



**Strategic Plan  
2007 to 2010**



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## 1. Introduction

Aberdeen is rich with high quality architecture, has a compact and well-preserved core, and in Union Street, one of the most impressive planned C19th streets in Scotland. The Green and surrounding area contain remnants of medieval street pattern and the impressive medieval Kirk of St Nicholas. Ferryhill and Aberdeen's West End contain significant quantities of high quality historic residential tenements, terraces and villas. Old Aberdeen is home to medieval St Machar's Cathedral and King's College and Cottown of Balgownie next to the River Don and has the ambience of a village within a City. Footdee on the coast is a beautiful, intimate former fishing village set out by John Smith. To the south of the Dee, Torry Battery and Stevenson's lighthouse have protected and aided navigation into Aberdeen's important harbour. Aberdeen is a truly diverse city unified by its famous granite build.

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust was established in 2004 through a partnership between Aberdeen City Council and Scottish Ministers. A Company limited by guarantee, the Trust is an independent organisation with charitable status and represents a number of key organisations across the city.

## 2. Purpose of the Plan

This document sets out the areas of work that the Trust intends to tackle from April 2007 to March 2010 in order to make progress towards achieving the Trust's objectives and purposes. Individual annual action plans will be produced that programme activities and timescales.

## 3. Monitoring of the Plan

The nature of the Trust's activities means that flexibility must be built into the programme to allow the Trust to make best use of funding and joint working opportunities as they arise. Consequently the Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, amended and brought up to date in conjunction with the production of the annual action plan.

## 4. Review of the Plan

The plan will undergo a fundamental review in March 2009 taking account of emerging future funding issues at that time.

## 5. Risks

In preparing the plan a number of strategic risks have been identified. In addition to those risks indicated under each theme, some risks are cross cutting. The Trust is currently reliant on core funding from Scottish Ministers and Aberdeen City Council. If funding were to be withdrawn then this would have a fundamental impact on all of the Trust's activities.

## 6. Vision

The Trust's vision for Aberdeen's historic environment is that it will be:

- more widely understood and celebrated,
- properly maintained and conserved,
- used and enjoyed by all parts of the community,
- a catalyst for positive environmental, cultural, economic and social change

The Trust is already engaged in a range of activities that are starting to achieve this vision. However work will continue over the next two to three years to bring about significant progress.

## 7. Strategic Objectives

In order to achieve its vision Aberdeen City Heritage Trust aims to:

1. safeguard and enhance the quality and condition of Aberdeen's historic environment;
2. promote wider understanding, enjoyment and appreciation of Aberdeen's historic environment;
3. safeguard and enhance Aberdeen's unique identity;
4. make Aberdeen's historic areas more attractive places to live, visit and invest in;
5. work with others to amplify the impact of wider initiatives to improve Aberdeen; and
6. be open, transparent, effective and efficient in its work.



East side of  
Marischal Street

## 7.1 Safeguarding and enhancing

- Maintain a system of grants during 2007-10 and use them to invest up to £230K in Aberdeen's historic environment;
- Attract additional investment in Aberdeen's historic environment including support of The Green Townscape Heritage Initiative;
- Promote ongoing care and maintenance of Aberdeen's historic buildings, townscapes and archaeological sites; and
- Investigate the availability of contractors for carrying out repairs to historic buildings and opportunities for traditional craft skills training.

### Context

Aberdeen's historic built environment is a major heritage asset, which should be protected and enhanced. Aberdeen City Heritage Trust established a Historic Building Grant Scheme in April 2005 that encourages repairs to the physical environment. Priority areas were established by the Trust with a focus on Guild Street and the Green and the periphery of the city's retail core at the west end of Union Street and King Street that are subject to higher turnover in use and occupation. Legislative change will shortly remove "outstanding" designation allowing consideration of wider use of Executive funding in all conservation areas in the city. Consideration will be given to whether there is a need to re-prioritise grants assistance early in the life of this plan.

