

draft

DUMFRIES CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

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“The designation of a conservation area is a means to safeguard and enhance the sense of place, character and appearance of our most valued historic places.”

Planning Advice Note 71 Conservation Area Management, Scottish Government, December 2004.

Background to the Appraisal

Introduction

Dumfries has a long and striking history, which has led to the development of a fine town possessing a rich heritage of buildings. It is a culturally important town with a high quality environment. In recognition the town centre was designated a conservation area to help ensure that the best of the historic legacy is retained and to which the best of today's buildings can be added. But if Dumfries is to evolve to support its future needs any necessary changes need to be informed by a good understanding of the structure and qualities of the town. This in turn will help to determine the best form of new development. Such an understanding must cover individual buildings, the spaces and the wider townscape and embrace the historic layout of streets and the links with the river and the wider setting that provides the backdrop to the conservation area.

Despite its many qualities however, Dumfries is under threat. Like so many towns across the country, Dumfries has suffered from under- investment in its built heritage. The town has not always been quick to adapt to changing circumstances and has seen changes and redevelopment that, with hindsight, may not have been of the best. This together with under-utilised sites and intrusive individual buildings will, if not checked now, lead to further decline and loss of historic character. That in turn will make Dumfries less attractive to inward investment thereby exacerbating the problems.

The Character Appraisal – Purpose and Justification

The Scottish Government has recognised the importance of the whole historic environment of Scotland in Scottish Planning Policy, 2014 where one of the subject policies is ‘Valuing the Historic Environment’.

“The historic environment is a key cultural and economic asset and a source of inspiration that should be seen as integral to creating successful places. Culture-led regeneration can have a profound impact on the well-being of a community in terms of the physical look and feel of a place and can also attract visitors, which in turn can bolster the local economy and sense of pride or ownership.” (SPP 2014, paragraph 136)

SPP states that Conservation Area Appraisals should inform development management decisions (SPP 2014, paragraph 144)

‘Our Place in Time’ the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland, 2014 (HESS) requires Local Development Plans to “... enable positive change in the historic environment which is informed by a clear understanding of the importance of the heritage asset affected...” [SPP,2014 para 137]

The character appraisal of a conservation area is part of the route to understanding that importance.

Neither the legislation governing conservation areas nor the subsequent body of government advice seeks to prevent development and change.

Government policy is aimed at securing greater economic benefits from the historic environment whilst ensuring that it is cared for, protected and enhanced for the benefit of our own and future generations.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to the proper stewardship of its historic areas and has prepared this appraisal to help inform the development and management of the town's conservation area. This Appraisal is not a manual that sets out exact actions nor is it a catalogue of good buildings. It is much more a prompt that helps in the process of developing an understanding of the conservation area and so stimulate good quality design and further development. It is the starting point for developing conservation area management proposals.

The aims of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, with the attendant Conservation Area Management Plan, are to:

- Identify and describe the elements that contribute to the area's special architectural or historic interest;
- Describe how the character and quality of the historic built environment will be protected and enhanced, including preventing further erosion of character through small-scale inappropriate changes to buildings, streets and open areas; and
- Enable carefully managed change and evolution of the conservation area, by encouraging development that makes a positive contribution to the area.

This appraisal will guide the Council in making planning decisions and, where opportunities arise, preparing and implementing enhancement proposals or supporting new development. Implicit in this document is the Council's conviction that Dumfries must be allowed to develop and adjust to modern needs and the conservation area allowed to evolve just as the town itself always has done over the centuries.

The principal planning policy framework is Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) and supporting Supplementary Guidance.

The appraisal is the basis for the approach to be adopted in the management and control of development affecting the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Using this Appraisal

The appraisal is published in three sections:

Part One – covers the historical development of Dumfries and gives a descriptive overview of the conservation area.

Part Two – considers the management of the conservation area and sets out a strategy for further development and enhancement of the area.

Part Three – Includes a link to Historic Environment Scotland for a list of all the registered listed buildings and a glossary of terms used within the appraisal.

Please remember that the descriptive parts of the appraisal are illustrative and may not necessarily cover each and every aspect that moulds the character of the Dumfries conservation area. The omission of any particular feature, building, space or other aspect of the area should not be taken to mean that it has no significance or is not relevant to the care and stewardship of the area.

The Value of the Existing Conservation Area

In describing the conservation area it is important to start with an appreciation of the general qualities of the town that gave the impetus for its designation as an area whose character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced. What are the key aspects that are valued and should be kept?

The detailed answers will emerge in the appraisal. Overall, Dumfries, as a historic Burgh on the lowest crossing point of the Nith, has seen varying periods of growth, prosperity as well as decline, and has a legacy of fine buildings from a long period of historical development. The town possesses a rich and interesting townscape, high quality public and private buildings, complexity of streets and spaces that combine to bring a sense of identity that is unique and special.

It is generally acknowledged that the unique historic character, the varied and interesting architectural detailing, the relationship of spaces and other open areas and streets and the magnificent riverside setting are fundamental to the well-being of the town and in turn are highly valued. It is the 'sum of the parts' that makes Dumfries what it is, gives it a sense of place that is unique and is why all effort should be directed to its proper conservation and development.

This combined with the ubiquitous use of local red sandstone gives a charm and warmth to the town that is both a pleasure to visit and within which to live and work.

The town possess a rich and interesting townscape punctuated by key buildings



Clockwise from top left: Militia House, English Street; 32 George Street; Midsteeple, High Street; 54 Buccleuch Street (former Clydesdale Bank); St George's Church, George Street; 8 High Street facing Burns Square

The Conservation Area

A conservation area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The revised boundary of the single large conservation area was adopted on the 31st January 2014.

The conservation area boundary is shown on the map on page 8.

- THE MEDIEVAL TOWN – centred on the older central area of the town with an essentially medieval street pattern but encompassing the later expansion toward the river along Friar's

Vennel and the planned 'Georgian' development around George Street.

- WHITESANDS, RIVERSIDE AND BURNS' HOUSE – containing the river frontage downstream of the Caul and including Burns Street and St Michael's Church yard.
- LOVERS' WALK AND CATHERINE STREET – taking in the important and visually striking later Victorian development of the town towards the railway station.

Issues Affecting the Conservation Area

Regeneration of Dumfries Town Centre Dumfries and Galloway Council has identified the regeneration of Dumfries town centre as one of its priority projects. It has developed a programme of initiatives that seek to develop the town as an exemplar; to be a place with an excellent environment which people visit and in which they wish to linger, surrounded by attractive, well maintained buildings, containing a high quality public realm and increasing economic activity.

A number of initiatives have been implemented with good results. Some vacant properties have been brought back into use and some public spaces have been improved although much remains to be achieved. The centre of Dumfries is undergoing a planned programme of improvements. Sustained property investment is required in order to improve the existing building stock. New buildings and the conversion of existing stock to meet the needs of the 21st century are also necessary.

Flooding

There are severe flooding risks associated with the river Nith. The Whitesands and adjacent buildings, in particular, are inundated several times a year. Properties in Brewery Street and the lower parts of Friars Vennel and Bank Street are also affected periodically.

Subject to funding and government approval, the Council is committed to providing flood defences and mitigation measures to protect the areas at risk. It is anticipated that this will result in engineering and townscape works along the Whitesands some of which may be over 2.1m high as this is the level of protection that is considered necessary after consideration of the balance between providing flood protection and keeping visual and environmental impacts to an acceptable level.

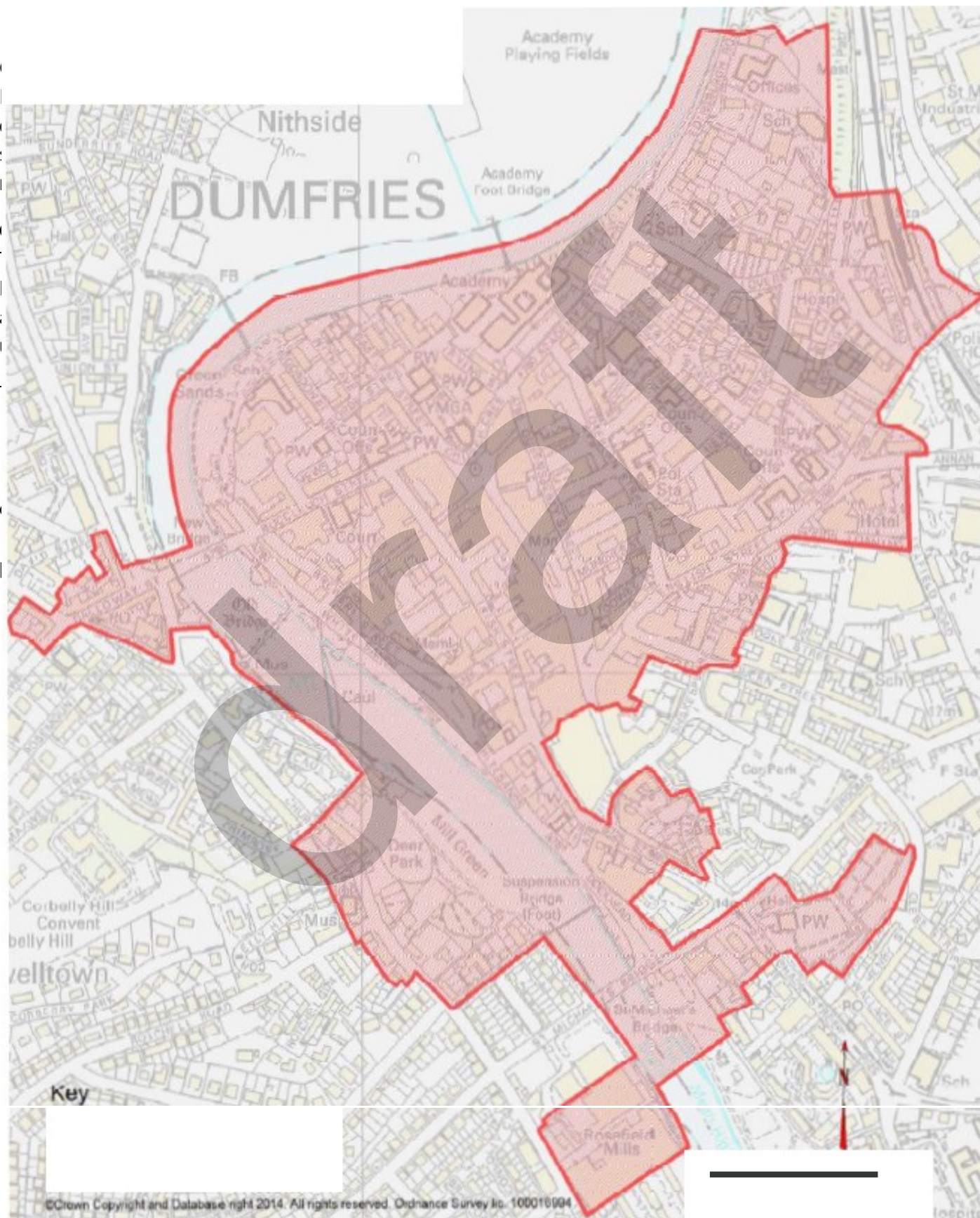
Monitoring and Review of the Appraisal

The Appraisal is an important part of the future management of the conservation area. The description of the conservation area, the issues and conflicts identified and the scope for enhancement will be subject to change over the years.

Monitoring and periodic review of the conservation area as well as the effectiveness of this document in pursuing the Council's conservation policy will validate the continuing relevance of the designation, its extent and the success of management strategies. Useful indicators to be monitored may include:

- The numbers of buildings at risk from neglect and deterioration;
- The effectiveness and quality of repairs to buildings and improvements to public spaces; the design quality of new buildings, alterations and extensions;

- New uses for vacant buildings and reduction in vacant upper floor space;
- The quality of open spaces and other parts of the public realm;
- Vitality and viability of commercial areas; and the level of investment and progress in the implementation of particular schemes of enhancement, such as shop fronts or streetscape enhancement.



PART 1 - UNDERSTANDING THE DUMFRIES CONSERVATION AREA

History and Development

Regional Context

Dumfries is the regional capital for Dumfries and Galloway. It has a population of just over 37,000 out of a regional population of 152,000.

Medieval Dumfries grew up at a strategically advantageous point commanding higher ground adjacent to the lowest crossing of the Nith some 10 miles inland from the Solway. The river is tidal and navigable to this point and formed an important communication link in early times particularly in the early medieval period when the Nith formed the boundary, between the lands of the Kings of Scotland and those of the Lords of Galloway.

It was on the principal land route through Galloway from the east. Before a bridge was built, the Nith had a number of fording points, the crossing from the Greensands being known as the Stake ford. The surrounding terrain made travel difficult and few other routes were available until the construction of the Old Military Road in the 18th century and the development of the route up the valley to the north and south. Dumfries is at the centre of a system of radial routes serving many parts of the region.

Archaeological Interest

The earliest evidence for human settlement dates from around 6,000 years ago. Archaeological excavations on Irish Street in 1994 recovered a number of flint tools and scant remains of a structure. Early people would have exploited the salmon resources of the river, living in temporary camp sites above the flood plain.

An extensive part of the town centre is of archaeological interest and is designated as an Archaeologically Sensitive Area in LDP2. This is shown on the Map on page 28. See also Technical Paper: Archaeologically Sensitive Areas, for further information.

The Devorgilla Bridge across the River Nith is a designated Ancient Monument.

As well as buried remains, there may be remains of early buildings embedded within more recent buildings.

It is important that the Council's appointed Archaeologist is consulted before any development that might impact on possible buried remains is undertaken.

Development of Dumfries - Medieval

First mentioned in the 1150s, Dumfries is likely to have been a Royal Burgh by 1185. In *The Buildings of Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway*, Gifford notes *"That the town was a centre of some local standing in the C13 can be inferred from the foundation there in 1265 of the Convent of the Greyfriars by Devorgilla, Lady of Galloway, who is reputed to have erected a bridge across the Nith."*

The core street plan with a wide market place on high ground above the river with burgage plots set at right angles, gated entrances and civic buildings such as a tollbooth would have been established early on.

It is possible that around the 12th and 13th centuries there was a mill at what is now Nith Place with St. Michaels Parish church to the south, and Greyfriars Friary to the north. Friars

Vennel ran east from the river to create the southern boundary of the Greyfriars land. The town developed further along the ridge line between Greyfriars and St. Michaels to create what is now known as the High Street, and Queensberry Square may have been the original location of a market.

A defensive building known as the New Wark latterly serving as a prison and barracks was built in what is now Queensberry Square in the late C14. Also present would have been the Tolbooth dating from the late 15th century and occupying the site of Burton's today, and the Fish Cross at the point where the High Street and English Street meet.

Buildings expanded on both sides of the High Street and the extent of the backyards or rigs were marked by passages that are the origins of the various closes which run perpendicular to the High Street today. In the 16th century Shakespeare Street and Irish Street were known as 'Under the Yairds' and Loreburn Street was the 'Yairdheads', both suggesting the extent of the early medieval development. Irish Street was later to become known as West Barnraws.

The location of the original wooden bridge crossing the River Nith is likely to be close to or on the site of the Devorgilla Bridge we see today, repaired and rebuilt many times since its original construction in 1431. The span of the current bridge was reduced by three arches when the Whitesands was developed.

In addition to the remains of the royal castle in Castledykes Park, there are known to have been at least three early castle locations (mottes) in Dumfries, all likely to date from the 12th century. One was at Townhead Mote just north of Greyfriars, one at Lincluden further north on the river, and one at Troqueer, further south on the river. A possible further site was identified at Maxwelltown close to Old Bridge House.

