

4. CHANGE

Evolution

- 4.1 As the way we live has changed, so has our environment, and the historic environment is no exception. We expect to find ring-main power supplies in buildings originally lit by rush tapers, and we are not surprised to see Welsh roof slates in London. However, we are sometimes startled by changes, especially those that have not stood the test of time.
- 4.2 In most areas, change is an inevitable part of a natural evolution that tends to be accepted until it conflicts with other values. Then, it is the perception of change that gives rise to concern: How much change? How fast? And to what effect?

Drivers of change

- 4.3 To understand fully the causes of change in the historic environment is beyond the remit of this report: It would require substantial social science research. However, it is clear that the driving forces include:
- 4.4 Ownership: Long-term paternal ownership, as for instance country estates, can result in conservative management in which change is minimal. Conversely, absentee landlords with less benign motives may have little incentive to maintain property so that, when investment becomes necessary, work may be affected more by expediency than quality.
- 4.5 The *Framing Opinions* campaign estimated in 1991 that an average of £21,000 is spent on properties when ownership changes. This is clearly a significant time for step-changes.
- 4.6 Technology: Technological developments have influenced physical change to a large degree. The invention of plate glass in the mid-19th century had an immense effect on windows, which had hitherto been made up of multiple panes. Similarly, the introduction of central heating with balanced-flue boilers has made most chimneys redundant.
- 4.7 The degree to which new technologies have been embraced is also a factor. For instance, the acceptance of plastics has accelerated quickly despite initial scepticism.
- 4.8 There is now a problem with the replacement of non-standard elements, such as special castings or leadwork details. While

most components can still be made, the issue of convenience is a challenge for local authority control. On the Woodgrange Estate, the local authority has addressed this by using grant-aid to commission a pattern for the distinctive cast-iron fence panels.

- 4.9 Marketing: The twentieth century saw a progression from products being simply offered to the market, to a situation where the market is created by the artificial generation of 'need'. This has been much of the replacement joinery industry in which 'old' has been equated with 'worn out'.
- 4.10 Fashion: Historically, the desire to be different has led to brick houses being re-fronted in stone and vice versa. Urban analysis often reveals local changes that are not accounted for by need. In the 1920s there was a particular fashion for new front doors, in the 1960s it was 'California' concrete block boundary walls, and now perhaps plastic windows with a stained glass effect. All of these fashions are evident in the areas sampled in this research.



Alexandra Cottages: Window changes become apparent in warm weather

- 4.11 Social aspiration: Linked with marketing and fashion, the aspiration to achieve a higher status for property is not new. Materials were often upgraded visually so that stucco was used to look like stone, cast-iron was painted to look like bronze and now, astonishingly, plastic window frames are grained to look like rosewood. In areas of social housing, it is evident that the right-to-

buy has generated changes to personalise property and to announce ownership.

- 4.12 Affluence/ poverty: Often the problems faced by historic buildings are due to too much money or too little. This was apparent in the survey – There were very few properties that were being modestly maintained in the narrow margin between changes due to misguided ‘improvement’ and changes brought about by decay.
- 4.13 In the Bromley study area, high car ownership has led to breaches in almost all of the front boundary walls with many of the front gardens given over to hardstanding for cars. In Maryport, however, a general lack of resources must be the explanation for the high survival rate of original slate roofs and cast-iron gutters, while spending has been concentrated on changes that show, such as replacement windows.
- 4.14 Government policy and regulation: Change has clearly been affected by government requirements, from the byelaws introduced after the Fire of London to the current Building Regulations. Those who now seek to install double-glazing in listed buildings will often quote government expectations for fuel economy.
- 4.15 The definition of conservation areas¹, however, implies a policy to limit the scope of change through the ‘desirability to preserve or enhance’. The degree to which this is supported through planning policy, supplementary guidance and planning practice in different areas is a significant factor.
- 4.16 Regulation is a balance of incentives and sanctions. Grant assistance may be important, but communities can equally be motivated by the degree to which understanding of conservation issues has been promoted.
- 4.17 Enforcement against small-scale change is rarely possible unless an Article 4 direction is in place to remove permitted development rights. Even then there are issues of regular inspection, evidence and proof.