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust intends to continue its Historic Building Grant Scheme until 2010 subject to funding being available from core funders, making around £230K available per annum. Additional funding may also become available from Heritage Lottery Fund and the Scottish Executive to be targeted at the Green and surrounding streets. The Trust needs to investigate commercial sponsorship and forms of charitable giving that might provide useful project related and revenue income.

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust was one of a number of organisations that requested the Castlehill Ward be reviewed by Historic Scotland. This work is nearing completion with a number of proposed new listings, upgrading and down-gradings and removals from the statutory lists. The Trust will continue to lobby Historic Scotland and other agencies to ensure that the city's historic environment is safeguarded.

Grant-aided work can be carried out effectively only where sufficient skills exist. Recent studies carried out across Scotland by Construction Skills, Historic Scotland and the National Heritage Training Group have highlighted the shortage of skilled craftspeople. The Trust will investigate the establishment of a scholarship or grant support for students/ apprentices in this field and work with local education providers to bring this about.

### Key Strategic Risks

- Loss of core funding of Trust's grant-giving function
- Failure to attract further funding into the city
- Lack of or loss of engagement with the public

## 7.2 Promote wider understanding, enjoyment and appreciation

- Support a Doors Open Day in conjunction with the Doors Open Day Committee;
- Maintain a web-site and publish information about Aberdeen's historic built environment and cultural heritage;
- Inspire learning through promoting contact with and interpretation of Aberdeen's historic environment and cultural heritage; and
- Raise the profile and increase the understanding of Aberdeen's historic environment through the media.
- Complete a photographic record of buildings in Conservation Areas

### Context

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust has supported Doors Open Days in the city in September of 2005 and 2006. A financial contribution and Project Officer time has been given in the run up to the event which successfully engages the public and allows them access to many historic buildings. In 2006 there was a greater focus on the young audience and it is hoped that Trust involvement in this area will continue.

National Maintenance week in November 2006 saw the Trust involved in setting up a Homeowners training seminar in conjunction with Historic Scotland, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Property Repair Initiative. The event attracted over 90 delegates who benefited from the expert instruction of the Scottish Lime Centre Trust, local specialist contractors and housing officers. The Trust will investigate holding similar events on an annual basis.

The Trust website continues to be an attractive front for the organisation and contains a variety of useful information about listed buildings and conservation areas and the purposes and remit of the Trust. The website will be developed to allow web-based pre-applications to be lodged in 2007.

The Trust continues to have a good profile in the media. Amongst other media coverage, in 2006 the local Independent newspaper carried a wrap around highlighting the work of the Trust and one of its first major projects which was picked up by The Scotsman. The Press and Journal and Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce's bulletin covered the Trust in January 2007. Regular media coverage is important to retain the profile of the Trust and will be pursued into this period of the Trust's life.

The Trust is committed to establishing an annual lecture, which will help promote its activities and raise its profile.

The Trust supported students on Aberdeen City's 13-16 Trades Programme to attend the Scottish Lime Centre Trust for training in the use of traditional materials and the students visited one of the Trust's live projects in 2006.

Investigations into the provision of primary age curriculum material continues. This important work will ensure that early messages about the importance of history and buildings are conveyed.

The Trust will develop suitable curriculum material over the period of the plan, working in conjunction with the Aberdeen Environmental Education Centre and education officers of Historic Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland.

During 2005/06 the Trust engaged The Robert Gordon University to undertake a photographic record of “outstanding” conservation areas. With the impending removal of this designation, the Trust will investigate the creation of a photographic record of all remaining conservation areas over the period of the plan with a view to making this available to academic researchers and the public. This will be an invaluable resource as a reference to chart progress.

### Key Strategic Risks

- Lack of interest in Doors Open Day and loss of funding.
- Maintaining the website up-to-date
- Negative profile or problems with media



Traditional joinery  
detailing,  
West End

## 7.3 Safeguard and enhance uniqueness

- Monitor strategic plans, master plans and other policy documents that have a bearing on the character of historic parts of the city.