Development of Dumfries – Medieval to 19th Century

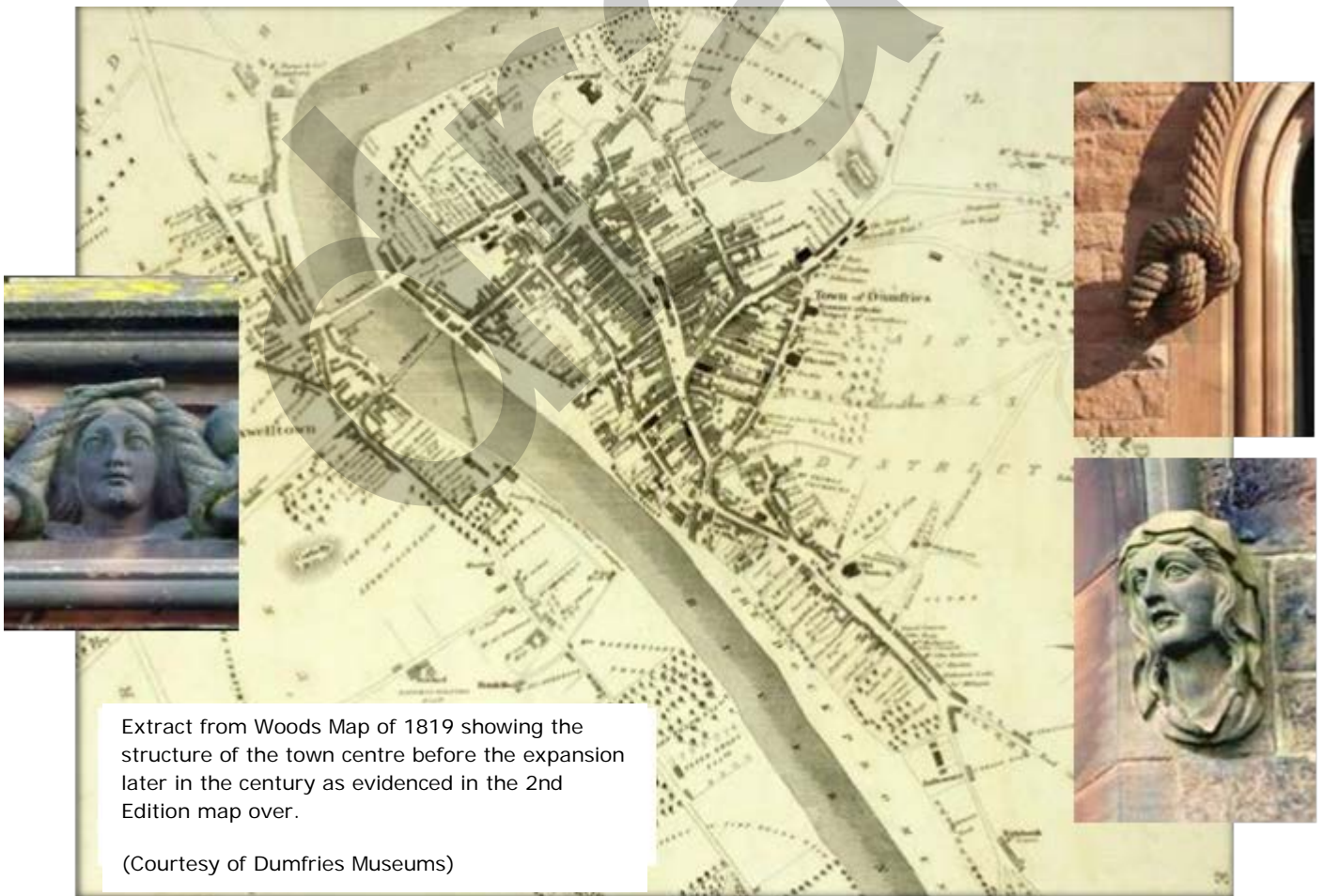
Best described as of varying fortune the success and development of the town to the sixteenth and seventeenth century was modest. Dumfries does not appear to have had a port of any consequence until the latter half of the sixteenth century.

Cross border conflicts in the 15th and 16th centuries meant that the town was burnt several times but Gifford notes that it was also notable as a centre of textile industry and: *"The town's commercial importance was at its height between c. 1720 and the 1750s, when it became the most important port for the tobacco trade."*

The town mill, now the Robert Burns Film Theatre, was rebuilt in 1781. A number of especially good houses were erected during the 18th century and these may still be seen in several locations across the town centre.



Conjectural plan ca. 1560 from W A Dodd (1978) *The Medieval Town Plan at Dumfries, Edinburgh*, after p223.



Extract from Woods Map of 1819 showing the structure of the town centre before the expansion later in the century as evidenced in the 2nd Edition map over.

(Courtesy of Dumfries Museums)

By 1806 a town extension had been planned to the north of the town centre. This area was laid out in typical Georgian town planning fashion with a grid of straight broad streets to be lined by grand buildings in a style that we now recognise as typically of the period. In the event progress proved disappointing with only piecemeal development initially while many of the later plots failing to be built upon (some until this day). Nevertheless the elegant buildings lining Castle Street give us a clear impression of the potential quality of the whole scheme had it been completed. During the remainder of the nineteenth century the town continued to expand with new streets being added and existing country roads being subsumed by development in what appears to have been a largely ad hoc manner.

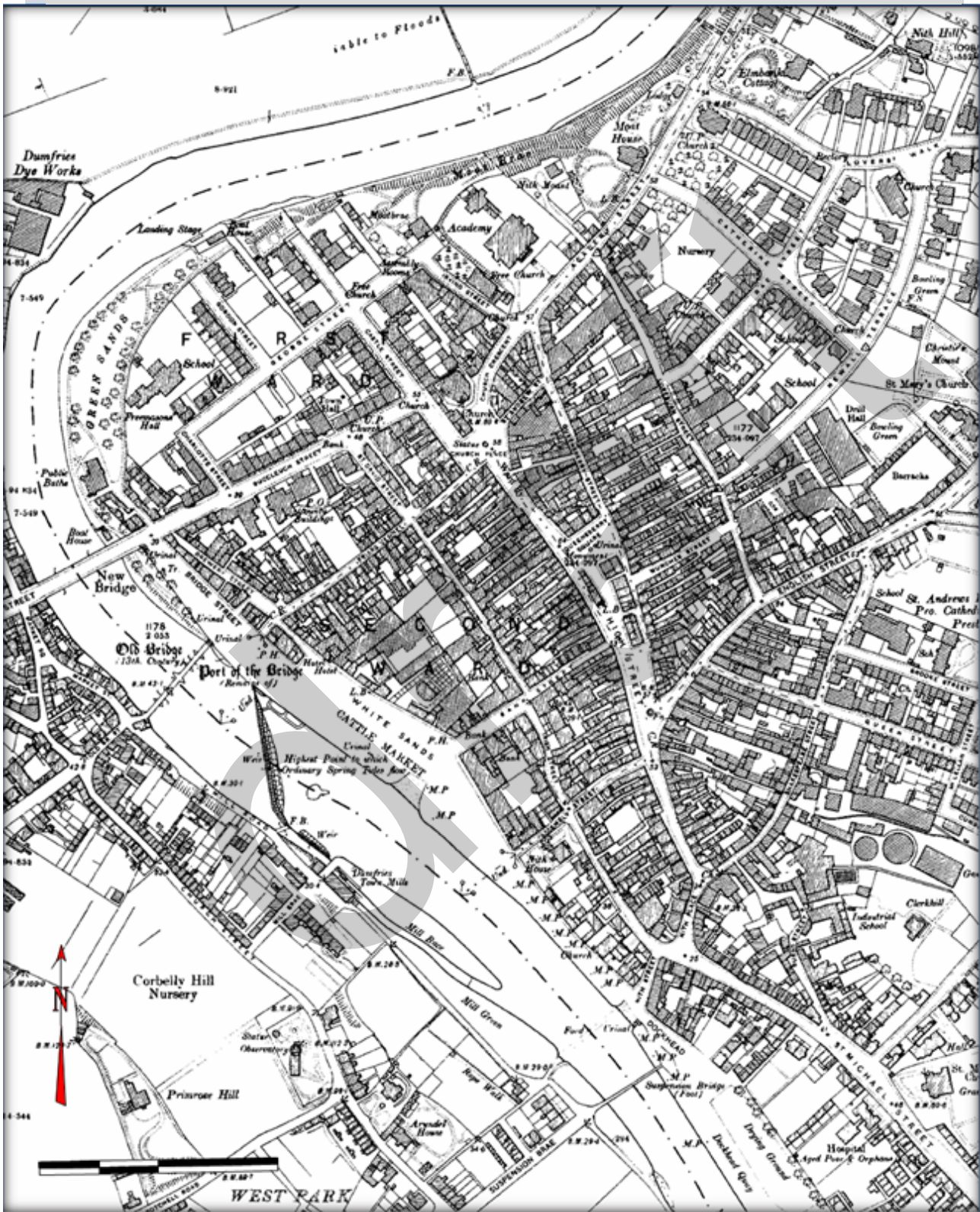


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The rapid growth of the town from that shown on Wood's map is seen here with the development

of the former nurseries north and east of the town centre with suburban housing at a much lower density and layout to the older town centre. The densely developed closes, following the lines of the medieval burgaje plots off the High Street, are still clear on this 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map.

Dumfries Ca. 1890



All through the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth, the central part of Dumfries was characterised by dense development in the burgaje plots running back from the High Street.

This resulted in numerous, over-populated closes; many of which have been cleared away. These can be seen on the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map over.

Dumfries became an important centre for the sale of livestock in the C18 and C19, with sales being held on the Whitesands. By the mid C19 it was also the commercial and administrative centre for the region. The prosperity of the period is again reflected in the many imposing public, commercial and private buildings that now form the rich legacy of the era.

Industrial buildings such as the Rosefield complex and the now demolished St Michael mills gave a strong industrial character to parts of the town centre. Prosperous suburbs first in the Lovers' Walk and Edinburgh Road (Langlands) area were built as a result of the arrival of the railway in 1850, which skewed the development of the town's suburbs in an easterly direction. Between 1870 and 1900 infill development created Newall Terrace, Catherine Street and Rae Street.

The development of the railway though peripheral to the conservation area, is very important in the town's history and development.

The Station and Station Hotel are fine buildings on the north-eastern boundary of the conservation area.

The townscape was punctuated with prominent landmark buildings ranging from the Sheriff Court of 1863 and the County Buildings (1912) now the Council Headquarters, to churches with tall widely seen spires such as Greyfriar's (1868).

Development of Dumfries - Modern

Apart from the gradual redevelopment of the closes the centre of Dumfries was largely untouched until the middle of the 20th century. Large housing areas had been growing on the peripheral areas. In the late 19th century and early 20th century suburbs east of Loreburn Street and across the river Nith in the Rotchell area developed mostly with fine town houses of the local red sandstone.

From the end of the First World War onwards municipal housing estates grew on the fields surrounding Lincluden College, off Annan Road and in the Georgetown area. These give an urban feel to the outer approaches to the conservation area.

However, aerial photographs from the mid 1960's show a town of mills, industry and dense housing that is now barely recognisable.



Circa 1962 showing the industrial and railway legacy to the east of the town centre, the dense development between High Street and Whitesands and more informal layout and use of Whitesands for buses and parking. Note early phase in construction of 'new' swimming pool, and the old 'Public Baths' both now demolished.

(Photograph: Courtesy of Dumfries Museum - Copyright Aerofilms Ltd.)

Much of the 'organic' nature of the earlier development has been lost with the larger scale and more rigid forms of development such as the Loreburn shopping centre and the road improvements. These photographs show a town centre that was densely developed with a wide variety of buildings including factories, workshops and warehouses.

Today, there is a legacy of vacant and open sites stemming largely from the closure and demolition of late 19th and early 20th century industrial areas and redundant railway sidings. Notable is the large area off Broom's Road, now a car park but formerly the gas works. Some smaller sites, especially in the George Street area, were never developed but had clearly been intended to be as evidenced by a number of incomplete terraces.

Description of Conservation Area

Introduction

This section defines the key features of the conservation area and gives an overview of the town as a whole and considers its wider structural aspects first. A more detailed analysis is given in the area appraisals below

Setting

Topography and Landscape

The town lies on low ridges in a bend of the river Nith surrounded by higher ground which gives distant views from many places into and out of the town centre. Out to the east lies

the Lochar Moss, now mostly drained, but formerly a large area of marsh and peat lands. Beyond these are the gentler rolling hills of red Permian sandstone, with the widely known quarry at Locharbriggs, from which most of the town has been constructed. To the north the wide Nith valley, with broad meanders, forms level and fertile grazing pastures. To the west the land rises to the outlying granite outcrops of Criffel and Mabie Forest. South is the widening mouth of the river Nith and beyond the Solway flats.

From the town centre the ground falls to the river in the north and west. West of the river it rises to a high point at Corbelly Hill. Another notable area of higher ground runs south from Larchfield to Georgetown. These form a foreground to the more distant hills visible from parts of the town centre to the south west, north and east.

Significant Views, Panoramas and Viewpoints

The river with the rising ground both to the east and the west allows for significant and attractive views into and out of the conservation area.

From beyond the town on approaches such as the A75 from the east near Mouswald or the west down the Glen or the A711 near the Mabie Ridge distant views of the town with key buildings such as the churches, St Joseph's College and the former Corbelly Hill Convent, provide an intriguing glimpse of the historic character and interest that is Dumfries, all set in the wide river valley. In views of the town centre from the higher land, nearer at hand, three church spires punctuate the skyline. This is especially true of Greyfriars Church and St. Michaels Church spires that act as focal markers for the town centre on approach to the town. These are complemented in different views by such key buildings as the Sheriff Court and the Station Hotel. However, some later buildings such as the monolithic former Social Security offices on Irish Street, the flats off St Michael Street and the rear extensions to major shops fronting the High Street and the telephone exchange are less attractive and are visually intrusive.

The Craigs Road ridge provides a significant backdrop and setting for the older part of the town when seen from the North West. This is now dominated by the large mass of the Royal Infirmary; however, further south the landscaped grounds of the Crichton, also a conservation area, provide visual interest as the urban area blends to the countryside beyond.

Principal views out of the conservation area, having medium distance vistas, are from Friars Vennel, Bank Street and Assembly Street towards the river and the high ground beyond. There, but beyond the conservation area, is situated the dominant former Corbelly Hill Convent and the Observatory, being the tower of a former mill, now part of the museum and housing the Camera Obscura, adding focal points and interest to these views. The Camera Obscura gives particularly splendid views of the conservation area from its high look out across the river.

The bridges provide important vantage points for the main vistas up and down river and into the town centre. The bend in the river round the Greensands area towards Nunholm gives a changing vista much softened by the mature planting.

The bridges provide important vantage points for the main vistas up and down river and into the town centre. The bend in the river round the Greensands area towards Nunholm gives a changing vista much softened by the mature planting.

Important, but more intimate views, though still encompassing large stretches of the conservation area are those views across the river from the lower levels such as from Whitesands and more especially from the west bank. Here key elements such as the Robert Burns Film Theatre, the former water mill, the Suspension Bridge, the Old Devorgilla Bridge and more modern road bridges and the Caul provide a rich context and foreground interest to these views, which show the rising ground and dominance of parts of Irish Street and the High Street.

There are no formal or planned vistas within the Dumfries conservation area, though significant views appear and occasionally a key building becomes the focus of such a view. Even the vista of Greyfriars along the High Street is more by accident than design as it was originally tucked in behind a row of houses that extended from Castle Street.

Important views are mostly confined and constrained by the street pattern and enclosing development.

Longer views include the High Street with the Midsteeple and Greyfriars Church forming key landmarks; down Friars Vennel with the varied rooflines and slightly irregular frontages giving visual interest; Queensberry Street with the changing but tight urban vista and key buildings such as the former Trades Hall facing Queensberry Square; and English Street with the smaller scale buildings punctuated by larger and in some cases more decorative buildings set in a curving and rising streetscape. However, it should be noted that almost any point within the conservation area gives rise to attractive and closed-in views made interesting by the rich detail and variety of buildings and their placement.

Activity, Movement and Street Pattern

The wider road network serving Dumfries is largely based on ancient routes and retains the pattern laid down in the medieval period. For example, the Old Military Road, which passed over the Devorgilla Bridge but now much changed within the town, is still a roadway beyond the town limits to the west being a pleasant and relatively quiet byway.

The town was by-passed to the north in the 1980's. The by-pass, the A75, now forms a strong visual and physical division on the approaches from the east, north and west. This road has three large and visually dominant bridges crossing over the Nith over its meanders beyond Nunholm.

Most approaches to the town centre are now through suburban areas with the increasing proximity to the centre marked by a gradual increase in building density and changes in building style and materials. Immediately to the west of the river is the former separate township of Maxwelltown, incorporated into the Burgh of Dumfries in 1926. To the north early and mid-20th century housing estates dominate.

The core of the town still retains an imprint of its early medieval street layout based on rigs arranged around a market place, now the High Street with Queensberry Street, (see Map on page 13). The rigs were bounded at the rear by 'back lanes', shown as 'East Barnraus' and 'West Barnraus' in the Burgh Survey. These now form Loreburn Street and Irish Street respectively.

The High Street was accessed by the old routes into the town. These include, from northeast Townhead (Academy Street / Edinburgh Road) and Lochmaben Gate (English Street); from

the west (Devorgilla Bridge / Friars Vennel), and; from the south (Burns Street / St Michaels Street). These were augmented in the first half of the nineteenth century by the construction of Buccleuch Street and Buccleuch Street Bridge. Despite various overall changes, such as widening of streets, this layout is still visible and forms the basis for the street pattern today.

The town centre is still dominated by major traffic routes both radial and cross-town. Whitesands in particular is an important link along the river allowing traffic from the north and west to reach the Crichton and the Hospitals. Key junctions that can be congested are at St Michael's and both ends of the Whitesands. The High Street, previously heavily trafficked, was pedestrianized in the late 1980s.

In some places streets have been redeveloped and new routes created from previously narrow and built up streets. Shakespeare Street and Loreburn Street were 'improved' to favour motor vehicles with the loss of much early and small-scale townscape and both streets now offer opportunities to establish a better environment for pedestrians.