Erosion

- 4.18 The concept of erosion in this context is relatively modern. It tends to be assumed that, in the past, modernisation was experienced as a natural part of a gradual but inevitable evolution. Over the last 150 years, however, there has clearly been a perceptual shift, no doubt in response to the accelerating pace of change. This has

¹ Section 69 - Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

seen an increasing consciousness of environmental issues including, of course, the historic environment. And it has resulted in a set of values being accorded to the historic environment. Erosion is said to occur when these values are adversely affected by change.

- 4.19 To understand erosion, therefore, it is necessary first to understand the values in play in each circumstance. These may be implicit in a designation, such as a conservation area. They may be more specifically set out in the analysis provided by an appraisal or conservation plan. They may be expressed by the resident community as much as by professionals. In any case, these values should be assessed before any attempt is made to measure change.
- 4.20 The nature of change should also be considered. Some changes are benign – the restoration of missing features, for instance. Others may be considered damaging, but how badly? There are questions of:
- Sensitivity – A replacement window that differs only in a few minor but crucial respects may be devastating to a precious listed building but tolerable elsewhere
 - Relativity – Some changes matter more than others. The weighting of these differences is discussed in the next section
 - Magnitude – A replacement window that required the removal of masonry to alter the proportions would almost certainly be far worse than one that fitted the existing opening
 - Accumulation – Small-scale changes that are inoffensive in a single iteration may have an erosive effect through repetition
 - Speed – The rate of change, which can be measured by successive surveys, may itself be a cause for alarm
 - Extent – An alteration may be so endemic that it is regarded as neutral rather than bad: television aerials, for instance, are rarely expressed as a major issue
 - Survival – Some changes that would have been considered negative have survived the test of time to become cherished rarities. An example might be an art deco shopfront on a Victorian building

Implications for research

- 4.21 The diversity of multi-period conservation areas complicates the understanding of values and the effect of change. The layering of history brings with it the need to distinguish between evolution and erosion. This can be achieved by relating the assessment of

change back to the definition of special interest using the principles already established in *Informed Conservation*.²

- 4.22 Despite campaigns, such as *Framing Opinions*, there is a constant need for information and guidance on managing change. Knowing when to accommodate changes and when to resist them, and in what manner, requires particular discernment.
- 4.23 There is also a case for gaining better knowledge of the socio-economic drivers of change and how they might be influenced to take better account of the historic environment.

Conclusions

- 4.24 Change is inevitable and even desirable. It is influenced by many factors some of which may be modified by guidance and regulation.
- 4.25 Change is erosive when it conflicts with established value systems.
- 4.26 While rates of change are not generally defined, it is clear from the rapid adoption of modern materials that change has accelerated.³
- 4.27 Deciding whether change matters, therefore, requires an understanding of how heritage values and the nature of the change interact in each case.
- 4.28 There is a case for further research and guidance on the causes of change and how they might be managed.

5. ANALYSIS

Statistics

- 5.1 Data from the survey proformas was entered onto a database using Microsoft Access. This software is useful for storing multiple fields of information in a readily retrievable form and for extracting basic statistics. However, there are limitations. It does not, for instance, accommodate a photograph of each building with its record. Nor could Access perform calculations. For working purposes, therefore, the database was transferred to Excel.

² Kate Clark, op cit

³ For instance, the widespread use of plastics has developed relatively recently

- 5.2 The survey proforma (see Annexe 1) allows for a survival rating for each item to be entered. This is expressed as a percentage of the original. Thus, no change would be 100%, while a lowered chimney stack would be 50%. The replacement of three out of four windows with uPVC would be 25%.
- 5.3 The survival rating can be multiplied by a weighting figure, reflecting the relative significance of the changes (see 5.8 below), to provide a score for each item. The sum of these scores would produce a total for each property.
- 5.4 The maximum score in each case would be 100% of the weighting figures – ie complete survival. The actual score for each property can be compared with the theoretical maximum. Expressed as a percentage, this gives the measure of change.
- 5.5 Using a percentage enables comparisons to be made between surveys of different areas even though different fields may be used (see 3.22 above). An index of change for a whole area could be achieved by taking the average of the changes recorded for each of the constituent properties.
- 5.6 Building-by-building analysis may well be useful for local management but, for the comparison of areas, there is a danger of over-complication. There is no need to disaggregate the figures only to total them again. Using the database, the survival rating of each item can be calculated for the whole area - ie the survival of, say, original windows as a percentage of all the windows. The use of this method to achieve a comparative index of change for the study areas is illustrated at Annexe 2.
- 5.7 The statistical approach can be summarised thus:

Statistical analysis:

- Percentage of original item existing = survival rating
- Survival rating x weighting = score for each item
- Sum of item scores = total score for building or area
- 100% x weighting = maximum possible score
- Total score ÷ max score x 100 = measure of change

Weighting

5.8 Weighting is necessary because some changes are more apparent than others and, therefore, have more influence on the perception of change. Clearly, there is a subjective element in assessing the weights to be applied. Accordingly, the researchers devised a system that took the six most prevalent fields and ordered them on a scale of six down to one. This was tested by the Steering Group and there was considerable debate.

5.9 The consensus was first that 'doors' should be combined with 'windows', reducing the number of fields to five. Second, a consensus emerged on the ranking of the fields by their relative importance – ie significance to the perception of change. This was as follows, with 1 being the most significant change and 5 being the least:

1. Walls
2. Windows and doors
3. Roofs, chimneys and dormers
4. Porches, bay windows and other projections, such as verandahs
5. Rainwater goods, bargeboards and relatively ephemeral ironwork

5.10 Third, the importance of each field was given a value as a percentage of the whole and from this a weighting value was assigned:

	%age	Weighting
▫ Walls	30	3
▫ Windows/ doors	25	2.5
▫ Roofs etc	20	2
▫ Porches etc	15	1.5
▫ RWG	<u>10</u>	1
	100	

The case studies

5.11 Using the scoring method of survival x weighting, collective scores for the study areas were:

▫ Alexandra Cottages	40.48
▫ Maryport	52.49
▫ Woodgrange	68.12
▫ Hanger Hill Gardens	75.56

By comparison, the control area scores were:

▫ Maryport	34.24
▫ Ealing	65.16

5.12 The detailed statistics are given in Annex 2. The method shows that it is, indeed, possible to rank conservation areas against each other but the usefulness of this may be open to debate. As with all indices, it is the reasoning behind the single index figure that matters. A commentary is, therefore, necessary to attempt an explanation for some of the differences:

5.13 Alexandra Cottages: The estate was built for railway workers in the 1860s. The four parallel streets are contained by a distinctive boundary wall. The brick houses are built in pairs under a single gable facing the street and with entrances on the side elevations. All the houses were recorded.

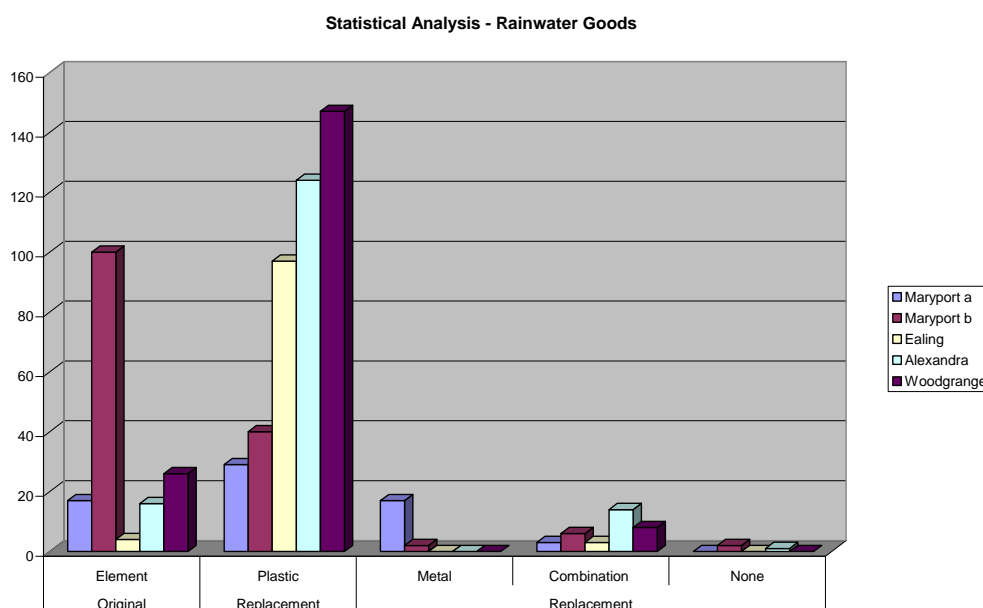
5.14 The estate has clearly been affected by investment in ill-informed improvements. It has by far the highest incidence of alterations that would be difficult to reverse, such as enlarged window openings and refaced walls. Roof materials have changed significantly, as have front gardens and boundary walls, clearly due to the high demand for off-street parking.