### Context

Aberdeen is world renowned as the “Granite City” due to the predominance of granite build and strong world-wide export markets in the nineteenth century. Much of Aberdeen’s distinctiveness is derived from its granite, which lends a binding uniformity to buildings of different styles and periods. Although in excess of 300 buildings suffered bombing damage during World War 2, the quality of the city centre has remained largely intact.

The Aberdeen City Heritage Trust does not comment on Planning proposals as a matter of course, but may comment on strategic developments in the city centre which may have a bearing on the city’s distinctive character.

### Key Strategic Risks

- Insufficient human resources to allow monitoring of applications

## 7.4 Make Aberdeen’s historic areas more attractive to live, visit and invest in

- Identify potential environmental enhancement areas that contribute to the marketability of the city and wider area.
- Maintain a system of historic environment grants during 2007-10 and use them to invest up to £230K in Aberdeen’s historic environment including street surfaces, railings and general enhancement.

### Context

Aberdeen’s historic areas tend to correlate to areas of high income and prices of properties which in the main are already well tended. There are, however, still opportunities for enhancing and promoting these areas further through physical works. Bon Accord and Golden Squares are high-quality visual environments, but have lost their charm through the presence of parking and the disintegration of uniformity in railings and building frontages. These architectural jewels need to be polished and cherished. By working in partnership with other organisations such as Visit Scotland the Trust can ensure that the quality of the historic environment is highlighted in tourism campaigns.

### Key Strategic Risks

- Limited budget for enhancement may limit impact of schemes

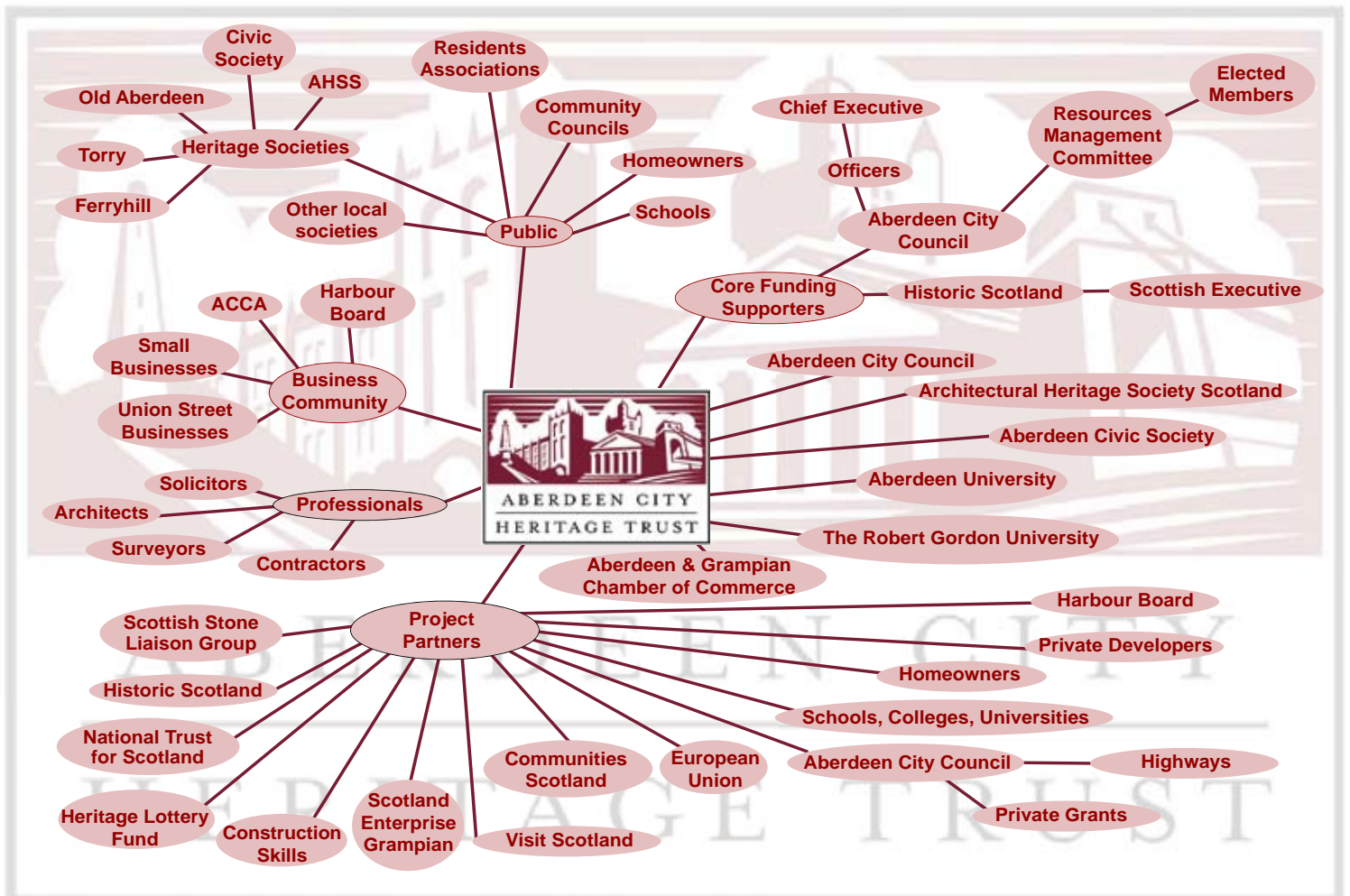
## 7.5 Amplify the impact of wider initiatives to improve the City