18th century development adjacent to the medieval core to the west is laid out in a more formal grid pattern centred on George Street between the river and High Street.

Later development to the north, around Lovers' Walk, is more organic and appears at first to be less structured than the neoclassical grid or the medieval street pattern.

Townscape

The town centre of Dumfries has a largely traditional townscape with closely developed streets lined by buildings mostly at the back of the footways. The central area is complemented by civic spaces and borders on open spaces to the north and west, mostly associated with the River Nith. Together these form what most will regard as an attractive townscape that justifies its protection and management.

In Dumfries the consistent size, shape and regularity of the majority of smaller buildings helps to create an even well-ordered townscape. This is complemented by larger or 'landmark' buildings, which stand out architecturally through their massing and form yet still fit comfortably into the townscape. The mainly traditional form of the roofs and resultant roofscape punctuated by the many chimney stacks, mostly with good collections of cans add to the townscape quality of the town centre.

The townscape is further strengthened by the use of locally sourced materials and traditional building practices that give a strong 'sense of place' and local identity.

Components that make up the townscape include:

Building facades

The street facades of buildings are the most obvious defining elements of the Dumfries townscape. However, this is dependent on architectural detailing, materials, form and placement of the whole building

Roofscape

Roofscape is the cumulative view of roofs and the upper parts of buildings, such as eaves and gables together with chimneys and is usually appreciated from higher vantage points or beyond the immediate confines of streets. Most traditional roofs are pitched and slated roofs. Smaller vernacular buildings and the Georgian and Victorian terraces have simple dual-pitch roofs parallel with the street.

Chimneys with the occasional intrusion of tower, turret or spire complete the scene. Skews in sandstone often define the divisions between buildings or the gabled ends. Some have carved or shaped skewputts.

Dormers are also significant and designs vary; many are canted with hipped roofs or simple rectangular with gabled fronts.

Street Form

Dumfries has a hierarchy of streets and spaces from major traffic routes to narrow vennels and closes. Generally development is at its densest in the medieval street core focussed around High Street, Friars Vennel, Irish Street, Bank Street, Queensberry Street and English Street, and the network of closes leading off. Further from the core, streets are usually less densely developed with buildings usually set back from the footpath edges.

The street form and resulting townscape arises from:

- Uses and activities - The form and character of the street will depend on whether or not the street is primarily commercial, retail, industrial or residential. In addition its function, for example as a primary route, will also influence its character;
- The building line and its relationship with the street – Most is at the back of the footways but further out building lines are more variable often including private open spaces, sunken basement areas or front gardens;
- Width and proportion of facades - Plot sizes were broadly based on the original feus, which in the older medieval parts were largely consistent and relatively narrow. This adherence to earlier plot sizes is clearly evident in the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map above;
- Massing and building height – Massing defines the size of the building and how the volume enclosed is arranged.

Variations in massing and building heights are dependent on, age, use, historical development, the importance of the building and the location within the town;

- The stylistic qualities of traditional buildings and traditional detailing - Despite the diverse range of building types and architectural styles there is an underlying consistency provided by traditional materials and pattern book detailing. Decorative elements such as string courses or moulding at eaves or around doors and windows together with other embellishments and occasional statuary add further interest and variation;
- Materials – generally there is a consistent and limited range of materials including red Lochaber sandstone, Cumbrian or Welsh slate and the grey granite kerbs and setts.

Roads and Street Surfaces

Evidence from street works and partially excavated areas suggests that by the late 19th century many of the streets in the central areas were paved with granite setts. The increasing volumes of traffic from the nineteenth century onwards gave rise to the widespread use of tar macadam surfacing, replacing or covering the original setts. Further losses occurring when services are laid or repaired.

Kerbing was also of granite and much still survives and remains an important characteristic of many streets within the town centre. It is most likely that this came from the Dalbeattie or Creetown.

Retaining and reinstating the granite kerbs should therefore be an important objective.

Footways and closes are now largely concrete slabs or bituminous asphalt but often retaining granite kerbs.

The pedestrianisation scheme of the late 1980's, which included the High Street and Friar's Vennel, saw the widespread use of concrete blocks. In contrast, the most recent phase of street improvements has been undertaken using grey, pink and red smooth flat granite blocks; their use was largely based on the need to provide smooth durable walking surfaces, good access for push-chairs and it is suggested that the palette of materials established in the High Street and Friar's Vennel should be considered for use in new schemes of roads repairs and surface renewals in the central area.

Open Spaces

Public and private open spaces are important components of the character of the town. They add richness and provide locations for traditional and ceremonial events and play an important role in the use of the area. There are a number of civic spaces within Dumfries, some developed by design or from earlier functional uses such as market places. Key public spaces include:

- Burns Statue, at the head of Friars Vennel / High Street and fronting Greyfriars Church;
- Queensberry Square;
- The Plainstones and High Street Fountain;
- Whitesands and Dock Head;
- Greensands and the Riverside; and
- Millgreen / Deerpark.

Such spaces also help to provide a contrast with the tight urban forms of the centre adding contrast and interest to the townscape.

Open areas, adjacent to the river, that are significant in providing a setting or lead-in to the conservation area include the Academy Playing fields to the north and Dock Park to the south. The Whitesands is potentially one of the more important open areas in the town, but is now largely given over to car parking, compromising the environmental quality of the area.

A number of, what might be termed opportunistic, spaces may be found across the conservation area in areas such as the corner of Brewery Street and Friar's Vennel where several roads meet or where the alignment and placing of buildings changes. These smaller spaces can have considerable merit often providing good intimate townscape. Other examples include Nith Place, the area in front of Moat Brae, the Station forecourt and the area adjacent to Market Street.

The vennels and closes provide intimate and confined spaces in the centre of the town. Most historic closes have been lost. Those that remain provide pedestrian links from the High Street but with their character having been compromised by demolition and modern

development. Their function of providing links through the long lines of buildings is a useful one and should not be underestimated.

Private space is also significant in forming the character of the conservation area. It tends to be hidden behind street frontages and is somewhat restricted in the more heavily built up town centre. However, in the George Street and Castle Street area and the Victorian and Edwardian suburbs many houses had, albeit small, front gardens with cast iron railings. These are important to the character of those areas. Some of the frontages have now been given over to car parking with the loss of enclosure, architectural detailing and historic character. The loss of original cast iron railings and in some cases their replacement by inferior modern fencing contributes to this loss of character.

Trees and Soft Landscaping

There are few significant public green open spaces, sometime referred to as soft landscaping, within the conservation area apart from that adjacent to the river Nith, in graveyards and that on the corner of Catherine Street and Academy Street. Access to open areas along the riverside is not consistent or contiguous and could be improved to allow continuous access on both sides of the river.

The contribution from mature trees in back gardens and the larger grounds in more peripheral areas that give a green softness to the character especially in the outer parts of the conservation area should not be underestimated.

Gap Sites and Sites with Inappropriate Buildings

A number of undeveloped gap sites, some of which may previously have had buildings, are to be found around the town centre. These break up the continuous line of buildings and consideration should be given to their development. Some of these sites have been given over to car parking provision. Larger such sites include those at Loreburn Street, Shakespeare Street and Brooms Road.

Although not strictly gap sites, some inappropriate and architecturally poor buildings, also have a negative impact on the townscape of the area, and could be regarded as potential redevelopment sites. However, before any demolition takes place the relevant building must be assessed on its intrinsic merits and for its contribution to the conservation area. Such assessment should also include any potential sustainability issues and no building should be removed before the redevelopment plans for its site are agreed and about to proceed.

Buildings

Buildings within the designated conservation areas are of a diverse nature reflecting a wide mix of styles and ages and different periods of economic prosperity and confidence. Commercial success has also driven the display of architectural exuberance in many of the buildings, often former banks. These are juxtaposed with more modest earlier properties, such as 27-29 English Street also often having undergone further development and redevelopment.

Sometimes former houses were developed into shops and, especially in the High Street, older buildings have given way to more modern development. Most of this newer development was purpose-built commercial and retail, some with accommodation above.

Even within the known medieval core, there is little evidence in the outward appearance of most buildings of their potentially early origin.

Today, Dumfries town centre, like most Scottish town centres, has classically derived buildings largely from the 18th and 19th centuries.

In contrast, some early twentieth century buildings such as Burtons and the Academy extension with their stripped down classically proportioned styling add elegance and variety to the traditional streetscape. The former Workington Brewery Aerated Water Works at Dock Park (ca. 1904), recently occupied as Jamies Tiles, has an interesting façade with symmetrical rounded gables framing the building.

The Loreburn shopping centre has had a major impact on the eastern part of the High Street and Irish Street. Though attempting to retain a more traditionally scaled street frontage its modern approach to detailing and the bulk and form especially as seen on the Irish Street and Shakespeare Street elevations give the lie to its true form which is out of scale with the traditional development around.

There is a general absence of tower blocks and whilst there are some four-storey 20th century flats, one five-storey office block, the Telephone Exchange and a five-storey classroom block at the Academy which stand out in a number of views within or across the conservation area, these are few and not excessively tall.

Architectural embellishment: There is much and varied architectural embellishment on buildings across the conservation area. Simple raised margins help define openings, banding gives sense to the structure by defining internal floor levels, skews and skewputts give definition to roof edges and divisions in terraces while door cases or porticos help to emphasise the main access point.

More ornate carving and statuary are found usually on buildings of higher rank and prestige.

Building Types

To help in the analysis of building styles and hence as a guide to possible interventions and new development in context, the identifiable stylistic groups include:

Landmark or Key Buildings – Churches and large Civic and Commercial Buildings There is a rich legacy of larger landmark or key buildings in the conservation area. These are significant to the character and appearance of the area. Some are churches and are particularly prominent in wider views of the town. Greyfriar's Church is a good example terminating the northern end of the High Street. Many buildings are significant in their immediate surroundings, such as the former bank at 8 English Street or Barbour's on Buccleuch Street or Pailing's on Queensberry Street. Other key buildings also exploit the topography of the town such as the positioning of St Michael's Church on an elevated site so emphasizing its importance.

One building that is important in close and wider views and has great historical significance is the Mid Steeple. Many Civic and Public Buildings are also landmark or key buildings.

Usually, earlier large commercial buildings are characterised by their high quality and fine detailing

Many examples abound but especially noteworthy is the former Clydesdale Bank on the corner of Irish Street and Buccleuch Street. The design of later commercial buildings has tended towards a simplified box-like architecture and these buildings are often out of scale with their surroundings, such as the telephone exchange backing onto the car park on Newall Terrace.

18th century Town Houses

Relatively few remain unaltered but are a significant part of the character of the town. Examples include 93 Irish Street and Waterstone's on the High Street. These are mostly elegant Georgian buildings with good proportions and classically derived detailing. Most classical buildings were originally painted, notwithstanding the very high quality of sandstone masonry.

18th and 19th century Vernacular

Represent the more ordinary, smaller buildings that were originally mostly residential. Many have been altered or have had their frontages remodelled. Most have relatively steeply pitched slated roofs with good sized chimney stacks that are important in most street views.



The term 'vernacular' excludes the larger more elaborate buildings but could be defined as having:

- Mostly two-storey construction with occasionally three storeys. The earliest houses are more likely to have been single storey though most were raised to provide additional accommodation;
- Mostly residential uses but often adapted to include a shop;
- Stone walling, mostly Locharbriggs sandstone. Some have been subsequently rendered or painted. A few may originally have had lime harl / render;
- A shallow depth (generally less than about 9 metres) giving a modest proportion to relatively steeply pitched slated roof; and
- Regular simple facades with vertically proportioned timber sash and case windows.

Residential Tenements

These are usually of two, three and occasionally four stories. Those in the town centre have shops on the ground floor. The residential accommodation is accessed via a

common stair reached from a door incorporated in the street frontage. Examples may be seen at 37 Friars Vennel, 20 Great King Street and 57 English Street.

Victorian Terrace

Most terraces are associated with the earlier period of expansion away from the centre. Good examples include Rae Street and Catherine Street. They are nearly always of the local red sandstone and often have some architectural embellishment.

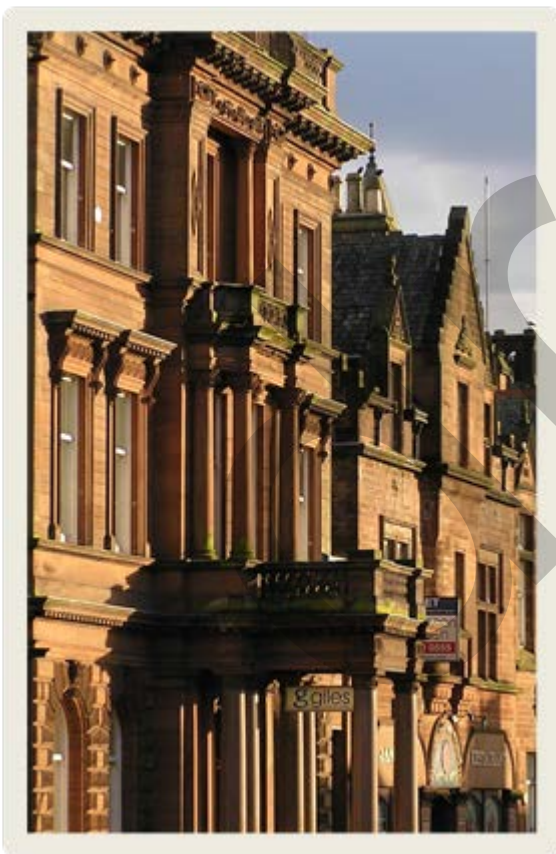
Traditional joinery for doors and windows give these buildings an elegant, solid appearance. Some are individual houses while others have flatted accommodation.

Victorian / Edwardian Suburban

Represent the later period of expansion and are typified by the properties fronting Lovers' Walk and parts of Newall Terrace. They are usually substantial semi-detached or detached houses, sometimes referred to as 'villas'. They are usually larger and more elaborate than vernacular buildings and may have bay windows and ornamented doorways.

Large Commercial

19th century, large commercial buildings are characterised by their high quality and fine detailing. Many examples abound but especially noteworthy is the former Clydesdale Bank on the corner of Irish Street and Buccleuch Street.



The design of modern commercial buildings tends to have resorted to simplified box-like architecture and these buildings are often out of scale with the area.

Civic and Public Buildings

These comprise a wide range of buildings and styles dating from the mid 19th century through to modern times. They include key landmark buildings such as the Sheriff Court

(1863) and the Council Headquarters (1912) and a range of schools, offices and other functional buildings. Except for the more recent buildings these are mostly of red sandstone and make a considerable impact on the streetscape.

Modern Flatted Housing and Office Blocks

Most modern housing blocks are not within the conservation area but do have a visual impact. Those across the river on Church Street are prominent in views out of the area and impact on the setting of some key buildings, not least the Devorgilla Bridge. Most are out of scale with the earlier traditional development around. Their simplistic grid and box style that give them an appearance that is out of keeping with the conservation area.

Shop Fronts

Shops have been a feature of the town centre since at least the late 18th century and there are now just over 300 properties with shop frontages across the town centre. Retail premises and associated uses such as cafes, public houses and offices offering services directly to the public are an important part of the conservation area.

Shop fronts are significant elements in the streetscape of the conservation area. Their presence at eye level makes them the most prominent feature and they greatly influence the appearance of the area. Dumfries is fortunate in possessing some elaborately detailed shop fronts, with a fascia and pilasters typical of the Victorian or Edwardian period. Within the conservation area there is a great variation in the style and design of shop fronts some of which are of excellent quality.

Many of the larger shops or those given over to the large multiple retailers have modern frontages, often out of character with the building or its location in the conservation area.

Some smaller local businesses, often located away from the High Street have retained good traditional shop fronts. Unfortunately many have also been altered. Modern materials, ill-proportioned glazing and poorly detailed surrounds, with an over-large fascia and ill thought out advertising combine to reduce the quality of the streetscape detract from the historic character and lessen the attractiveness of the area.

Traditional Shop Fronts Design Considerations

Traditional shop fronts, dating largely from the late 19th and early 20th century, are usually characterised by large windows framed by the use of a fascia, surmounted by a cornice, and, at the sides, by pilasters. These elements visually represent the beam and columns supporting the shop opening. The base of the shop front is defined by the stall riser.

Traditionally protection from excessive sunlight was provided by a retractable canvas canopy. This was usually incorporated into the fascia and involved a roller and front cover plate operated from and supported by iron support brackets. Featureless and forbidding – heavy security shuttered shop fronts that if combined with poor maintenance or unsympathetic alterations damage the area and give a poor message as to the business inside.

Good traditional design also had regard to the architectural character of the building on which they were placed. They were designed to attract the customer and provide a positive image to display and promote the goods being sold.

