

■	Chapters	
1	Introduction	2
2	SWOT Analysis	3
3	Archaeology	6
4	Roofscape	7
5	Walls	10
6	Joinery	12
7	Streetscape Features	16
8	Infill Development	20
9	Article 4(2) Directions	21
10	Major Proposed Developments	22
11	Action Plan	23

1 Introduction

1.1 This Conservation Area Management Plan for Ilfracombe follows on from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the town that was adopted in September 2009.

1.2 The management plan document will act as a reference and guide for all those who make decisions which may impact on the special character of Ilfracombe – the Council, property owners, tenants, businesses, planners, developers, designers, and statutory undertakers and service providers.

1.3 The policy context for this management plan is set out in the Planning Acts – particularly the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended October 2008 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended April 2008.

1.4 The special character of Ilfracombe is identified in the preceding character appraisal. It is the purpose of this document to lay down what actions will be taken in the future to safeguard and enhance that character. Part of this process is to inform and advise local residents and businesses so that they better understand how their actions can affect the historic character of the area.

1.5 It is of fundamental importance that owners and contractors recognise that their actions can, and do, have a significant impact on the character and appearance of Ilfracombe. Good decisions and sympathetic works do take more thought and can often cost more; but the rewards are great and will be appreciated in years to come by future generations. All actions, good and bad, form part of the legacy we leave.

2 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>A wealth of historic buildings which give the town a sense of local distinctiveness and character.</p>	<p>Long term inadequate investment has led to a town with a vast number of buildings in poor condition.</p>	<p>Vacant sites, such as the Montebello Hotel & Golden Coast Amusements sites present opportunities for redevelopment within the core of the town.</p>	<p>High quality and significant buildings in a vacant and ill-maintained condition present targets for criminal activity.</p>
<p>Areas of high quality and great contrast, such as the spacious formal character of Torrs Park compared to the dense and informal arrangement of buildings along Fore Street.</p>	<p>A relatively high number of vacant High Street units.</p>	<p>The potential to develop the area to the south and south east of the harbour in a sensitive manner.</p>	<p>The local perception that the conservation of the historic environment is an inconvenient barrier blocking the future development of the town.</p>
<p>A good quantity of informal public open space easily accessible within the core of the town.</p>	<p>Inconsistent street furniture colour scheme.</p>	<p>Enhancement of pedestrian links between the seafront along Wilder Road and the High Street.</p>	<p>A lack of appreciation and understanding of the historic development of the town and the value of its built environment.</p>
<p>Successful local cultural facilities such as the Landmark</p>	<p>A lack of formal open scape (such as sports fields) within the town.</p>	<p>Streetscape improvements,</p>	<p>Further conversion of larger properties into smaller units, with</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Theatre and the town's Museum.		possibly including shared surfaces, in the seafront and harbour areas.	consequent increase in number of cars.
A high quality landscape setting, easily accessible via long distance footpaths and the Tarka Trail.	Surrounding topography limits outward expansion of the town, placing pressure on the historic town centre.		Inappropriate infill development, particularly within the Torrs Park area.
Good degree of survival of traditional shopfronts and joinery within commercial / retail buildings.	Two deprived wards within the town.		Local environmental conditions increase the regularity of need for maintenance to timber and metal.
Previous investment in enhancing the streetscape through provision of non standard street lighting, litter bins, surface treatments and bollards.	These previous investments are now looking dated in some areas and, in terms of surface treatment, materials for sympathetic repair are not always available.		Sea level rise and increased risk of future flooding, and raised floor levels in future developments.
Traditional and distinctive street signage.	With the High Street being an 'A' road it is necessarily dominated by the car, with little opportunity to create a pedestrian friendly environment.		Threat from insensitive and inappropriate replacement windows, especially uPVC.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Appreciation and capitalisation of the towns heritage (ie. Victorian Week).	A tendency towards 'quick fix' solutions rather than long term investment (ie. Turnerisation of roofs).		Inappropriate redevelopment of vacant, derelict or under-used sites within and around the town.
			Individual letter tiles for traditional signage no longer available or prohibitively expensive.

