London's Historic Character Thesaurus

LUC

Discovery, Innovation and Science in the Historic Environment

Greater London
London's Historic Character Thesaurus

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SUMMARY

Historic England commissioned the 'London Historic Character Thesaurus' project (Project No. 7929) to provide a coherent and transparent framework of terms for use in recording and analysing character in Greater London. LUC worked on the project between July 2019 and March 2021. The outputs of the LHCT project consist of this project report, The London Historic Character Thesaurus (LHCT) database and The LHCT User Guide. Following completion of the project, the LHCT will be hosted by the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER). Both the structure of the LHCT and the component types were subject to review and approval by key HE stakeholders. This was undertaken through a mixture of project meetings and phone and email communication.

The LHCT database was developed as a relational MS Access database and populated with character types and associated scope notes. The database was configured to provide exports of all LHCT terms in spreadsheet, pdf or text file format to allow users to access it in a format which suited their needs, including for use in GIS applications.

Character types in the LHCT cover both current historic character and aspects of previous character which may remain as an influence on the landscape. They were developed through critical review of pre-existing historic character thesauri and terms previously used in historic landscape characterisations of urban areas in England. Some pre-existing character types were modified slightly whereas others were adopted wholesale into the LHCT. These were supplemented by further character types to cover aspects of historic character present within Greater London which had not been grappled with in any detail by any previous historic characterisation initiatives. These character types were established through the project team's review of Greater London's current character and processes known to have been important in formation of the city, such as government, industry and maritime trade. Evidence for new character types was taken from historic mapping sources, aerial photography, Google Street View imagery and the project team's own experience of work in Greater London, including some targeted walkover survey.

The User Guide consists of an introduction to the LHCT initiative, background to the principles of analysing and recording historic character, examples of use of the LHCT and the full listing of all LHCT character type terms. The final version of the User Guide developed by the project was created following comments from key HE stakeholders, the GLA and Westminster City Council.

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INTRODUCTION

Project background

The London Plan 2021 puts understanding the character of places at the core of shaping change to them. Whilst consideration of character has a long history in urban spatial planning, dating back to the late 1960s,[1] there have been few formal attempts to define what 'character' is in these contexts so its general usage meaning, i.e. *the particular combination of qualities in a place that makes it different from others*, has often been taken as read. Character, then, can be understood as coming from the myriad differences in our environment and the way in which we experience them. What is not always made explicit in discussions of character is that it is inextricably linked to how people have exploited their surroundings in the past and, as such, all character is 'historic character'. This means that discussion and management of character is most effective when its historic dimension, and the way this shapes what we experience in the present, is recognised.

Historic England (HE), and its predecessor body English Heritage, have promoted historic characterisation as a way to holistically understand the historic environment. Owing to the importance of character to the future direction of planning and design in London, HE funded a review of existing local authority characterisation studies within Greater London in 2016 to inform the revised London Plan.[2] This review established that no comprehensive baseline assessment of Greater London's historic character exists. It also demonstrated that, where local authority characterisation studies existed, they varied greatly in scope, content, terminology and consideration of the historic depth of observed character. HE, working in dialogue with the Greater London Assembly (GLA), recognised that a lack of consistent information on historic character would both constrain developing properly informed proposals for development within local authorities and limit the ability to shape change, and understand its effects, at Greater London scale. To respond to this challenge, HE developed a project brief for the creation of a historic characterisation *thesaurus*,[3] the 'London Historic Character Thesaurus' (hereafter 'the LHCT project'), to provide a coherent and transparent framework of terms for use in recording and analysing character.[4]

Work to create the LHCT and associated project outputs was undertaken between July 2019 and March 2021. The outputs of the LHCT project consist of:

- This project report;
- The London Historic Character Thesaurus (LHCT) database; and
- The LHCT User Guide.[5]

This project report details how the LHCT was created and how it corresponds to both existing thesauri on historic character and the terminology used in historic characterisations which border Greater London. The LHCT itself is hosted by HE[6] and the User Guide is available from the hosts and will be made available online. The User Guide consists of an introduction to the LHCT initiative, background to the principles of analysing and recording historic character, examples of use of the LHCT and the full listing of all LHCT character type[7] terms.