Principles of Design for New or Replacement Shop Fronts

A characteristic of many modern shop fronts is their over-simplicity, lack of good proportion, disregard for the design and detailing of the building, the use of poor materials and dependence on corporate design and advertisement. This has led to an erosion of the character and quality of parts of the town centre.

Simple but architecturally appropriate implementation of the basic traditional elements, described above, is usually the key to good shop front design.

New signs should be traditional in appearance using matt surfaces and traditional materials. They should, for the most part, be hand painted. The layout of signs and their design, including the size and style of lettering should be carefully thought out to avoid brash, intrusive signage.

Innovative, contemporary design, either in new buildings, or if it can be successfully integrated, in older buildings, will also be encouraged where it can be seen as being complementary and in keeping with the general traditional street scene.

The shop front must always relate to the building above and around. This is especially important when a shop internally extends across two or more buildings. The external frontage must be split to keep the building's architectural form.

New fronts should be made up in timber, using traditional joinery techniques, including where appropriate frame and panel construction methods. Relief and interest can be added through the addition of a strong cornice, a well-proportioned fascia and consoles.

Standardised, corporate frontages and signage will rarely be appropriate in the conservation area and such an approach is unlikely to be approved.



Advertisements

The number and size of signs should not be excessive and they should respect the form, proportions and appearance of the building on to which they are being placed. Signage should be placed within the architectural elements of the shop front. A relatively narrow fascia should not be obscured by a deep applied sign. In all cases the signage should be designed as part of the fascia and not extend beyond it.

Lighting to the fascia should be unobtrusive, either using external floodlights or an integrated down lighter.

Projecting signs should be individual and responsive to the nature of the business yet should generally be based on traditional hanging signs. If illumination is required external floodlights can be used.

Canopies

Where retractable canopies are proposed they must be of a traditional form and necessary for the proper use of the shop, such as protecting perishable produce from direct sunlight. Canopies should form part of the construction of the shop front or, if applied later, be capable of successful integration with the architecture and style of the building and the shop front.

Curved 'Dutch' canopies are not easily integrated into traditional shop fronts and can be visually intrusive. Such canopies will not normally be permitted on more traditional frontages or on listed buildings. Where their use is considered acceptable they should be set into the window recess and not fixed over the shop front surround.

Security

Roller security shutters and grilles, particularly solid metal types, can be unsightly and damage the character and appearance of the street. External security shutters will not be permitted within the conservation area. Where security is an overriding concern alternative means such as laminated and toughened glass or internal grilles should be considered.

In some instances removable open-mesh grilles may be permitted where they can be integrated into the window joinery without the fittings being visually intrusive.



Featureless and forbidding – heavy security shuttered shop fronts that if combined with poor maintenance or unsympathetic alterations damage the area and give a poor message as to the business inside

External burglar alarm boxes should be mounted discreetly and where possible adjacent to other projecting architectural elements and coloured to match in order to reduce their visual impact.

Council Policy on Shop Fronts in relation to Policy HE2 Conservation Areas

The Council's approach is that where the restoration of traditional shop fronts is not feasible that new proposals for shop fronts should be appropriately designed and proportioned having regard to the age and form of the building, its architectural character, appearance and setting. External security shutters will not be permitted within the conservation area. However, where security is an overriding concern alternative means such as laminated and toughened glass or internal grilles should be considered.

**Council Policy on Advertisements and Canopies in relation to Policy HE2
Conservation Areas**

Advertisements should be carefully designed using matt surfaces and traditional materials. The number and size of signs should not be excessive and they should respect the form, proportions and appearance of the building onto which they are being placed.

Retractable blinds of a traditional character will be permitted where it can be shown that they are necessary and are of an appropriate design having regard to the shop front, the architectural qualities of the building and the general street scene. However, modern "Dutch" canopies and those carrying advertising will not be permitted."

draft

Aspects of traditional shop fronts in Dumfries



Traditional fronts around Dumfries town centre: a) unusually entirely in sandstone, Irish Street; b) In its heyday, a traditional front extended to first and second floor, Queensberry Street; c) well-crafted and detailed example English Street; d) attractively-proportioned, modern front drawing on traditional principles, Castle Street.; e) on St Michael street an elegant well-proportioned front with sandstone pilasters and cornice; f) on Church Crescent a very fine and well-detailed front that would be enhanced by use of colour to emphasise the architectural details and the reinstatement of the original door.

Character Areas

Introduction

The distinctions between different parts of the town that give them their special character are important as;

- they add extra richness to the overall Conservation Area;
- they show the historical development of each area and architectural styles and fashions as well as changing social trends; and
- they reflect particular needs and uses within the particular area.

The character areas are shown on the map on the next page.

This section, therefore, looks at the town in greater detail and has been arranged by the character areas as shown on the map over.

The definition of these areas is based on a visual assessment taking into account the more obvious structural differences across the town centre, the historical development of the town and the nature and visual character of the streets and adjoining back land. Some aspects of each character area will flow between areas and the boundaries and definitions are not rigid but the broader distinctions should help in developing a management rationale for these areas.

As well as a general description the section on each character area includes summary sub-sections regarding:

Key positive aspects – to pick out those elements that are especially important to the character of the conservation area and which must be borne in mind in any further works or when considering development proposals that would impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area. Their significance should not be lessened or their setting marred by insensitive development or by inappropriate changes to the elements themselves.

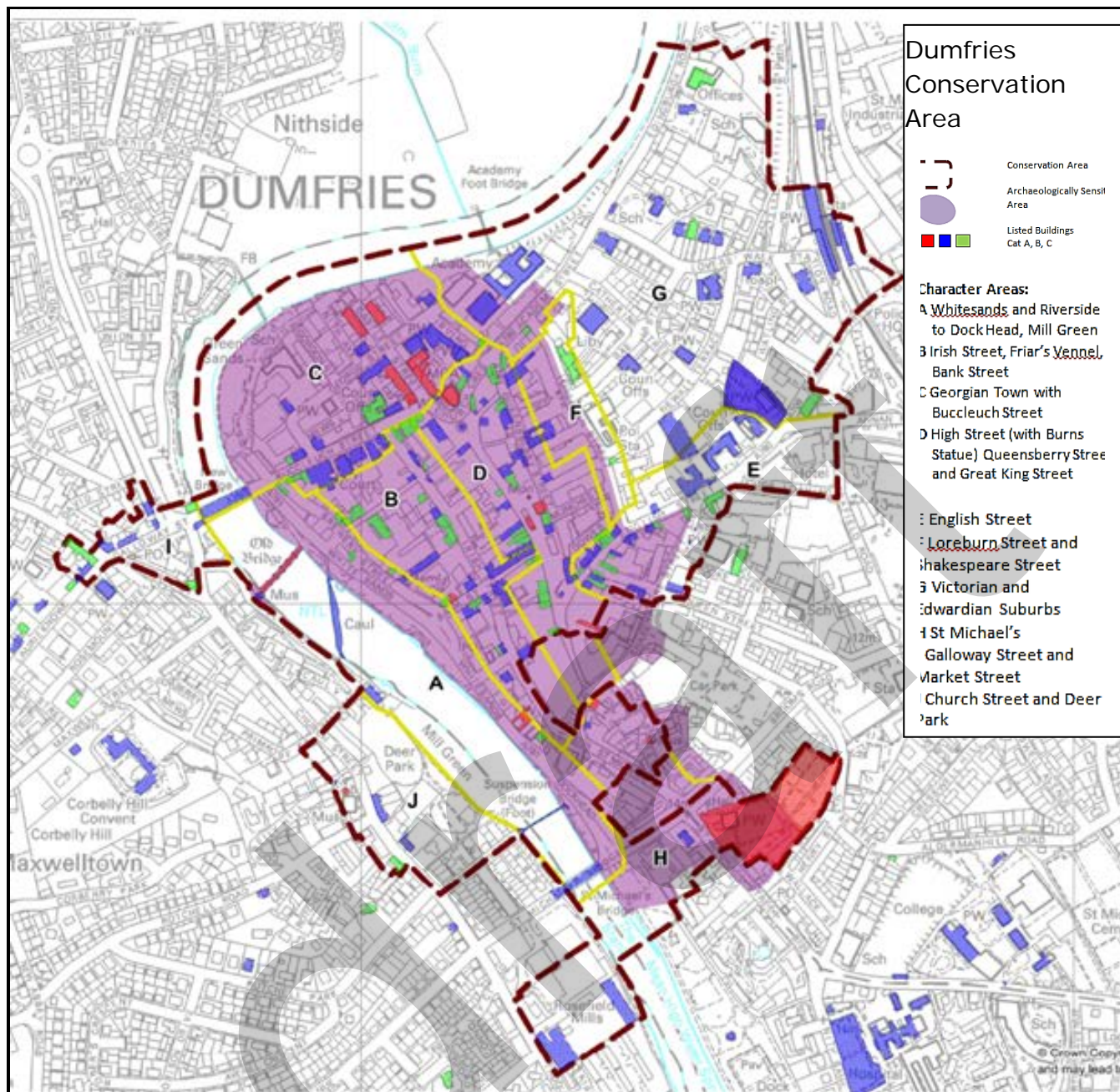
Issues and conflicts – these are intended to highlight aspects that are tending to have a detrimental or otherwise negative impact on the character and quality of the conservation area. These, some broad and some specific, will inform the action list in Part 2 of the appraisal that identifies ways in which the positive management of the conservation area can proceed.

Buildings at Risk – will list buildings that by their external appearance, or evidence of underuse might be considered at risk. That means they are suffering from, or likely to suffer from, no or poor maintenance regimes. As a result their condition and appearance is deteriorating to such an extent that this has a negative impact on the character and well-being of the conservation area.

Development Opportunities – to show where specific considerations are required in any development proposals. This is not exhaustive and only covers key sites or redundant buildings where development would have a significant impact on the area.

Enhancement Opportunities – Enhancement opportunities are suggested but it should be noted that this appraisal does not commit the Council to any specific funding for the projects suggested. These are summarised at the end of the Appraisal and are intended to be taken

forward to the Conservation Area Management Plan to enable consideration to be given to implementation, funding and prioritising of projects.



South of 32 Whitesands the buildings are set back in line with Brewery Street. However, the edge is not continuous and open or gap sites and buildings that may now be seen as inappropriate to the more traditional character play a part in reducing the architectural and townscape quality of the area. Some are the legacy of a more mixed land use where garages and workshops once formed part of the character and economy of the Whitesands. Others have suffered from under-investment on maintenance and repairs or from poorly executed repairs using cheap modern substitutes so making them less attractive in the street scene.

North of Bank Street the buildings are a mix of 2 and 3-storey domestic and commercial properties. Most properties in the northern part of Whitesands have shop fronts as do many of the properties between Brewery Street and Bank Street. South of Bank Street there are fewer shops with the last of these being next to Assembly Street. From there on the buildings are mostly larger commercial though interest is provided by such as the Church

Hall, the Salvation Army Citadel, and the fine Georgian house at 92 Whitesands (usually known as 29 Irish Street).

Throughout the Whitesands area buildings vary in scale and quality. For example, between Bank Street and Assembly Street there is the contemporary Royal Bank of Scotland building, from 1982, raised on a plinth above flood levels showing strong horizontal emphasis, while beyond the adjacent gap site a range of late 19th century two-storey buildings still form a coherent group. Building plots are often wider here but the window proportion and layout and general design aesthetic of most of the buildings emphasises a traditional vertical proportion.

Further along, towards Dockhead, architectural coherence breaks down even more with a variety of building types, including some single-storey workshops / residential units, without a unifying theme.

Roofs are mostly pitched, slated and parallel to the roadway. Relatively few buildings have dormers. Chimney stacks punctuate the skyline. As with most of the conservation area red local sandstone is the most common walling material although painted and rendered buildings also make up a considerable part of the building stock.



Horse Fair on Whitesands ca. 1900 (Courtesy of Dumfries Museum)

Brewery Street

Brewery Street is at the western end of Friars Vennel, runs parallel with Whitesands and ends where Whitesands is at its greatest width. This was a legacy of infill development on the Whitesands and much of the street is dominated by the rear elevations of those frontage properties. It is now a narrow service lane to the rear of the properties fronting the northern end of Whitesands. As a result the character is somewhat austere and neglected and suffers from underinvestment and poor levels of repairs and detailing.

A - Whitesands and Riverside to Dock Head, Mill Green

The whole riverside from Nunholm to Dock Park provides a strong boundary for the north and west of the town centre. Since the development of Maxwelltown on the west bank and its incorporation into the Burgh the urban character now spreads across the river. The stretch from Buccleuch Street Bridge to Dock Head tends to be the arrival point for many visitors to the town. To the north and south the riverside along Greensands and Dock Park changes to a more informal semi-natural character with mature tree cover. These provide important recreational extensions to the Whitesands.

The Whitesands is a broad open space and thoroughfare which forms part of the flood plain on the east bank of the River Nith running from the Buccleuch Street Bridge to Dockhead at St Michael Street Bridge. It was formerly the cattle market and is one of the key areas within the town forming a hard urban edge overlooking the river.

The river provides important views and panoramas of the town. As it flows through from Nunholm the river bends creating closure to views along its length. Mill Green and the wooded area above, on the west bank, from the Burns Film Theatre to the St Michael Street Bridge, is a key part of the character of the conservation area providing an outlook that contrasts with the urban east side.

The Whitesands is now dominated by the road and large parking areas.

In the mid 1990's, the hard landscaping with the cycleway and footpath at the very edge of the river separated from the parking areas were created. These are now part of the linear character of the area.

The rising ground behind the frontage buildings and the dominance of several key buildings, which for the most part face Irish Street, is a valuable aspect to the character of the Whitesands. This also makes the whole area between Whitesands and Irish Street sensitive to development whose form and detail will be exposed and will impact on the character and quality of the area.

The eastern side of the Whitesands, forming an abrupt edge of the town centre, is made up of a nearly continuous line of building which steps back from the end of Brewery Street. It is likely that the blocks of development that formed Brewery Street and now line the northern end of Whitesands are infill, and that the original riverside space was much wider than at present. These buildings now form a strong urban edge that contributes positively to the character of the area: in particular 32 Whitesands, the former Poacher's Rest public house, placed at right angles to the street provides a traditionally proportioned building facing and helping to define the space, in the wider part of the street.

The street terminates at the Buccleuch Street underpass. It provides access to car parks for Barbour's and other commercial properties. An informal space where Brewery Street meets Friars Vennel, gives a small space that, with appropriate traffic management and redesign of surfacing materials and layout, could be given over to a more pedestrian friendly civic space.

Mill Green

Though on the other river bank, Mill green is important to the character and setting of the Whitesands area. It is an open area on rising ground well covered in mature trees that merge with the mature garden grounds of properties fronting Church Street above.

It terminates, to the north, with the former mill, now the Burns Film Theatre and Restaurant. This together with the Caul and, just upstream, the Old Bridge House Museum and the Devorgolla Bridge provide an important grouping of historic elements in the wider area. Views of Mill Green are important from several vantage points within the conservation area and are further enhanced by occasional glimpses of the Observatory Tower.

Important Buildings

The former **Poacher's Rest (32 Whitesands)** stands on the corner with Brewery Street and is, like the Coach and Horses a traditional smaller scaled building. It is set at right angles

across the line of properties marking the end of Brewery Street helping to define the wider part of Whitesands visually.

The Coach and Horses, late 18th century, in its diminutive form, stands on the corner with Bank Street and is an important reminder of the older traditional buildings that were once more common.

Devorgilla Bridge is the oldest surviving structure in Dumfries and dates from its reconstruction in 1620. It was shortened in the early 19th century from nine arches to the six we see today. Its historic and visual character is highly significant as is the setting of the bridge.

92 Whitesands / 29 Irish Street was built by William Carruthers of Dormont, between 1690 - 1700. An impressive barrel-vaulted space used as a bonded warehouse, under the residential accommodation, with ancillary courtyard buildings, open onto the Whitesands. The former Workington Brewery Aerated Water Works at Dock Park (ca. 1904), recently occupied as Jamies Tiles, has an interesting façade with symmetrical rounded gables.

General Observations

Although the lower parts are prone to flooding the space at the end of Friars Vennel, on Brewery Street and extending northwards to the cut through to Whitesands, has the potential for more intensive use in connection with such adjacent uses as cafes and restaurants and public houses. Such an area could also serve as a community space that is away from the main traffic flows on Whitesands and so potentially more 'restful' in character.

Key positive aspects

Wide panoramic views of both the town centre, rising to Irish Street and High Street and of the west bank, Mill Green and Observatory above - the riverside is highly significant to the character of Dumfries. It offers much potential to accommodate activities as well as being of high landscape and townscape value.

Devorgilla Bridge a significant historic structure and the other three bridges - the setting and architectural quality of all the bridges is important to the identity of the town; they also offer valuable view points as well.

The river itself, dynamic and ever-changing, and the Caul – the importance of the water, the sounds and the visual impact of the Caul largely define the character of this part of the town. The change to a calmer more restful state above the Caul is also important to the area north of Buccleuch Street Bridge.