3 Archaeology

3.1 The centre of Ilfracombe has a great potential for archaeological investigation, with the conservation area covering the area of the core of historic development which had two centres, the Parish Church and the Harbour. The potential for archaeology on the Torrs is more limited as the area has not long been a centre of habitation. Even so remains of industrial workings such as lime kilns do survive above ground and as such remains of archaeological significance may exist within the area, with potential for older, prehistoric remains to have been undisturbed by subsequent developments.

3.2 Where work is subject to the planning process it will be considered within the context of PPG 16 and may be subject to relevant conditions such as a period of professional quality archaeological investigation and recording. This is most likely to affect any engineering or construction works within the High Street and Harbour character zones.

3.3 When work not requiring consent is being carried out by private owners they should be aware of historic features; such as artifacts and wall footings to changes in colour of the earth. If anything is found people are encouraged to contact the Council for advice. Significant finds ought to be recorded to add to our understanding of the history of Ilfracombe and its development over time, and even relatively small finds that could at first glance be considered insignificant can add to our understanding of the town's history.

3.4 Statutory undertakers doing trench work ought to seek advice before starting and agree a watching brief where appropriate – for example, if cable undergrounding is carried out within the conservation area or when new service runs are being installed.

3.5 Any future infrastructure works within the harbour itself may have the potential for uncovering artifacts, some of which may be of archaeological significance and such works would be subject to an archaeological watching brief.

4 Roofscape

4.1 The roofscape is a prominent part of the conservation area, as a result of the landscape setting of the town as a valley enclosed by hills. Views from the east and west look down into the town highlighting the form of roofs, with coastal hills such as the Captone, and Lantern hill allowing elevated views of the town from the north. The appraisal identifies other key views in which the roofscape plays its part, but it is not possible to identify every important view within the appraisal and the roofscape is generally of importance throughout the conservation area.

4.2 Other features such as chimneys, ridges and rainwater goods, add further interest to the roofscape in the town. The main roofing material is slate, often imported from Wales. Years of low investment have led to a large proportion of roofs being repaired with bituminous materials through the process of 'Turnerisation' (see section on Turnerised Coatings).

Chimneys

4.3 Loss of chimneys is nearly always detrimental to the character of the roofscape and can interfere with the pattern of the streetscene. It is seldom necessary to remove a chimney and ought to be resisted with repair often being a less costly option. Removal of a chimney should be avoided unless there are extenuating circumstances such as serious structural concerns that have been professionally identified. The buildings within the town have retained their chimneys, but the potential threat of their removal should not be ignored.

4.4 Alterations damage the distinctive character of chimneys by the application of smooth, crisp render that hides stonework or flattens an uneven surface. Removal of drip slates and historic pots also detracts from the character of the area and should be avoided wherever possible.

Rainwater Goods

4.5 There is a good degree of survival of historic cast iron rainwater goods within the conservation area. These are typically of traditional profiles, being half round or ogee. These rainwater goods add to the historic character of their buildings and enrich the streetscape, and have the added advantage that they can be painted to be in keeping with the buildings wider colour scheme.

4.6 Correctly maintained cast iron rainwater goods can have a functional life in excess of 100 years, and when replacement is needed there are still suppliers of traditional gutter profiles available. This functional life can be expected to be reduced in a coastal town such as Ilfracombe, and the regularity of maintenance increased. However, with improved modern paints maintenance periods can still stretch to several years and the

life span of properly maintained iron rainwater goods still approach the 100 year mark. Lightweight cast aluminium rainwater goods may also be suitable for use on some buildings.

4.7 Plastic is in many ways an inferior modern product for use as rainwater goods, because it can be affected by exposure to sunlight and become brittle relatively quickly. Although plastic rainwater goods can last for over 25 years it is unlikely that an entire gutter system will last this long without some sections splitting and requiring replacement.

4.8 Plastic rainwater goods do not accept paint well and are available in a limited range of colours; typically fading of the plastic occurs within the first 5-10 years. Modern box profile rainwater goods do not fit well with historic buildings as traditional guttering was never produced in these forms.

Slate As A Roof Covering

4.9 The dominant roofing material within the conservation area is natural slate, much of which arrived by sea from Wales.

4.10 A much wider variety of slate is now available in the UK, including slate imported from Spain, South America and China. Some of these imported slates may be suitable for roofing on new buildings or buildings not in prominent locations but their use on prominent historic roofs should be avoided as they have a noticeably different appearance, especially when wet. The implications of fuel miles of imported materials also favours more locally sourced slates.