Alexandra Cottages: Sash windows reinstated in restored openings

- 5.15 However, there are signs of recovery, apparently in response to social changes and indications that house values can be affected by the survival of 'period features'. In a few cases, traditionally detailed sash windows have been reinstated. An Article 4 direction has recently been implemented by the local authority, following a public consultation exercise, and there is evidently a new determination to improve the management of the conservation area.
- 5.16 Maryport: The town was laid out in a grid pattern in the mid-18th century when Humphrey Senhouse, Lord of the Manor, decided to develop a coal port to rival nearby Whitehaven. He named the town after his wife.
- 5.17 Development did not take off until the town was largely rebuilt on the same layout from 1847 following connection to the railway network. However, the economic success of the port and the local coal industry were short-lived and decline was continuous through most of the 20th century. Despite several regeneration initiatives, Maryport continues to show signs of social deprivation.
- 5.18 The conservation area is considerably larger than the other research cases and it was not possible to survey all of it. Instead of taking one sector of the town, it was considered that it would be more representative to sample four sub areas that reflect the main phases of development from the middle to the end of the 19th century.
- 5.19 Ironically, the low investment resulting from economic depression has resulted in a remarkably high survival of original slate roofs and cast-iron rainwater goods. A considerable proportion of the original doors and windows has also been retained. This has been reinforced in some parts by grant-aid.
- 5.20 In 1997, a building condition survey was carried out. It recorded factual information on building materials and judged overall condition in one of four categories (Good, fair, poor, very bad). The survey was intended primarily for identifying priorities for grant funding, but it has been used for conservation area management.
- 5.21 Although Maryport has an Article 4 direction, one area in particular has suffered from a vogue for uPVC windows that has been difficult to resist. This is partly because of unsympathetic appeal decisions. More recently, however, it is because the evidence available from the survey is more than four years old. Residents are aware that planning enforcement is limited to works within the last four years and can claim that the work was undertaken after

the survey but before the limit. The onus of proof has been held to rest with the local authority.



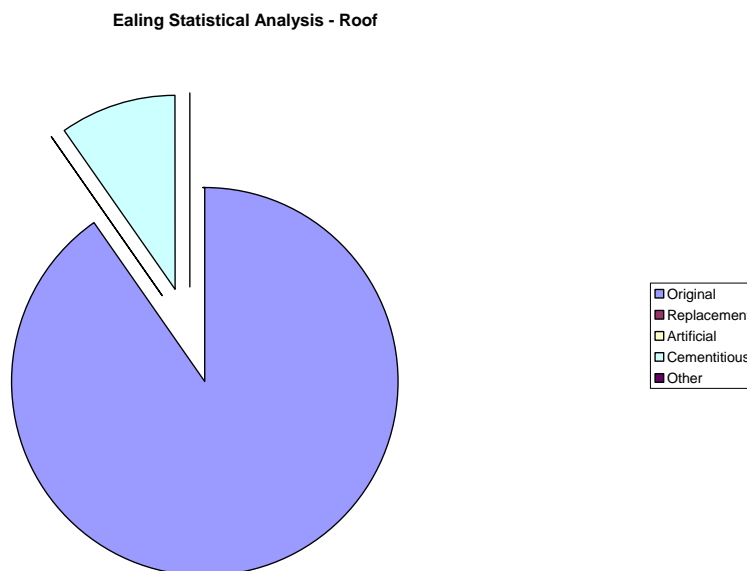
Analysis of rainwater goods showing high survival of original cast-iron in Maryport (second column) and the high incidence of plastic replacements at Woodgrange (tenth column).