CREATING THE LONDON HISTORIC CHARACTER THESAURUS

Overarching principles

The key aim of the LHCT project was to enhance the contribution made by Greater London's historic character to shaping sustainable, well-designed places within its local authorities and overall. The existence and use of the LHCT would achieve this through promoting consistency in future characterisation studies.

There were several key principles underpinning creation of the LHCT:

- Character type terms must be suitable recording the historic character of the whole of Greater London, from the dense urban landscapes of the City of London to more rural fringes at the edges of outer London Boroughs.
- Character type terms were to align with the key historic characterisation principle that all areas possess historic character, regardless of their date of evolution and irrespective of any values attached to them.
- Character type terms must allow for recording of historic character as experienced now, plus the range of previous character types which might be anticipated within Greater London.
- Terms used for previous character were to be compatible with the approaches to recording this in existing characterisation projects.[8]

Whilst the LHCT was not designed with any specific application in mind, it has been designed to be useable in the kinds of scenarios in which urban and metropolitan historic characterisation has, thus far, been deployed.

It was recognised in the brief that the LHCT needed to be deployable in a GIS environment since the majority of local authority characterisations are created using GIS packages.

Method

Development of the LHCT comprised four key stages:

- Project initiation and information gathering.
- Developing the Thesaurus framework.
- Identifying historic character types.
- Preparing the User Guide.

At all stages, the project team were supported by HE's Project Assurance Officer (PAO) and other key HE stakeholders comprising representatives from the Regional Delivery London and South East Team, Data Standards and those with experience of overseeing the development of historic characterisations.

Project initiation and information gathering

An inception meeting was held between the LUC project team, the PAO and key HE stakeholders. Discussions at the inception meeting allowed the project team to develop a deeper understanding of the LHCT project drivers, aspirations for use of the LHCT and the wider data standards that it needed to align with. It also allowed clarification of hosting of the LHCT and the identification of potential example projects (termed 'exemplars' in the project brief) which could demonstrate the use of the LHCT and be included within the User Guide. The only potential example to emerge from inception discussions was the Westminster and Whitehall Urban Archaeological Database, hereafter 'Westminster and Whitehall UAD', which had recently been commissioned by HE and was including characterisation of land-use at various dates, stretching back into prehistory, for its project area.

As part of project initiation, a notification was sent to stakeholders and relevant data holders.[9] This comprised circulation of a briefing note via email explaining LHCT project's function, process and intended outcomes. Its aim was to ensure that stakeholders understood the project and could make any resources, including data, required available in a timely fashion. It also aimed to establish if there was any interest within Greater London local authorities in providing examples of characterisation work using the LHCT for use within the User Guide. None, however, were forthcoming as a result of this initial contact.

Data gathering comprised assembling sources relevant to developing the LHCT. These comprised:

- Historic Characterisation Thesaurus (HCT);[10]
- National Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project Thesaurus;[11]
- National Historic Seascape Characterisation Thesaurus (HSCT);[12]
- London's Local Character and Density Report for Historic England (Allies and Morrison 2016);
- London Borough characterisation studies;[13]
- Metropolitan HLCs;[14]
- County HLCs contiguous with Greater London – East Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey;
- Recent London Borough Conservation Area Appraisals; and
- Ordnance Survey mapping for Greater London.

As London is a port city built around a tidal river network, the HSCT was reviewed as a potential source of appropriate structure and types.

Developing the Thesaurus framework

This stage focused on reviewing the structures and character type terms used in both existing characterisation thesauri and relevant previous characterisation projects (see list above) to establish a structure appropriate for the LHCT.

Review of existing characterisation resources

The structures of the characterisation resources reviewed are summarised in brief below (NB where discussing the most detailed character type available for use in a thesaurus (i.e. the one sitting at the base of the hierarchy), the term 'finest-grained type' is used below).