4.11 New slate should be fixed to roofs using nails, as this is the traditional method. By using the correct double lap, wind lift can be avoided and so is not justification for the use of clips. With some imported slates the recommended use of clips is to disguise the fact that the slate is of poor quality and will split if holed for nailing. As such, slate from a source that recommends the use of clip fixings should be looked at cautiously.

4.12 It should be remembered that slate is a highly durable natural material and it is highly unlikely that an entire roof needs to be re-covered. In most cases slates slip because their nails have exceeded their functional life and the slates can be salvaged and re-attached with new nails. Roofs that feature rag slate, or slate in diminishing courses are particularly important and are also particularly vulnerable. Opportunistic and unscrupulous contractors will offer owners of such buildings an amazingly cheap price to re-roof in artificial or imported slate, knowing that the rag or random slate they reclaim can be sold on or re-used on much more lucrative work elsewhere.

Turnerised Coatings

4.13 Many of the slate roofs in Ilfracombe have been repaired over the years, and many have been treated with waterproof bituminous coatings applied over hessian. This process was first developed in the 1880's and as such is not a new technique, although the process is still carried out with some refinements having been developed over the years.

4.14 The nature of this type of repair is a short term one as the coating softens in hot weather and after 10 years or so begins to fail. This means that either the process must be repeated and an additional coat of the treatment applied at further cost, or the roof must be repaired in some other way.

4.15 The major drawback of the process is that once applied it is difficult and costly to remove. A repair of a slate roof may be more expensive but will last significantly longer (80+ years) and the majority of the slates can often be reused after this period, with only the timber batons and nails needing replacement. After turnerisation it is almost always the case that the slates must be discarded, leading to a much higher cost as new slates must then be purchased.

4.16 Property surveyors will be only too aware that the presence of turnerised coatings will potentially have future cost implications for owners as the coating implies that the roof covering itself was defective and the repair has only a limited lifespan as well as damaging the prospect of recycling the existing roofing materials. As such turnerisation may also have a negative impact on resale value of properties.

5 Walls

5.1 Ilfracombe possesses a mix of buildings constructed of a variety of materials. Some cob buildings survive within the town, especially around the harbour and Fore Street (The George and Dragon Public House is a prime example), while the majority of buildings are either of exposed brick or rendered local stone with some ashlar stone buildings constructed of imported masonry such as Bath Stone. Repointing is a major long-term maintenance consideration on the brick buildings while maintenance and repair of render is the largest issue with buildings of cob or the relatively poor quality local stone.

Repointing

5.2 Repointing of historic masonry is a process that needs to be carried out over the period of a building's history. The major risk this poses to historic buildings is when an ill-informed owner or contractor elects to use modern Portland cement to repoint historic masonry.

5.3 Traditional buildings were designed to be porous, the thickness of their walls ensured that the inner surface would not get wet and that when dry weather returned the wall could dry out again. As the traditional lime mortar was softer than the surrounding brick much of the evaporation of moisture occurred through the mortar joints. In this way the mortar itself was sacrificial, slowly weathering away and eventually needing to be replaced by the process of repointing.

5.4 When modern cement is used the method of moisture transfer is altered. The Portland cement is harder and impermeable and as such moisture transfer is forced to occur through the face of the brick, eventually causing the decay of the brick itself. Portland cement is also brittle and inflexible and while lime mortar will allow a degree of movement within the building fabric, cement will crack at the slightest movement allowing moisture to further penetrate into the building.

Rendering

5.5 Render was traditionally applied to buildings for a variety of reasons, either to cover up a poor quality building material which was visually unpleasant, or to protect a particularly porous building material, such as cob, against damp ingress. The local stone used in Ilfracombe is a relatively poor quality shalestone which is both highly porous and friable. Few buildings within the town leave this material exposed to the elements but the former Runnacleave Hotel on Runnacleave / Wilder Roads is an example. Traditionally render was lime based, in the same way that mortars were lime based. Re-rendering a building in modern cement based renders or applying modern barrier paints can cause similar problems to repointing in modern cement mortars.

