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Guide to the conservation of historic buildings

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Foreword to BS 7913

The IHBC is delighted to join in partnership with the British Standards Institute (BSI) in the production of this co-branded manual of BS 7913. Its publication widens access to this conservation standard, particularly for IHBC members and their colleagues, and marks the IHBC's successful promotion of cross-sector conservation standards.

BS 7913 helps guide practitioners as they integrate understanding, management and change in a unified process of effective conservation. As such it serves as an accessible standard of good practice for works to older, traditional or valued buildings, settings and, as appropriate, places, all regardless of levels of formal designation, controls or regulation.

Similarly, this standard is for non-specialist users as well as specialist conservation practitioners. Its widespread recognition both as a British Standard and as a practitioner's manual is an especially important consideration today, especially as we see reductions in planning guidance.

Finally, this publication rounds off the IHBC's more recent successful promotion of conservation standards. Following the joint development of a National Occupational Standard (NOS) for conservation in 2012, and linked vocational qualifications in 2013, this joint publication with the BSI completes the infrastructure needed to establish built and historic environment conservation practice as a distinct and universally recognisable specialist discipline.

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For more information on the IHBC see www.ihbc.org.uk



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Summary of pages

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The consultation should involve regular engagement with the relevant parties from an early time, through meetings and publicity in the local press and the internet.

5.6.3 Starting the project

The project should start with an initial scoping assessment by competent persons. This is a desk-based assessment using historic environment records and other resources to identify archaeological sites, designated heritage assets, historic buildings and other available data held nationally or locally.

The scoping assessment should produce an understanding the context of the area. It could, for example identify a mediaeval core with 17th and 18th century alterations. Larger centres tend to see distinct additions of later periods from the 18th to the 20th century, while in smaller centres the 18th and 19th centuries are likely to be represented by more limited additions and changes, alterations and amalgamations of plots.

5.6.4 Site-based work

Site workers should be provided with any equipment and resources needed and they should undertake research to ensure their survey is well informed.

The fieldwork should aim to identify different character areas within the wider area, and analyse these in terms of the individual units, and their sequence of planning and development.

It should:

- a) establish dates of construction and alteration for buildings and other components of the landscape;
- b) identify the uses of buildings, past and present;
- c) identify the development of building types through their forms, typologies and construction methods;
- d) understand the social make-up of the area and how this has changed dynamically over time. Household size, structure and occupations can help in this analysis; and
- e) assess the condition of the buildings and the other components of the area.

5.6.5 Evaluation

The magnitude of impact of change should be assessed in relation to the significance and value of the historic building. The magnitude of impact can range from a neutral impact where the value is low or negligible and there is no change, to very large where the value is very high and the impact is major.

Figure 2 shows an example of how magnitude of impact can be plotted against value. Other similar matrices can also be used.

Figure 2 – Magnitude of impact plotted against value

VALUE	Very High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/ Very Large	Very Large
	High	Neutral	Slight	Slight/ Moderate	Moderate/ Large	Large/ Very Large
	Medium	Neutral	Neutral/ Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate/ Large
	Low	Neutral	Neutral/ Slight	Neutral/ Slight	Slight	Slight/ Moderate
	Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral/ Slight	Neutral/ Slight	Slight
		No change	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT						

5.6.6 Outputs

Area based assessments should take the form of a written report and map-based and graphic presentations. Geographical information systems (GIS) can aid the production of graphic information, which might include:

- a) a map showing the area in its wider setting (e.g. in a larger settlement, or in the context of a rural landscape hinterland);
- b) a map that demonstrates the area's historical development and identifies places or buildings with particular historical associations;
- c) a map illustrating current uses, e.g. related to different historic building types (residential, commercial, industrial);
- d) a townscape analysis map showing, spatial issues, e.g. important views into and out of the conservation area, landmarks, and open or green spaces; or temporal issues, such as the extent to which pre-urban landscape features (e.g. the lines of former field boundaries) survive in the current townscape; and
- e) a map showing designated and non-designated historic building. Locally this might include;
 - 1) listed buildings and other buildings and spaces which contribute to the character of the area;
 - 2) photographic images or drawings of buildings and characteristic local details.