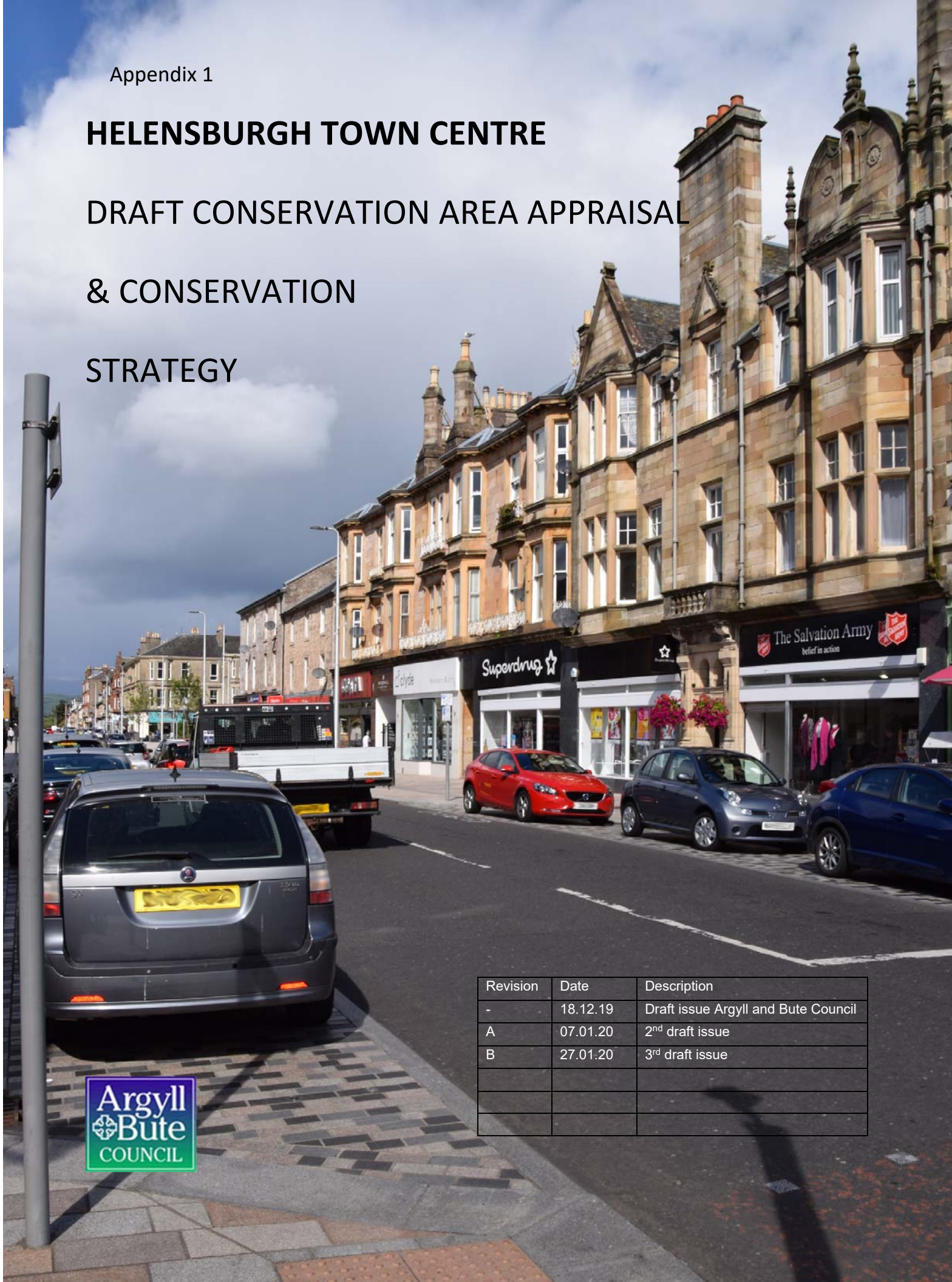


HELENSBURGH TOWN CENTRE

DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

& CONSERVATION

STRATEGY



Revision	Date	Description
-	18.12.19	Draft issue Argyll and Bute Council
A	07.01.20	2 nd draft issue
B	27.01.20	3 rd draft issue

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Post card view East Princes Street / Sinclair Street

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONSERVATION AREAS

Conservation areas are defined as ‘*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*’. 1.

The designation of a conservation area is a means to ensure that the character and appearance of a valued historic place is safeguarded for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.

Conservation area status does not mean that new development is unacceptable. It does mean that any proposed change will require careful management with the aim of maintaining the integrity of the area and enhancing its special character.

There are 33 Conservation Areas within Argyll and Bute. Further information can be viewed at:

<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/conservation-areas>

1. Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997

1.2 REASON FOR CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

Helensburgh currently has two conservation areas in recognition of the town’s special architectural and historic character. The Hill House conservation area was first designated in 1971. The Upper Helensburgh conservation area was designated in 1994 and covers an extensive part of the north side of the town’s residential area. The southern boundary terminates at Argyll Street and does not encompass any part of the town centre, pier or water front.

All Local Authorities are required to review their conservation areas on an ongoing basis and in 2008 Argyll and Bute Council commissioned the Helensburgh Community Council to appraise the town’s existing conservation areas. One of the outcomes of this study was the recommendation to analyse whether the town centre merits its own conservation area.

Argyll and Bute Council subsequently commissioned a scoping exercise in 2018 to review the parameters for a potential Helensburgh Town Centre conservation area.

This initial scoping survey established that there were indeed areas of the town centre that meet the criteria for special architectural and historic significance with a recommendation that a detailed conservation area appraisal be carried out to fully assess these characteristics.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The purpose of this appraisal is to build on the initial scoping exercise undertaken, and define and evaluate the character and appearance of a defined study area of Helensburgh's town centre comprising six urban blocks. The study area is two blocks deep between King Street and Clyde Street and three blocks long, encompassing Helensburgh Central Station to the east and ending at James Street to the west. Princes Street and Colquhoun Square lie at the centre of the study area.



Appraisal study area boundary

The esplanade and pier are considered separate and distinct to Helensburgh's town centre and are therefore not included within this study.

The appraisal will identify key characteristics and areas of distinctiveness to ensure a thorough understanding of what is desirable to protect. It will also identify any detracting negative factors.

The appraisal will form the basis of a conservation area boundary review that will determine if the

addition of a new Town Centre conservation area should be considered.

Finally, the conservation area appraisal will provide the basis for the development of a conservation strategy. This strategy will define how change is managed within the conservation area, identify specific opportunities for positive enhancement and will set out the policy framework for the determination of development proposals.

1.4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

This Conservation Area Appraisal and resultant Conservation Strategy will be subject to public consultation prior to final Council approval. The final report will incorporate the views and feedback of local residents, property owners, stakeholders and community organisations.

2. LOCATION, HISTORY and DEVELOPMENT

2.1 LOCATION

Helensburgh is situated approximately 25 miles north-west of Glasgow on the north shore of the Firth of Clyde close to the mouth of Gare Loch.



Helensburgh location map

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The town has a coastal setting bounded to the south by the Firth with views over to Greenock,

Port Glasgow and the Rosneath Peninsula, and to the north by Glen Fruin and its surrounding hills.

The town lies at the western mainland end of the Highland Boundary Fault on the interface between the highland and lowland terrain.

2.2 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The area of Helensburgh was originally known as Malig / Millig and developed initially around Ardencaple Castle which was the prominent structure in the 13th century landscape as the strong hold of the MacAulay clan.

The Castle area was sparsely populated by fishing settlements until the development of the burgh was initiated in 1776 by Sir James Colquhoun who acquired the land from the daughter of Sir John Schaw of Greenock in 1752.



Ross Charles, 1722-1806. Map of the shire of Dumbarton. National Library of Scotland. Shelfmark: EMS.s182.

The burgh acquired its name when Colquhoun named it in honour of his wife, Lady Helen Sutherland, initially referring to it as 'My Lady Helen's Burgh'. Colquhoun's original intention for the settlement was to establish a feuing plan with the aim of encouraging cottage industries primarily focused on textile manufacturing. These industries were never fulfilled and it was considered this was due to the shore at Helensburgh being unattractive to shipping.

In 1802 the town received burgh charter which was administered by the Town Council. In 1803 a substantial scheme for the development of a planned town was proposed by Peter Fleming of Glasgow. This was based on the formal structure of two-acre plots divided by a grid. Helensburgh's grid predates Fleming's comparable grid iron concept for Glasgow City Council commissioned in 1806.

Review of John Thomson's Atlas of Scotland of 1832 illustrates that the earliest settlements developed on the lower slopes of Helensburgh along the shore road in the grid iron format.



John Thomson's Atlas of Scotland, 1832. Extract reproduced from the National Library of Scotland. Shelfmark: EMS.s712(15)

In the early 19th century with the increased industrialisation of Glasgow and the reduction in quality of living standards, wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs began to seek residencies in healthier locations not too distant from their place of work, of which Helensburgh was one such destination.

Initially these properties were considered to have been built chiefly as summer homes of Glasgow's merchant class and Helensburgh expanded rapidly as a family resort. As Helensburgh became more accessible from Glasgow, first by combination of rail and steamer via Greenock (1841) and then with the construction of the direct rail connection with Glasgow (1858), the town became a permanent

residency, popular with the business and professional classes.

By 1865 two thirds of Helensburgh was developed. In the later part of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century a substantial part of the town centre area was redeveloped with gap sites infilled and some early properties replaced with large grander buildings. The architectural styles of upper Helensburgh are evident in the development of the town centre with many of the same architects being involved in the designs for both areas.

3. CHARACTER and APPEARANCE

3.1 SETTING

Helensburgh lies on the north shore of the Clyde estuary at the mouth of the Gare Loch. All sea front locations offer exceptional expansive views over the Clyde estuary towards the Roseneath Peninsula, Greenock and Port Glasgow.

The town is bounded to the north by Glen Fruin and the surrounding hills of Balcnock and Craperoch. However, from within the town centre, while the hills are visible from some vantage points, they do not provide the principal backdrop. Instead the northern vistas are principally of rising, straight avenues lined with various trees and hedgerows.

It is the east west vistas where fine views of the surrounding hills and farmland are more direct providing an important visual connection with the landscape.

3.2 TOPOGRAPHY

The town is shaped by its natural topography of gently sloping terraces punctuated by steeper slopes. These slopes are the remnants of raised beach cliffs, an emergent coastal landform formed by fall in sea level. The land falls approximately 70m from The Hill House down to the shore line. The slopes of the residential suburbs in upper Helensburgh finally flatten out as it meets King Street on the edge of the study area.

The natural topography of a south facing slope provides the town with a southern coastal

termination from many vantage points, and in conjunction with the grid pattern town layout, this is highly effective in framing vistas from axial streets terminating on the Clyde.

3.3 ACTIVITY AND USES

Helensburgh is principally a residential area having developed as a dormitory town to Glasgow. The town centre area is more diverse with a rich mix of civic, cultural, commercial, leisure, retail and residential uses.

Sinclair Street and Princes Street are the two principle shopping streets within the town centre with almost continuous ground floor retail units. Interspersed through the town centre are cultural, civic and religious landmark buildings of status.

Civic and cultural buildings range from the Scots Baronial former municipal building on the corner of Sinclair Street and East Princes Street containing the police office, fire station and court hall. Other cultural buildings of note include the former La Scala Cinema on James Street and the former post office on Colquhoun Square.