5.6 Movement within a building almost invariably leads to cracking of the brittle cement render allowing moisture to get in through the cracks. The impervious nature of the cement render will trap this moisture within the wall and force it deeper into the building causing internal damp problems and the potential for damage to the fabric through the transfer of soluble salts from the cement itself.

5.7 Unrendered buildings should not typically be rendered for purely aesthetic reasons. Instead render should be applied only where there would be a technical advantage to doing so and when this is necessary materials must be compatible with the construction of the building. For historic buildings this invariably means lime based materials.

Polychrome Decoration

5.8 Many of the brick built buildings within Ilfracombe feature 'structural polychromy', that is to say that their materials have a variety of colours and these materials are used to create a decorative design feature, or to highlight architectural features.

5.9 The greatest threat to this architectural feature comes from painting or rendering over the building. Several examples of this form of redecoration can be seen throughout the town, including 'Alpha House' at the corner of Wilder Road and Church Street. The rendering over or painting of buildings displaying polychrome decoration should be avoided wherever possible and only considered where the fabric of the building is decaying to the point at which a protective layer of render is required to safeguard the building.

5.10 Once a building has been externally rendered or had a decorative scheme painted over, it is difficult, expensive and time consuming to effectively reverse these interventions and return the building to its original appearance.

6 Joinery

6.1 Historic joinery can add significantly to the character of an area and the extent of its survival is typically representative of the proportion of Listed Buildings in an area, but is also dependent upon the value that people place on the historic value of their town. Like most places Ilfracombe has retained a degree of historic joinery which sits alongside sensitive replacements as well as unsympathetic, poorly detailed modern joinery. The majority of properties in the High Street have retained traditional joinery and this lends positively to the character of the retail core of the High Street and Harbour.

6.2 At present the replacement of windows and doors is not controlled on unlisted buildings in use as private dwelling houses. Buildings in other uses, including apartments and retail premises require planning permission for alteration and replacement of windows and doors. North Devon Council will consider Article 4(2) directions to prevent harmful alterations to dwelling houses in the future. It is always preferable for owners to recognise that sensitive maintenance adds value to their own property and contributes to the sense of place.

6.3 Historic joinery ought to be seen as antique furniture that changes hands as part of a larger deal and can easily be overlooked. It only takes one inconsiderate owner to destroy the historic appearance of a building by ill-considered renovation; with property changing hands as frequently as it does today there is a steady stream of buildings whose luck has run out. There are few people who would throw a 200 year old chair or table in a skip – their potential value is usually appreciated – yet it happens to windows and doors regularly. These artifacts are a finite resource that embodies the craftsmanship of earlier generations and records the materials and techniques they used.

6.4 Unless badly neglected over a long period of time, traditional joinery is rarely beyond repair. In many cases the timber used was so well sourced and seasoned that it is far more durable than any modern alternative. If repair is not possible, replica replacement is the next best thing; though replacement requires the use of primary resources and energy that makes it a less sustainable option. The use of imported hardwood from unsustainable sources ought to be avoided and uPVC has significant ecological issues associated with its production process and later disposal. From a sustainability standpoint timber windows made from managed sources of timber are more environmentally sound than uPVC which does not decompose in landfill and produces chlorine based by-products and gases during manufacture.

6.5 There is no product that is maintenance free. Timber needs painting every few years, but each time the result looks fresh and new. After a hundred years or more sash cords or hinges may need renewal; this is quite easily done and gives the unit a

new lease of life. When modern opening mechanisms or double glazed units breakdown the answer is replacement of the whole unit – hence the piles of uPVC windows accumulating at recycling centres in the absence of satisfactory means of disposal.

Windows

6.6 The size, type and design of the windows in an historic building reveal much about its age or development, its use and the status of its occupants in the past. Humbler buildings often have casement windows that vary in design according to age, use and local custom. Sash windows also vary in size and detail according to age and use. The enduring popularity of sash windows reflects their versatility in providing controlled ventilation.

6.7 Historic glass survives in some windows and should be retained where possible. However, installing modern glass that has been treated to give it the appearance of historic glass is not considered appropriate.

