

YOUR HISTORIC PLACE

A LENS FOR THE PLACE STANDARD TOOL

PILOT VERSION



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA



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OVERVIEW

The Your Historic Place lens is designed to be used with the Place Standard Tool.

It sparks and supports conversations to explore the connections between people, place, and our historic environment.

It will help you to think about your area's buildings, places, and spaces. How do the historic elements of your area shape the place it is today? And how can they help it be a successful place for the future?

The Your Historic Place lens uses the same themes as the Place Standard Tool. The lens introduces each theme with a short exploration of its connections to the historic environment. It then gives additional conversation prompts. These can be used to inspire discussion and help participants think about their historic place.

The core Place Standard tool can be found at www.placestandard.scot

About this pilot version

This is a pilot version of the Your Historic Place lens. It has been developed by Historic Environment Scotland in conjunction with the Place Standard Team.

It follows the successful launch of other Place Standard Tool lenses which focus on climate change and air quality.

We welcome use of this pilot lens in place-making activities across Scotland.

All we ask is that you let us know how you used it and what you thought of it. Your feedback will help us refine and develop the lens.



INTRODUCTION

Is my place historic?

Yes!

Every place has a history, and that history explains how a place has evolved into what it is today. We can see this in our places' historic environment. The historic environment is our surroundings as they have been shaped, used and valued by people in the past, and continue to be today. It connects people with place, and with traditions, stories and memories linked to those places.

The historic environment can take the form of a stone circle, a prehistoric fort, a medieval castle, a public park, a stately home, a row of cottages, a townscape or a landscape.

It could be a factory, mill, battlefield or shop. It might be a street name or some cobblestones, a postbox or a boundary hedge.

It can be big or small, eye-catching or commonplace. It can be something really well known, that people come to visit from far and wide, or something that only local people know of.

The historic environment isn't limited to stones, bricks and mortar. It's a combination of things we can touch and those we can't. A building can often impress with its features alone. But its fabric and purpose also tell us of the lives played out within its walls. Then there are the links between places and historical people and events, and with art, literature, language and culture.

Why does it matter?

The historic environment shapes our identity. It is central to our everyday lives and our sense of place, identity and wellbeing.

It tells us about the past, the present – and even points the way to the future.

Understanding how the historic environment shapes a place and the way it is used and experienced is vital to developing an understanding of the place itself. It can help us all to make better decisions about the places where we live, work, visit and play.



Where can I find more information and support?

There are lots of great resources out there to help you learn more about the history of your place, and the role of the historic environment in successful places. Here's a few to get you started:

If you want to find out more about how to explore, share and celebrate your heritage, you could begin with Historic Environment Scotland's [Talking about Heritage](#) guides. You could also take a look at the Historic Environment Scotland's [Community Advice Hub](#) which contains a wide range of information, resources and advice. This includes information about [Scotland's Community Heritage Conversations](#), an online monthly event series bringing together volunteers, community groups and heritage professionals. The Conversations aim to provide an engaging and approachable forum for sharing experiences and opportunities, discussing emerging policy and practice, and supporting one another through new and innovative solutions.

[Canmore](#) contains more than 320,000 records and 1.3 million catalogue entries for archaeological sites, buildings, industry and maritime heritage across Scotland. Compiled and managed by Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore contains information and collections from all its survey and recording work, as well as from a wide range of other organisations, communities and individuals who are helping to enhance this national resource.

[Pastmap](#) lets you view information about the archaeology, architecture and landscapes of Scotland on one single map. It is managed by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) along with partners from local government and archaeological curators, and holds data from a growing number of other sources.



ADDITIONAL PROMPTS

Moving Around

Historic routes influence the way we move around a place.

The history of a place will have affected the way that today's routes have developed and changed over time.

The reuse of older infrastructure, such as railway lines and canal paths, can also provide walking, wheeling and cycling routes.

- Do you think there are routes and paths that have particular significance to your place?
- Are there old railway lines or canal paths that have been reused to create enjoyable places to walk, wheel and cycle? Is there potential to reuse or improve more routes like these?
- Are your place's historic streets, paths, and lanes accessible to use? Does using them make journeys more enjoyable?
- If older routes are currently under used or unused for walking, wheeling, or cycling, would using them more be a good thing? What would need to change to make this happen?

Public Transport

The historic features of a place may influence public transport routes and infrastructure.

Public transport facilities are often historic buildings and structures.

- Does public transport make it easy to visit the historic places and spaces in your area for recreation and education?
- Is public transport infrastructure (e.g., station buildings, signage, street furniture) an important part of the character and heritage of your town? Does it help to create a sense of arrival and place?
- Are the historic public transport facilities in your place fit for purpose and accessible?



Traffic and parking

The historic characteristics of a place (for example, road surfaces and widths, routes, and street planning) are likely to influence traffic and parking behaviours and management.

Equally, these behaviours and management may affect the historic environment of a place, for example through the visual effects of signage, or physical changes to accommodate parking.

- Do traffic and parking arrangements affect your ability to enjoy the historic features of your place?
- Do the historic features of your place cause any issues with traffic and parking?
- Does infrastructure that's associated with traffic and parking (e.g. barriers, bollards, signage) work well with the older features of your place?
- Are historic features of your place under pressure from changes to accommodate car use (e.g. conversion of front gardens to parking spaces)?

Streets and Spaces

The development of our existing streets and spaces has been influenced by the history of our places.

Historic buildings, streets, open spaces, views and boundaries can provide the framework which defines our present-day streetscapes and spaces.