The town centre area contains throughout the study area distinctive listed late 19th and early 20th century tenements of varying style and period with traditional shopfronts at ground level. The tenements are principally located to the main shopping streets of Princes and Sinclair Street where they inject scale and enrichen the town centre with their varied skylines and details.

Colquhoun Square is an important civic space in the town. Its pedestrianisation environment makes it an important gathering place for events and day to day use. Located within and adjacent to the square are two religious' buildings, Helensburgh Parish Church and Princes Street West Congregational Church.

3.4 STREET PATTERN

The town of Helensburgh has a formal, structured town plan based on a grid iron street pattern with broad streets that is remarkably uniform throughout. The street pattern has a regularity that is reinforced by an almost continuous

boundary to the blocks. This boundary treatment varies depending on its locality with upper Helensburgh defined by boundary wall and hedge rows and streets lined with an array of species of trees. As the streets transition into the town centre study area the boundary walls and hedge rows become terraces and tenements with a strong building line defining the urban block and reinforce the street pattern.

In the main these blocks are complete with limited erosion of the boundary edges and the town centre has a density of urban block that is unmatched in the locality. In conjunction with the array of landmark municipal and civic building this gives the town centre study area a unique character that contrasts with all other parts of Helensburgh.

The town centre contains an important civic open space at its centre in Colquhoun Square which is unique to the town in terms of its urban scale and form. What is distinctive about this square is how it has been formed. The square has been created by insertion into the centre of four grid blocks as opposed to leaving a single block vacant. By forming in this way, by carving rather than omission, it embodies the square with certain characteristics. One resultant strong feature is that the square has internal corners with each block contributing to the square's overall character. Diagonal views between the building corners are accentuated and important in terms of how the square is read and understood. The road structure runs through the centre of the square on both axes rather than around the perimeter which allows the public realm of the square to communicate directly with building frontages unobstructed by the road network. This allows the shopfronts to spill out onto the square with seating providing a direct connection that enriches the space.

In 2015 the square was pedestrianised to improve the quality of the public realm shifting the focus onto people and providing a gathering space suitable for town events.

Helensburgh Central Station is located in the town centre area on the north east edge of the study area. As a terminus station the platform buildings

are able to knit themselves into the urban grain without impacting on the street pattern of the town centre.

The town has two primary vehicular arteries. The A814 coast road via Dumbarton or Faslane provides primary east west access to the town. From the north the A818 via Loch Lomond dissects the town centre where it becomes Sinclair Street and meets the coastal road perpendicularly at the water front.

Within the town centre area, the dominant cross road and perceived commercial heart, is where the principal vehicular thoroughfare of Sinclair Street meets Princes Street.

3.5 BUILDINGS AND TOWNSCAPE

The townscape of Helensburgh can be described and analysed by its streets. The three primary streets are Princes Street, Sinclair Street and Clyde Street.

1. East and West Princes Street. East west axis.

East and West Princes Street is the principal civic street in Helensburgh dissecting the heart of the town centre on the east west axis. What is immediately distinctive about the street is its retail density. From the start of the town centre area at the intersection with Maitland Street, the street has active street frontages on both sides until James Street at the western end of the town centre area.

In terms of townscape character, what is quite distinctive about West Princes Street is the linkage of the two key urban focal points, the Sinclair Street junction and the main civic square, on one axis. They are located immediately adjacent to one another which provides the street with an urban scale, vibrancy and density of activity which is more akin to a much larger town.

East and West Princes Street contains a concentration of listed buildings that make a significant contribution to townscape. The identity of the street is informed by the distinctive frontages and corner features of these buildings

which collectively make an important contribution to the town centre character area.

The street is dual sided and its buildings are principally masonry and largely 3 storey tenements of alternating scale depending on their period, ranging from plain to highly distinctive and decorative. Interspersed cohesively between these are grand civic buildings and a series of low scale 18th century buildings and a single storey bungalow row of shops.

One of the principal characteristics of the town centre street pattern is the various corner conditions to the urban block. At the intersection with Maitland Street however there is a gap site. The row of tenements to East Princes Street lack a suitable termination and transition onto Maitland Street and as a result present a blank gable to the street which negatively impacts on the streetscape.



View West from gap site at corner of Maitland Street and Princes Street. The row of tenement lacks a suitable termination. This diminishes the integrity of urban block and corner condition.

The train station (Category B listed) to the north side of the street is vital in informing the first impression of Helensburgh by rail. Of Victorian design built in 1899, it replaces an earlier building from 1856. Designed by James Carswell for the North British Railway Company Engineering Department the station as a public space contributes significantly to town centre character.



Helensburgh Central with its barrel-vaulted and pitched roof glazed canopies to platforms.

Adjacent to the sandstone station office building is the 2 storey and attic Scots Baronial former municipal buildings (Category B listed) at 1 East Princes Street.



1 East Princes Street. Former Town hall. Scots Baronial style forming strong corner feature to cross roads.

With its turreted and crow stepped form makes a handsome corner piece at Sinclair Street. Designed by John Honeyman in 1878 this building when read in conjunction with the 2 storey, 4 bay Renaissance style of the station office provides a strong node and orientational point.

Transitioning across the main cross roads the Jacobean style, grey sandstone tenement of 8-12 Princes Street (Category B listed) is highly distinctive in terms of streetscape. With its decorative pediments, exaggerated skyline incorporating tall chimney stacks and canted windows the building continues the expressive and sculptured aesthetic and makes a good counterpoint to the former Town hall building.

The projecting ashlar stones at the gable indicate that 8-12 is incomplete. The original intention was for this building to continue around the corner onto Sinclair Street with a grand bell capped tower. This would have required the demolition of the adjacent early 18th C building to the corner. The buildings have very contrasting aesthetics and the terrace reads as incomplete. The blank gable of the tenement is prominent in terms of streetscape.



8-12 West Princes Street. Striking tenement in Jacobean style with its varied skyline and prominent chimney stacks. The building has an impressive scale on Princes Street and makes a significant contribution to the street scape. Adjoining to the west is William Tait's well-proportioned tenement.

The tenement of 8-12 has a good relationship and easy transition into William Tait's cream sandstone, symmetrical, 7 bay tenement at 14-28 (Category B listed) dating from 1878 with its decorative brattishing and two diamond wall head stacks on square bases.

The adjoining tenement of 30-34 (Category C listed) of early 19th century design, reads as two-

storey on the streetscape despite being 3 stories due to its modest floor to ceiling heights. The building further contrasts with its neighbours with its uncoursed squared rubble walling and plain, functional elevation. This sits well with the equally plain later 20th century, 4 bayed ashlar tenement that forms the corner block to Colquhoun Square. This building is rectangular in plan and the only one of the four corner blocks of West Princes Street fronting Colquhoun Square that isn't L-shape and therefore doesn't present a principal frontage to the square.

Across the street is a single-storey row of originally 9 bungalow shops, possibly of interwar period. Unfortunately, most of the traditional shops have been lost replaced with modern type with only one shopfront at nr 21 surviving intact. Some of the high level dentilled cornices to the row survive. This row of shops has an impressive shopfront scale and is distinctive in terms of character and streetscape.



Late 19th C, traditional shopfront to 21 West Princes Street. Mostly original with some later modern additions. Part of bungalow terrace row of shops. Shops either side have been replaced with modern designs.

Colquhoun Square is central to the town centre townscape and provides a focal point and civic locus which is a key part of the character of West Princes Street. The buildings fronting the square vary in their architectural significance individually but are important collectively as a grouping

forming an enclosure to the square. Alan Berry's two 1980s brick housing developments while generally self-effacing and modest contribute significantly towards this sense of enclosure to the south side of the square. Its arched shopfronts to the ground floor condition reference the 19-bay semi-circular headed arcade fronting the square at ground level to 19-25 Colquhoun Square (Category B listed). This three-storey, symmetrical tenement of later 19th century design forms an L-shape enclosure to the north west side. Across the street to the south west side the former post office at 18 Colquhoun Square (Category B listed) provides an L-shape enclosure as Princes Street transitions into the square. The design by W W Robertson of 1893, extended by 5 bays to the south in early 20th century is more expressive, considered to be Beaux Arts influenced and provides a strong corner with its elongated cupola.



18 Colquhoun Square, W W Robertson, 1861. Late Victorian former post office with elongated cupola provides a strong corner feature and prominent visual marker.

To the north of the square, two prominent buildings form the enclosure and also the entrance sequence to Colquhoun Street. To the west sits the West Kirk (Church of Scotland) (Category B Listed) which is an important visual marker to the square with its spire which adds verticality and alternative scale. The diagonal view of this from the opposite corner of the square is particularly significant.



West Kirk an important visual marker on Colquhoun Street with its 3-stage tower with broach stone spire. J W and J Hay 1853.

To the east is the Bank of Scotland (Category B listed) a 2 storey, 3 bay square plan, classical building dated 1861. Maps of 1892-1949 indicate that a building adjacent to the bank to north east corner of the square, that pre-dated it, has been removed to form a car park for the bank. This is the only internal corner to the square that is open which opens up long-distance diagonal views from the square and Princes Street to the square 3-stage tower of the former St Columba Church (now The Digital Arts Centre) at 81 Sinclair Street. The open corner provides views and access into the back court behind the tenements fronting West King Street and Sinclair street. This former back court houses a large public car park whose vehicular exit is via a pend from Sinclair Street.

Also, on the north eastern edge between 30 and 34 Colquhoun Square there is another view into the internal backcourt of the blocks. The rear elevations of the tenements to Princes Street are visible. Elements such as the projecting turnpike stair turret to the rear of 30-34 add a different character and variation to the streetscape. The back court is separated from the square by a tall rubble boundary wall which maintains the square's sense of enclosure at this point.



Open internal corner to north east side of Colquhoun Square. This affords long distance views towards tower of former St Columba Church.



A L-shape three-story tenement at 74-78 of grey harl with red sandstone dressings with a squat turreted corner providing a robust termination to the end of the Town Centre area.



North east side of Colquhoun Square. Gaps in frontages offering views into interior spaces of the block and rear facing elevations.

Continuing west down Princes Street the north side of the street again provides an unbroken terrace of four tenements with continuous ground floor retail until James Street at the edge of the town centre. A L-shape three-story tenement at 74-78 and 18-20 James Street (Category B listed) provides a robust termination to the end of the Town Centre area.

Opposite this is the mid-19th century Helensburgh United Reformed Church (URC) (Category B listed) constructed in cream and pinkish sandstone rubble by John Honeyman. The church grounds are bounded by a mid-height rubble wall that maintains the block boundary with pink ashlar gate piers to the corner. The church was converted to a hall following the construction of a later church building built in 1883 in a cream sandstone behind and at right angles to the original building.



Helensburgh URC Church at the corner of Princes and James Street. The boundary wall is important in providing enclosure to the church grounds and maintaining the consistency of urban block reinforcing the grid iron street pattern.

As West Princes Street continues beyond James Street the density and scale that defines the town centre area diminishes. The continuity of the active frontages is interrupted and the consistency of urban block that defines the town centre character is eroded by building gaps, lanes and driveways. As West Princes Street continues west, tenements and terraces give way to two-storey detached and semi-detached houses as the street transitions towards the residential suburbs.