6.8 When new windows are needed there are a number of issues to consider:

- Proportion and subdivision – The glazing pattern of the original windows ought to be retained, (or restored if lost), as that is a critical part of the whole building. It indicates the size of glass available or affordable at the time of construction.
- Mode of opening – The introduction of top hung or tilt-and-turn opening lights is always visually jarring and harmful to the historic character. Overlapping ‘storm-seal’ type details are an entirely modern introduction and are unnecessary if flush fitting units are properly made. Spring loaded sashes are an inferior replacement mechanism compared with properly weighted double-hung sashes.
- Glazing – Traditional glazing bar profiles, properly jointed and glazed with putty, (or glazing compound), rather than beading, will give a genuine appearance.
- Thermal insulation – Double glazing cannot be achieved within traditional multiple pane designs without bars being either much too thick or false. Beading is nearly always added which further detracts from the appearance. Attempting to introduce double glazing into a traditional design usually means a small air gap that hugely reduces the insulation properties anyway. The use of shutters and/or insulated curtains can greatly reduce heat loss without the need for window replacement.
- Draught-proofing – The majority of heat loss from historic windows is often through draughts caused by ill-fitting frames. Draft proofing systems are available that can be fitted to existing windows in situ and can be highly effective in reducing draughts and heat loss.
- Sound insulation – Cutting down noise is often given as a reason for replacing existing windows with double glazed units. However, tests have shown that secondary glazing is actually more effective at reducing transmitted noise. It is

often less costly than fitting double glazed units and also allows for the historic windows to be retained.

- Sills – Traditional sills should be retained unless beyond repair, when they should be replaced with matching sills in terms of both materials and details.

Doors

6.9 Doors can add to the character of the streetscene in much the same way. It is worth remembering that a little time and money spent on periodic maintenance and painting can allow a good quality historic hardwood door to remain serviceable for many years.

6.10 It should also be remembered that traditional timber doors may hold 'door furniture' such as knockers, knobs, letterboxes and hinges which are still serviceable even when the door itself has been allowed to decay beyond salvaging. If a replacement timber door is sourced these older pieces of door furniture can be re-used on the new door. By their nature uPVC doors come with letterboxes, hinges and handles ready fitted, often moulded as part of the unit and the sensitive, and sustainable, re-use of historic features is not possible.

6.11 Where a door is accompanied by a doorcase it is often the case that the door was designed as part of the unit and replacement by a door of different design will detract from the appearance and character of the building as a whole. Even when not accompanied by doorcases the replacement of a well designed historic door with a standardised modern unit will be detrimental to the character of the building, and thus the wider streetscape.

Shopfronts

6.12 There are a good number of traditional shopfronts within Ilfracombe that survive relatively intact, with the northern side of the High Street to the east of Northfield Road having several stretches of neighbouring shopfronts in good condition. Church Street also possesses some good examples of traditional shopfronts, particularly in the Northcote buildings.

6.13 There are significant issues relating to shopfronts that can have a profound impact on the character of a place:

- Retention of features – Where historic and traditional features such as stallrisers survive they should be retained. It is also important that surviving features are not unnecessarily hidden by modern additions and signage.
- Signage – There was a time when the emphasis was on quality, legibility and illustration of function. Today the approach to shop signage seems to be to achieve the largest and brightest advertisement. Clumsy box fascias and totally obscured windows draw attention in the wrong way and detract from neighbouring businesses.

Illumination should only be considered for businesses that trade at all hours and then should be limited to that needed for identification. Internally illuminated signs are not considered appropriate within historic shopping areas.

- Design – New shopfronts and signage require planning permission, and/or advertisement consent – North Devon Council will expect these elements to be competently designed to suit their context.
- Standardisation - National retailers and companies with standardised shop signage may be required to vary from their standard design so as to be better in keeping with the character of the conservation area, many national retailers will have a 'conservation' variant of their standard signage which will be more appropriate.

7 Streetscape Features

Surface Treatment

7.1 There is a wide variety of surface treatments within the conservation area, ranging from brick pavements and stone slabs to the more typical tarmac. Curb stones appear in a variety of materials too, again concrete appears as the standard modern material but traditional curbs of granite and even slate can still be found, with granite appearing in patches throughout the High Street and Market Street and slate being most obvious on Fore Street.