Historic Characterisation Thesaurus

The HCT contains character types primarily designed for, or derived from, county-level HLCs. These HLCs covered areas largely rural in nature which has heavily influenced the character types present within the HCT.

The HCT has a multi-tier structure of character types and subtypes recorded under 17 'classes' to allow recording of observed historic landscape character. There are 284 character types and subtypes within the HCT. The 'Class' is the top tier in the hierarchy with types and subtypes then arranged hierarchically underneath each Class term. The shallowest hierarchy of a finest-grained type sits at two tiers[15] with the deepest at six tiers.[16] Finest-grained types most commonly though sit at the third or fourth tier. The tiered relationships of the HCT mirror the structure of the Thesaurus of Monument Types (ToMT).[17] The complexity of the ToMT is enabled by its storage within a relational database. In such databases, the positioning of a term needed for recording within the hierarchy does not matter in terms of information display and retrieval. When such a multi-tiered structure is transposed to a GIS environment, the disparity in levels of hierarchy at which the finest-grained type is recorded poses issues, both for data structure and in visualisation.

National Historic Landscape Characterisation

The NHLC Thesaurus (NHLCT) typically uses a two-tier classification. The exception to this is those character types covering field systems, which have a third tier. This is an intermediate tier, referred to as 'Enclosure Type Group', which sits between the top tier (Broad Type) and the lower tier (Character Type). The Enclosure Type Group is used to allow period-based differentiation between groups of character types. The NHLC was entirely designed around a relational database linked to a simple GIS layer which carries and identifiers to tie back detailed records in the database. In terms of symbolisation of character types in GIS, either the Broad Type or Character Type can be used.

Whilst there is general alignment between the Broad Types used in the NHLC and the Classes within the HCT there is some divergence around settlement, cultural topography, fish farming and aquaculture, ornamental landscapes and water.

National Historic Seascape Characterisation Thesaurus

The National Historic Seascape Characterisation Thesaurus (NHSCT) uses a three-tier classification:

- Top tier – Broad Character Type
- Middle tier – Character Type; and
- Lowest tier – Sub-character Type.

Whilst all three tiers commonly record meaningful information (i.e. each tier records a different value to the other) for each thesaurus entry, there are some instances of recording meaningful detail at a single tier or at two tiers.

As with the NHLC Thesaurus, there is some divergence between the Broad Types used in the NHSC and the Classes within the HCT. These largely derived from this thesaurus being designed to operate primarily in the marine and coastal environment.

Metropolitan Historic Landscape Characterisations

The Metropolitan HLCs reviewed all use a two-tier system to classify observed historic landscape character. For the majority of HLCs, the top tier is referred to as 'Broad Type' and the lower tier as 'HLC Type'. Some appear to have been created using bespoke packages which bolt together databases and GIS. Separate research for Historic England reviewing Metropolitan HLCs within the context of urban historic characterisation projects is showing that these systems, when exported either for archiving purposes or to allow external users to work with characterisations can be subject to a 'flattening' and/or loss of information compared to what is visible to those who have access to the bespoke system.[18] This can sometimes have the effect of it being unclear to an external user which data fields are the primary fields used to describe character or to interrogate the phasing of character types, rendering the data harder to use. None uses wholly identical Broad Type terms to the HCT Classes. This is largely as the HCT post-dates the Metropolitan HLCs.

County Historic Landscape Characterisations adjacent to Greater London

It was possible to interrogate the structure of all HLCs adjacent to Greater London. These exclusively use a two-tier system to classify historic landscape character with the top tier often termed 'Broad Type' and the lower tier often 'HLC Type'. Where other names were used for the differing tiers, they were generally clearly distinguishable from one another and their purpose and function in recording character was clear.

Whilst some HLCs used coded values to express values for type terms, all also contained the full written character type term in addition these coded values. This meant that it was relatively straightforward to understand the structure of the HLC in question and both interrogate and symbolise it appropriately. None used wholly identical Broad Type terms to the HCT Classes. Again, this is largely as the HCT post-dates the majority of these HLCs. With the exception of East Berkshire, all used a single Broad Type for settlement-related type terms.