2. Sinclair Street. North south axis.

Sinclair Street is Helensburgh's main shopping street and is of key economic importance to the town. Running north to south, Sinclair Street is a continuation of the main road network from Luss Road (A818) from the north. The street is therefore vital in informing the first impressions of the town centre and where the transition from boundary walls and hedgerows to terraces and tenements is most pronounced.

The town centre starts where Sinclair Street crosses King Street and terminates at Clyde Street two blocks later. Over the town centre area Sinclair Street has continuous ground floor commercial frontage to both sides of the street from Clyde Street up to Princes Street and then to the west side of the street up to King Street.

The two sides of the street have noticeably different building scales with the east side of the street being occupied by tenements and civic buildings of scale.

The west side is formed by predominately low rise single and two storey buildings. This is interrupted by one-off tenements that bookend the northern end of the town centre area at King Street and at the cross roads which reintroduce scale and variety to the streetscape.



View north up Sinclair Street with variety of building scale. The spire of St Columba Church provides an important visual marker.

Particularly prominent in street scape terms is the Art Nouveau style building of the former Conservative Association Headquarters at 40 Sinclair Street (Category A listed) and the 3-storey and attic muscular tenement of 22-34 (Category C listed). Charles Rennie Mackintosh worked for John Honeyman and Keppie at the time of construction in 1895 and it is widely considered that building details including the elegant stone carvings, ornately carved tree on the breaking eaves parapet and the roof glazing are consistent with his style.

Both buildings are built in red sandstone and their four-storey height with their breaking and varied skyline make a significant contribution to streetscape being of city scale with distinctive frontages and reflect that Helensburgh in the late 19th century would have had a wealthy population benefiting from close links to Glasgow.



38-40 Sinclair Street. Former Helensburgh and Gareloch Conservative Club. Elegant asymmetric elevation with highly distinctive parapet and exquisite carved masonry.



33-41 Sinclair Street. Dated 1878. The tenement is important in re-introducing scale to Sinclair Street and pairs well with the buildings opposite bringing a cluster of decorative listed buildings. The tenement with its canted roofs and decoration elevates it beyond a standard Glasgow tenement.



22-34 Sinclair Street. Frank Burnet and Boston, 1899. 3 Storey and attic with strong street presence featuring Scottish 17th century details and broken skyline. The stone for the building is originally from Maybole Castle, Ayrshire.

Opposite the former Conservative Association Headquarters, the three-storey blonde tenement of 33-41 (Category C listed) reinjects scale to the west side of the street when entering the town centre area from the north viewing towards the Firth of Clyde. This tenement with its canted slate roofs, decorative masonry details of consoles, capitals and carvings elevates it from a standard tenement and pairs well with the listed buildings opposite.

The majority of traditional shopfronts have been lost to Sinclair Street replaced with modern type. The 20th C two-storey infill building at 7-9 and 23-25 with commercial premises at ground level are out of keeping with the rest of the town centre in terms of form, frontage design and materiality.

At the cross roads the buildings are generally two-storey and self-effacing with the exception of the Scots Baronial municipal buildings (former town hall). The two buildings on the west side nr 43 and 45 while plain in the context of the highly expressive tenements that form their back drop are early 18th century vernacular buildings. Their appearance has been altered by extensions, modern alterations and materials and loss of features such as gabled chimney stacks. They contrast with the neighbouring buildings being rendered. The two corner buildings form a good pairing having similar form but orientated differently with 43 having its gable to Princes Street and 45 its gable to Sinclair Street. Nr 43 was previously an inn according to NLS maps of 1860.



43 Sinclair Street. Paired with nr 45 below.



Transition from two storey corner buildings on Sinclair Street cross roads to bungalow row of shops. These are much altered with altering style, proportion, signage and use of materials. The original design intent for a designed row has been lost.



45 Sinclair Street. Pairing of two-storey early 18th Century vernacular buildings at an important cross roads in the town centre area. These are low scale and plain but very visible in terms of streetscape. Both have undergone modernisation and contrast with the decorative masonry large scale tenements neighbouring.

Transitioning through the cross roads north there is another row of single-storey bungalow shops although this block has a reduced scale and level of detail compared to the Princes Street row. These shops have been much altered such that there is no continuity in design, materiality or signage to the terraced frontage.

Across the street at 48-52 is the later 1906 Police Station extension to the Scots Baronial burgh buildings (category B listed). It contrasts with the earlier building with the use of a grey sandstone but continues the Scots vocabulary albeit with a modern interpretation. This building is highly distinctive in terms of streetscape with a variable rhythm to the eaves level that together with its freer fenestration brings together the disparate building scales of Sinclair Street. The rear elevation of the building is also distinctive with its tall chimneyed doocot and expressive stacks.



48-52a Sinclair Street. A N Paterson's 1906 addition originally comprising the Police Office and Fire Station. Continuing the Scots vocabulary of the former Town hall but with a modern interpretation

the two buildings make a significant contribution to streetscape with its variety of forms, details, and varied skyline. The use of a contrasting grey sandstone clearly demarcates the different timeline of construction.



Rear of 48-52a Sinclair Street. Highly distinctive rear elevation in an Arts and Crafts style.

The range of late 19th century, three-storey tenements terminating at King Street while not listed are important to street scape in reintroducing the scale and density of the town centre character and maintaining the consistent building line. Each of the three tenements is different but linked by their use of red sandstone. 65-67 has a vehicular pend that provides access to the block interior. The pedimented roof, canted bays and uncoursed, squared rubble and stone detailing between the bays elevate this from a basic tenement adding visual interest. The tenement at 71-75 has similarities to 74-78 West Princes Street with its grey harling and stone dressings. The shops to the ground floor are relatively unique to the town centre being domestic in style, scale and appearance. The L-shaped corner tenement at 77 replaces an earlier square building that fronted Sinclair Street. The tenement has fenestration and shopfront to both elevations which maintains the active ground floor condition and animates both streets. However, as the tenement continues along King Street the ground floor condition reverts to residential and the character qualities as the town centre diminish.

Terminating the row of tenements on Sinclair Street is the tower of the former St Columba Church with its contrasting cream sandstone and vertical emphasis. This distinctive corner feature marks the end of the town centre area with the block between King Street and Argyle Street being considered transitional between the residential and town centre areas.



View north. Group of three tenements at end of town centre area. These provide a good grouping with the spire of St Columba Church and all differ in design offering variety benefitting the streetscape.

Opposite the tenements the co-op building is a late 20th C infill development on the site of the former goods and engine shed land serving the train station. With its predominately blank elevations, basic form, use of yellow engineering brick and lack of active ground level commercial activity the building contrasts significantly with its neighbouring buildings and is incongruous in character to the rest of Sinclair Street.

3. Clyde Street. East west axis coast fronting.

West Clyde Street runs east west and is part of the main coastal road route. The street is single sided with sea fronting properties to the north which overlook the esplanade and former pier. The buildings are modest two-storey and attic properties interspersed with three-storey tenements and civic buildings. There are no gaps between the buildings, except for one occasion where a modern two storey building has been inserted at 3-5 West Clyde Street, and the street has a consistent building line and block pattern. Access to the rear courts are through pends or

closes interspersed between continuous ground floor commercial frontage. The street has a varied and interesting character that is derived from the alternating building scales and the five listed buildings with distinctive frontages set against plainer more self-effacing buildings.

Between the former pier on the axis of Colquhoun Street and Sinclair Street there is a large car park fronting the Firth of Clyde which has been formed through extensive land reclamation. This land is the location of Helensburgh Leisure Centre which has been built over the site of the previous open-air swimming pool formed in 1928 and gifted by Provost Andrew Buchanan.



View east along West Clyde Street. Over time the single dormers have been modified creating full length dormers which has had an intrusive impact and much altered the roofscape and character of the buildings. The street has a consistent ground level appearance that contrasts well with the variety at eaves level created by different building scales and forms.

Clyde Street has a strong juxtaposition between early vernacular building and later mid-19th century redevelopment and this is most evident at the edges of the town centre and at the intersection with James Street. Here a mid-19th century three-storey tenement of 42-45 towers over the 18th century building at 46. At 37-39 there is another three-storey tenement redevelopment. The projecting ashlar outer stones of its unfinished gable are indications that nr 40 was also intended to be redeveloped to form a continuous row of tenements which would have unified the building

height. Nr 40 was never developed and the street maintains the rise and fall of the eaves line. Adjacent to 37-39 is the highly distinctive two-storey and attic Scots Baronial former bank at 36 (Category B listed) with its crow stepped gables and corbels which contributes significantly to townscape.



24 West Clyde Street. A N Paterson and Stoddart, dated 1928. The corniced apex stacks to both gables are highly distinctive and give the building a varied skyline and interesting form. The building was originally built for the National Bank of Scotland.

Also distinctive in terms of streetscape is the two-storey and attic building at 36 (Category B listed) which occupies a prime corner location at Colquhoun Street, leading north to Colquhoun Square. With its virtually symmetrical street façades each balanced around a chimneyed gabled centrepiece, the building is an important nodal point on the entrance sequence historically from where the pier joined the esplanade on the axis of Colquhoun Street. Adjacent at 20-23 the 1933 art deco infill of the former Woolworths department store. Unfortunately, the original shopfront has been lost. The 3 storey and attic Glasgow Style tenement at 18 (Category B listed) with its Art Nouveau details has an equally striking frontage with its symmetrical facade and contrasting use of bull-faced coursed red rubble sandstone.



18 West Clyde Street. T and J Low. 1909. 3 Bay Glasgow style tenement with dated keystone, full height bowed tripartite oriels flanking and corbelled stepped bowed parapet with breaking eaves.

Set between two storey and attic properties is the 1830s Imperial Hotel at 12 West Clyde Street (Category C listed). The hotel was the former Tontine Inn which had a stagecoach service every morning which left to meet the steamer at Luss. The town centre area terminates at the two-storey and attic property at 9 East Clyde Street where the continuous building line is interrupted following the demolition of a stretch of buildings and the construction of a car sales show room and forecourt. Beyond this point the street becomes dual sided but the building form, scale and typology change dramatically as it transitions into Helensburgh's former industrial area that used to contain the slaughterhouses, gasworks, steamie, mineral waterworks and distillery.

4. James Street. North south axis.

James Street is a transitional street forming a perimeter edge to the town centre.

James Street has a different character north and south of Princes Street. To the north side up to King Street the presence of single storey outbuildings and a play park fronting the street reduces the density, scale and dual sided character of the street. The north side with the exception of the corner building to 74-78 West Princes Street has no distinctive frontages, corner features or ground floor commercial activity. The upper part

of James Street is predominately residential with plain buildings and this area is not considered to have the same characteristics as the town centre.

The view south down James Street towards the Firth is terminated by a red granite obelisk. This is a monument (Category B listed) to the aspirations and achievements of the marine engineer Henry Bell for his steam navigation. Bell was vital to the growth of Helensburgh responsible for enhancing Helensburgh's reputation for bathing and leisure and also served as the town's first Provost.



Erected in 1872 in memory of Henry Bell the obelisk forms the termination to James Street. The former Art Deco cinema on the east side of the street makes a significant contribution to streetscape.

The east side of James Street is particularly distinctive through the presence of three significant listed buildings side by side. This combination of buildings in different form and typology adds significant interest to the streetscape.