- 5.22 Woodgrange Estate: The estate comprises about 700 houses laid out in pairs and short terraces between 1877 and 1892. This was a speculative venture by Cameron Corbett, one of London's most prolific developers. It provided homes for middle-class commuters in response to improved transport links to the City.
- 5.23 The elongated grid comprises four parallel streets, aligned east-west, intersected by lesser cross roads. The survey concentrated on the middle third of the estate.
- 5.24 The houses were built to a small number of standard patterns. They have several distinctive features, clearly influenced by railway design. These include glazed cast-iron verandahs and low brick boundary walls with decorative cast-iron rails and panels.
- 5.25 Although there are a few houses that have suffered drastic alteration, the combined effect of an Article 4 direction and a grant scheme have led to considerable survivals and reinstatements. There are five times as many original sash windows as uPVC replacements and only two openings have been altered. The main losses are of roof materials and rainwater goods.

- 5.26 Some survey work has been carried out in the past in connection with grant schemes and the Article 4 direction. However, this does not appear to have been used conclusively and the data may even have been lost.
- 5.27 Hanger Hill Gardens: The estate was developed by Douglas Smith between 1928 and 1936 in a distinctive mock-Tudor style. Its qualities were recognised with a particularly early conservation area designation. It is also protected by property covenants as well as an Article 4 direction. The survey covered all the houses but not the similarly designed blocks of flats.
- 5.28 This survey was undertaken by English Heritage as a pilot before the current research was commissioned. It is possible that some of the data may not be fully compatible following its translation into the current method.
- 5.29 It is clear that there are particularly good survival rates for roofs, walls and windows. However, there are fears that changing patterns of ownership will accelerate the incidence of change.
- 5.30 Maryport control: In discussion with the Conservation Officer, an area was selected, adjacent to the conservation area on its south side. It is an area of late 19th and early 20th century terraces many of which have received comprehensive treatments under Housing Act funding.
- 5.31 This has led to wholesale replacements of roof materials, chimney stacks and windows. Some terraces have been coated with protective wall-coverings in the form of a rough render. It is not surprising, therefore, that this area has a low score.
- 5.32 Ealing control: Saxon Drive is adjacent to the Hanger Hill Gardens Conservation Area. It is on the edge of the GWR Estate laid out by T Alwyn Lloyd and built incrementally from 1920 to 1937 to provide accommodation for married railway staff working on the Great Western Railway. The houses were built in pairs funded by the rental income of the previous houses.
- 5.33 The railway owners exercised strong control over the appearance of the estate⁴ until the freeholds were sold to the occupiers in the late 1970s. As the statistics show, this has led to remarkable survival rates of more than 90% for walls and for the original clay pantiled roofs.
- 5.34 However, as the last generation to experience the railway company rules begins to fade, it is clear that change will soon

⁴ For instance, the privet hedges that formed distinctive property boundaries were strictly limited to 1.2m (4 ft) in height

accelerate unless the area is formally designated. Indeed, the overall rating could be used as a significant factor in the justification for a conservation area.



The remarkably high survival of original clay pantile roofs in the Ealing control area contributes to the high overall score despite it not being designated as a conservation area.

Practical issues

- 5.35 Although this research has included the assessment of over 1,000 buildings, they were all houses in planned settlements. A wider sample of building types and ages – an industrial area for instance – would test the methodology more thoroughly.
- 5.36 Unlike the research samples, most conservation areas are the product of evolutionary change. In multi-period areas it would, therefore, be necessary to preface a survey with a statement of understanding.
- 5.37 This could be derived from a conservation area appraisal to establish a distinction between those changes that have stood the test of time, and contribute positively to the character of the area, and those considered to detract from it. The survey would, of course, address the difference between the two.
- 5.38 In any case, it will be necessary to make some assessment of the character of the area before a survey is undertaken. Only then can the relevant fields on the proforma be determined and the weighting given to each.

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- 5.39 The assessment of character and the discernment necessary to distinguish some changes mean that specialist skills are likely to be required at least in the design of the survey.
- 5.40 A single survey will provide data on changes that have taken place, but not of the dynamics of change. Rates of change, increasing or decreasing, can only be gauged from a successive series of comparable surveys.
- 5.41 Where one of the aims of the survey is to manage compliance with planning requirements, it is necessary to re-survey on a maximum cycle of four years. This is because enforcement action can only be taken within four years of unauthorised development taking place.
- 5.42 Also, for compliance, there may be problems about the admissibility of digital photographs as evidence. This should be checked in advance and, if necessary, print film should be used with a databack camera.
- 5.43 It would in theory be possible to reduce photographic costs by taking a 'drive-past' video of each side of a street. However, experience shows that the high incidence of trees or parked cars in the foreground often makes it necessary to be selective to obtain the best angle of vision.