- working with Aberdeen City Council and its associated organisations to help deliver its corporate objectives and City Vision, including the policies and proposals set out in the Aberdeen Local Plan where these serve to fulfil the Trust's objects;
- promoting the role of the heritage conservation in economic and community regeneration;
- promoting opportunities for education and training;
- promoting opportunities for cultural tourism;
- promoting enhancement of the public realm.
- co-ordinating the efforts of and building the capacity of Aberdeen's voluntary heritage organisations;

### Context

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust needs to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations across the city to achieve its purposes. Maintaining communications and making sure opportunities for joint working are explored is an important part of the Trust work if it is to influence outcomes and ensure that its limited funding is used to best effect.

Range of potential partners and funders



Since its inception in 2004 the Trust has given several presentations to core funders, community groups, local heritage societies and residents associations. Through Homeowners training the property-owning public, landlords and professionals were reached. As well as raising the profile of the Trust, these have been important in explaining the types of assistance it may be able to give towards the repair of historic buildings and nourishing local interest in the city's heritage.

Joint working with Aberdeen City Council and Scottish Enterprise Grampian has delivered a successful Stage 1 Bid for Heritage Lottery Funding in 2007 and the Trust would anticipate continuing working with these key organisations to deliver improvements to historic areas in the heart of the city where these meet the Trust's objectives.

### Key Strategic Risks

- Loss of political support for the activities of the Trust following elections
- Lack of human resources to develop projects

## 7.6 To be open, transparent, effective and efficient in its work

- agree a three-year strategic plan, with annual action plans with its funding partners;
- publish annual reports and accounts;
- maintain a strong corporate identity
- continue to provide advice and support to the general public on issues relating to the historic built environment;

As a limited company and Scottish charity Aberdeen City Heritage Trust is committed to providing the city with the best possible service within its resources.

## 8 Action Plan

On the basis of Strategic Objectives an Action Plan for 2007/08 has been produced in the form of a Gantt chart showing both core operational activities of the Trust and additional discreet Projects.

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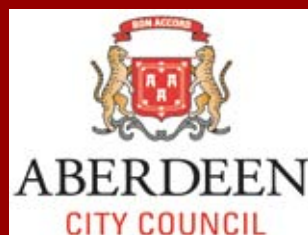
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