London Characterisations

As detailed in earlier research, local authority-based studies use a variety of approaches to characterisation.[2] These range from taking a purely geographic character area approach (i.e. not character type-based) to a variety of tiered approaches using character type terms. Whilst none took an identical approach, two-tiered classifications were commonest. On closer examination, some of the multi -tiered classifications were actually single or two-tier approaches, using what purport to be type terms from wholly differing tiers at the same level in resulting outputs.[19]

The Allies and Morrison characterisation utilised a true two-tier approach to mapping character (Allies and Morrison, 2016).

Implications for LHCT structure

The review of existing characterisation resources found that none of the thesauri and relevant characterisation projects operated at an identical level of structural complexity. The commonest approach was a true two-tier method, as seen in the HLCs for counties neighbouring Greater London and several of the local authority characterisation studies.

A multi-tiered structure, whereby the finest-grained term used may not sit at a consistent place in the hierarchy, as seen in the HCT, NHLCT and HSCT poses issues when transposed to a GIS environment, both for data structure and in visualisation. This is as GIS attribute tables do not yet commonly function in a relational manner. To allow for recording all finest-grained types in the HCT, for example, six sets of character type recording fields would need to exist even though some entries would need only two of these to be completed to record the finest-grained term, necessitating a choice over how to handle the remaining fields where fewer than six fields need to be completed. These fields could either be left blank, with no attribute recorded in them, or could have the finest-grained type replicated in each subsequent field. The first approach is beneficial in terms of visualisation (see below) but results in 'data bloat' whereby information is recorded that is not strictly necessary, inflating the file size of the dataset. GIS data is commonly visualised by applying a legend to a field, or series of fields, within the dataset's attribute table. This means that the way in which attributes are captured within data fields conditions how they can be visualised. The ability to draw legends from attributes in multiple fields is currently limited in the main GIS packages available, with ArcGIS typically handling a maximum of three fields to create legends and MapInfo generally working from a single field. This limits the ability to readily visualise a character dataset structured at more than three tiers of recorded information. The LHCT needed to be useable in a GIS environment so setting a hierarchy level that existing key GIS packages could handle was a key consideration for drawing up the proposed structure. The optimum solution for any thesaurus designed to facilitate historic characterisation in a GIS environment would be one that uses the lowest practical level of complexity to convey the finest-grained character terms possible.

Proposed LHCT structure

Taking a lead from HLCs adjacent to Greater London and Metropolitan HLCs, a two-tier classification was proposed for the LHCT. The project team considered this approach to be straightforward to apply for end-users (i.e. lowest number of necessary fields in GIS data), would result in easily symbolised outputs, and would allow relatively easy read-across between characterisations created in Greater London using the LHCT to adjacent county HLCs since they could be compared at both top tier and bottom tier level. It was proposed that the top tier of the LHCT classification be referred to as 'Broad Type' and the bottom as 'HLC Type', as in many neighbouring HLCs. The LHCT Broad Type was to equate to the HCT Class with some minor alterations, shown in Table 1 with explanatory notes where alteration was proposed. It was proposed that all Classes currently within the HCT would be incorporated into the working draft LHCT whilst recognising that some, e.g. 'Fisheries and Aquaculture', may not be eventually required since there could prove to be no related character types within Greater London.

Table 1: Proposed LHCT top tier equivalence to HCT Classes

HCT Class name	LHCT Broad Type name	Notes
Civic Amenities	Civic Amenities	
Civic Provision	Civic Provision	
Commerce	Commerce	
Communications & Movement	Communications & Movement	
Cultural Topography	Cultural Topography	
Enclosure	Fields and Agriculture	This change in term name was suggested since not all aspects within this category are truly enclosed (e.g. open field and furlong) and as the content of 'Enclosure' may not be widely understood by a non-specialist audience.
Fisheries and Aquaculture	Fisheries and Aquaculture	
Industry	Industry	
Military	Military	
Orchards and Horticulture	Orchards and Horticulture	
Ornamental	Ornamental	
Recreation and Leisure	Recreation and Leisure	
Rural Settlement	Settlement	The amalgamation of these was suggested as it would enable matching with NHLC and National HSC datasets and with the majority of adjacent county HLCs.
Urban Settlement		
Unimproved Land	Unimproved Land	
Valley Floor and Wetland	Valley Floor and Wetland	
Woodland	Woodland	