The open spaces that give light and air to the town centre – The stretch of space on both sides of the river and the links to the walkways and parks beyond are a vital foil to the more urban aspects of the town centre.

The complex urban edge to the town centre– on the rising ground the buildings, some of considerable presence, give a complex, interesting aspect to the town.

Issues and Conflicts

Larger scale, wide modern buildings have eroded the smaller scale divisions along the street frontage. Earlier work-a-day buildings, former workshops and garages were present. Some have been redeveloped as large framed semi-industrial buildings and, now seem incongruous in the smaller scale environment of the traditional street frontage.

Insensitive alterations and loss of traditional architectural elements have damaged the character of the Whitesands. The loss of the unifying character of traditional windows, materials and other details is now impacting on the visual quality of the area. To this must be added the impact of under investment in repair and maintenance which is similarly undermining the character.

The poor quality of the streetscape and poor condition of buildings fronting Brewery Street – the main concentration has been on to the Whitesands frontage with the consequence that Brewery Street has been underrated and neglected. These elevations not only show neglect and poor quality repairs but are encumbered by a myriad of unsightly service pipes and vents.

Traffic, traffic management and traffic engineering have played a major and mostly negative role in the development of the Whitesands. In turn the resultant street furniture, signage and paving materials have until recently been largely installed in response to the needs of traffic rather than with an aesthetic developed from the historic character or the needs of pedestrians. There is a need to rationalise signage and consider the impact of signage and traffic management on the wider conservation area.

The Whitesands is prone to flooding with the lower car parking and road areas being inundated several times in each year. More severe flooding which reaches and floods some buildings can occur at least once in most years. It is also likely that the impact and expectation of regular flooding is leading to relatively low levels of investment in the lower lying properties and hence their neglected appearance.

Buildings at Risk

Buildings at Risk – Survey to be undertaken - buildings will be added here when completed.

Whitesands - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

Further development and managed change in the Whitesands area is considered desirable provided that it is carried out sensitively and complements the townscape of the area. A detailed Masterplan has recently been agreed.¹²

The Whitesands Masterplan – a number of sites on the Whitesands frontage, shown as 'opportunity sites' could be redeveloped and new infill or replacement buildings erected to reinstate the historic urban edge. Proposed development should maintain the human scale of development by the use of two or three-storey buildings that drawn on the more traditional forms of building in the area around the end of Friars Vennel.

Development of gap sites and modern commercial premises – In addition to the sites noted in the Masterplan, there are opportunities to improve the townscape along the Whitesands south of Brewery Street the removal of poor and inappropriate buildings and the sensitive insertion of new development at a scale more closely related to the older traditional development adjacent.

Enhancement Opportunity 1: Implement 'A New Vision; Whitesands' – The development of a potential scheme for the remodelling of Whitesands, Greensands and Dockhead and relieving the regular flooding problems is progressing.

Enhancement Opportunity 2: Complete Friars Vennel streetscape improvements to include Brewery Street and the links to Whitesands – Whilst as yet no specific funding is in place, this scheme, if implemented, would considerably improve the local character and appearance of what are important thoroughfares. It will also help to create another small civic space that could be used in conjunction with adjoining cafes and bars, for example

Enhancement Opportunity 3: Implement Improvement scheme for properties fronting Brewery Street – The development of properties to create a viable frontage to Brewery Street will greatly enhance the character and appearance of this area leading to better economic use of the buildings. Note: this should extend to general enhancement and shop front improvements to the Whitesands frontages of these properties as well.

B - Irish Street with Friar's Vennel and Bank Street

The street is significant from a historical perspective as it lies on the southern boundary of the original medieval town, known as West Barnraws. Friars Vennel and Bank Street, crossing Irish Street, are important links between the Whitesands and the High Street. However, the historic character of Irish Street is being eroded by the high level of intervention that has taken place, some of it relatively recently.

By the end of the 19th century Irish Street was closely developed, principally mixed commercial and residential. It possessed a wide range of buildings ranging from service buildings and workshops to fine town houses. As late as the early 1960's there were relatively few gap sites and the street still retained its homogeneity, notwithstanding the wide variety of buildings.

One of the principal changes made was the clearance of individual properties that fronted the street to make way for servicing the growing and redeveloping High Street shops. Other changes have been the loss of a number of fine buildings to redevelopment of the sites. As late as the 1990's all that remained of a mansion, 73-75 Irish Street, an ornate mid-19th century Roman Doric porch was lost, giving way to the Employment Exchange.

This gradual redevelopment has resulted in a mix of buildings ranging from the over-large, refurbished, modern office block at 122 Irish Street to the prominent Victorian Italianate building at number 86, now converted to flats, and the semi industrial early 20C workshops at 107-109, interspersed with service yards and entrances. Irish Street is now perceived as having a confused urban form within which a few good traditional buildings sit, albeit somewhat uneasily.

The range of uses in the street varies considerably, but now without the workshops and smaller industries of the 19th century. Office development predominates but residential, retail and leisure uses are also present. The buildings adjacent to the intersection with Bank Street form a coherent group of buildings that mostly date from the late 19th century.

Between Bank Street and Friars Vennel the buildings continue to be varied and include the Tudor Gothic Greyfriar's Hall, with its prominent gabled facade, Nos. 119-127 a substantial range, now a hotel, set back and showing rich architectural embellishment and No 159 on the corner with Friars Vennel, a substantial 19th century house incorporating some 18th century fabric.



This variation in the built character is heightened by the variations in the building line giving a complex frontage, as well as in the alignment and elevation of the street. The high point and drop down to its junctions with Bank Street and thence on to Nith Place create interesting and articulated short views of the buildings.

Glimpses outwards across open sites or along the crossing streets add further variety and interest.

Most older buildings are of red sandstone which, depending on the age and style, ranges from roughly coursed rubble to very finely detailed ashlar. Also prominent are stuccoed buildings that have been painted and lined out to give the impression of fine stonework. Many older buildings retain good traditional architectural detailing. Of note are features such as the delicate fan-lights at Nos. 63- 65, the fluted Doric columns on the front of the Old Bank Restaurant, the heavy portico to No. 86 with the decorative elements and the Roman Doric door surround at No. 93.

The wider streetscape is unimpressive, being for the most part patched tar macadam. Kerbs vary with some older granite edgings still in place. Footways vary, being mostly smaller concrete paving with a variety of tarred and other surfacing.

Friars Vennel

Friars Vennel is an important route from the Whitesands to the town centre. It is likely to have been developed by the 16th century but does not have the early medieval origins of the High Street. The street rises from the riverside giving good views back from its upper end with the Devorgilla Bridge and the rising ground of Maxwelltown and the former convent closing the view.

The development pattern along the street is largely traditional with relatively few changes to the earlier layout. Most of the street is closely developed at the back of the footway with 2-storey and 3-storey buildings. There is a varied roof and eaves line giving a highly articulated character to the street.

Though many buildings were replaced or redeveloped around the turn of the 20th century it is possible that some of the older buildings retain earlier building fabric or evidence of the original built form. A detailed building survey looking for such archaeological remains should,

therefore, be undertaken before any works to modernise or alter the premises are undertaken.



View of Friar's Vennel ca. 1900 (Courtesy of Dumfries Museum)

The street has a continuous frontage of shops some of which have been modernised and now lack the detail and character of the original.

The street surface was recently renewed with a mixture of red and grey granite blocks giving a solid but pedestrian friendly surface. This pattern is to be developed and used on other re-surfacing projects in the town.

An informal space comprises the crossing with Irish Street, where the widened opening of the west side to access Greyfriar's Street gives a small space that with appropriate traffic management could be given over to a seating or cafe area.

Bank Street

A short, relatively straight street that connects back to the High Street, Bank Street is significantly different from Friars Vennel. Its lower section is wider and overall buildings are of a larger scale and higher status. A number of former banks provide a strong, imposing townscape.

Important Buildings

29 Irish Street, set behind a tall rubble garden wall, privately restored, is one of the oldest buildings in the area its late 17th century front with rusticated stone quoins dividing the elevation into three sections. Its importance to the Whitesands streetscape is noted above. (See the reference to 92 Whitesands above).

86 Irish Street and The Old Bank Restaurant are prominent larger buildings representing a more prosperous period from the latter part of the 19th century. Both have been converted to new uses: the former British Linen Bank at No 86 now flatted dwellings and on the corner with Bank Street the former Commercial Bank now a restaurant.

2 Assembly Street formerly the Dumfries and Galloway Club, is late 18th century with 19th century alterations by James Barbour. Prominent frontage at right angles to Irish Street closing view from Bank Street junction.

The Albert Club, dating from 1828, is a superior detached red sandstone building with elegant Georgian detailing, having a fine Doric portico and corniced windows. It forms part of the raised historic townscape when seen from the Whitesands.

16 Bank Street (the former National Bank of Scotland) is a tall sandstone 'palazzo' built in 1862. This facade has highly developed ornamentation

General Observations

The future of Irish Street is uncertain. Its present form is unsatisfactory in many ways yet there is much to value. There are considerable numbers of fine buildings though rather lost amongst poor modern buildings, gaps and servicing.

Between the rear of Marks and Spencer and Nith Place there is an opportunity to carry improvement works to the area between the building and the carriageway. Such a scheme could reinforce the link through the underpass along Old Assembly Street down to the Whitesands as well as improving the setting for the Albert Club and 29 Irish Street. There is also scope for development and / or improvements to be carried out to the private land between these properties.

Key Positive Aspects

Important historic streets that provide links between river and town centre – Friars Vennel and Bank Street in particular provide good quality pedestrian links. They also offer the opportunity for diversification in the retail and commercial offer of the town centre having, for the most part, smaller shop units.

The historic character of Irish Street and its remaining legacy of fine buildings close to the commercial heart of the town – its position adjacent to the High Street and its value to service the High Street is both an asset and a threat (as noted above). Future management of the area must take both aspects into account to help rebuild the architectural integrity of the street.

The remaining legacy of quality townscape, albeit somewhat fragmented, with interesting closed views and juxtaposition of buildings – Future management of the area must consider how to help rebuild the townscape and architectural integrity of the street.

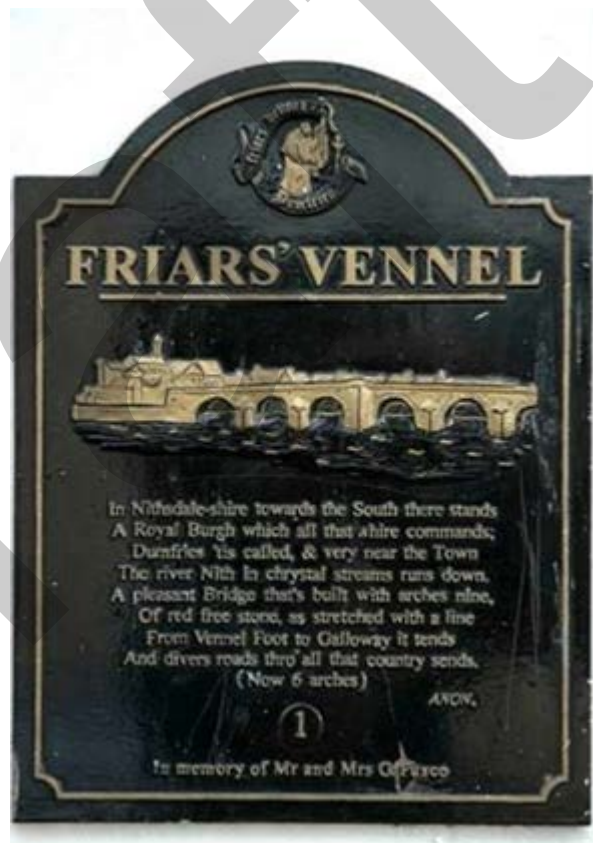
Issues and Conflicts

Overall Irish Street lacks coherence and in parts is a poor setting for its remaining historic buildings. The overlarge office block as well as some of the back sections of the larger High Street shops have changed the relationship and setting for the many attractive historic buildings that remain. Redevelopment of the office block and partial reordering of some of the other out-of-character structures could provide an opportunity to create a

stronger building line and more attractive buildings at a more appropriate scale. The present mix of uses in the area could perhaps be developed encouraging new uses for presently vacant or underused properties.

Underused and vacant buildings may in part be due to the wider economic circumstance and the fact that Irish Street has lost some of its purpose and identity. Similarly Friar's Vennel and Brewery Street suffer from underused properties that are poorly maintained. Some of this underinvestment may also be as a result of the regular flooding that occurs in the lower lying areas.

Poor streetscape, mixed often poorly maintained modern surfacing – whilst not necessarily suggesting that Irish Street as a whole should be subject to the same treatment as, for example, Friars Vennel, there is scope to reassess the approach to materials and detailing. Footways could first be improved and in some places widened to create a more amenable environment for pedestrians.



View of Friar's Vennel ca. 1900 (Courtesy of Dumfries Museum)

The pedestrianised part of Bank Street would benefit from further street surface renewal and use of opportunistic spaces and their design to focus on them as spaces rather than as thoroughfares would also be worthwhile.

Loss of original features and architectural detailing. The character and appearance of several buildings fronting these streets could be improved. Upgrading the streetscape, would help to enhance the area and provide a wider unifying character. Building repairs and reinstatement would benefit from a structured enhancement scheme that included the potential to offer grant aid to property owners.

Buildings at Risk

Buildings at Risk – Survey to be undertaken - buildings will be added here when completed.

Irish Street - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

Site adjacent to 29 Irish Street – an area of land that is underused and derelict to the rear the workshop fronting Whitesands. Sensitive development for commercial or residential use would enhance the setting of both the Albert Club and 29 Irish Street.

Enhancement Opportunity 4: Manage the development of Irish Street – Its position adjacent to the High Street and its value to service the High Street is both an asset and a threat (as noted above). Future management of the area must take both aspects into account to help rebuild the architectural integrity of the street.

Enhancement Opportunity 5: Reappraise open area to the front of 2 Assembly Street and consider a scheme to enhance street surfaces – Its position on the route from the High Street to the Whitesands as well as the setting of the listed 2 Assembly Street make this an important open area presently dominated by the service access to the rear of commercial premises.



Aspects of Irish Street, Bank Street and Friars Vennel

From top: when the 18th century meets the 20th the Loreburn shopping centre towers over 29 Irish Street; and fine detailing at Old Bank Restaurant on Irish Street; Varied building heights and styles along Friars Vennel with former Convent looming on hill beyond; and modest but imposing corner building on junction with Irish Street and Friars Vennel; view along Bank Street rising to High Street showing range of buildings, some imposing and significant. It also highlights the street's importance in connecting the town centre with the river.

C - Georgian Town with Buccleuch Street

The area west of Buccleuch Street was laid out from the 1760s onwards and represents a development of Dumfries in a purposeful and planned manner. Typical 'Georgian' approach to the design and layout of buildings is still a strong feature of this area. The area was laid out on a grid pattern of streets with the main thoroughfare, George Street, running roughly parallel to Buccleuch Street

Castle Street, George Street and environs

Stretching from Irving Street to Charlotte Street the Georgian Town represents an elegant phase in the development of Dumfries; though this was only partially implemented. Begun in the early 1900's development was slow as testified by the progress shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1853 for the burgh which indicated that only Castle Street, Gordon Street and parts of George and Irving Street had been developed.

Castle Street

This was laid out in 1806 to designs by Robert Burn, who also drew up the elevations for the buildings that were to line the street. It is possible that these plans may not have been strictly followed in their execution.¹³

Earlier buildings to the south previously extended what became Castle Street across and into what is now Burns Statue, with Greyfriar's Church hidden behind.



Castle Street seen from George Street. Below; quality detailing Castle Street.

The houses on Castle Street are of a high standard of design and detailing, recognised by their Category 'A' listing. Those on the east side are 3-bay while those opposite have 2-bay frontages.

The buildings are painted ashlar and exhibit fine quality stonework. Decoration is low-key but of high quality. Entrances have pilastered surrounds and doors have elegant and finely detailed fanlights. Small differences in the detailing give a pleasing yet unified appearance to the area. Many of the houses, both here and in George Street, have been converted to offices and a number of important local professional firms are based in the area. The view northwards along Castle Street is partially closed by the poorly detailed new block of flats.

George Street with Charlotte Street, Gordon Street, Nith Avenue and Irving Street

George Street forms the spine of the Georgian Town though its development is more patchy and mixed compared to Castle Street, which crosses George Street approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ along its length forming, on plan, a cross. Side streets are regularly spaced and join at right angles.

It is broad, straight and does not have distinctive vistas. To the north the modern 5-storey school tower block closes the view, while southwards the view is broken and is partially closed by the modern Barbour's furniture store.