Adjacent to the Helensburgh URC church (Category B listed), the former bank at 10-12 (Category B listed) has a villa aesthetic. In keeping with this the bank is set back from the street. Adjacent to this is the former La Scala cinema (category C listed) which opened in 1913 and is notable by its distinctive Art Deco facade. The former cinema is set hard to the street line. This combination of buildings adds significant interest to the streetscape. With the church and former bank being set back from the street their gable

elevations are important in providing a three dimensionality of building form. In contrast, the former cinema has a set piece front elevation with blank gables typical of this type of building.

A consistency to the block boundary is maintained by low level walls which enclose and define the threshold to the buildings set back from the pavement. Adjacent to the former cinema the boundary wall encloses the rear courts of the buildings fronting Clyde Street. This open space has a different character from the grounds to the front of the properties further up the street. Here the rear elevations of the tenements and the rear courts are visible. Elements such as projecting stair cases, chimneys, outbuildings and original sash and case windows to common areas add a different character and variation to the streetscape. The boundary wall continues until it meets the corner building at 46-47 Clyde Street providing transition from James Street onto Clyde Street.

5. Colquhoun Street. North south axis.

Colquhoun Street’s vehicular road way previously ran directly through Colquhoun Square on its north south axis until the street pattern was altered as part of major public realm works. The street now no longer communicates directly with Princes Street and there is no vehicular connection between the two sides of the street either side of the square. Colquhoun Street is now dissected into a north and south branch off the square.

The north side of Colquhoun Street has a different character to the rest of the town centre area featuring traditional buildings with modern one-storey extensions of varying quality. These extensions affect the setting of the buildings and are inconsistent in terms of detail, materiality, scale and form. Generally, they do not enhance the streetscape and in some cases affect the setting of the traditional buildings. Looking north from the two buildings that form the entry to the square, the town centre character starts to deteriorate and it is considered that this part of the street does not have the special character of the town centre area.



North side of Colquhoun Street. The single storey extensions affect the setting of the traditional buildings and are not positive in terms of streetscape.



South side of Colquhoun Street. Variety in building scale surrounding Colquhoun Square, blend of 18th and 20th century buildings in close proximity.

The character of Colquhoun Street to the south side of the square has been altered by demolition and new build. Colquhoun Street is on the axis of the pier and would have originally served as an important link for visitors to the town arriving by boat to the town’s main civic square. The classic view south from the square towards the Firth and pier has been significantly altered by the development of the pier. The land reclamation, buildings, boundary treatment and car parking interrupt and diminish the extent of body of water

that is visible making it feel further from the town. The connection to the water is a key part of Helensburgh's character.



View down Colquhoun Street towards Firth of Clyde. The continuity of building line so distinctive to Helensburgh is eroded to this street due to the prominent gaps between buildings.

From the square, the entrance to Colquhoun Street demonstrates Helensburgh's ability for a diverse range of disparate buildings to co-exist cohesively. On the west side of the street, the 3-storey and mansard brick housing development maintains the enclosure to the square and turns the corner providing an active elevation to Colquhoun Street with fenestration and street level retail.

The street at this entry point does not have a symmetrical arrangement with the brick building providing the enclosure to the east side of the square, not extending to the corner. An earlier 18th century 2-storey, pitched roof, vernacular building has been retained at 20 Colquhoun Street which has its gable to the square and main frontage to Colquhoun Street. The gable has fenestration at ground and first floor level. Retaining this building has been important to the square in maintaining the variety at eaves level, preventing the boundary from becoming too consistent. It also provides balance and connection to the scale of the buildings on the other side of the square. Nr 20 is rendered contrasting with the brick and stone of the surrounding buildings. Its appearance has been altered by modern alterations and materials

and loss of features such as gabled chimney stacks. Its setting and form are reminiscent of nr 43 and 45 on the cross roads of Sinclair Street and Princes Street.

Colquhoun Street to the south of the square is relatively narrow. The increased air space over the building between the two-brick building is important in providing the sensation of the view opening up to the Firth providing a counterpoint to the street narrowing.



8-12 Colquhoun Street. The loss of the adjoining buildings results in the tenement feeling disconnected from the block and the blank gables are visually intrusive and illustrative of loss of building fabric. Nr 20 on the corner of the square is an early vernacular building of plainer aesthetic and reduced scale compared to the later 19th c development.

Colquhoun Street is dual sided however the continuity of the building line to the east has been lost due to building removal. A single tenement block at 8-12 stands isolated on the street and the loss of the adjacent buildings now provides unconsidered views into the centre of the blocks and of the tenement's large blank gables.

The gaps to the building frontage disrupt the view towards the Firth. The west side of the street has a more consistent building line consisting of two-storey 1980s infill buildings that maintain the active street frontage down to 1-5 Colquhoun Street on the corner of West Clyde Street. This infill development is important in maintaining the retail nature of the town centre and encouraging footfall between the water front and civic square. 1-5 is a

modest two-storey and attic building fronting the esplanade but with a strong gable featuring fenestration and a flattened apex with three chimneys that have been reduced in height. This building and its shops are currently vacant.

6. King Street. East west axis.

King Street provides the northern enclosure to the blocks that form Colquhoun Square. As the street moves west from Sinclair Street the scale, density and consistency of building line begins to deteriorate. Between Colquhoun and James Street the buildings changes from tenement to single storey bungalow properties situated either hard to the street or recessed. These domestic buildings are typically set between later new-build developments of lesser quality. Considered as a full streetscape neither block has the characteristics of the town centre area with little active frontages, lack of uniformity or significant buildings or distinctive frontages that make a positive contribution to street scape.

characteristics of the town centre area. The listing of 25-27 is considered sufficient to protect the setting and development of this building.



Deterioration in the character of town centre area with low rise residential set amongst low quality new build, commercial development. The uniformity of street pattern and building line is lost affecting the street scape.



View west down Kings Street showing predominately residential dwellings and change in building typology and scale. The red sandstone listed building of 25-27 is visible to the left-hand side.

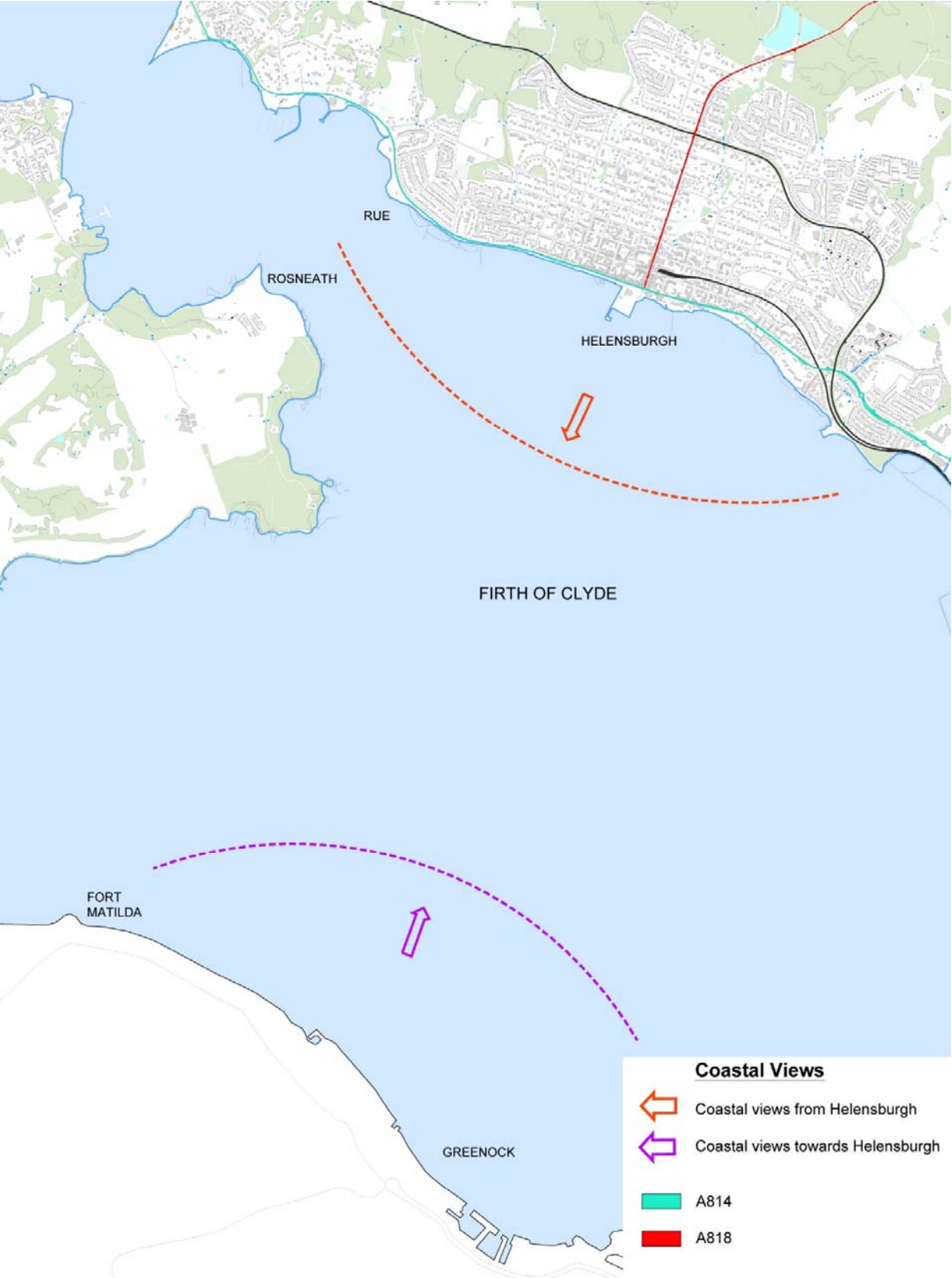
25-27 is the only building of note to the study area of King Street that has any distinctiveness worthy of mention. This building was formerly the Strathclyde Regional Council Registry Office (Category C listed). Analysing all aspects of King Street, it is considered the street does not have the



Pend to King Street forming the exit to the principal car park behind.