Street Furniture

7.2 Ilfracombe appears to have no consistent style of street furniture, with what we have today reflecting the introduction of features such as bins, benches, bollards and lamps over a long period of time and thus we find some genuinely old traditional cast iron litter bins and lamp bases alongside their modern steel counterparts. This mix of styles and ages does not present a visual clash as might be expected. Instead the various styles are unified by a consistent colour scheme; for the town this is a dark blue with white highlights for lettering and decoration. However some of the more recent additions have ignored this local colour scheme and instead bins and bollards have appeared finished in black or dark green, and it is these which stand out as being incongruous. As such it is important that an agreement over a colour scheme for street furniture within the town be reached and adhered to. The established blue and white scheme be retained and extended to cover all new street furniture within the town.

7.3 Some areas do have a consistency of certain aspects of their street furniture, such as the street lighting found along the length of the High Street which was installed in the 1980's in a traditional style. Where consistency does exist it is important that any replacement of individual units is undertaken in a sensitive manner and the closest possible match for a replacement is found rather than simply installing whatever happens to be available at the time.

White Spar

7.4 White Spar pebbles were traditionally found washed up on the beaches of North Devon, with Ilfracombe being particularly abundant in the material. Small pebbles are still washed up today but in nothing like the sizes and quantities found years ago. These white stones have been traditionally used as decorative copings along the tops of boundary and garden walls; a prominent series of examples can be found on the gate piers along Springfield Road.

7.5 As the material is no longer to be found in large pieces locally these traditional features should be retained wherever possible. There is limited scope to extend this practise for the very reason of the lack of the materials availability locally.

Trees

7.6 There are few trees within the conservation area, as the exposed position of the town on the north coast makes it difficult for trees to become established. However where trees can be found they do make a positive contribution to the character of the area, especially on the landward slopes of the Torrs and in the areas to the south and east of the Harbour where the topography provides some shelter for trees.

7.7 The town does lack street trees and there is a prevailing attitude that they cannot survive within the town, although streets such as Brookdale Avenue demonstrate that street trees can survive in Ilfracombe. Proposed new schemes do feature the introduction of further street planting and trees and this should be encouraged, although thought will have to be given to selection of hardy tree species.

Blue Tile Street Signs

7.8 Some of the streets within the conservation area have blue tiles street name signs, similar although not identical to those found in Barnstaple. This again continues the established theme of street furniture within the town having a blue and white colour scheme, and may even be the reason that those colours were chosen for the town.

7.9 Although these tiles are still manufactured their cost makes it prohibitive to extend the scheme to other streets or even to make repairs to the existing signs. However the council does have a number of spare tiles left over from previous schemes and can make tiles available for repair works, although the full range of letters is not covered. A recent example of a repaired and reinstated tiled sign is that on Quayfield Road.

The Lanes

7.10 The High Street is connected to Wilder Road and the surrounding residential streets on its southern side via a series of lanes and alleys (of which 'The Lanes' form only a part). These connective routes are known and utilised by locals on a regular basis. However they are not signed and their state of repair, and lack of natural surveillance makes them uninviting to visitors and tourists alike.

7.11 The routes on the southern side of the High Street are utilised more regularly, as they lead to residential areas, and are generally more open. In contrast the routes to the north of the High Street lead to the seafront and are often very enclosed, unlit and narrow, their surfaces are mostly in poor condition and as a result they appear intimidating and uninviting. Lack of signage means that many visitors do not realise that these links are accessible to the public and certainly do not realise where they lead.

7.12 With the proposed redevelopment and enhancement of the seafront along Wilder Road it is desirable to make the most of these pedestrian links, This could involve providing lighting and signage as well as repair and enhancement works to the surfaces of the lanes. Providing lighting may have the added advantage of deterring anti-social activities from taking place in the lanes. The major issues are that many of these lanes are in private or multiple ownership and as such any integrated scheme may be difficult to co-ordinate.

Parking

7.13 Ilfracombe has a relatively large problem with on-street parking. This is mostly as a result of the town's major expansion in the Victorian period when new buildings had no provision for cars and parking. Which is further exasperated by the subsequent subdivision of these large properties into flats.

7.14 However not all of the town's on-street parking is associated with residents. The town's tourist attractions attract visitors who begin to park for free on the streets before public car-parks are even half full so as to save on the cost of parking. As a result the streets around the town become heavily congested, especially in the summer.