In its southern part the street having turned the corner from Charlotte Street has an open sunken area adjacent that is now used for car parking. This area was undeveloped on the early Ordnance Survey maps. To the north are the school and the original Freemasons' Hall, the latter facing Charlotte Street is an isolated, prominent building that retains elegant detailing. Diagonally opposite stands the Free Church, which drops to a basement level facing the sunken carpark, giving the building a tall appearance when seen from Charlotte Street.

Beyond Gordon Street the development is more regular and typical of the earlier part of the 19th century.

Modern development such as the Church Hall, Devorgilla House and J M Barrie House are for the most part simpler and more utilitarian when compared with the earlier buildings, especially those on Castle Street. However, a key aspect of George Street is the quality of the original buildings in the vicinity of Castle Street and up to and including Irving Street. Of special note are St Georges Church, the Masonic Hall and Moat Brae.

The streetscape is now dominated by traffic engineering measures, such as the speed ramps and kerb build-outs. To the north the space fronting Moat Brae has become less well defined and is in part dominated by the ramped access to the school.

Charlotte Street is now dominated by Barbour's Home Furnishings building part of which still occupies a prominent early 19th century 3-storey tenement on the corner with Buccleuch Street. The view, from Buccleuch Street is closed by the former Masonic Hall with its ornate entrance and former Art School and Loreburn Primary School behind.

Gordon Street is a well-mannered street of Victorian, terraced, two-storey houses. These, in the Locharbriggs red sandstone are elegant and finely proportioned. The terrace to the north has unusual triangular plan bay windows. An open site, used for parking and the modern block of flats, Devorgilla House, dominate the northern side of the street from its junction with George Street.



Masonic Halls 'top and tail' George Street

Irving Street has a well ordered row of classically designed buildings on the west side, which terminates in the prominent but restrained Congregational Church (now the United Reform). A much altered building separates that row from the corner building on Church Crescent. To the east are the former Free Church and attached shop and flat, now a fitness centre, and a modest, gabled house that with its garden ground helps to turn the corner to Academy Street. Behind is the imposing Minerva Building, part of Dumfries Academy.

The modern wing of J M Barrie House now closes the street view northwards with Moat Brae, set off to the right, the latter only becoming more significant in the street view on progressing further along Irving Street.

Development of the adjacent gap site will need to be very carefully considered to complement Moat Brae itself as well as its impact on the view along the street.

Buccleuch Street though strictly speaking not part of the Georgian development, the street, in its formal layout and proximity to the area, may be considered as forming part of the Georgian Town character area. It had already been laid out before work started on the area to the north. It was extended to join with the 'New Bridge' in the 1790's.

It is a street of two halves, however, the northern side shows a broadly Georgian aspect in the rows of even, well-mannered buildings: those to the west including fine 3-storey tenements. This order is only broken by the restrained but relatively large Municipal Buildings, the base for the former Nithsdale District Council. In contrast the east side has the notable landmark buildings of the **Sheriff Court**, well as key buildings of considerable scale and presence; these include **Barbour's**, the former **Bank at 54 Buccleuch Street** and the **Bethany Hall**.

The street rises gently from the river and affords a grand vista when seen from the bridge. Greyfriar's Church and the Sheriff Court being especially prominent.



Large sandstone slabs form pavements over front basements and coal stores in George Street. Sunken basement areas in Castle Street and Irving Street with elegant cast-iron work, form part of architectural and streetscape character

Fine, elegant façades with good, strong architectural detail writ large on George Street, Moat Brae and No 42 and St George's Church.

Important Buildings:

St. George's Church – remodelled in 1893 now presents an ambitious Italianate sandstone ashlar front.

Moat Brae – c. 1832 by Walter Newall is an elegant classical town house now owned by the Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust under restoration and extension for the establishment of a centre for children's literature.

Barbour's – a long 'gently French renaissance' department store by James Barbour completed in 1879 closing the view from George Street along Charlotte Street.

Sheriff Court – imposing Baronial style building of 1866 notable for its busy sky line and the heavy rope moulding around the entrance doors.

54 Buccleuch Street – the former Clydesdale Bank designed as a tall palazzo marks the corner with Irish Street. Gifford describes this as "This palazzo has swallowed the bottle labelled 'Grow'; as its centre soars up from a tall balustraded portico."

Former Methodist Church (Weatherspoons) – by T F Hunt, 1817, though now only the shell of the former church, the interior and roof being entirely modern, the building's presence on the street corner with Castle Street and its significance in the townscape as seen from Burns Statue mark it as important to the character of the area. It has a dominant giant Ionic columned and pedimented portico.

General Observations

Most late 18th and early 19th century classical buildings were originally painted notwithstanding the very high quality of masonry work. This was to imitate the fashionable white limestone.

Many of the original houses have now been converted to offices and are occupied by prominent professional practices. Some have been changed to cafes, leisure or similar uses.

The street frontages to the terraces on Castle Street and George Street have sunken front courts that give light and access to basement floors. In most of the houses the main entrance is over a short bridge, often incorporating steps, to an imposing front door.

A distinctive feature in both streets is the use of large sandstone slabs on footways over cellars. These are vulnerable and cannot withstand the weight of modern vehicles, which should be kept off them.

Parts of George Street show limited architectural coherence due in part to the fact that the street was developed over a longer period. There are several gap sites that give opportunities for new in-fill development; however, the form of any new development should be appropriate to the wider scale and character of the area. There is scope for good new, innovative design, which would be preferable to poor copying or pastiche of the existing.

Key positive aspects

Quality and elegance of Georgian terraces – The simple classically derived proportions and layout of frontages define this part of the town and are a pleasant foil to the heavier, but no less interesting or important, Victorian detailing elsewhere.

- Painted façades should be retained.
- Layout of streets on a grid pattern – typical of a 'planned' town the layout and relationship of the terraces is the defining part of the character here.
- Strong architectural structure of Buccleuch Street with its outstanding public and commercial buildings the strong townscape created by the close grouping of these buildings and their relation to those further up the street and Greyfriars Church is important to the character of this part of the town.

Issues and Conflicts

A number of inappropriate modern interventions have broken the elegant lines and symmetry of the Georgian facades. In particular, on Irving Street the altered and out of proportion shop front next to the United Reform Church breaks the elegant rhythm of the classical frontage.

Gap sites and open views to the rear of properties fronting Buccleuch Street – some sites remain undeveloped from the foundation of these streets or have been the result of later intervention. Their (re)development must be carefully considered if the area is to be protected and enhanced.

Buildings at Risk

Buildings at Risk – Survey to be undertaken and buildings will be added here when completed.

Development and Enhancement Opportunities

Open sites off George Street, some of which are used for car parking, 55 Buccleuch Street and the former Art College Campus – Sites and properties that are to become available for redevelopment. It will be important to secure a high standard of design. Their development will also assist in the regeneration of the town centre by providing opportunities for enhancement of the general townscape in the area as well as the economic knock-on effect of their productive use. Car parking issues arising are considered in the Town Centre Parking strategy.

Enhancement Opportunity 6: Promote the development of open sites in George Street and nearby areas. – Some gap sites have remained and their development would greatly enhance the Georgian Town quarter.

Enhancement Opportunity 6a: Promote the reinstatement of historic iron railings along George Street and Castle Street frontages. – The loss of many of the original railings has lessened the quality of the streetscape. Reinstatement would greatly enhance the street scene.

D - High Street (and Burns Statue), Queensberry Street, Great King Street

This area comprises the heart of the commercial centre of Dumfries.

The High Street was originally a wide medieval marketplace lined by burgage plots and closely developed. By 1700 considerable infill development had taken place creating what we now call Queensberry Street. The most important single incursion into the open space architecturally is the Midsteeple.

Although it is likely that some buildings have their origins in the 17th century, (such as 78-83 High Street but heavily rebuilt) most buildings in the High Street range from the later 18th century to modern. Buildings are generally three or four storeys tall with the occasional two or five storey edifice. They form a continuous building line at the back of the footways. At street level there is a continuous line of shop fronts. Some good traditional fronts remain, especially on English Street and Queensberry Street.

Older buildings almost universally have slated pitched roofs, mostly parallel to the street, either with traditional eaves and rhones or, on grander buildings, the roofs set back behind parapets. Modern, larger units have a variety of modern roof forms. Buildings erected or adapted for retailer multiples are mostly large and out of scale; note especially those such as occupied by Iceland and Debenhams. Their impact on the back land towards Irish Street is significant.

In some cases, such as the building occupied by Boots or 92 High Street (formerly Happit), parts of the frontages have been retained and alterations made but major redevelopment of the rear was undertaken again making significant changes to the character and appearance of the back land.

Upper floors mostly provide storage and office accommodation for the shops although there is some independent office accommodation and a small amount of residential accommodation.

The legacy of this early infill and later development and redevelopment has given the High Street not only its dominant role in the town centre but has also created a street unified in function but with interesting variation. In particular the changes in street width and the breaking out into the wider spaces give the street a special quality that encompasses both intimacy and open vistas. The rise to the high point at the Midsteeple also gives visual interest, especially looking south where the falling street levels and resultant changes in building frontages create a varied townscape.

Civic spaces are provided in Burns Statue, Queensberry Square and the open area from the Mid Steeple to English Street. The latter contains a substantial late 19th century fountain and the recently constructed 'Plainstones' elevated area adjacent to the Mid Steeple.



High Street, Then and Now

Views of the High Street, circa 1900 and 1965 . That on the right showing what is now the site of the Loreburn Shopping Centre (Pictures: Courtesy Dumfries Museum Service).

Right: the same scene today showing the 'recreated' townscape replacing the traditional street scene.

Below: the view above as seen today.

And below right even relatively modern buildings are lost from the historic streetscape.

As well as its role as the primary retail area in the town, the civic spaces incorporated within the length of the High Street have important cultural and civic functions providing focal points for events and activities. " Guid Nychburris", an event carrying on the ancient borders tradition of annual 'Common Ridings', makes important use of the area at

High Street Fountain which with Queensberry Square hosts a weekly Saturday market.

Today the High Street is pedestrianized and vehicular access restricted to service vehicles or for the purpose of local access to individual properties.

The street surfaces in the High Street were laid in the late 1980's at the time of pedestrianization. They consist mainly of concrete blocks and slabs that are now reaching the end of their useful life. Recent street surface renewal work both in parts of the High Street and Friars Vennel has established a new palette of high quality materials and construction practices that are to be adopted when further renewal and resurfacing work is carried out in the town centre.

Burns Statue

Now principally seen as the setting to the Greyfriars Church, Burns Statue opens out from the northern end of the High Street. Six of the town's streets terminate in the space; though the main through road, heavily trafficked, is the link from Buccleuch Street to Academy Street. This tends to dominate the space both visually and by the flow of vehicles. The space is also used for public transport with a number of bus stops on the west side.

Although it is at the hub of the six streets the space still retains a sense of enclosure with a continuous row of 3-storey buildings on its west side, and substantial buildings that turn the corners from the High Street and from Academy Street. Greyfriars Church is the single most dominant and visually important edifice.

Queensberry Street

Queensberry Street, part of which was once known as Old Fleshmarket, is a long relatively narrow street having a rich and diverse character. It comprises commercial and retail premises of traditional character and scale whose retail element complementing the adjacent High Street.

Architecturally there is a considerable variety of building styles with most buildings rising to three storeys. Two larger scaled buildings, Patties and Palings give the street grandeur; while other smaller but well detailed shops create interest and traditional character. The 3-storied former hardware shop, has a fine traditional shop front and a large, iron-framed display window at first floor level. The large tenement building built on a curved frontage provides a dramatic lead in from Academy Street.

The modern 3-storey block of flats, together with the open car park adjacent bring a break and discontinuity to the street scene on the eastern side.

Of the many closes shown on the earlier Ordnance Survey maps, only two now remain. One leads to the High Street and one to Loreburn Street. These have lost their historic character, both now simply serving principally as pedestrian routes. Both are the sites of demolished buildings and adjacent buildings still show the scars.

Although different in form to the original closes, the enclosed courtyard to the rear of 88 Queensberry Street is of interest. Buildings are single storey having attic windows with pedimented dormer heads. A former mission hall (dated 1885) stands at the eastern end of the courtyard. An axial roof ventilator makes for visual interest when seen from the adjacent car park.

Great King Street - opens from the High Street and Queensberry Square with two large, prominent corner buildings providing a wider visual gateway into the street. Previously, very

narrow and linking Queensberry Street to Loreburn Street through a bend, Great King Street was created by the demolition of a long stretch of buildings fronting Queensberry Square and the old street itself. The view along the street is partially closed by The Fleshers Arms public house that is one of the last of the older traditional buildings on Loreburn Street.

It is essentially early 20th century in character with one side dominated by tall tenements and small shops, erected in the late 1920's and 1930's facing the imposing former Linen Bank building and the long, low, former post office. Two, apparently older but altered, two-storey buildings, survive between the tenements.

The superficial character of the street is dominated by the bus stances and traffic control equipment at its eastern end and the one-way flow of traffic. Paving is modern and functional. Kerb lines and street layout are mostly traffic oriented.

Important Buildings

128 Queensberry Street (formerly Paling's), c.1900 in a free Flemish style has unusual oriel windows on the top floor and a row of high-arched windows with the original glazing pattern to the first floor.

109 Queensberry Street (formerly Pattie's), is a large elegant store of around 1880. Its high proportions and French pavilion roof make it stand out among the more traditional buildings adjacent.

109 Queensberry Street - is a large elegant store of around 1880. Its high proportions and French pavilion roof make it stand out among the more traditional buildings adjacent.

Midsteeple, just north of the midpoint of the High Street, is one of Dumfries' historically important landmarks. Completed in 1707, it was built as the townhouse by Tobias Bacup for the Burgh Council. It resembles the Town House in Stirling and in its architecture and detailing was in its time a modern and highly significant building. It has a number of accretions.

The former **Trades Hall (now the Santander Bank)** built in 1806, is an elegant 'Georgian' building with a pedimented projecting bay on the main frontage.

Queensberry Monument erected in memory of the 3rd Duke of Queensberry in 1780 designed by Robert Adam.

The Fountain, dates from 1882. It is the work of the Sun Foundry in Glasgow, and provides a picturesque focal point at the point where English Street joins the High Street.

The **former County Hotel**, now Waterstone's was originally the elegant Georgian styled town house of Richard Lowthian of Stafford. Its upper floors and cast-iron balcony were added in 1860.

6/8 St. Andrew Street, though not strictly in the High Street forms part of the continuous elevation from the High Street. It is an imposing, tall 3-storey edifice highly ornamented. Its height, emphasised by large chimney stacks give it importance and presence in the view along the High Street from Burns Statue.

Greyfriar's Church facing Burns Statue forms an important landmark terminating views along the north end of the High Street. It is also seen, in the distance, juxtaposed with the

Midsteeple when viewed from the southern part of the High Street. It is highly significant in views along Buccleuch Street.

General Observations

The High Street and close environs comprise the commercial heart of the town. It is the area where perhaps the most significant changes to the historic character have been made.

Crucially, as evidence of the late 19th century and early 20th century mapping shows the changes from a very densely developed central area to the more open aspect today. Very large numbers of houses set in tight, unhealthy, dark closes have been demolished.

It is likely that there will be continued pressure for development and redevelopment in these central areas around and off the High Street. Key historic buildings and a traditional rhythm and treatment of facades will help maintain the human scale and architectural interest of the area whilst allowing well-designed modern intervention.

On the High Street there is potentially a demand for larger retail units. Where consideration is being given to the amalgamation of smaller shops then the development of the frontage should recognise and retain the smaller units and their architectural identity.

Key positive aspects

Focal and landmark historic buildings such as the Midsteeple and the former Trades Hall – such buildings are important to the identity of the town and help to set markers for its historical development. Their setting and detailed aspects should be preserved.

The wide and open spaces – serve to meet civic, cultural and social needs with the focus on the recently developed Plainstones.

Views of Greyfriars – includes the setting of the church as seen from Burns Statue as well as from further along and from High Street Fountain.

Interesting historic buildings retained amongst the more modern neighbours – In addition to the key or landmark buildings several interesting earlier buildings survive within the main High Street frontages. These such as Nos. 55 High Street, 71 to 73, the former County Hotel at No. 79, No. 109 on the corner with Bank Street and the decorated 111 High Street, retain the links to the earlier form of the street and maintain a sense of place that is important to the overall character of the area.

Vennels and Closes – especially such as that leading to the Globe Inn, established in 1610, Burns' favourite Howff.

Issues and Conflicts

Renewal of Pedestrianised Surfaces - The materials used in the 1980's are no longer considered appropriate. A palette of durable, high quality materials in Friars Vennel, as established around Midsteeple and Burns Statue with design detail compatible with pedestrian and wheelchair use.

Larger scale modern buildings have lost the urban grain of the original medieval burgale plots on the street frontage by having long horizontal proportions. Because of the redevelopment of the original plots it is now unlikely that the original tightly packed rhythm in the street frontage could be reinstated. However, in any future development schemes reference to more traditional, vertically proportioned frontages should be maintained and

where appropriate any existing plot divisions should be expressed in the division or design of new buildings.