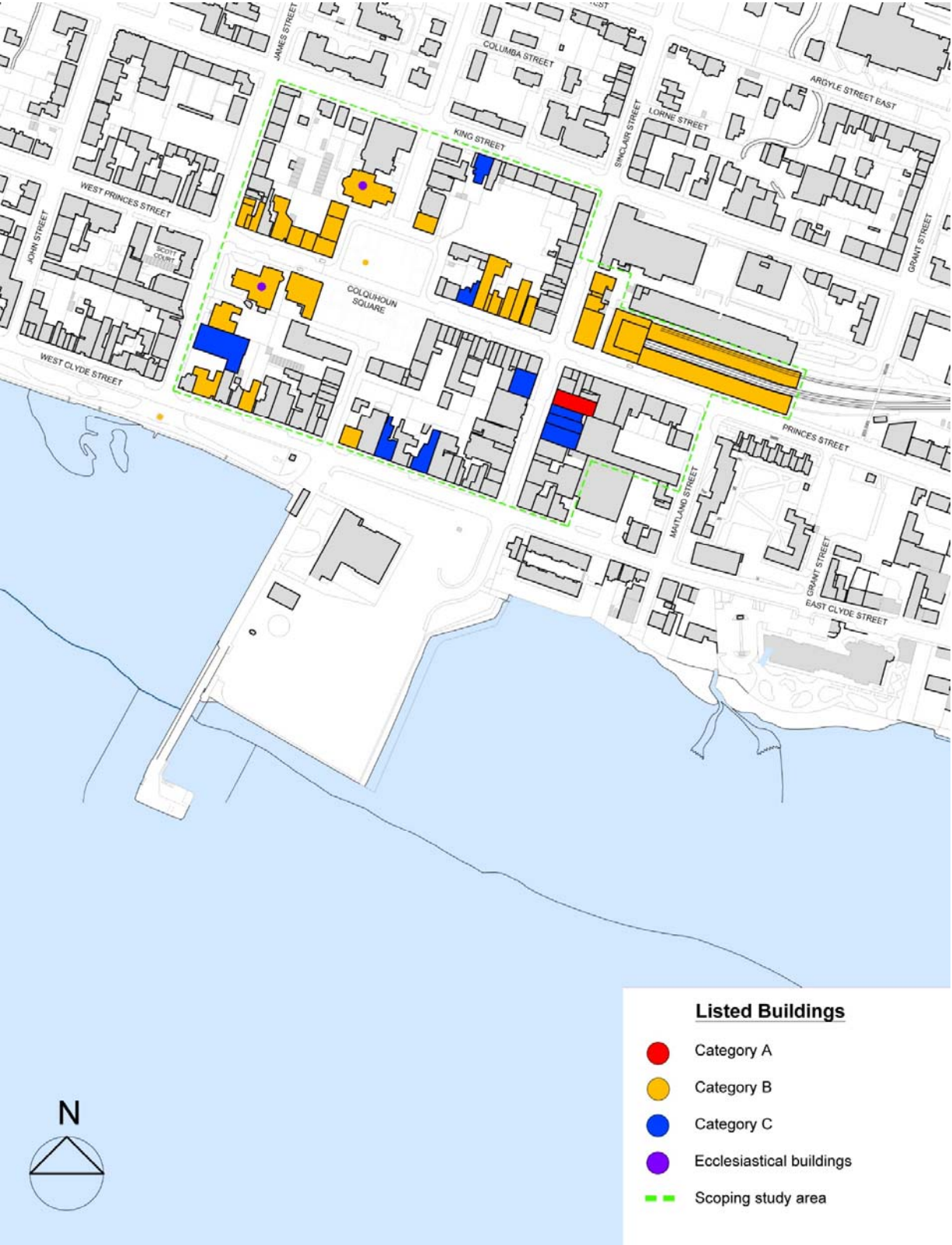
Context Analysis Maps

Coastal View and Access Analysis



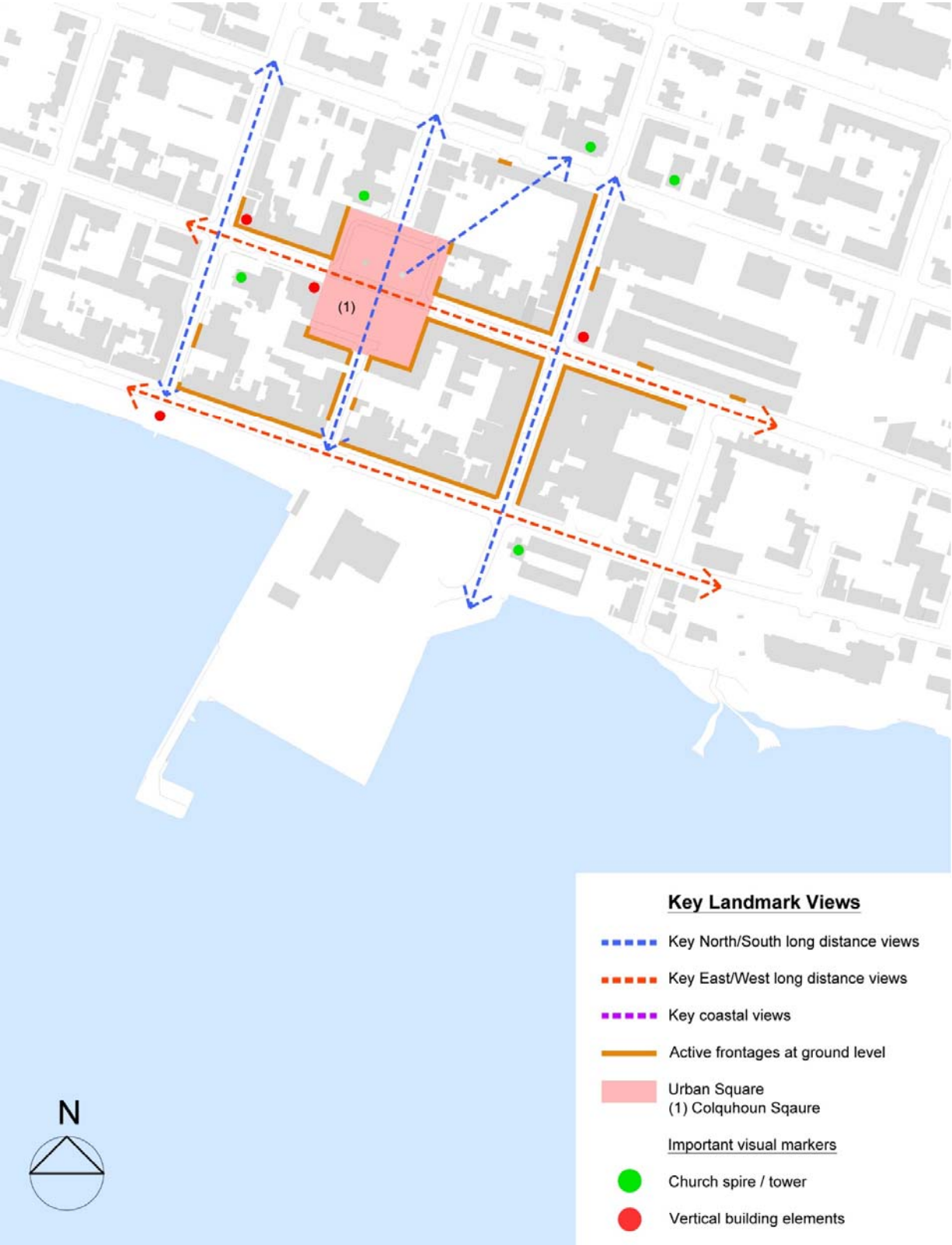
Townscape Analysis Maps

Townscape Analysis. Listed and Ecclesiastical buildings



Townscape Analysis Maps

Key landmark views and active commercial frontages



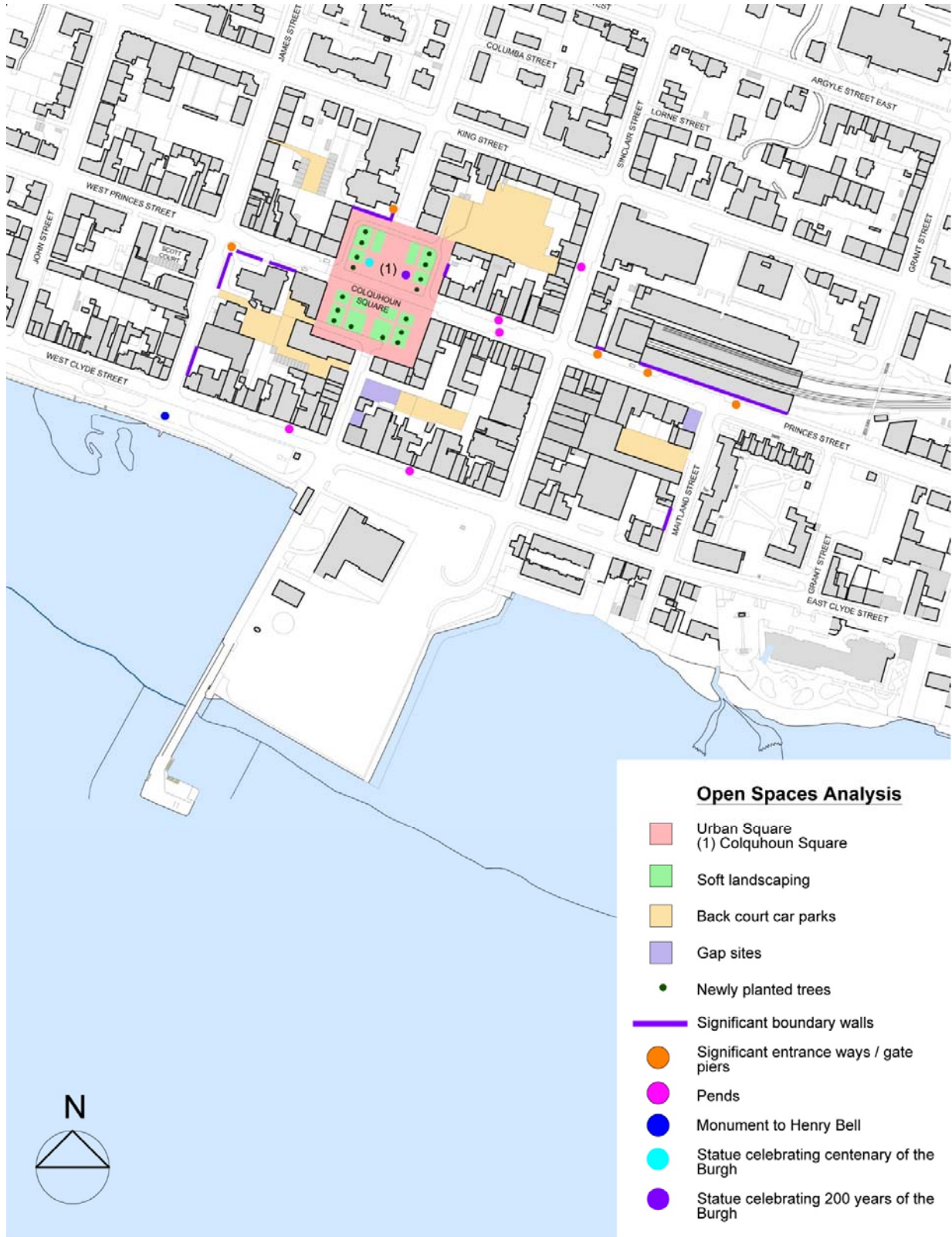
Townscape Analysis Maps

Principal streets and distinctive frontages



Townscape Analysis Maps

Open Spaces Analysis



3.6. Open Spaces

The principle public open space areas within the study area are hard landscaped in keeping with the urban nature of the town centre.

The principal public open space is Colquhoun Square. This underwent a major public realm and traffic management enhancement in 2014 reimagined as the civic heart of the town. The pedestrian focused landscape provides plenty of spaces for gathering as well as places for structured town and community events such as marquees and markets.



Public realm works to Colquhoun Square.



Bell's Bell museum plinth installed as part of outdoor museum.

The square incorporates an 'outdoor museum' that showcases through sculptures and artwork aspects of the town's history. These have been integrated into the bollards used to control traffic movements with these becoming museum plinths.

The square also incorporates public green space into the town centre via new structured planting including trees, lawns, shrubbery and floral areas. These modulate and reduce the scale of the square to avoid it being too vast and imposing a space. In conjunction it provides a range of scales and openness as well as introducing contrast, colour and biodiversity to the town centre. The planting and design of the square has considered important views including diagonals ensuring key areas are framed and key views maintained.

The square integrates two Celtic Cross statues (Category B listed) in pink granite that celebrate the centenary and bi-centenary of the burgh.



Celtic Cross statue (category B listed) celebrating the centenary of the burgh. 1802-1902.