The proposed structure was circulated to the PAO and key HE stakeholders for review. A review meeting was subsequently held to discuss feedback on the proposed structure. The consensus of reviewers was that the two-tier structure was unlikely to provide enough nuance to symbolising the kind of variations in historic character likely to be found in Greater London, and a three-tier structure, as generally used by the HSCT, was considered more appropriate. It was also considered that the proposed alterations to the HCT Classes was inappropriate. Agreed comments from the meeting, including the switch in structure from two to three tiers, were taken forward into a revised LHCT structure for adoption by the project.

Adopted LHCT structure

The adopted LHCT structure consists of three tiers of character types. At the highest, and most general, level are 'Broad Types'. These provide a high-level category to assign observed character to and equate to the HCT Classes. Underneath each Broad Type is a series of 'Intermediate Types' which allow more specific characterisation. Underneath each Intermediate Type series of 'Narrow Types' which allow the most detailed level of characterisation. The diagram below shows how the LHCT hierarchy works for a series of character types which sit within the 'Civic Provision' Broad Type (Figure 1).

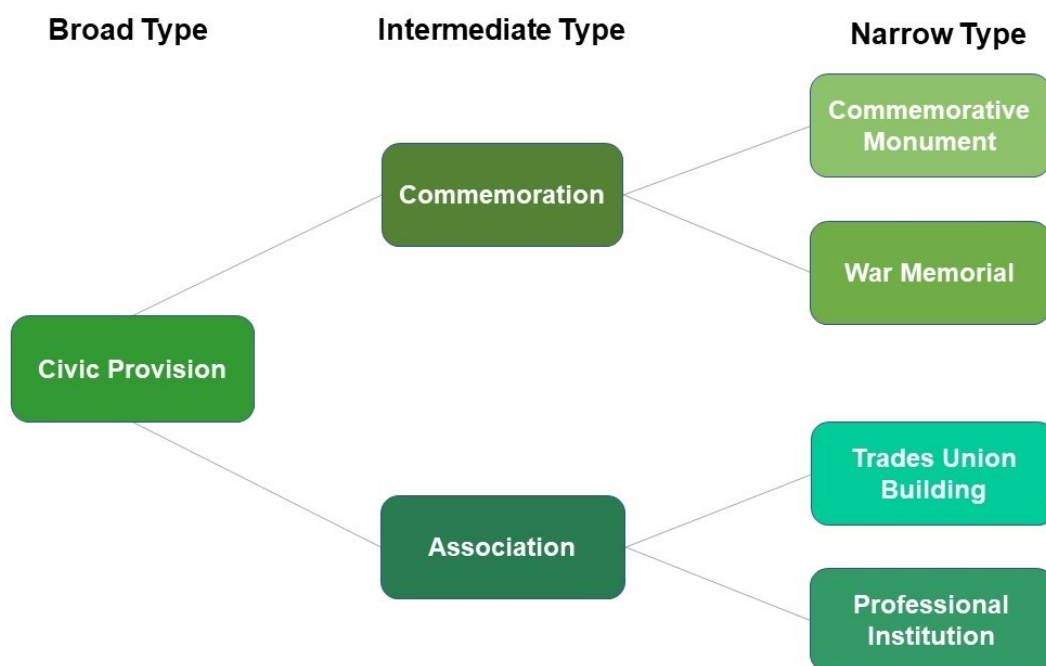Figure 1: Adopted LHCT hierarchy shown with Civic Provision character types

This structure allows comparison of characterisations created for Greater London using LHCT with those HLCs that already exist for authorities bordering Greater London. The Broad Type level within the LHCT corresponds to the top tier used within the neighbouring HLCs whilst the Narrow Type corresponds to the lowest tier used within these HLCs.