Loss of original architectural detail and joinery and detailing is of concern. Many older buildings have had modern windows installed as part of previous improvements. This has undermined their historic character and appearance.

Adaptation to the changing needs of the retail sector has also meant that either unsympathetic changes have been made to buildings or they are now less suitable or convenient to the businesses occupying them. A greater proportion of units with larger open floor plans would better suit modern retailing needs. Methods of adapting, renewing or extending buildings need to be considered to ensure older buildings continue to be economic whilst retaining their historic character. This pressure on the older stock of buildings is likely to increase and needs to be overcome to ensure that a healthy retailing sector is retained in the town centre.

Upper floor vacancy rate (approximately 9% for the High Street in mid-2012) Underuse of the upper parts of buildings can lead to underinvestment in the fabric and a lessening of maintenance. This in turn can have a negative impact on the street scene.

Street furniture and signage have to some extent been ad hoc or reflect earlier trends. Consideration should be given to a rationalisation of all street furniture and additional items such as planters. The proliferation of posts carrying lighting, security cameras, signage and decorative elements such as flower baskets and banners has led to visual clutter and intrusion that may now be regarded as detrimental to the character of the conservation area.

Buildings at Risk

Buildings at Risk – Survey to be undertaken - buildings will be added here when completed.

High Street - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

Rear of 174 High Street, 89-91 Queensberry Street and Munches Street / Dobies

Wynd – Buildings and sites that presently are underused or detract from the townscape. Gap sites such as 89-91 Queensberry Street should be considered for development with retention of access way and closes where necessary. The former warehouses at the rear of 174 High Street have been partially restored (early 2013) but further work to the buildings and adjacent land would help to improve the townscape and viability of the area. Consideration should be given to the future of Munches Street and Dobies Wynd and partial redevelopment to reinstate buildings on street frontages.

Enhancement Opportunity 7:

Redevelop Burns Statue – A scheme for the improvement of Burns Statue and its immediate surroundings has recently been completed. The primary aim was that Burns Statue should become less dominated by traffic and be presented as a dignified setting for Greyfriars Church.

Enhancement Opportunity 8: Upgrading, resurfacing and general improvement of Three Crowns Close, Coffee Close and adjoining Close, Royal Oak Close, Standard Close and Gas House Close

– The closes play an important part in pedestrian circulation and access. Conflict with their use for parking and / or waste management may need to be resolved. This will involve the Council and adjacent land owners.

E - English Street

English Street provides an area of mixed shopping adjacent to the High Street. It is densely developed with buildings to the back of footways and has, for the most part, only seen relatively minor intervention. English Street is a typical example of an early street that has slowly evolved. It is lined by a mix of buildings, now mainly nineteenth century in character and of various degrees of architectural merit. It is possible that some buildings have earlier origins and any scheme of refurbishment or redevelopment should include archaeological examination of the hidden fabric to determine whether or not this is so.

English Street is the transition from the heart of the town centre, adjacent to the High Street, through its secondary shopping function and out to the tertiary area and eventually forming the approach and frontage to the Council headquarters gives it a varying and interesting character. This is strengthened by the slight rise towards Loreburn Street and the fall down towards its junction with Shakespeare Street. A slight curvature in the street closes views and creates a progression of differing streetscape perspectives.

Leading off English Street is **Queen Street**, now truncated by **Shakespeare Street**. It is narrow and lined by mostly 3-storey tenements. The rear wing of the Queensberry Hotel leading back from English Street dominates the entrance to the street.

Development pattern along English Street is traditional with relatively few changes to the earlier layout. The junction with Loreburn Street has been widened, giving a gap on the northern side of the street. Further along, a group of older buildings have given way to a large and out of character steel-framed shop that is set back and again breaks the tight building line. Apart from these, most of the street is closely developed at the back of the footway with 2-storey and 3-storey buildings. Most have shop fronts, which are unbroken along the part of the street closer to the High Street. Some high quality traditional shop fronts remain, while others have simply been hidden under modern finishes. Other shop fronts have been modernised and now lack the detail and character of the original.

Most buildings date from the 18th or 19th century and the dominant architectural style is that of a simplified frontage using Georgian derived proportions for window openings. A number of Victorian buildings, or buildings that were 'modernised' in the 19th century, also give a distinct character to the street. Plot widths, and building widths vary but frontages are mostly vertically emphasised.

Roofs are pitched, slated and parallel to the street. Chimney stacks and, where retained, ornate cans make an important contribution to the roofscape of the area. Wall materials are either red sandstone or painted render and in the latter case window openings often have raised stone or painted surrounds.

The street is partly pedestrianized but the section from Queen Street to Loreburn Street is not pedestrian friendly. The stretch beyond Loreburn Street to its junction with Shakespeare Street carries a high volume of traffic.

Important Buildings:

Council Headquarters, 1912 by J M Dick Peddie, is an impressive edifice of Locharbriggs red sandstone. It is in a neo-Georgian Style and was originally fronted by ornate cast-iron railings and gateways.

Now referred to as **Militia House** and used as Council offices, the former police barracks is a large Scots Baronial styled building by J Barbour erected in 1876. It is highly significant in views into the conservation area, especially along Hoods Loaning.

Jubilee Buildings, 1887, though not notable on architectural grounds, is an important building defining the corner of Loreburn Street and English Street. It possesses a fine bust of Queen Victoria set in a niche on the English Street frontage.

Queensberry Hotel 1869, by James Barbour, has an elaborate frontage carved with trophies and foliage.

8 English Street (former Union Bank), is described by Gifford as "a dignified palazzo".¹⁸

General Observations

English Street has the potential to provide a pleasant and commercially successful environment that is at a human scale. This is due partially to the way the continuous façade of buildings of varying heights and detailing form a sinuous building line enclosing the street coupled with the relative narrowness of the street and the fact that it is partially pedestrianized.

Key positive aspects

Interesting intimate streetscape punctuated by key architecturally important buildings – The street offers a smaller, more intimate scale of development that allows for a different range of shops and commercial enterprises from the High Street adding variety and vitality to the town centre.

Dominant Council Headquarter Buildings grouped with St Mary's Church and Cairndale Hotel – this creates a civic space that could be enhanced and linked across to the leisure centre and its open setting. Beyond is the cinema, St Andrew's Church and the Theatre Royal that could also be included in a reappraisal of this whole area.

English Street lies on an important route into the centre – though not directly related to its townscape qualities the fact that the street connects the leisure centre, Council offices and cinema with the town centre makes it significant in the conservation area and meriting special attention to improve and upgrade its buildings and streetscape.

Issues and Conflicts

Poorly detailed shop fronts and those altered including the incorporation of security shutters – These are having a serious impact on the character and appearance of the street.

The shared pedestrian and traffic part of the street lacks definition that would give pedestrians priority over vehicles – redesign of the surfacing and traffic management would allow continued shared use of the street but would make it safer for pedestrians by making vehicles take second place.

Loss of original architectural detail and joinery and under investment in the buildings - some older buildings are underused and poorly maintained while others have undergone alterations and repairs that are not in keeping with their traditional character.

Buildings at Risk

Buildings at Risk – Survey to be undertaken - buildings will be added here when completed.
English Street - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

Modern large commercial premises and back land at 93 English Street and the open corner site adjacent to 62 English Street – the larger site at No. 93 represents a visually incompatible building in the street frontage. Its careful redevelopment, which may be associated with back land, could enhance the townscape in this part of the street.

Enhancement Opportunity 9: Redesign the shared pedestrian and traffic part of English Street to give a more pedestrian friendly environment – redesign of the surfacing and traffic management would allow continued shared use of the street but would make it safer for pedestrians by making vehicles take second place.

Enhancement Opportunity 10: Reappraise the area fronting the Council Headquarters to include the area between the leisure centre, the cinema, St Andrews Church - The Theatre Royal has been restored and public realm work has been included. However, there is scope to redevelop or at least consider the setting and relationship between several important public buildings with the possibility of creating a civic and cultural complex with open spaces of high quality.

F - Loreburn Street with Shakespeare Street

Although separated geographically, these streets are considered together because they are both the product of mid-20th century 'improvements'. The overriding characteristic of these streets is that they were created from older densely developed streets to accommodate modern traffic flows. Both have a more open character brought about by the loss of earlier townscape.

Loreburn Street

Loreburn Street is on the line of the medieval back lane shown as East Barnraus in the Burgh Survey, and formed the boundary of the built-up area of Dumfries in the 18th century. The 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map shows Loreburn Street to be tightly developed and narrow.

Piecemeal redevelopment and demolition of the closes opened the area out and in the latter half of the 20th century it lost large sections of its traditional buildings to street improvements and the creation of the car park.

The eastern side is now dominated by the Police Station of 1938 with its late 20th century extension and the architecturally bulky Telephone Exchange completed in

1963. Other interventions have been introduced to promote vehicular traffic movement which although partially successful has been at the expense of pedestrians and the character of the area.

The character of the street changes along its length. On entry from Academy Street it is one-sided with the disused Loreburn United Free Church forming a centrepiece along the row of traditional development with single storey sheds also forming part of the building-line at the start. Opposite the area is open with views of the remains of the older development fronting Queensberry Street and the newer block of flats. The street tightens up at the junction with Great King Street where buildings line the street at the back of the footways. Those original buildings that remain are mostly two and three storey 19th century with pitched slated roofs. Loreburn Street becomes much more part of the town centre as it merges with English Street. Here are to be found some retail and commercial businesses and public houses.

Shakespeare Street

Largely peripheral to and not wholly within the designated conservation area, Shakespeare Street is, however, a significant area on its edge impacting on the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. The development of Shakespeare Street in the 20th century has changed the dominance of traffic flow and the perception of this street as a major route. Earlier mapping shows English Street to be the principal arterial route into the town centre with Shakespeare Street a smaller side road that was heavily and closely developed.

The present form of this street is the result of road widening and the demolition of many buildings in the latter half of the 20th century. Like Loreburn Street the 'improvements' have seriously undermined the character and amenity of the area. Its character is now essentially modern with several new relatively large scale blocks of flats. More recently, in 1995, the loss of the South Free Church further eroded the historic character of the street.

The gap site fronting Brooms Road car park and the low building associated with the NCP car park on the opposite of the road still bear testimony to the problems of thoughtless building removal.

The original buildings that remain are mostly two and three storey 19th century with pitched slated roofs. The street retains a small number of shops, clustered around the Theatre Royal and at Nith Place. Some of the gaps left by demolished buildings have been redeveloped with new social housing in the form of flats and supported accommodation. The bulk and massing and general detailing is not wholly in keeping with the traditional character of the area. It is possible that their impact could be mitigated by appropriate development of adjacent open areas to create a new townscape for this part of Dumfries.

Important Buildings

The Fleshers Arms is prominent in the view from Great King Street and the gable end when coming along Loreburn Street itself. It is likely that this is the oldest surviving building on the street.

Loreburn United Free Church is important for the variation and articulation its façade gives to the run of buildings on the northern part of the street.

The Police Station and Telephone Exchange dominate architecturally and provide important aspects, not necessarily in keeping, to the townscape. The older section of the Police Station was built in 1938 and exhibits a regular and not wholly out-of-scale frontage to the street.

The Towers of St, Andrew's Pro-Cathedral destroyed by fire in 1961, form important landmarks viewed across the conservation area. However, they are isolated visually and their setting is diminished by poor immediate surrounding areas and the loss of the upper part of the spire.

The modern St. Andrew's Church by Sutherland and Dickie, 1963, is concrete framed and with a long sweeping roof. Its impact on the conservation area is limited as it is set so far back from the street.

Theatre Royal is notable more for the association with Robert Burns and as the oldest continually working theatre in Scotland than its intrinsic architectural qualities.

General Observations

The older buildings in these streets are constructed of red local sandstone which is also used on some of the newer buildings, most notably the telephone exchange, which uses sawn red sandstone as a cladding. Render and brickwork are also commonly used. Further use of brickwork should be limited and used where it would not detract from the character set by the local red sandstone. Newer materials may be acceptable where they are used in an architectural manner to emphasise form or to provide visual interest and articulation.

Improving the pedestrian environment in both these streets, to encourage convenient pedestrian use, with proper redevelopment of vacant sites can help these areas to recover some of the traditional townscape qualities. This might include narrowing roads and reducing vehicle speeds thereby gaining much needed space for pedestrians, easing pedestrian road crossing and increasing pedestrian comfort.

New development in gap sites should seek to reinforce (or re-establish) an urban form of buildings of around 3 storeys high fronting into the back of the footpath. If larger buildings were proposed they should seek to minimise the apparent width of their frontage by modelling and articulation of the facades.

Key positive aspects

Towers of St Andrews – The towers are part of an important historical narrative and provide a widely seen visible landmark in the town. Glimpses may be had from locations such as the corner of Loreburn Street where it joins English Street or from further afield outside of the conservation area. They also provide an interesting contrast with the new church, which is of considerable architectural merit.

Theatre Royal – the theatre, now extended and restored, is of significant cultural and historic importance.

Issues and Conflicts

Loss of enclosure and gap sites, truncated end of Queen Street. Development should be encouraged that redefines the street and provides a sense of enclosure. Though it is now not possible to reduce the scale and width of Shakespeare Street, appropriate forms of development could greatly enhance the urban character of this part of the town. Such development should have regard to re-establishing the pedestrian links from the residential areas and the car park to the east with the town centre.

Opportunities exist, such as at the end of the western part of Queen Street and along the frontage to the Brooms Road car park for sensitive traditionally scaled buildings, which could be in either a modern idiom or revert to good quality traditional forms and use of materials, but avoiding pastiche.

Dominance of traffic, traffic engineering and signage - The dominance of the roadway means Shakespeare Street acts as a barrier to pedestrians. Consideration should be given to the introduction of a more pedestrian friendly design to the street. Shared areas shopping area and retaining parking and layout design that, whilst allowing vehicular access, favours the pedestrian and increases safety by slowing vehicular traffic should be a priority.

There is a need to rationalise signage and consider the impact of signage and traffic management on the wider conservation area

Open aspect of car parks – sensitive development, as described above on the street frontages, could help to mitigate the impact of these areas. Care should be taken not to over-design the roadways and access to back lands or car parks otherwise the enclosure and traditional character will again be lost.

Poor setting for the towers of the former St Andrews Pro-Cathedral – somewhat lost on a carriageway edge without any real sense of purpose the setting for the towers is now fragmented.

Buildings at Risk

Buildings at Risk – Survey to be undertaken - buildings will be added here when completed.

Loreburn Street - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

The open aspect of the northern part of the Street – Development, in association with considerations in the Town Centre Parking Strategy, could allow for a reinstatement of closure and intimate townscape.

Enhancement Opportunity 11: Reinstate frontage development to Loreburn Street

Part of the land is a short stay car park that is important to the central shopping area allowing good access to the northern end of the High Street and to Queensberry Street. However, consideration should be given to how the street enclosure can be reinstated whilst still visually signposting the main.

Shakespeare Street: Development and Enhancement Opportunities

Open sites and the wide traffic dominated street – the reinstatement of a more pedestrian friendly environment as well as the provision of links through to the town centre are important to the wider economic regeneration initiatives being promoted.

Enhancement Opportunity 12:

Reappraise Nith Place and consider a scheme to enhance the area – There is scope to develop a unified public space that provides a new focus and setting for the western end of St Michael Street as well as creating a new pedestrian friendly area. The present dominance of traffic and the associated street furniture, signage and other elements, presently uncoordinated, make this area visually unappealing and difficult to navigate on foot.

G - Victorian and Edwardian Suburbs

This area, immediately to the north east of the town centre, was developed from the middle of the 19th century onwards on open land and nurseries as the new housing area for the town. It provided a fresher environment, better housing and green spaces. Some parts were developed at a higher density, such as Rae Street, but for the most part houses were of a substantial size and had private gardens. This growth and investment was also linked to the rise in the use of the railway and the development of the station and the

A range of detached, semi-detached and terraced housing was developed along existing routes, such as Lovers' walk, as well as in purposely laid out streets, such as Rae Street and Catherine Street on hinterland plots. For example, much of what is now the developed area of Catherine Street and Lovers' Walk was a nursery in the 19th century.

Catherine Street, Rae Street and Newall Terrace

Catherine Street is dominated by the ornate Ewart Library, a Renaissance style building set back on the western side of the street. Most other properties are terraced houses or flats set at the back of the pavement or with small front enclosures. These once had cast-iron railings but all have now been lost.

The area of Newall Terrace that is closest to the town centre is somewhat fragmented by the variety of building types and scale of buildings present. These range from the well-proportioned, gable fronted school, now the Oasis Youth centre, to the Loreburn Hall where two lions guard the entrance providing a visual focal point. The car parks, some sited on previously built up areas others on former school grounds break the continuity of development. The area to the south of Newall Terrace is dominated by the massive block of the telephone exchange and the modern, industrial-like extension to the council offices as well as the main part of the Loreburn Hall.