A number of spaces in the internal blocks have been converted to car parks with access via lanes or pends. The car parks are an obvious requirement of town centre commerce as the mode of transport will typically be car dependent. The use of the internal block spaces as car parking is appropriate and necessary to alleviate the pressure of on-street parking.



Celtic Cross statue celebrating 200 years of the burgh charter 1802-2002



Car park installed to rear court. Views of the back elevations of Sinclair Street and King Court. Accessed through pend from Sinclair Street. Car parks in the rear courts keep the main shopping streets relatively free of cars improving the space for pedestrians.

4. CHARACTER APPRAISAL and ASPECTS OF DISTINCTIVENESS

Having examined the historic development and townscape of Helensburgh's town centre it is now possible to identify those features which contribute to its unique character and appearance as an area of special architectural and historical interest.

Key features of special character:

- Coastal location setting on the Firth of Clyde and at the western mainland end of the Highland Boundary Fault.
- Setting shaped by natural environment – Northern backdrop of Glenfruin with gently sloping terraces punctuated by steeper slopes that are the remnants of raised beach cliffs.
- Historical development as a seaside resort and later dormitory town to Glasgow.
- A planned town with rigorous grid iron street pattern that pre-dates Glasgow.
- Uniformity of the grid iron pattern.
- Town Centre status. Density of urban blocks unmatched in the locality, concentrated retail activity at ground floor and array of municipal and civic buildings. Contrast to Upper Helensburgh.
- Consistency of urban block, cohesive tenement street frontages with corner features. Gaps in frontages offering views into internal spaces/ rear views of buildings.
- Boundary walls which maintain and reinforce the urban block.
- Waterfrontage with expansive panorama to Port Glasgow and Greenock.
- Townscape shaped by diverse range of historic buildings with co-existence of disparate architectural styles including Scots Baronial, Jacobean, Art Nouveau, and Beaux Arts. Building period ranging from 18th century through to 20st century. Concentration of 20 Listed Buildings and many un-listed buildings that make a significant contribution to townscape.
- A number of buildings from 20th Century that are distinctive and contextually well considered.
- Sinclair Street and Princes Street, the principle main streets and commercial heart.
- Distinctive civic open space at Colquhoun Square. Its insertion carved into the grid plan.

- Number of distinctive frontages and corner buildings with principle elevations to both aspects to principle town centre streets.
- Traditional shopfronts and bungalow row of shopfronts.
- Varied and exaggerated skylines with breaking eaves, towers, turreted corners and cupolas, prominent chimney stacks, varied pediments, piended roofs and corbelled chimneypiece.
- Traditional details and decorative features including elegant stone carvings, crow stepped gables, corbels and canted oriel bays.
- Traditional materials: stone (sandstone ashlar and rubble in varying colours), brick, painted rendered and harled surfaces, slate roofs, lead works, cast iron rainwater goods, brattishing, dormer windows, timber sash and case windows and doors.

5. PUBLIC REALM AUDIT

The current public realm to Helensburgh is generally high quality with the town having undergone a major public realm works in 2014. This included upgrading street lighting, furniture, signage, kerbs, drop kerbs, sensory element, pavements and on-street parking.



High quality public realm improvement works completed 2014.

6. NEGATIVE FACTORS

There are some negative factors to buildings, street frontages or spaces that detract from or threaten the quality of the townscape.

Vacancy or Under-use: Buildings capable of reuse but lying empty or partly used.

Helensburgh town centre benefits from a high percentage of occupied shops which adds vibrancy to the area and provides a good indication of the health of the town centre. Four long term vacant shops exist to corner of West Clyde Street and Colquhoun Street and two at the corner of East Clyde Street and Sinclair Street. The parent buildings over the majority of these shops are vacant also.

Shopfronts: inappropriate shop frontages and ill-considered signage (layout, graphical content and materials).

Helensburgh still retains a number of traditional shopfronts, fully or mostly intact and some with varying degrees of modern intervention ranging from minor to extensive. Shopfronts are one of the most easily recognisable parts of Helensburgh's town centre character and the loss of, or the inappropriate alterations to these traditional shopfronts, can be detrimental. This is most noticeable at the single storey bungalow terrace of shops where traditional details have been mostly lost. The town suffers the common issue of oversized and irregular retail signage, even when under a single parent building. In conjunction with the use of modern aluminium and Upvc signage this affects the character of the area and the setting of the parent buildings.

Where modern shopfronts have been installed the replacements are typically functional and lack the syntax of a traditional shopfront. Features such as recessed lobbies, stall risers, console brackets, pilasters, fanlights and timber fascias have generally been lost which diminishes the character of the shopfronts. Traditional hand painted and raised timber signage has also been lost. Replacement shops are typically in aluminium or PVC and a number of shops lack the use of high-

quality materials. Modern shops also lack depth being generally flat with little to no relief which impacts on streetscape.

Inappropriate alterations: loss of architectural character through incremental and inappropriate changes to building elements – windows, doors, roofs, chimneys, dormers, shopfronts.

At West Clyde Street the majority of the traditional single dormers have been modified or enlarged to create full length dormers which has had an intrusive impact on townscape and much altered the roofscape and character of the buildings. Not much can be done to reverse the alterations to date but where single dormers still exist these should be protected to avoid inappropriate development. Where a building is undergoing significant restoration or redevelopment, Planning Policy should encourage clients to reverse the negative development and reinstate the traditional roof arrangement.

Inappropriate repair: non-traditional materials or techniques; poorly executed repairs.

Lack of maintenance: Difficulties due to ownership; safe access to repair high level areas; high cost; low use of factoring arrangements.

Inappropriate development: modern redevelopment which does not respond sympathetically to its townscape context.

Need for repair: through poor maintenance; life expiry of building fabric; prolonged lack of investment; low property values.

Waterfront: The land reclamation to the pier area at the foot of Sinclair Street and Colquhoun Square has altered the connection of the town centre to the water. The increased land mass reduces the body of water visible which in turn reduces its impact. Furthermore, the high number of cars and array of signage add various obstructions in the foreground which are distracting and deteriorate the view and connection to the water.

While the town centre underwent a public realm improvement scheme in 2014 this did not extend to the pier and car park. While not part of the town

centre character area its location on the periphery between the town and the water has an impact on the perceived quality of the town centre.



View south over land reclamation to pier and car park. The connection of the water to the town centre is diminished by the increased land mass and visual obstructions of cars and signage.

6.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

The overarching socio-economic factors which contributes to the need for continued action within Helensburgh's town centre are as follows:

Neglect and Deterioration

The built environment of the study area is in variable and vulnerable condition due to a number of factors, often co-related. Significant levels of long-term under investment combined with a predominantly 19th Century building stock and in some cases challenging economic setting has led to deterioration of buildings. Over a relatively short period of time these factors will lead to further progressive decline.



17-19 West Clyde Street (Category B listed). Typical building failures include vegetation growth, failure of roof details and repairs. Significant stone repair and structural intervention is required with movement evident to canted window bays.

The poor condition of the building fabric is a result of a lack of regular maintenance and repair. This is exacerbated and underpinned by a number of local and specific issues:

- The severely exposed West of Scotland coastal location (accelerating decay and increased effects of climate change).
- Multiple ownership with variable factoring agreements (complicating implementation of repair works).
- No planned maintenance or inspection regimes.
- Accessibility for basic maintenance / repair operations (access to rear elevations, high level).
- Economic factors (high cost of repairs relative to property values within the town centre area; changing demographic profiles).

Once a building descends into disrepair it can become increasingly complex and expensive to rectify. In some instances, poor quality, partial or inappropriate repairs have been made. In other instances, buildings have been vacated, threatening the building's ability for reuse and repair.



5-7 East Clyde Street. Building subject to emergency notice from Argyll and Bute Council. Works include doughtakings to gable, propping of internal pen check stair and propping of shop lintel.

6.2 INCREMENTAL DAMAGING CHANGE

Small, incremental inappropriate changes, can damage the quality and appearance of historic buildings and spaces that contribute to the character of a Conservation Area. Significant levels of damaging change are evident in the town centre including:

Loss of original timber sash and case windows and inappropriate replacement in a variety of configurations, opening methods and materials (uPVC, aluminium).

Unsympathetic modern shopfronts or inappropriate interventions (fascia's, signage, entrance doors, colours).

Loss of visual character of roofscapes (chimneys, dormer windows, decorative ironwork, rain water goods) and the use of non-traditional materials.

7. MANAGEMENT PLAN

This Management Plan will define how change is managed within the conservation area, identifying specific opportunities for positive enhancement. The plan will also support the important policy framework for the determination of development proposals.

'Designation of a conservation area should not be regarded principally as a means of increasing control but rather as a commitment to take positive action to safeguard and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.' 1.

'When effectively managed, conservation areas can anchor thriving communities, sustain cultural heritage, generate wealth and prosperity and add to quality of life.' 2.

1. & 2. PAN 71 Conservation Area Management.

The Conservation Area Appraisal provides the basis for the development of a Conservation Area Strategy. It also provides the framework for highlighting opportunities for positive enhancement. Good conservation can be described as the management of change. This recognises the ongoing need for areas to adapt physically, socially and economically to meet the needs of living and working communities.

The key objectives for the ongoing active management of the proposed conservation area are:

- To protect and reinforce the integrity of the character area.
- To promote enhancement and positive change to enable sustainable growth and economic regeneration.
- To consider the negative factors and threats to the special conservation value of Helensburgh Town Centre Area.
- To prevent erosion of character through further inappropriate small scale change.
- To ensure that any new development enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area, with an emphasis on high quality design.

Management of the conservation area will be of particular relevance to the planning authority. The Council will seek to achieve these key objectives through the Development Management process. However, effective management requires support and input from other stakeholders. The main purpose of a Conservation Area Management Plan is to ensure that all stakeholders are working

within a mutually agreed framework and common set of aims, objectives and priorities.

8. OPPORTUNITIES for PLANNING ACTION: CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

An important part of the Conservation Strategy was to determine if a new conservation area should be created. The Conservation Area Appraisal scoping established that Helensburgh town centre meets the criteria for special architectural and historic significance that is desirable to preserve and enhance.

The conservation area boundary to the town centre relates to the key character streets outlined within the appraisal. This is as follows;

Princes Street. The boundary will include both all buildings From Maitland Street to James Street and encompass the full boundary wall enclosure to Helensburgh Central Station on Princes Street.

Colquhoun Square. The boundary will include all buildings enclosing the square.

Sinclair Street. The boundary will encompass all buildings from West Clyde Street to King Street excluding the co-op building at the corner of Sinclair Street and King Street (54-56).

West Clyde Street. The proposed boundary extends from James Street down to the logical termination at 9 East Clyde Street encompassing the built side of the street.

Colquhoun Street. The boundary will encompass West Clyde Street to Colquhoun Square.

James Street. The boundary will include all plots, buildings, gardens and boundary walls to the east side of the street from West Clyde Street to Princes Street including the tenement 76-78 Princes Street West and 18,20 James Street.

It is important to note that the conservation area boundary will be kept under review. Future re-appraisals may conclude that other areas within the town centre meet the criteria for special architectural and historic significance and that

further redefinition and extension of the boundary should be considered.

9. MANAGEMENT POLICIES

A key objective of Argyll and Bute Council's Historic Environment Strategy 2015 – 2020 is to promote positive development management and intervention for Argyll and Bute's Historic Environment.

