

IHBC COMPETENCES

PROFESSIONAL AREA OF COMPETENCE

1. PHILOSOPHY

Knowledge and understanding of conservation theory and the social, cultural, political, aesthetic, economic and environmental values that underpin current conservation policy and practice.

Conservation philosophy is dynamic and evolving, reflecting changing circumstances and values in wider society. For example, climate change and changes in live/work patterns have implications for conservation.

Understanding of conservation philosophy is essential. This requires being conversant with the history of the conservation movement and national and international principles and philosophies for conservation, including charters, standards and guidelines of ICOMOS, BSI, SPAB and the UK's national heritage societies and statutory heritage bodies. There should be an awareness of conservation theories, principles and concepts such as reversibility, conservative repair, minimum intervention, significance and evidence-based reinstatement (in contrast to conjectural reinstatement).

It is also necessary to understand how conservation philosophy informs conservation practice, including the tensions that sometimes exist between philosophy and practice, and the compromises that this can involve. An awareness of the wider social, economic and environmental context against which informed and authoritative conservation judgements and decisions are made is essential.

2. PRACTICE

Knowledge and understanding of conservation practice and making of informed and authoritative conservation judgements, including knowledge of its processes and protocols and the ability to interact effectively with all bodies and individuals who have a significant role to play in the field.

Practice involves making informed and authoritative conservation judgments, including taking into account conservation philosophies and the wider social, economic, environmental and placemaking context as well as conservation philosophies. It is necessary to understand the various values of heritage and the process of evaluating significance, utility value, socio-economic values, environmental values and others. Crucially, this also includes understanding how historic areas can help



achieve sustainable development and support biodiversity and healthy lifestyles, for example through conserving embodied energy, mixed use, ease of pedestrian movement and green infrastructure, including parks and green spaces.

Practice requires an appreciation of the creative, interactive, problem-solving nature of conservation practice. It is necessary to be able to make informed and balanced judgments which take account of the various values of heritage, budgets, physical and economic context, different legislative frameworks and other considerations. Practice also requires skills in negotiations and sometimes the art of compromise to reconcile different priorities.

There should be familiarity with the roles, responsibilities, activities and collaboration of all bodies and individuals within public, private and voluntary sectors that are engaged in heritage protection, management or project development/delivery either directly or in an advisory capacity.

Practice also involves engaging effectively with groups, organisations and individuals with an interest in the historic environment, including owners, community and amenity groups, elected representatives, clients, applicants, professional advisers and other stakeholders.

The IHBC's [Conservation Professional Practice Principles](#) provides more detail on Philosophy and Practice Competences.

PRACTICAL AREA OF COMPETENCE: EVALUATION

3. HISTORY

Knowledge and understanding of the development of the historic environment including the remains of previous periods and cultures, historic buildings and settlements, work of engineering, parks, gardens and other elements of the historic landscape.

An ability to assess special architectural or historic interest and significance is a key requirement in relation to sites, areas, structures, buildings, townscapes, landscapes, and other aspects of the historic environment. This includes understanding local vernacular buildings, formal architecture (including compositional principles) and the influence of national and international planning and architectural movements. It is also necessary to understand spaces and settings, including townscape, landscape, layout and spatial characteristics, planned or unplanned.

There should be an understanding of visual assessment and archival research. This should translate into an ability to advise on the suitability

of heritage assets for designation, including listing, scheduling, historic parks and gardens registration, conservation area designation or other means of designation and protection.

Such understanding is necessary to assess the impact of development proposals on architectural and historic interest, significance, setting and character or appearance.

4. RESEARCH, RECORDING AND ANALYSIS

Ability to carry out or commission research, recording and analysis of the historic environment, and to maintain records accordingly.

There should be an understanding of the role of research in developing an understanding of historic buildings, including their fabric and settings, and also historic areas, townscapes and places. This includes using primary and secondary sources, documents, archives, on-line material and reports.

There should be knowledge of the use, updating and management of historic environment records.

There should be awareness of how to plan, prepare or execute a programme of recording, or be able to identify the most appropriate bodies or individuals to undertake such work using appropriate techniques. This includes reading and understanding of photographic and graphic representations.

There should also be an understanding of compilation and analysis of heritage evidence for plans and strategies, which can include identifying local heritage assets, their uses, condition, economic context (including viability) and other relevant factors.