7.15 Parking along the length of the High Street is another issue, and although it is desirable to allow people to park for a few minutes outside of the shop they wish to visit the sight of cars parked on double yellow lines, half mounting the pavement is a common one. At peak times of the day this can lead to heavy congestion along the High Street which is also the main A road through the town.

7.16 The town does have ample provision for parking cars, however as much of this provision is unused. For example the Wilder Road carpark is just two minutes walk from the High Street, however this is not signposted in anyway and the carpark usually has empty spaces while the roadside spaces along the High Street are full to capacity.

7.17 Equally other car parks, such as that at Hillsborough, may be relatively close to the Harbour and have reasonably level access, however access to the High Street is limited by the steep slopes of Fore Street and a longer walk.

7.18 More needs to be made of existing parking provision within the town so as to maximise its use, which includes clear signage pointing the way to the High Street, harbour and other attractions. At the same time illegal parking along the High Street needs to be tackled, possibly by way of designating the length of the High Street as a 'Red Route' while still allowing short term parking in the roadside bays.

Open Spaces

7.19 The informal public open spaces, such as the slopes of Capstone and Runnymede Gardens which are attractive and desirable to retain as open spaces for the enjoyment of the public. Typically these areas are well maintained and have provision of benches and litter bins. More could be made of some of these spaces, such as the viewpoint atop Capstone Hill where existing interpretation panels are faded and difficult to read.

7.20 Other open spaces are the private open spaces in front of some of the town's grand Georgian Terraces, such as the lawned area often seen with grazing sheep in front of Montpelier Terrace. These spaces form a key part of the formal setting of their associated terraces, which are often listed buildings. These areas should be retained free from development for both their visual appeal as an open break in development, as part of the setting of listed buildings and their contribution to biodiversity links within the town.

7.21 An other variety is the vacant sites which have previously developed and now stand vacant or derelict. Examples being the former Montebello Hotel site, town Bus Station, and the former Golden Coast amusements site. These open spaces are, by contrast, undesirable and unattractive. The size and location of these sites make them ideal candidates for a variety of redevelopments and, if carried out appropriately and sympathetically, could enhance the character of their surroundings.

8 Infill Development

The landscape around Ilfracombe places constraints on the outward expansion of the town. To the north the sea is an obvious barrier, to the west and east steep gradients and protected landscapes such as the Heritage Coast and the North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty also act as a barrier to expansion. The town has already grown significantly to the south since the mid 20th century and further growth in this direction, at the expense of agricultural land appears the only potential for expansion of Ilfracombe.

These constraints put the town under growing pressure to maximise the use of space within the existing area of the town. This presents opportunities for the redevelopment and enhancement of un-used buildings and previously developed sites such as the vacant land once occupied by the Montebello Hotel. At the same time the pressure for infill development is also present in areas where it would be likely to be inappropriate, examples being the Torrs Park area of the town where grand Victorian villas which were part of a suburban planned development. Here the spacing of the buildings are equally a part of the streetscape as the buildings themselves, and the high quality of the architecture and materials of the villas means that infill buildings are invariably inferior in design and/or materials or else economically unviable.

Infill development is a complex subject to effectively tackle, as it maximises the use of existing developed areas to reduce the number of homes that need to be accommodated on previously undeveloped land. Also infill development can be a very positive thing, filling unsightly voids within the streetscape and removing vacant or derelict sites which are not only unsightly but also potentially hazardous and magnets for anti-social activities. In some cases infill can blend effectively and add to the existing character. However this form of development should not be at the expense of a distinctive local character as identified in the character appraisal, especially where open spaces are part of what makes an area distinctive.

9 Article 4(2) Directions

9.1 Perhaps the greatest threat facing conservation areas in the UK is development not controlled by the planning system. The majority of these ‘permitted developments’ affect private dwelling houses and allow for minor works to be carried out without the need to apply for planning permission.

9.2 These rights were granted by the ‘Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995’ (as amended October 2008) and cover activities such as changing windows and doors, erecting satellite dishes and, most recently, some installations of on-site renewable energy generation equipment.

9.3 As well as granting these various rights of development, the order also provided provision for revoking them under certain circumstances, primarily within architecturally, or historically, sensitive areas. The section of the order dealing with repealing permitted development rights is Article 4. For a direction to be enacted under this article certain conditions must be met.