In order to meet the core objective of preservation and enhancement of the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area the Council

will uphold the use of Local Development Plan Policies, Supplementary Guidance as well as apply policies and guidance defined at a national level.

9.1 LEGISLATION and NATIONAL POLICY

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, provides the legislative framework to listed buildings and conservation areas, setting regulatory measures covering development and statutory designations.

A national policy framework includes, Scottish Planning Policy 2014, Historic Environment Policy



for Scotland 2019, Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement 2016, Scheduled Monument Consent Procedures 2015 and Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance note series.

9.2 LOCAL POLICY

9.2.1 Argyll and Bute Local development Plan March 2015

Policy LDP 3 – Supporting the Protection, Conservation and Enhancement of our Environment.

'A Development proposal will not be supported when it does not protect, conserve or where possible enhance the established character of the built environment in terms of its location, scale, form and design.'

9.2.2 Local Development Plan policies

Development proposals within a conservation area are assessed relative to their character and design and should follow guidance in particular the following:

LDP STRAT 1 – Sustainable Development

LDP 9 – Development Setting, Layout and Design

9.2.3 Local Development Plan – Supplementary Guidance.

Development proposals are also expected to be consistent with Supplementary Guidance in particular the following:

SG LDP ENV 16(a) Development Impact on Listed Buildings

SG LDP ENV 16(b) Demolition of Listed Buildings

SG LDP ENV 17 Development in Conservation Areas and Special Built Environment Areas

SG LDP ENV 18 Demolition in Conservation Areas

SG LDP ENV 19 Development Impact on Scheduled Ancient Monuments

SG LDP ENV 21 Protection and Enhancement of Buildings

SG LDP ADV 1 Advertisements

SG LDP Shop front - Shop front / Advertising Design Principles

SG LDP RET 2 Change of Use to and from Use Class 1 (Shops) in the Core Shopping Areas of the Main Town Centre.

9.3 ADVICE on PROCEDURES

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment 2012 introduced changes to the regulations governing planning permission in Scotland.

Under the terms of the Amendment, permitted development rights for householders have been removed from conservation areas.

Conservation Area designation means that planning permission from Argyll and Bute Council will be required for most works including the following:

- New development including, property extensions, enlargements, improvement or other alterations including roof, window or door replacements.
- Works within the curtilage of a dwelling house.
- Minor operations e.g. repainting, or works to masonry such as painting and stone cleaning.
- Changes of use or temporary buildings.
- Hard surfacing within the curtilage of a dwelling house.
- Changes to any part of a boundary wall, railings, gates or other enclosure.
- Demolition.
- Removal of or works to trees.
- Works which materially affect the character of a building.
- Advertisements.

Listed Building Consent will be required for works to all Categories of Listed Buildings.

When considering the need for planning and or Listed Building Consent contact should be made with the Council's Local Development

Management Team prior to any works starting on site.

Further information is available at Argyll and Bute Council's Historic Environment web page on Listed Buildings:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/listed-buildings>

9.4 APPLICATIONS for DEVELOPMENT

Applicants for new or re-development on sites within the conservation area will be required to submit a Design Statement to explain the principles on which the development is based and to illustrate the philosophy behind the proposed design solution. A conservation statement should be included that takes account of the Helensburgh Town Centre Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan. The conservation statement should include the following information:

- How the development reflects the objectives of this management plan.
- How the proposal secures the repair and retention of features of historical value and detail.
- How the proposal reflects and responds to the area's special townscape, architectural and visual qualities as set out within the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- How the new development or alteration provides for positive enhancement to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

For guidance on the content and structure of Design Statements refer to PAN 68 – Design Statements published by the Scottish Executive.

For further guidance applicants are advised to contact the local Development Management team.

Application forms and guidance for making an application are also available from Argyll and Bute Council's web site - <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/make-planning-application>

9.5 PROTECTING AGAINST INAPPROPRIATE SMALL SCALE CHANGE

Original architectural detail and the use of traditional materials makes a defining contribution to the character and appearance of the town. This is magnified in Helensburgh due to the number and variety of high quality historic and listed buildings in the town centre area. Retention and appropriate repair are an important criterion in the context of preservation and enhancement.

Inappropriate change such as, windows, doors, shopfronts and the loss of building elements such as chimney stacks has eroded, to certain parts, the appearance of the area. Such change on a singular basis may be seen as small but incrementally will lead to a detrimental loss of character.

The continued reversal of the trend is therefore important.

Outlined below are the most significant contributing factors in cumulative loss of character.

9.5.1 Windows

The prevailing original window type within the character area is timber sash and case. It is important to acknowledge that considerable character is gained from the window fenestration for the majority of late Georgian / Victorian buildings within the town centre. Unfortunately, the appearance of many buildings has been compromised by the inappropriate use of PVC windows or by the loss of glazing patterns (astragals).

Continued positive action is required to ensure that window repair and replacement is carried out to safeguard and enhance the character of the building.



8-12 West Princes Street. A good example of traditional timber sash and case windows and a demonstration of their importance to the overall building character, in this case Jacobean with its original 6 over 6 and 6 over 1 glazing patterns formed with astragals. One flat has replacement modern Upvc casements which have a vastly different aesthetic with larger, double frames due to being a casement type. This begins to alter the character of the listed building.

Existing sash and case windows should be repaired whenever possible. Repairs should be on a like for like basis and can include effective draught proofing measures. Re-glazing with slim profile double glazing units, manufactured specifically for sash and case windows, can in many cases be successfully incorporated into existing frames. Such overhaul, carried out by experienced contractors can extend serviceable life for modest cost. Replacement of historic windows will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that they have deteriorated beyond practical repair. In such cases the replacement windows should replicate the historic design, in terms of proportion, section sizes, astragal arrangement, profile and material. Details such as the presence of horns and the method of glazing fixing (putty), paint coatings and colour should be considered. The use of externally visible proprietary trickle vents and dry glazing beads should be avoided.

Where previously inappropriately replaced or altered the reinstatement of windows in keeping with the character of the building will be encouraged and supported.

For detailed information on policy reference should be made to Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Windows.

9.5.2 Roofs

Roofs and associated features such as chimneys, dormer windows, rainwater goods and detailing are a key constituent of the character of the Conservation Area. Roofs can be essential to the character of buildings on an individual basis or collectively when viewed as a grouping. There is a mix of roofing type within the Conservation Area. A number of listed buildings, tenements and important civic buildings have traditional pitched roofs in Scottish slate. However, some traditional buildings have been reroofed using modern slates or concrete tiles which is detrimental to the character of the individual buildings and wider streetscape.

To safeguard and enhance, positive action is required to ensure that the repair of historic roofs is carried out using appropriate traditional materials and detailing. It is important to note that with regular maintenance traditional materials such as slate, lead and cast iron can be extremely durable.

Existing slate of suitable quality should be re-used whenever possible with any new slate required to make up any shortfall sourced to provide a good match in terms of size, thickness and colour and laid in the same coursing pattern – particularly important are graded lengths (diminishing courses) and random widths. Poor quality or synthetic slate or concrete tiles should be avoided. The use of concrete tiles is particularly visually intrusive, they raise the finished surface of the roof disrupting relationships with skews and chimneys and surcharge additional weight onto the roof structure.

Roof fixtures such as aerials, satellite dishes, vents, flues etc. should be carefully sited to ensure that they are not visible from ground level or break the profile of the roof at ridges and chimney stacks. This is especially important where gaps in

frontages offer considered views into internal spaces of the block.

Where a roof has been previously altered the reinstatement of traditional materials and form will be encouraged and supported.

Chimneys make an important contribution to the character of a roof and distinctiveness of an elevation and should be retained. Where repair is required this should be on a like for like basis using traditional materials with particular attention to details such as cornices, copes and chimney pots. Where major intervention is required due to structural issues there will be a presumption that chimneys should be reconstructed on a like for like basis.

For detailed information on policy reference should be made to Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Roofs.

For information on roof mounted renewable energy systems such as photovoltaic panels refer to Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Micro Renewables.

9.5.3 Boundary walls

The open space analysis of the Conservation Area Appraisal defines that existing boundary walls, are of particular distinctiveness and contribute to the overall character and appearance. They are important in terms of setting of some of the buildings and in reinforcing and maintaining the urban block pattern.

Those that remain require to be protected, their removal or inappropriate alteration will not be supported. Positive action should be undertaken to ensure that boundary walls are kept to a good standard of repair (particularly pointing) to avoid deterioration. Repair to masonry components should be undertaken using appropriate traditional materials and any significant repair that will require rebuilding should be on a like for like basis.

For detailed information on policy reference should be made to Historic Environment Scotland's

Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Boundaries.

10. OPPORTUNITIES for DEVELOPMENT

There is a presumption against new development within the conservation area which would harm its character or appearance, however, it is important to define that proposals that only deliver a neutral effect will also not be sufficient.

Local plan policy and supplementary guidance promotes positive intervention, with an emphasis on high quality design, with the core objective of enhancement and contribution to a sense of place.

There are some key gap sites within the Conservation Area boundary. One of these is at the end of a row of tenements at the corner of Princes Street and Maitland Street. This site is particularly important on the boundary to the town centre area on one of the principal streets that largely defines the townscape character. The development of this site can make a significant contribution to the first impression of the area. There is the opportunity to provide a strong corner feature that completes the urban block and provides a positive transition onto Maitland street.

Other important gap sites are the two vacant plots either side of 8-12 Colquhoun Street. These sites are particularly sensitive as they are located on an important linking street between the former pier and the main civic square. Insertion of buildings of the appropriate scale and design is important in re-establishing the building line which will frame the views of the square and waterfront.

For all of these gap sites it is vital that they incorporate active commercial frontages which are a unique component of Helensburgh's town centre character.

In terms of redevelopment, there are a number of key sites containing 20th century buildings whose character do not as individual buildings contribute positively to townscape. At 7-13 and 23-25 Sinclair Street and 2, 3-5 West Clyde Street these sites should consider the long-term strategy of redevelopment and enhancement.



2-5 West Clyde Street to the corner of Sinclair Street and the adjoining building at 7-13 Sinclair Street are prime candidates for future redevelopment considering the long term enhancement of Helensburgh.

10.1 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

New Design in Historic Settings published by Historic Environment Scotland and Architecture + Design Scotland sets out broad principles on how good design in historic settings can be achieved.

Argyll and Bute Council – Sustainable Design Guidance 3 – Working with Argyll and Bute’s Built Heritage is also relevant.

11. OPPORTUNITIES for ENHANCEMENT

The following represent initial suggestions for opportunities to enhance the proposed conservation area over the duration of potential short, medium and long term timescales. This will be subject to a consultation process to allow the input of all stakeholders.

11.1 SHOPFRONTS and SIGNAGE

Few of the historic shopfronts remain completely intact, the majority have been partially altered or replaced. Unsurprisingly there has been loss of architectural detail at street level. Where traditional shops remain, these should be conserved and enhanced which not only will enhance the shopping streets but bring economic

benefits by encouraging tourism and increased footfall.

The loss of historic shopfronts is particularly noticeable to the bungalow row of shopfronts where a significant number have been replaced with modern alternatives of disparate design and materials. The uniformity and character of these shops has been lost and the improvement of these grouping of shops would be an ideal enhancement opportunity.