Resource implications

- 5.44 The cost of surveys is largely a matter of time. Characterisation, purely for the purposes of the survey, and design of the survey itself will take at least a day. For on-site assessment by proforma and photographing front elevations, five or six minutes should be allowed per building. To these time costs, an allowance should be added as relevant for travel, subsistence, film and stationery.
- 5.45 Deskwork, comprising the transfer of data to a computer database, applying the calculation of survival rates and weighting, and producing results in tabulated or chart form, will process no more than 300 cases a day. Further allowance should then be made for final analysis and reporting.
- 5.46 Thus the initial survey of a typical conservation area of, say, 300 properties would take:

▫ Set-up	1
▫ Survey	4
▫ Tabulation	1
▫ Analysis and report	<u>1.5</u>
	7.5 person/days

Once the method for a particular authority had been established, there would be savings on the set-up and analysis stages that could bring the total down by about one person/day.

- 5.47 It may be possible to reduce costs by surveying a representative sample of properties in a conservation area. However, that would not be practical if evidence is required for conservation area management as well as assessing change.
- 5.48 Authorities faced with full surveys of all their conservation areas on a four year cycle may be outpaced by the costs.⁵ However, there would be substantial savings to be made on repeat surveys through, for instance, the use of hand-held technology. Costs will be less startling if they are seen as an essential part of the appraisal, management and monitoring of historic areas.

Review of methodology

- 5.49 The case studies were limited by the lack of a baseline. In none of the cases did any previous work have a sufficiently comparable basis. The fall-back of adopting the original as-built state for comparison meant that some of the recorded change is likely to have preceded the conservation area designation. The extent to which the research can demonstrate the effect of designation on the process of change is, therefore, limited.
- 5.50 However, the studies have themselves established a baseline on which future surveys can build. Periodic review would establish the speed of change as well as the nature of the changes themselves.
- 5.51 The method has established a means for comparing the degree of change experienced by different building elements. It also makes it possible to compare the amount of change in different conservation areas. However, there are limits to the usefulness of this. As the Ealing control area has shown, a commentary is necessary to interpret how the drivers of change affect the results.
- 5.52 Surveys are labour-intensive and require specialist input. They are, therefore, a significant investment. It would be possible to produce statistics on the basis of a sample survey, as was the case with Woodgrange and Maryport, but their usefulness would be limited.
- 5.53 It might also be possible to dispense with the survey entirely and rely instead on the informed view of an experienced practitioner

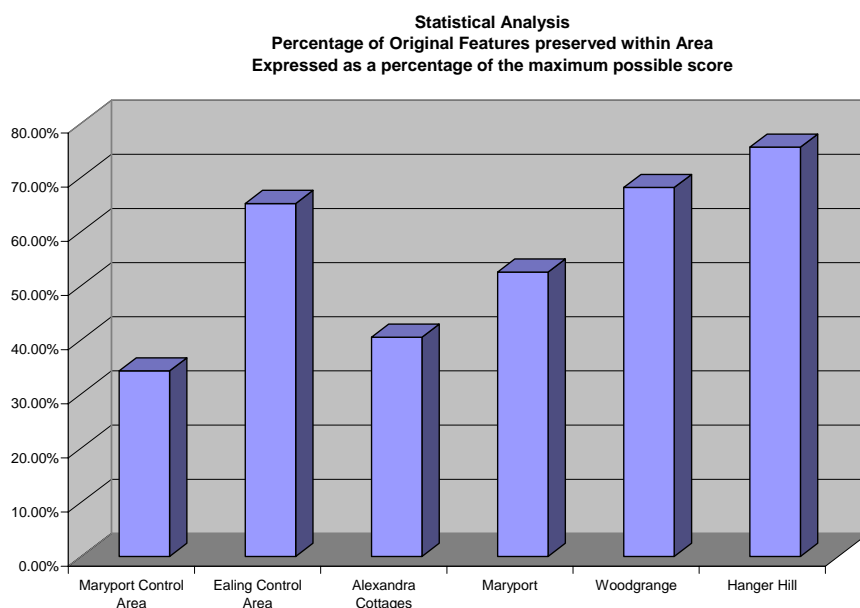
⁵ The average authority with 28 conservation areas would have to undertake seven surveys every year taking about nine person/weeks. This would amount to about one fifth of a post.