The structure was developed as an MS Access database which could be populated with character types and associated scope notes (see note 7). The database was configured to provide exports of all LHCT terms in either spreadsheet or pdf format.

Identifying historic character types

This stage comprised developing a list of character types suitable for inclusion within the LHCT and creating scope notes for each character type. There were two key elements to this:

- identifying existing character types within the HCT suitable for use in Greater London; and
- identifying new character types, referred to as 'novel types', for the kinds of historic characters present in Greater London that had not yet been encountered within previous historic characterisations.

This stage was undertaken in close liaison with the PAO and key HE stakeholders on issues such as appropriate novel types and type names.

The HCT character type and subtype terms were reviewed and many (c. 230) were suitable for adoption as LHCT Narrow Types. Review of the HCT highlighted areas where a significant number of novel types would need to be created, both at Intermediate Type and Narrow Type level. This included instances where no, or no suitable, intervening HCT type existed that could be used as an Intermediate Type for an HCT type proposed for inclusion as a Narrow Type.

Also evident from review of the HCT were significant gaps in character type coverage for aspects such as industrial activities, commercial uses and urban housing forms. The Metropolitan HLCs and the Barking and Dagenham HLC were reviewed for character types which could infill these gaps and proved to be a particularly rich source of character types for industry. Character types derived from these HLCs were generally suitable for use as Narrow Types within the LHCT but needed to be assigned to an appropriate Intermediate Type since this level did not exist in their classification structure.

Even after review of existing thesauri and HLCs, a substantial number of gaps relating to urban housing forms remained. Draft types for these were developed by review of recent publications on 20th century housing, including specific works on garden suburbs.

Evidence for other new character types and modifications to existing character types was taken from historic mapping sources, aerial photography, Google Street View imagery and the project team's own experience of Greater London,[20] including some targeted walkover survey.

The project team also liaised with the Westminster and Whitehall UAD project team to seek any character types they identified as required for their work but missing from the HCT or previous London Characterisations so that these could be included within the draft LHCT. This process initially yielded only a single character type 'Public Baths' which was required for their work. Subsequent liaison with the

Westminster and Whitehall UAD project team yielded further character types required (see below).

Initial work on draft types identified the need for a large number of novel types, both at Intermediate Type and Narrow Type level, and some departures from the hierarchy used within the HCT for types brought in from that source. These were released for review by the PAO and key HE stakeholders in a series of 'tranches' to make review and comment upon them more manageable. The tranches were issued in prioritised manner with the first tranche covering the most significant issues (e.g. entire new Intermediate Types crucial to the LHCT hierarchy) and subsequent tranches comprising further revisions and less fundamental novel types and alterations. These tranches listed proposed character types and associated scope notes. The following review tranches were issued:

- Tranche 1 - novel Intermediate Types, major changes to terms within the HCT, novel Urban Settlement Types;
- Tranche 2 - Updated terms reviewed at Tranche 1, further novel Intermediate Types, novel narrow Types relating to the Following Broad Types - Civic Amenities, Civic Provision, Commerce, Communications and Movement, Industry, Recreation and Leisure, plus some Urban Settlement.

A review meeting was held between the project team, PAO and key HE stakeholders following Tranche 1 to allow discussion of feedback received and come to an agreement on how to resolve any points of contention. These agreed actions were then taken forward into updated versions of the types in question which were circulated as part of Tranche 2. Comments on Tranche 2 were less extensive and resolved using emails and calls between the project manager and PAO.

A collated version of the LHCT, incorporating all types brought over unaltered from the HCT plus the novel and modified types agreed through the tranche reviews, was then created. This draft HLCT was issued for review by the PAO and key HE stakeholders to identify any remaining issues with character type names or scope notes. This process yielded only minor corrections, chiefly typographical errors, to the character type names and scope notes.