- Are there memorable buildings, structures and spaces which help people to find their way round?
- Do the older features or building styles of your place make it distinctive?
- Is there public art (for example sculpture, statues, murals, graffiti) that give your place character?
- Could more be done to help the older buildings, streets, and public spaces to contribute to your place's attractiveness?
- Could historic buildings and spaces influence better design for any future new development in your place?

Natural Space

The character of natural spaces is the result of a range of natural processes and human activity over many generations.

Some natural spaces are designated as Inventory gardens and designed landscapes because of their national importance. Others are undesignated but may have historic features or interest. These might be ‘natural’, such as old woodland, tree avenues, hedges, ponds or planting schemes. Or they may be ‘built’, such as walls, greenhouses, fences, seats, or hard landscaping features.

- How is your experience of your natural spaces affected by their historic features (natural and built) and previous uses?
- Which parts of your natural spaces feel important to the character of your place and community?
- Is the accessibility, quality and amenity of your place’s natural spaces influenced by their history?
- Do historic buildings, structures and spaces form a habitat or shelter for nature (e.g. for nesting, roosting, feeding or hunting). Do they support biodiversity?

Play and Recreation

Historic places and spaces can provide opportunities for formal and informal play and recreation.

Places that have a history of being used for play and recreation often have cultural significance as part of community heritage and memories.

- Are there older buildings, structures or spaces (e.g. squares, parks, gardens, the grounds of historic buildings) in your place that offer opportunity for play and recreation? Could these opportunities be created or improved?
- Are there museums, historic sites or historic attractions that can be visited in your place? Are they accessible and affordable?



Facilities and services

Many civic and community facilities and amenities are historic or traditional building or spaces. They may have been purpose-built, or adapted for that use.

- Are local services and support located in older buildings or spaces? If so, are they fit for purpose, accessible and well looked after?
- Are there opportunities to increase or enhance the role that older buildings and spaces play in providing local services and support? Could vacant or underused old buildings be reused to respond to local needs?
- What can a new place learn from adjacent established places about successful, easily accessed local support and services?

Work and local economy

Heritage tourism and the repair and maintenance of historic and traditional structures can make a significant contribution to local employment, skills development, and economy.

- Does the historic environment of your place provide or support local jobs? Are there opportunities to increase this?
- Are there opportunities to develop skills by volunteering at historic places and spaces nearby?
- Are there local opportunities to train and develop traditional skills to repair and maintain older buildings and structures in your place?

Housing and community

Around one fifth of Scotland's homes were built over 100 years ago. Many newer areas of housing are related to an older core settlement. Areas of older housing are often distinctive and contribute to community identity.

- Are there areas of housing that help tell the story of the history and development of your place and its communities?
- Are existing areas of housing connected with community identities?
- Could the older housing in your place or nearby places influence the development of successful and distinctive new housing?
- How well do newer areas of housing connect and interact with older established areas?



Social Interaction

Many of the spaces and structures which give opportunities for social contact are historic (for example public squares and parks, and buildings such as halls, social clubs, pubs, shops, or churches). Often, they can be physical reminders of community memories and traditions.

- Are there enough places to sit, so that people can meet, rest, and enjoy the historic spaces in your place? Do the seats, benches and other social street furniture reflect the character of your place?
- Are there historic places where people like to gather or spend time with each other? Have those places been used like this over many years? Are there any limitations to accessing these places?
- Are there favourite or well-known places to meet (for example, by a particular statue, building or shop)?
- Are there historic places and spaces that are physical reminders of your communities' traditions of gathering, meeting, and spending time together?

Identity and belonging

A place's historic environment tells its story, and the story of its communities, past and present. This is key to defining a place's identity. It also affects how people feel about a place, including senses of belonging and connection.

- How do you feel about the history of your place? Do you feel connected to it?
- Are there buildings, structures and spaces or views that hold memories or are significant for you? Are they connected with local traditions, stories, or community events (past or present)?
- Do you think that there are untold stories about the history of buildings, structures, and spaces in your place?
- Are there any parts of your place that create uncomfortable or negative feelings for you or others, because of their history?



Feeling safe

Past uses and events can affect present-day feelings of safety in a place.

The characteristics of older areas of a place will influence whether people feel safe and comfortable there.

- Do you feel safe in the older areas of your place?
- Are there places where you feel less safe because of the condition of older building and spaces. Does the way they are used (or lack of use) affect your feelings of safety?
- Do past uses and associations connected to your place affect how safe and comfortable you feel there?

Care and maintenance

The condition of historic buildings and spaces will influence views on whether they are valued, and their contribution to place and community.

Care and maintenance are essential to the green, sustainable future of a place.

- Are your place's older buildings, structures and spaces well looked after?
- Are there opportunities to improve the maintenance of underused, unused, or derelict buildings or spaces? Could a long new term or temporary use be found for them?
- Do you notice the effects of climate change on older buildings, structures, and spaces? Do you think more can be done to adapt them to deal with climate change?
- Is it easy to find local tradespeople with the right skills to repair and maintain older buildings in your place?

Influence and Sense of Control

Being able to take action to manage a place's historic environment, and to be involved in decision making about its future can contribute to a sense of control, influence, and connection.

- Do you feel able to influence decisions about what happens to the older parts of your place? Do discussions about this feel transparent and open to all?
- Do you feel that community knowledge on the history of your place is recognised and valued by decision makers?
- Are there ways to recognise and celebrate the heritage of your place?
- Do you feel confident that different views on the heritage of your place can be voiced and listened to?