Throughout the town centre there are a variety of signage designs. In many circumstances the fascias have been replaced with large oversized items. Where the original fascias do remain, these are typically blank with oversized signage installed below. The ad-hoc signage has been designed on a shop by shop basis with no consideration given to the overall effect on streetscape. In a lot of cases the oversized fascia negatively impacts on the proportion of the shops making them appear overly squat and top heavy. Oversized signage typically corresponds to where shops have been replaced with aluminium systems which as a standardised system are not best suited to the tall existing openings.

Signage is non-uniform with a variance in sizing, materiality, quantity of information displayed and its positioning on the shopfront.

With the quantity of active shopfronts in the town centre area and the influence they have on the town’s impression they would benefit from an overarching signage strategy.

The improvement of shopfronts through repair and reinstatement of traditional detail would be an ideal enhancement opportunity.

For detailed policy information reference should be made to Historic Environment Scotland’s Managing Charge in the Historic Environment – Shopfronts and their Short Guide series - Traditional Shopfronts - A short guide for shop owners

Argyll and Bute Council Supplementary Guidance SG LDP Shop Fronts and Advertising Design Principles should also be considered.

11.2 BRINGING VACANT BUILDINGS and SHOPFRONTS BACK INTO USE

A high percentage of Helensburgh town centre buildings and shopfronts are occupied which brings a vibrancy to the area. There are however some isolated areas of vacancy.

11.3 1,3,5 COLQUHOUN STREET

One particularly prominent long-term vacant building is 1-5 Colquhoun Street which is vacant to the ground floor shops and first floor level. The adjoining shop unit to 25-26 West Clyde Street which has fenestration to both corner elevations is also vacant. Collectively this grouping of vacant buildings on an important connecting street is impacting on the town's first impressions which will ultimately effect footfall and retail trade to the surrounding businesses.



The vacant ground floor shops to 1-5 Colquhoun Street has a negative impact on the perceived quality of the area. The vacancy to upper levels indicates to visitors that this isn't a High Street issue of not being able to let the unit but a much wider condition issue.

The general fabric of the building is in very poor condition and it would be reasonable to assume that unless a programme of necessary repairs is instigated, it will not likely be occupied at any time in the coming years. The external fabric requires attention to address water penetration issues, considerable stonework repair, window refurbishment (or wholesale replacement), and possible structural intervention to the supporting

structure of the shopfronts. A programme of repair with a structured maintenance plan would safeguard the building's future and greatly improve the streetscape. In conjunction with the building repair, consideration should be given to a shopfront replacement programme to reinstate high quality, traditional shopfronts to this important linking street.

11.4 43 and 45 SINCLAIR STREET

Study of archive records of 43 and 45 Sinclair Street confirm the loss of key architectural details that negatively impacts on character. This is noticeable in the loss of the chimney stacks to the gables, timber sash and case windows and cast rainwater goods to both properties. A key alteration that impacts on their setting is the loss of the traditional shopfronts which contrasted visually with the parent building in terms of its proportion of fenestration, materiality and colour. The shopfronts were a key part of the character of the buildings. Their loss and replacement with modern shopfronts featuring large floor to ceiling glazing with infill walls between in the same materiality and colour as the parent building has impacted on the streetscape.

The location of these buildings on the cross roads of the town centres two principal streets present an opportunity to enhance this key townscape area. Significant enhancement would be achieved through a programme of fabric repair. There is also an opportunity to enhance further through appropriate fascia and shopfront replacement. Archive images provide precedents for previous shopfront treatments.



Archive image of Princes Street looking west towards cross road intersection with Sinclair Street. The buildings of 43 and 45 can be seen with their original arrangement.

11.5 5-7 EAST CLYDE STREET

The building is comprised of two storeys of residential accommodation over a fully commercial ground floor. The residential accommodation (4Nr flatted properties) are contained to the first and second floor level and are accessed from a pencheck stair to the rear of the building. The building is subject to a Dangerous Buildings Notice which came into effect on 21st April 2016, reference number 16/00029/DS. The noted reasons for serving that notice are as follows:

- *First floor Stonework at junction of front elevation and east gable in dangerous condition.*
- *Rear raised attached ancillary block in dangerous condition.*
- *Pencheck stair in dangerous condition (temporary propping installed).*

The building was determined to be an imminent danger to public safety. The general fabric of the building is in very poor condition and the building now requires a very high degree of urgent intervention to restore the building to safe use and lift the Dangerous Buildings Notice which remains in force. Further to any urgent repair works, a programme of immediate / recommended fabric repairs will be required to bring the building into a habitable condition. Without the stewardship of repair and maintenance, the building will no doubt continue to deteriorate, albeit under periodic review by Argyll and Bute Council to mitigate any future risk to the public.

The mixed tenure aspect (commercial and residential) adds a level of complexity which is prohibitive to the owners independently undertaking significant repair works. Without intervention, further dilapidation will be likely and the site will be at risk of full demolition in the longer term.



5-7 East Clyde Street. A dangerous building notice has been issued on the building. Without a comprehensive fabric repair programme the building is in risk of full demolition in the future.

11.6 MAINTENANCE

Crucial to the preservation and enhancement of character and appearance is regular maintenance. Significant and costly repairs can be avoided by systematic annual inspections and dealing with small issues quickly. Early action “stitch in time” repair is far more beneficial in the long term.

Argyll and Bute Council’s Historic Environment web page on Maintaining a Historic Building provides a resource of information:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/maintaining-historic-building>

The on-line resource Under One Roof provides impartial advice on repairs and maintenance for flat owners in Scotland:

<http://www.underoneroof.scot>

The maintenance requirement of buildings is very much dictated by Helensburgh’s coastal location. Building fabric is continually exposed to severe weather conditions. Increased rainwater collection can mean that some original rainwater systems can be undersized which means they very quickly reach capacity. This can result in the discharge of rainwater at wall head level can quickly lead to significant problems (timber decay and fabric deterioration through moisture ingress).

It is also important to recognise that buildings are more energy efficient when they are kept well maintained. Defects can cause the building fabric to become wet. In this circumstance the building will not only feel colder but will also have a reduced thermal performance, contributing to heat loss and increased energy costs.

Guidance on improving the energy efficiency of traditional buildings is provided in Historic Environment Scotland's Short Guide 1 – Fabric Improvements for Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings:

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=179c1909-3679-4486-9583-a59100fa98c1>

As the majority of building types are tenemental there is an opportunity for engagement with property factors active within Helensburgh. The overarching aim would be the enhanced management of buildings in multiple ownership with focus on cyclical maintenance, inspection and appropriate repair methodologies.

11.7 PUBLIC REALM

There are also a number of public realm / open space related enhancements that can be considered:

Helensburgh town centre contains a number of significant pends that provide access to the rear courts of the blocks. These are often overlooked and as the ownership of these is often undefined can be often forgotten and suffer from lack of regular maintenance. The pends contribute to the character of the streetscape and provide an opportunity to enhance the views into the rear court. Their improved public realm can also aid pedestrian movement and perception of these areas.



Pend to West Princes Street as part of bungalow row of shops. The rear courts are visible from the street and their appearance directly affects the character of the town centre. Consideration should be given to how these are used.



View from within the West Princes Street pend towards rear court. This pend contains cobbles and remnants of an earlier road network which could be conserved and enhanced. The overall perception of the pend could be enhanced encouraging positive development of the internal courts.

The back court accessed from the West Princes Street pend is currently closed off with Heras fencing. The space appears not to be in active use and offers a poor level of amenity. There is an ad hoc arrangement of refuse bins and a partially filled single skip with further Heras fencing separating adjoining areas. There is an opportunity to improve the visual context of the court yard with the obvious enhancement of the view offered from the

street. The management of the space and the potential opportunity for active use should also be considered.



View of back court area looking north. Poor level of amenity and lack of any active management.



Ad hoc Heras fencing separating adjoining areas.

12. IMPLEMENTATION

The Area Property Action Group (APAG), providing a collaborative Council-wide approach should continue to liaise on matters relating to the management of the Conservation Area. The group allows the department the opportunity to share information on the services, landowner details, financial assistance and statutory powers they use. The group comprises of representatives from

planning, building standards, environmental health, Council Tax and housing improvement officers.

The use of statutory powers, including enforcement will be considered and used as appropriate.

Public awareness of the Helensburgh Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be strengthened to ensure understanding of the importance of the town's built heritage.

The Management Plan to be made accessible on the Council's web site to encourage public 'ownership' of the document with more likelihood of action and engagement.

Implementation will also rely on the continued involvement of key local stakeholders.

13. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The conservation area will be monitored and reviewed through the following processes:

Photographic surveys: A detailed photographic survey of all buildings and open spaces within the proposed conservation area has been carried out as part of the appraisal process. This 2018 record will form the basis for monitoring further change.

Observation: Officers from the Local Development Management Team will visit the conservation area on a regular basis.

Monitoring indicators: The implementation and impact of the management strategy will be reviewed against the following indicators:

- Progress in the prevention of inappropriate small-scale change and progression to good maintenance and adoption of traditional repair techniques.
- Progression and implementation of proposed enhancement opportunities.
- The design quality of new development.

The Conservation Area Appraisal and area boundary will be reviewed cyclically with appropriate updating and revision as required.

14. FURTHER GUIDANCE and USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

FOR GUIDANCE ON PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A PLANNING APPLICATION

Contact:

Argyll and Bute Council

1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD

Tel: 01546 605518

Argyll and Bute Council – Make a Planning Application

<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/make-planning-application>

Argyll and Bute Council – Planning Application Guidance

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-application-guidance>

FOR GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Argyll and Bute Council

Our Historic Environment

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/our-historic-environment>

Conservation Areas

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/conservation-areas>

Buildings at Risk

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/buildings-risk>

Policy and Guidance

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/policy-and-guidance>

Historic Environment Strategy

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/hist_env_strat_combined.pdf

Local Development Plan

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/written_statement_0.pdf

Supplementary Guidance

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/supplementary_guidance_adopted_march_2016_b.pdf

Sustainable Design Guides

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/design-guides>

Listed Buildings

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/listed-buildings>

FOR INFORMATION ON CONSERVATION, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

Historic Environment Scotland

Inform Guides – A series of guides providing detailed advice on conservation, repair and maintenance of traditional building elements and materials

https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/?publication_type=36

Short Guide 9: Maintaining Your Home - A Guide for Homeowners

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=9b3ca2e8-afcc-42ba-92c3-a59100fde12b>

Sash and Case Windows: A Short Guide for Homeowners

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=9ea41caf-aa32-4827-ba08-a59100fea1a3>

Technical Conservation Knowledge Base

<http://conservation.historic-scotland.gov.uk/>

FOR INFORMATION ON FUNDING

Argyll and Bute Council - Funding

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/funding-and-links>

Historic Environment Scotland - Grants and Funding

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/grants-and-funding/>

FOR GUIDANCE ON MANAGING CHANGE IN THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic Environment Scotland

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Guidance Notes

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/managing-change-in-the-historic-environment-guidance-notes/>

14. BIBLIOGRAPHY

North Clyde Estuary – An Illustrated Architectural Guide. Frank Arneil Walker with Fiona Sinclair. Published by Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.

An Appraisal of the Conservation Areas in Helensburgh 2008. Helensburgh Conservation Areas Group (HCAG), Argyll and Bute Council, Helensburgh Community Council.



HELENSBURGH TOWN CENTRE
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL
and CONSERVATION STATEMENT