The draft LHCT was shared at this point with the Westminster and Whitehall UAD project team for use in their characterisation work. Their feedback identified a series of past land-use activities not yet covered by the LHCT. Where these were felt to have wider relevance (i.e. for characterisations beyond this very specific section of London), character types were developed for inclusion within the LHCT. These chiefly related to religious establishments (e.g. Abbey, Monastery), owing to the importance of these in shaping the character not just of their project area but of other parts of London, and also past industries, plus forms of more 'organic' historic settlement core land-use patterns. Many of the character types and scope notes proposed as a result of this feedback were developed from the associated types in the Thesaurus of Monument Types.[17]

The feedback from the Westminster and Whitehall UAD project team also highlighted an issue with how character types related to watercourses were stored within the LHCT, namely that these character types sat under two distinct Broad Types (Communications and Movement, Cultural Topography). This was brought

over with importing the hierarchy in which natural and semi-natural watercourse character types sat within the HCT and had the unfortunate effect of meaning that there was no character type which could be used to characterise the River Thames. A solution to this issue was proposed whereby the relevant watercourse character types were brought under a single Intermediate Type, 'Water Body' within the Cultural Topography Broad Type. Changes proposed to the LHCT as a result of feedback from the Westminster and Whitehall UAD project team, including novel types, were developed in discussion with the PAO and HE Data Standards Team representative. These were issued as a final tranche for review and sign off by the PAO and HE Data Standards Team. Following sign-off these were incorporated into an updated draft LHCT.

A pilot characterisation of an area of Holborn (see below) was undertaken by the project team as part of preparation of the User Guide. This work highlighted an issue with how office uses were categorised in the LHCT. This was raised with the PAO and HE Data Standards Team representative and a solution proposed, refinement of the existing 'Office Block' Narrow Type and creation of an 'Office Premises' Narrow Type. Following review and sign-off of this change, the final draft LHCT was compiled.

The final draft LHCT contains:

- 17 Broad Types;
- 70 Intermediate Types; and
- 410 Narrow Types.

Preparing the User Guide

As agreed in project initiation discussions, the user guide was produced as a pdf containing the following sections:

- Introduction – explaining the project background, intended users of the LHCT and benefits of using the LHCT;
- Using the Thesaurus – containing key historic characterisation principles, explaining the LHCT structure and how to access the LHCT, key considerations for designing a characterisation which uses the LHCT;
- Examples of Use of the LHCT;
- LHCT Database instructions; and
- Full Listing of Character Type Terms.

As no completed examples of use of the LHCT were forthcoming from local authorities, a small pilot study was undertaken by the project team to demonstrate how the LHCT could be applied. Discussions with the PAO identified that HE had developed a series of learning resources in 2015 to help to explain how the process of assessing historic character can inform an understanding of proposals for change. These were in the form of walking tours, and one of the areas covered was a section of Holborn which included Gray's Inn.[21] This 'character walk' was used as a pilot area for testing how to develop a detailed characterisation which applies the LHCT. This example was used to demonstrate how the three-tiered approach to

characterisation using the LHCT works in practice and show how capturing other attributes – such as information of building age, height and materials – can deepen understanding of an area when coupled with understanding the character types present. This was illustrated with a mixture of character mapping and photography, some of which is reproduced below. Comparing Figure 2 to Figure 3 shows how an area, such as High Holborn which appears at the extreme south of the maps, can appear relatively homogeneous on character type grounds but have a greater degree of variation when other aspects of its character are considered.

Figure 2: Current character at Narrow Type level

Figure 3: Current character of buildings by date of origin

Some high-level detail about the characterisation work being undertaken as part of the Westminster and Whitehall UAD project was given within the User Guide as an example of the development and application of the LHCT. The Westminster and Whitehall UAD project's characterisation was incomplete at the time of User Guide completion so it has not been possible to include characterisation mapping from that project within the User Guide.

The draft User Guide was reviewed by the PAO and key HE stakeholders and an updated, final, version of the first edition of the User Guide was completed in March 2021.[5]

REFERENCES

[1] Character was first formally included in heritage management in Conservation Area legislation of 1967 and is now firmly embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012 onwards).