who could assess survival rates and make comparisons between conservation areas. These are the kinds of judgement that are commonly made, for instance, by English Heritage's Historic Areas Advisers. While this is a perfectly valid approach, it lacks the objectivity being sought by this research.

- 5.54 Detailed surveys provide vital evidence for maintaining Article 4 directions and monitoring compliance with planning decisions. However, as has been discovered in Maryport, the currency of the evidence can only be maintained if the survey is updated at least every four years.

Conclusions

- 5.55 It is possible to compare the degree of change to different elements of buildings within an area and it is possible to aggregate these to provide an index of change by which whole areas can be compared.



- 5.56 If the statistical method was used solely to produce a comparative index of the condition of conservation areas, the incentive to undertake the survey work would be limited. A low ranking on the index could be seen as a measure of the need for investment or stronger control. However, as the commentaries on what lies behind the statistics have shown, some of the factors that influence change cannot be addressed with a simple resource-based response.

- 5.57 Local authorities have been notorious in the past for embarking on over-ambitious surveys that failed to serve a purpose. If change is

to be measured, it is vital that the process begins with a clearly stated method including both the expectations and the use to be made of the outputs.

- 5.58 The index would be more useful for resource deployment if it was expressed in multiple terms, in the same manner as the national Index of Multiple Deprivation, so that the different elements could be ranked individually. However, that would require an order of sophistication that could not be justified by the benefits.
- 5.59 Instead, the justification for the approach must lie in the potential for greater efficiency in the current exercise of planning practice and increasing refinement in conservation area management. This is considered in the next section.

6. CURRENT and BEST PRACTICE

Local authority performance

- 6.1 The empirical evidence is of local authorities struggling to perform. This may be due to:
- the low priority given to conservation work
 - the pressure to concentrate on statutory requirements
 - a lack of resources
 - a lack of skills
- 6.2 Low priority: This can be improved by raising central government expectations, by drawing attention to the erosive effects of unwelcome change, and through guidance that demonstrates the proven benefits of conservation for community development, sustainability, tourism and regeneration.
- 6.3 Statutory requirements: Planning performance targets have concentrated on decision times for applications, and staff resources are considerably directed to this. However, decision times have improved and are no longer the whole picture. There is now an increasing emphasis on the quality as well as the quantity of planning decisions.
- 6.4 Other indicators are emerging, such as the number of Article 4 directions or numbers of buildings-at-risk. In 2005, a conservation indicator will be used for the first time in the local authority best value assessments. This will be the number of conservation area appraisals completed. It is to be hoped that this will not lead to a generation of hastily conceived and under-used documents.

- 6.5 The measurement of change could be more clearly linked to the appraisal process than it is at present. This would turn a detached statement into an active management tool, as is proposed in Scotland. However, in England and Wales, less than a third of the 9,000 conservation areas have an appraisal⁶, so a considerable shift in the deployment of resources is clearly necessary.
- 6.6 Lack of resources: It is ironic that the concentration on statutory work has left insufficient resources to undertake the strategic work that would enable statutory jobs to be carried out more effectively.
- 6.7 Now that the ODPM has introduced the Planning Delivery Grant, there are signs that authorities are beginning to make use of it to boost the framework that is necessary for improved performance. This is driven by the emergence of wider indicators and the need to demonstrate best value. In one case, a cathedral city was recently told that its best value review would have been better if the conservation issues had a higher priority.
- 6.8 Lack of skills: The need to build the capacity of local authorities was amply demonstrated in a joint study by English Heritage and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation⁷. It showed that nearly a third of planning applications have a heritage dimension, that there are insufficient resources to develop proactive work, and that there is a need to raise professional standards.