PRACTICAL AREA OF COMPETENCE: MANAGEMENT

5. LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Knowledge and understanding of legislation and policy for the conservation of historic environments, their formulation locally and nationally, and awareness of other relevant legislation, policies and guidance.

There should be an understanding of the relationship between international agreements, national legislation and policy, and strategic, local and neighbourhood levels of heritage policy.



An understanding of legislation, policy and guidance – including as applicable for any relevant devolved nation - is required. This includes preparing, administering or advising on applications for heritage consents, planning permission and other statutory consents. It also relates to policy drafting and developing local strategies and projects concerned with the protection and management of the historic environment. Understanding is required of statutory and non-statutory designations, policy planning for heritage and development management, and key concepts such as special architectural or historic interest, setting and economic viability.

There should be an ability to advise varied audiences on legal and policy matters, including politicians, professionals, clients, the public, stakeholders and statutory and non-statutory organisations.

There also needs to be knowledge of other legislation, policy and guidance that affects the historic environment, such as building regulations, environmental health, health and safety, environmental protection and highways.

6. FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

Knowledge and understanding of economic factors in applying heritage legislation and policy, including applications for statutory consents, and for procurement of conservation services for heritage-related projects, including financial and viability assessments, valuation, cost planning and contracts.

An understanding of finance and economics is required in the application of heritage legislation and policy, and in developing and delivering heritage projects and programmes. This includes understanding of the processes through which decisions are made and the factors affecting such decisions, including viability assessment, business planning and valuation. This may involve the commissioning of external assessments by consultants or colleagues.

Familiarity with commercial and contractual aspects of heritage work is also necessary, including common forms of contract, costing of conservation works, VAT and the effective use of resources.

An understanding of finance and economics also underpins heritage-led regeneration of buildings and areas, including awareness of the bodies and stakeholders responsible for developing and delivering schemes. There should be familiarity with relevant conservation grant schemes and other funding sources which can be used for the repair, refurbishment, enhancement and regeneration of historic buildings and areas.

PRACTICAL AREA OF COMPETENCE: INTERVENTION

7. DESIGN AND PRESENTATION

Ability to analyse and evaluate historic contexts and to secure appropriate designs in fabric, buildings, townscape and areas, existing and proposed, and to communicate results in ways accessible to professionals and communities.

Fundamental to heritage professional practice is knowledge and understanding of placemaking, including principles of planning and architectural, landscape and urban design. This is fundamental to the analysis and understanding of character, including spatial characteristics, townscape, the public realm, architecture and building design and layout. Such understanding is important in assessing the suitability of design proposals affecting historic areas, historic buildings and settings.

Design applies at different levels, from constructional details to the location and layout of large urban expansions and all levels in between.

There should be an ability to analyse and communicate design concepts, for example through verbal description, written appraisal or graphic representation.

The implications of climate change need to be understood, including awareness of the sustainable characteristics and health benefits of historic areas developed originally as part of a low carbon economy. This includes awareness of intrinsic sustainable characteristics of historic areas, including mixed use, ease of pedestrian movement and green infrastructure.

There should be an ability to prepare design and character policies, guidance and briefs, which promote high standards of design for places, buildings, townscapes, landscapes and spaces.

The different stages of the design process need to be appreciated, including effective community engagement principles and techniques, to maximise heritage and other benefits through the design process.

8. TECHNOLOGY

Knowledge and understanding of building construction of all periods, the characteristics of structures, the nature and properties of building materials, and appropriate methods of repair and alteration of historic fabric.

Technical knowledge of the construction and materials of historic buildings, structures and places is necessary to be able to advise on

appropriate methods for their repair and maintenance, including advising on specialist repair techniques, the availability of materials and the need for specialist construction skills.

Understanding the physical characteristics of building materials and construction is also necessary for monitoring the condition of buildings, identifying causes of decay, identifying defects and specifying or advising on works for repair, maintenance and enhancement. This is necessary when undertaking visual or more in-depth surveys of building condition, including buildings-at-risk and area-based surveys.

Technical understanding is also necessary when considering the practical implications of new and developing techniques in conservation, building construction, retrofitting or other interventions.

AREAS OF COMPETENCE		COMPETENCES
PROFESSIONAL		1. Philosophy 2. Practice
PRACTICAL	EVALUATION	3. History 4. Research, recording and analysis
	MANAGEMENT	5. Legislation and policy 6. Finance and economics
	INTERVENTION	7. Design and presentation 8. Technology

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