[2] LUC 2016 Historic England London Plan Review – Project No. 3: Characterisation of London's historic environment. https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/get-involved/luc-characterisation-london-historic-environment-final-report-pdf/.

[3] The term '*thesaurus*' is used in historic environment data management to refer to controlled terminologies promoted for use in recording aspects of heritage assets, such as chronologies or asset types. Further information, including adopted thesauri, can be found via the Forum on Information Standards on Heritage (FISH) web pages http://www.heritage-standards.org.uk/fish-vocabularies/.

[4] Historic England 2019 Project Brief for: London's Historic Character Thesaurus Project No: 7929.

[5] LUC 2021 London's Historic Character – Thesaurus and User Guide.

[6] The LHCT is hosted by HE's Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS).

[7] Character types are the basic unit of characterisation. Types consist of a name, which identifies and summarises the type (e.g. Basic Terrace, Water Meadow), and a description, often referred to as a 'scope note', which explains what the defining features of the type are. Types may be sub-divided to add detail and specificity (e.g. the character type Terraced Housing can be split into sub types to allow recording of different kinds of terraced housing, such as Basic Terrace, Link Terrace, Grand Terrace).

[8] Past historic characterisations have recorded previous character in one of two ways – epochs or stratigraphically. In the epoch approach character types are recorded for a series of specific periods/dates, most commonly defined by recording the character shown on, or evidenced by, a particular map source (e.g. current OS, First Edition OS, Tithe Map). In the stratigraphic approach, character is recorded in a way similar to archaeological stratigraphy with most recent, or 'current', character recorded first and then previous characters recorded in chronological succession with most recent previous character

recorded first with subsequent previous characters then running in sequence to oldest documented.

[9] Stakeholders comprised internal HE contacts (including GLAAS, GHEU, Policy and Evidence Group and Development Advice), the Greater London Authority and Boroughs and other local authorities, including historic environment services of authorities neighbouring Greater London. Neighbouring authorities were included since they are custodians and users of HLC data covering similar character types to outer London and as the LHCT would need to have regard to enabling meaningful comparisons between studies within and adjacent to the capital.

[10] Forum for Information Standards in Heritage (FISH) 2015 Historic Characterisation Thesaurus. http://heritage-standards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/HistoricCharactFull_-Aug2015.pdf

[11] Exegesis SDM and Locus Consulting 2017 National HLC Stage 5: Final Report. Appendix 2

[12] Historic England 2017 Historic Seascape Characterisation Thesaurus.

[13] GIS data for characterisation studies commissioned by Greater London local authorities was not readily available so published reports from these projects were relied on instead

[14] These HLCs were undertaken as part of Historic England's HLC programme and covered council areas co-incident with England's major conurbations: Birmingham, Black Country, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

[15] For example, Class = Commerce > Type = Shopping Street.

[16] For example, Class = Communications and Movement > Type = Water Transport > Subtype = Navigation > Subtype = Navigation Channel > Subtype = Disused Navigation Channel > Subtype = Buried Navigation Channel

[17] Forum for Information Standards in Heritage (FISH) 2021 Monument Type Thesaurus. http://www.heritage-standards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Mon_alpha.pdf

[18] LUC (forthcoming) Urban Characterisation Review. Historic England Project No. 7795.

[19] Approaches which were effectively two-tier but drew from multiple tiers can be seen in the characterisation studies for Enfield (2011 study), Haringey and Lewisham (2010 study). Redbridge uses types from what are called 'primary' and 'secondary' 'typologies' at the same level, resulting in a single-tier characterisation output.

[20] The project team's experience of Greater London's historic environment spans: the 2016 London characterisation review (See Endnote 2); historic characterisation associated with proposed infrastructure; assessments for multiple development proposals (including EIA review on behalf of multiple London Boroughs); and time spent working as a Conservation Officer at Westminster City Council and as an HE Historic Places Advisor in East London.

[21] Character walks homepage https://historicengland.org.uk/servicesskills/training-skills/online-training/tour-maps/. Holborn Walking Tour https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/education/historic-charactermap-holborn-london-pdf/.

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