation Area.

Consideration could be given to listing of a number of properties in the main streets which are not listed, but could merit listing from a group value point of view.

Consultation with locals to discover which buildings are seen as important in the village and could be considered for listing should be made.

10. **Negative factors and Management Recommendations**

There is a great deal of clutter in the Warkworth Streetscape, in terms of signage and standardised street furniture. It would be advantageous to consider rationalisation of these features, the provision of adequate well designed litter bins and the creation of high quality signage to indicate the entrance to Warkworth village from boundary areas and perhaps to the Conservation Area. Improvements to the quality of seating and the bus shelters would create useable space to be appreciated by all.

As discussed earlier, the provision of an improved quality of streetscape provides a challenge, together with enhanced hard and soft landscaping in Dial Place.

Sensitive lighting to key buildings could be provided to enhance their appreciation at both close hand and from further afield during winter months and the early evening.

The Spence and Dower Study identified issues with the provision of community space and facilities that are accessible, functional and designed to meet the needs of all the community. The availability of such facilities would enhance the experience of living in and using the Conservation Area. Community ownership of public open space and continued maintenance will also assist in this experience through involvement and fundraising activities.

Incremental loss of original features within unlisted buildings where Permitted Development exists is often
detrimental to the townscape and small individual accretions have the potential for damaging one's overall perception of a quality environment. Consideration should be given towards implementing an Article 4 (ii) Direction to control changes to properties with significant townscape value (such as doors and windows) on highway frontages together with a programme to identify buildings with "listable" qualities.

11. Summary of special character

What makes Warkworth, Warkworth? Character in the built environment is a combination of factors that encompass one's experience of place. This can be a mixture of all of the different factors explored in the Appraisal, and also the combination of things that one cannot necessarily devise planning and conservation policies to control or enhance such as sounds and smells. By defining and protecting the tangible; such as buildings and the spaces formed between them (streets, squares, paths, yards and gardens), the activities and uses that make up the special character of a place can be sustained.

Recommendations for the Preservation and Enhancement of Warkworth Conservation Area

The following aspects of preservation and enhancement can be considered for the Conservation Area.

Use of the Appraisal

The Appraisal can be used to identify the aspects of special character and appearance that give Warkworth its sense of place. Conservation Area Appraisals can be used as a useful tool in the Development Control decision-making process. New developments should seek to complement these aspects of the village townscape, in line with Policy BE6 of the Local Plan.

Extension of the Conservation Area

The approach to Warkworth from Birling forms an important part of the way in which one experiences the conservation Area. This area contains a number of Listed Buildings (e.g. Birling Manor) and forms part of the setting of the present Conservation Area. This area, together with the cemetery could form a logical extension to the conservation area.
Old Helsay has strong historical associations with the agricultural development of Warkworth, and affords fine views into the Conservation Area across the Coquet. Again, the inclusion of this area should be considered.

**Introduction of an Article 4(ii) Direction**

Incremental loss of original features within unlisted buildings where Permitted Development exists is often detrimental to the townscape and small individual accretions have the potential for damaging one’s overall perception of a quality environment. Consideration should be given towards implementing an Article 4 (ii) Direction to control changes to doors and windows on properties with significant townscape value on highway frontages.

**Listing of Unlisted Properties with Townscape Value**

Consultation as part of the Appraisal adoption process, as to which buildings could be considered to have “listable” qualities should be made. If suggestions are made for Listing, these should be compiled and sent to English Heritage, with supporting information and photographs.

English Heritage guidance on Listed Buildings shows the following criteria for consideration for Listing:

Architectural interest: the lists are meant to include all buildings which are of importance to the nation for the interest of their architectural design,

Decoration and craftsmanship; also important examples of particular building types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technical innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms;

Historical interest: this includes buildings which display important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history;

Close historical associations with nationally important people or events;

Group value, especially where buildings comprise together an important architectural or historical unity or a fine example of planning (e.g. squares, terraces or model villages).
A particular building may qualify for listing under more than one of these criteria.

**Streetscape Improvements**

In planning any repairs or a major works programme, consideration to the typical common Warkworth pallet of materials should be given. This will ensure that works are designed to improve and enhance the area, rather than impose standardised solutions which may not be sympathetic to the traditional streetscape. Retention of the trees in Castle Street is important.

Improved hard and soft landscaping to the car parking areas at Dial Place and the southern end of the Butts would be beneficial.

**Summary of management recommendations:**

- Extend the conservation area to include the cemetery and chapel.
- Introduce Article 4 directives to protect important details and finishes, particularly windows and doors, and prevent further erosion of character
- Consider buildings for listing; St Lawrence Terrace
- Public realm audit and streetscape improvements, including street furniture and surfaces, traffic calming measures

**Boundary Changes 2006**

The approach to Warkworth from the direction of Birling forms an important part of the way in which one experiences the transition into the conservation area. The high retaining walls to the cemetery and the mature trees are an essential ingredient in the entrance to the conservation area. This area dominated by mature trees which sits high above the river is an important part of the setting to the current conservation area such that it would form a logical extension to the conservation area and is now included in the conservation area.
Bibliography

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- Spence and Dower (2003) Tomorrow’s Warkworth
  A Study for Warkworth Village Trust
Glossary

Public Realm Audit
Streetscape Surveys

A focal point of conservation area designation is the careful maintenance and use of public space. This incorporates assessment of signage use, surface materials, street furniture, parking and traffic management issues. A public realm audit/streetscape survey considers the suitability of these elements against the character of the area and the practicality of their position and location and provides an opportunity to define and enhance the conservation area environment.

Article 4 Directions

The aim of an Article 4(2) Direction is to encourage the retention of high quality architectural features on buildings and to preserve and enhance the conservation area of which they are part. ‘Like for like’ repairs and reinstatement of architectural features will be encouraged, along with the removal of previously unsympathetic changes to buildings.

In order to keep control over development in Conservation Areas and very occasionally outside Conservation Areas, the Council is able to make an 'Article 4 Direction', the effect of which is to take away 'permitted development' rights, meaning that Planning Permission will be required.

Where there is not a Direction, owners of houses within a conservation area have rights to undertake considerable alterations to their property without the need for planning permission (Permitted Development Rights). Where these rights are unchecked they can undermine and erode the 'special interest' of a conservation area, allowing changes to the windows and doors, additions such as porches and general lack of attention to detail.

Design Information and Guidelines

Alnwick District Council has undertaken a study of the district to identify the principal characteristics of the built environment. This has provided the basis of three documents that aim to provide recommendations for new development and design guidelines for alterations to existing buildings.
The following publications are available from the Alnwick District Council -

- Guide to historic windows
- Colour Schemes
- Conversion of Rural Buildings

A.O.N.B – Design Guide

Northumberland County Council together with Alnwick and Berwick District Council’s, have a responsibility to protect and enhance the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To achieve this aim, a series of ‘Northumberland Coast AONB Design Guides’ have been produced. These guides focus not only on the character of traditional local buildings and their repair and maintenance but incorporate a strategy for quality housing design that benefits both the rural community and environment.

Alnwick District Council - Historic Buildings Grant scheme.

The main purpose of Historic Buildings Grants scheme is to ensure the continued survival of important historic fabric, and to enhance and preserve the appearance of listed buildings or buildings of architectural importance.