9.4 For example if the local authority wanted to prevent homeowners in an area from replacing windows without planning permission that area would have to contain some surviving historic windows that would be protected by the measure. Equally the area would have to contain some inappropriate modern replacement windows – as this demonstrates that there is a threat from inappropriate works being carried out.

9.5 Article 4 directions do not remove all permitted development rights, rather they are targeted at specific forms of permitted development and the developments they target must be justified.

9.6 The possibility of utilising Article 4(2) directions within Ilfracombe will be investigated as a result of this management plan, and if considered appropriate and practical may be implemented within the conservation area. Community consultation would precede any adoption of such a scheme.

9.7 It should also be noted that if a planning application is required exclusively as a result of an Article 4(2) direction then no application fee will be applicable.

10 Major Proposed Developments

10.1 There are currently several large developments being proposed within Ilfracombe which, if carried out, have the potential to transform the seafront and harbour areas and bring much needed investment into the town.

10.2 It is important that these separate schemes are designed to preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the town as identified by the character appraisal. Developments should also be seen in the context of the wider aims for the future regeneration of the town and advantage taken to link the new developments both to each other and the existing commercial activities within the High Street and Harbour areas.

10.3 These major developments centre around:

- Proposals for the redevelopment of the town's Bus Station into a mixed use residential and commercial complex;
- The creation of an extensive heritage and cultural centre around the existing museum and the Landmark Theatre;
- A passenger ferry service linking South Wales (Swansea) and North Devon (Ilfracombe) with its associated infrastructure;
- An investigation of options for the redevelopment of the vacant former Victoria Pavilions site;
- An investigation of options for the viable redevelopment of the vacant former Golden Coast site.
- Redevelopment of the former Montebello Hotel site.
- Development in and around the harbour, including residential developments, construction of an outer breakwater and provision of new berths.

10.4 Where appropriate development briefs will be prepared to guide the redevelopment of these sites.

11 Action Plan

Action	Timescale	Lead Agency
Use the character appraisal & management plan as material considerations in determining planning applications within and adjoining the Ilfracombe Conservation Area.	Ongoing	LPA* / ITC**
Use adopted SPD and planning policies to prevent inappropriate infill development that would detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area, particularly within the Torrs Park area.	Ongoing	LPA / ITC
Investigate the options and practicalities of Article 4(2) directions to control unsympathetic alterations.	9 Months	LPA / ITC
Implementation of the above if considered practical and appropriate.	18 Months	LPA
Investigate resurfacing options and the possibility of shared surfaces within the Harbour sub zone.	12-18 Months	LPA / Highways / North Devon+
Implementation of the above if considered practical and appropriate.	Dependent upon funding	Highways
Rationalisation / Improvement of pedestrian and vehicular signage and links between High Street, Harbour and Seafront.	3 years	ITC / Highways / North Devon+
Agreement on colour scheme and maintenance of consistency within the town's public realm and street furniture features.	Ongoing	Highways / ITC / NDC***
Investigate the options for the creation of a 'Town Trail' or 'Heritage Trail' similar to that being produced for Barnstaple.	12-18 Months	NDC / Museum / ITC

Action	Timescale	Lead Agency
Implementation of the above if considered practical and appropriate.	2 years + dependent upon funding	NDC / Museum / ITC
Produce a signage guidance note for Ilfracombe so as to guide the design and siting of future signage within the conservation area. This document will supplement an updated version of the district-wide Shopfront Design SPD which will also be produced.	18 months	LPA
Investigate a cheaper / local source for replacement blue street name tiles.	ongoing	LPA
Investigate options and schemes within the conservation area for possible HLF funding, examples to include repair and restoration of buildings via TCI and Grant Schemes, public realm improvement projects, such as those being planned in cooperation with North Devon+ as methods by which to remove the Ilfracombe Conservation Area from the national 'Conservation Areas at Risk' register.	ongoing	NDC, ITC, North Devon+
Investigate options for re-use of Historically significant buildings which have become vacant or fallen into disrepair and highlighting these buildings to potential future users.	ongoing	NDC / ITC

* Local Planning Authority (currently North Devon Council)

** Ilfracombe Town Council

*** North Devon Council

This management plan is to be reviewed and updated on a 7 year basis, with the next revision intended for mid 2016