A managerial approach

- 6.9 There are now signs that some authorities are seeing the benefits of a strong conservation framework. The basis of this is a strategy that acknowledges the need to understand the historic resource before decisions are made about it. The understanding must include a full inventory of heritage assets and the issues affecting them.
- 6.10 In respect of conservation areas, a set of appraisals will define the special interest but, unless they are accompanied by some measure of condition, they will not necessarily reflect the dynamic pressures or opportunities.
- 6.11 Detailed measurement-of-change surveys can provide a sound statistical base to the understanding. Then they can inform the decisions that follow including strategies for control, compliance, the allocation of resources and enhancement. Importantly, by

⁶ IHBC/English Heritage – *Local Authorities' Conservation Provision Survey* - 2002

⁷ Ibid

iteration, they can monitor performance and provide quantified evidence of improvement or, indeed, decline.

- 6.12 It is vital, however, that owners and occupiers of property in conservation areas have awareness of the special architectural and historic interest of their surroundings and are encouraged to appreciate special needs for maintenance, repair and enhancement. This can be achieved through accessible publication of information and guidance.



An example of supplementary planning guidance provided by Haringey Council to promote sensitive change on the Tower Gardens Estate.

Conclusions

- 6.12 It is reasonable to question whether such a mechanistic approach is necessary in practice. A basic 'health-check' of a conservation area can be performed empirically by a well-informed conservation professional with relative ease. Indeed, that is exactly how the heritage and financial needs of conservation areas have been assessed in relation to historic areas grant schemes since the 1950s.
- 6.13 However, modern management relies on statistical methods to justify the measures taken. For instance, single regeneration budget (SRB) schemes demonstrate their effectiveness with sophisticated analysis of outputs. The conservation world is catching up with this. English Heritage has published the *Heritage*

*Dividend*⁸, which defines the added value of grant investment, and it has developed the statistics collected in the past by the English Tourist Board and applied more analysis to it in the *Heritage Counts* series.

- 6.14 A managerial approach is increasingly important to the efficiency and effectiveness of planning delivery. This can only be provided on the basis of knowledge and discernment. In the past it has been sufficient to quantify the heritage inventory, but the need to prioritise actions and the allocation of resources requires a more fine-tuned understanding of the dynamics – the nature, direction and rate of change, and the drivers that influence it.

7. KEY ISSUES and RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Understanding: It is no longer sufficient to know that change is taking place and that some of it has an erosive effect. A deeper understanding of the dynamics of change is necessary in order that appropriate responses to change can be planned:

- Local authorities should be encouraged to adopt the methodology for measuring change in their conservation areas
- English Heritage could provide incentives by tying measurement-of-change surveys to historic areas grant funding as it currently does with conservation area appraisals

- 7.2 Method: The method has shown that comparative indices of change can be produced for individual items, for individual buildings, or for whole conservation areas. However:

- Further testing is needed especially on multi-period and non-residential areas
- Further work is needed to understand perceptions of change and, therefore, the weighting that should be applied
- Further work is needed to gain a better understanding of the drivers of change
- The surveys undertaken for this research should be reviewed within four years

⁸ English Heritage – *The Heritage Dividend* - 2003



Maryport: Avoidance of devastating changes requires the full range of controls and incentives, and the political will to promote them.

7.2 Resources: Change measurement clearly requires resources, particularly of personnel time. This would be difficult to justify if the process was self serving, but there are clearly benefits for wider aspects of heritage management:

- The capacity and capability of local authorities to undertake measurement-of-change surveys must be encouraged through the educational system, through government expectations and through incentives, such as the planning delivery grant
- Guidance is needed on how to design a measurement-of-change survey
- This should include advice on avoiding the over-complication of too much detail
- Where resources are a problem, priority should be given to ensuring full and regular photographic coverage of conservation areas. This will establish an archive from which evidence can be extracted or further analysis can be undertaken at a later date.

7.3 The wider context: It is important to consider the measurement of change in the wider context of managing the historic environment:

- English Heritage should continue to publicise the social and economic benefits of conservation and the erosive effects of unplanned change
- English Heritage should revise its guidance on conservation area appraisals and conservation area management to encourage the adoption of statistical methods for the measurement of change
- Key performance indicators for conservation planning should include the assessment of change in conservation areas
- Above all, however, communities must be fully involved in understanding their own inheritance and taking responsibility for the consequences of change.