Further along the street takes on a more sub-urban character dominated by relatively large houses, mostly semi-detached.

Lovers' Walk

Lovers' Walk is on the line of an older by-way and was developed, much as seen today, by the 1880's. The street has a distinct suburban character with spacious houses set in private grounds. Of particular note are the long frontages to properties on the eastern side of the street with sandstone walls to the back of the footways.

Academy Street

Academy Street is dominated by the school and in particular the Minerva Building and its 1930's extension to the north. These are set well back from the road on higher ground given them a more imposing character.

Academy Street starts at Church Crescent where the character is still tightly urban town centre. 3-storey tenements and 2-storey rows with shops at ground floor line the street. It becomes progressively more sub-urban in character with the continuous terracing on the south side giving way at Catherine Street to the open ground and later to the gate lodge to Elmbank. Modern school buildings and the former lodge complete the development on the north side where the road, having become the Edinburgh Road, follows the river Nith but elevated from it. Larger properties and mature planting then dominate the character after the Langlands Terrace, itself an imposing block of houses set back behind modest front gardens.

Important Buildings:

Minerva Hall, Dumfries Academy – Is by F J C Carruthers and was completed in 1897. Gifford describes it as 'exuberant English baroque' having a 'grandiose centrepiece with a portico of giant Ionic columns'.

The figure of 'Learning' atop the cupola is glimpsed from a variety of locations including Laurieknowe on the approach to the conservation area.

Station Hotel - and the **Station** are key buildings showing the importance of the railway to the 19th century and early 20th century Dumfries. The height of the Station Hotel,

surmounted by the spire, makes this a feature building visible from the top of Newall Terrace, rather like a marker for the station from the town centre.

Former U. P. Church - on corner from Academy Street to Lovers' Walk. It was until recently a school dining hall and is now a community café and training centre.

St. John's Church - is a landmark building whose spire and dominant location set it apart as a significant focal point on Newall Terrace and Lovers' Walk.

Former Schools - on Rae Street and Newall Terrace, highlight the growth and social history of Dumfries. The School on Newall Terrace is a Youth Centre, though Rae Street School has yet to find a new use.

Ewart Library - described by Gifford as 'unexciting free renaissance' dates from 1904 and was designed by Alan B Crombie.

General Observations

Though not entirely homogeneous the area is identifiably a product of the Victorian and Edwardian expansion of the town and the drive to seek better living environment.

H - St. Michael's

Nith Place with St Michael Street (to Broom's Road)

Nith Place, once a link from the High Street to St Michael Street has been substantially subsumed into Shakespeare Street. It formed the core of a secondary centre and still retains a number of retail and commercial premises.

It opens out to a substantial space originally the junction between Nith Place, Irish Street and St Michael Street with an elegantly curving frontage of modest buildings leading round the corner into St Michael Street. The recent loss of a small 'hotel' has left a gap site on the southern side of Nith Place / St Michael Street. The western side is now dominated by the end elevation of the Loreburn Shopping Centre. Its scale and the provision of a high covered bus pull in overpower the traditional buildings to the east

The dominance of the traffic flow down Shakespeare Street belies the origins of Nith Place and its true urban form.

The first stretch of St Michael Street is much as described above with mixed use 2 and 3-storey traditional buildings. Shops and businesses are clustered at the northern end of the street and on its turn to Nith Place. Buildings on the south side of the street are mostly later Victorian in character while many on the northern side appear to be earlier. The large 4-storey block of flats dominates the southern end of St Michael Street and is seen in juxtaposition with the important St Michael's Church giving a conflicting townscape and impacting on the setting of the church.

A very significant aspect of the street is how St Michael's Church closes the view along the street when seen from the vicinity of the Loreburn Centre.

Burns Street

Is a short double-curved street that links the upper part of St Michael Street to Shakespeare Street. Its significance now is the location of Burns House, which was the Dumfries residence of Robert Burns in the last years of his life in the late 18th century. It is now a Museum.

Originally very closely developed the street is more open and now mainly serves a car park. A number of original two-storey cottages survive at its eastern end with modern housing and the Activity and Resource centre opposite. Modern 4-storey blocks of flats overpower the traditional buildings dominate its western end where it joins Shakespeare Street.

Important Buildings:

Burns House – important as the home of Robert Burns during the latter years of his life. It is now a museum and has been carefully restored.

St. Michael's and South Church 1749, is prominent in views across and into the town; its tower and spire forming a landmark rivalled only by that of Greyfriar's.

24 Nith Place built 1753, with strong Georgian- detailing closing the view along the High Street.

Moorhead's Hospital – now converted to flats this elegant Georgian H-plan building is significant in views along Brooms Road. It forms a group with the church and churchyard opposite.

General Observations

The area around St Michael's Church and Moorheads hospital is separated from the town centre by Brooms Road and the widened junction at St Michael Street. The Church and Churchyard are listed at category 'A' and Moorheads is listed category 'B'. These statutory designations provide adequate protection and their inclusion in the conservation area is not wholly necessary. Similarly the Rosefield Mills complex though within the present conservation area is now so degraded overall and being separated from the town centre by modern intrusive development is proposed for exclusion from the revised boundary.

Key positive aspects

View towards St Michaels Church – The narrow street frames the view towards the church from its northern end. Dominance and architectural quality of St Michael's Church and historic graveyard surrounding. The landmark quality of the church is highly significant.

Issues and Conflicts

Insensitive alterations and loss of traditional architectural elements is eroding the character of these streets. The loss of the unifying character of traditional windows, materials and other details is now impacting on the visual quality of the area. To this must be added the impact of under investment in repair and maintenance which is similarly undermining the character.

Buildings at Risk

Buildings at Risk – Survey to be undertaken - buildings will be added here when completed.

St Michael's - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

No significant development issues. –

Opportunities for larger scale development are limited. All schemes in the general area will need to consider the townscape impact of the development not only in immediate context but also in relation to the wider setting and townscape views of the church.

Enhancement Opportunity – see note regarding Nith Place above.

I - Galloway Street and Market Street

This triangle of tight urban development is both the lead in to the river crossing at Buccleuch Bridge and a nucleus of the earlier part of Maxwelltown on the west bank of the river Nith. Formerly the county boundary followed the river and it was not until 1928 that Maxwelltown was amalgamated with the Burgh of Dumfries. Maxwelltown also includes the medieval Lincluden Collegiate Church but this has now been engulfed by modern development and is in any case well beyond the conservation area boundary.

The principal streets that comprise this part of the conservation area include Galloway Street, Market Square/High Street and Howgate Street. These are all closely developed with most of the buildings at the back of, often narrow, footways.

Market Square continues to Mill Road (part of which was formerly Market Street) but this area also previously densely developed is now largely open, the houses having been demolished by the 1950's. (check date) The southern part of the site bounded by Old Bridge Street was redeveloped with 4-storey flatted dwellings in the 1960s. The only remaining earlier building on the river frontage from Market Square is now the Bridge End Museum.

Properties on Galloway Street are mixed two and three-storey mixed residential many having shops at street level. Some good, if simple, traditional shop fronts survive with several examples of a variant that employ a fascia with bracketted ends but no pilasters. Glasgow Street is now a wide traffic dominated junction that formerly comprised two tightly developed streets meeting with Galloway Street; these being Glasgow Street and College Street.

For the most part the older properties had been built with their backs to the river, which at this point is edged by relatively high sandstone walling with no access to the water's edge.

Important Buildings:

Bridgend Theatre – is of townscape interest as its rounded end defines the junction of High Street and Howgate Street. It was an Episcopal Church and converted to a theatre in the 1970s.

Hope Place – on the corner with Terregles Street, its curved frontage and round-headed windows give an Italianate feel to the late-Georgian design.

Old Bridge House Museum – is one of the oldest houses in the area with elements dating to the 17th century.

Maxwelltown West Church – set high and with its tower and spire is a dominant landmark building that with the Benedictine Convent (this not in the conservation area) help to define the strong architectural quality of this part of the town.

General Observations

The current appraisal has determined that consideration should be given to a review of this part of the conservation area and that it should be excluded from the main Dumfries designation. There is considerable merit to the townscape and character of this part of the town, however, a review of the whole of the western side of the river should be undertaken to determine the most appropriate boundary including the Church Street area and potentially parts of adjacent areas to the west.

Key positive aspects

Intimate historic townscape with links to river- side at Old Bridge House Museum –

The loss of the riverside and island development is unfortunate, however, the tight network of streets that comprise the triangle still have a quality that is of considerable interest and townscape quality. Greater care in undertaking works to properties would pay dividends in recreating a fine traditional, intimate local centre looking out on to Mill Green and the Old Bridge beyond

J - Church Street and Deer Park

Church Street runs through later suburban developments on the west side of the Nith, on elevated ground. It is characterised by groups of terraced housing separated by individual larger houses set in mature garden grounds. These back on to the 'Deer Park' an open and partially wooded area on the steep slopes down to the river. Together they are very significant green areas in views from the town side of the river, both direct off Whitesands and in glimpses along the streets running down from Irish Street.

The tower of the former mill, converted to an astronomical observatory in 1835 occupies the highest part of the area. It now houses the Camera Obscura and is part of the adjoining Dumfries Museum. The tower commands excellent views and is a dominant landmark building.

The street is relatively narrow with a single footway on part of its length. It is bounded in part by medium high stone walls.

Older buildings are mostly 19th century two- storey; though Corberry Terrace is comprised of tenement rising to a fourth attic floor with dormers. The lowest floor is at basement level below the street.

Important Buildings:

The Observatory dating from 1798 but altered in 1835, is widely seen from many parts of the conservation area and forms a focal point / landmark building. Its historic interest is also significant as it now houses the camera obscura giving fascinating 360o views of the town.

Millbank set in a mature garden is a fine architectural composition with dominant chimneys and gables. It dates from the late 19th century.

General Observations

The current appraisal has determined that consideration should be given to a review of this part of the conservation area and that it should be excluded from the main Dumfries town centre designation.

There is considerable merit to the townscape and character of this part of the town, however, a review of the whole of the western side of the river should be undertaken to determine the most appropriate boundary including the Galloway Street and Market Street area and potentially parts of the adjacent suburban villa development to the west.

Key positive aspects

Varied historic townscape on rising ground with significant mature trees and landmark Observatory – the curving and rising (then falling) aspect of the street gives it a closed-in quality that gives varying views and vistas. The well-developed garden grounds

with mature trees add significantly to the character and quality as do the substantial buildings. The wooded / open areas adjacent down to the river as well as the river-side walkways are an important asset both for informal recreation and as a backdrop to the conservation area.

Issues and Conflicts

Incremental changes to properties, insensitive repairs and addition of satellite receiving dishes – as with many other parts of the conservation area such changes are gradually eroding the character of and appearance of the area. A review of the area will allow for a better programme of public consultation and perhaps a greater understanding of the issues that in turn would lead to a more considered stewardship of the area.

Buildings at Risk

Buildings at Risk – Survey to be undertaken - buildings will be added here when completed.

Church Street / Deer Park - Development and Enhancement Opportunities

No significant development issues. – Opportunities for larger scale development are limited. All schemes in the general area will need to consider the townscape impact of the development primarily in its immediate context. However views from the town centre / Whitesands to this area should also be considered in any proposals

Assessment of Significance and Identification of Risks

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to identify those elements of the Dumfries Conservation Area (as amended) that are highly significant and underpin its character. The following section draws out the features, open spaces, vistas and significant buildings referred to in the previous description of the conservation area.

This analysis, together with the Issues and Conflicts noted in the area analysis above, will help to inform the more detailed or site specific guidance given in Part 2 of the Appraisal with the ultimate aim of enabling the management of the area in order to 'preserve or enhance the character or appearance' of the conservation area.

The principles underlying the management of the conservation area to achieve the above aim are contained in the Supplementary Guidance on the Historic Built Environment.

The complexities underlying the town- scape of Dumfries are what give the area its richness and character but it is one that is united by simple traditional detailing in the older buildings and the use of the local red sandstone.

Although recent development has tended to be more generic and less closely tied to local traditions and details, the townscape overall imparts a special quality that give the town an identifiable sense of place and one that helps to set Dumfries apart from similar towns elsewhere.

To that end it can be argued that the townscape of Dumfries is highly significant and worthy of good stewardship in accordance with this appraisal and supporting planning guidelines.

Broader features of the conservation area and the townscape that are important include:

- Wider area vistas, views and panoramas, particularly of the conservation area

and town centre, when seen from beyond the area.

- The quality of the townscape being the combined effect of streets, spaces, buildings and their architectural form, scale, massing and details.
- The historic pattern of streets, their hierarchy and building plot boundaries and divisions.
- The quality, diversity and traditional integrity of the historic buildings of the town whose architectural variety is brought together in the almost ubiquitous use of local red sandstone and natural slate.

Assessment of Spaces

The principal open spaces across the conservation area are significant in underpinning the character of Dumfries town centre. Their retention and sensitive management is fundamental to maintaining this character.

Such spaces work at two levels. First as areas that people visit, use and enjoy being in as well as in the wider context at the level where views act foils to the contrasting urban areas. The most important spaces and vistas that need to be considered in how any proposal for development might impact on them include:

- The open aspect of the Whitesands and its intimate connection to the river Nith as well as to Dock Park and the Greensands
- The changing vistas with the varying widths and elevation of the High Street and the connections to adjoining spaces and streets such as into Queensberry Street and English Street and the setting for the Queensberry Monument in Queensberry Square and the Fountain.
- The civic space, originally enclosed by high ornate iron railings, in front of the Council headquarters and the link across the road to the sports centre car park with the rear of the cinema as backdrop is presently fragmented and poorly developed but are together important on the lead in and from English Street.
- Burns Statue both for its intrinsic value as a refuge and meeting point of 5 streets and for its role in the setting for Greyfriars Church.

Similarly;

- Fountain, at the other end of the High Street, being another focal point and joining of 4 streets as well as the newly formed Plainstones setting to the Midsteeple.
- The green, suburban character of Lovers' Walk with its high stone walls, changing vista along the curved street culminating at the Station Hotel and mature planting.
- The green areas across the river Nith, comprising the Deer Park and adjacent areas, some being private garden grounds, together provide a significant, high quality aspect to views out of the town centre.
- Academy Playing Fields an open area to the north of the town, across the River Nith, that provides a setting for the conservation area.

- The various burial grounds and spaces associated with the principal churches especially St Michael's and St Mary's.

Assessment of Buildings

Some of the more significant individual buildings have been noted in the character area appraisals above. Overall it has been noted that despite many changes and some modern intervention the majority of older buildings in the conservation area have a rich character and fine detailing and setting that is both significant and worthy of protection. Aspects of buildings and groups of buildings that need to be considered in any proposal for development include:

- The setting and views of the two churches, Greyfriars and St Michael's as well as that of the Midsteeple.
- The complexity of built forms rising from the Whitesands frontage to the High Street with key dominant buildings such as the Sheriff Court forming significant visual markers in this layering.
- The Devorgilla Bridge is a very significant historic structure.
- The quality of the terraces and other Georgian buildings in the Georgian town as well as the fine sandstone villas in the Victorian and Edwardian suburb area is highly significant. The intrinsic architectural qualities of these buildings as well as the sophisticated streetscape they create are important to the character of Dumfries.
- The character, detailing and setting of key, occasionally almost monumental, buildings such as the former banks, public buildings and retail premises. The variety of architectural design, the quality of detailing and the use of materials ensure a high significance to the overall character of the conservation area. (Individual buildings have been highlighted throughout the appraisal)
- The glimpses and views throughout the area where key buildings help to define or close a view or add interest to the visual experience. Often such buildings are modest but their aspect and placing, often fortuitously, serve to create the interest and complexity that makes up the character of the area. (Examples include the view of the Observatory from Assembly Street or of the Station Hotel along Newall Terrace).

The more important buildings have been highlighted in the character area descriptions above. Any supporting design statement for development in the conservation area will need to include reference to buildings and spaces that may be impacted either directly or indirectly.

Designated Buildings and Areas

Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings have statutory protection. They are designated at national level by Historic Environment Scotland. These areas and buildings have been assessed as having special significance.

In considering development that might impact on these, apart from direct physical impacts, it is important to consider aspects such as setting, both nearby as might be affected by development on neighbouring sites as well as more distant impacts where the designated site or building has a wider townscape value. An example of this would be the views along Buccleuch Street that encompass the complexity of the Sheriff Court with the tall spire of Greyfriars behind. Development, say of a larger or taller building that might interfere with

this relationship would need to be very carefully considered and if necessary modelled to gauge the wider impact.

Accessibility For All

There is a need to incorporate physical changes to buildings, entrances in particular to allow for safe and convenient access for all users of the town centre. This may impact on the design of existing frontages, or in the case of new buildings may, in part, determine certain aspects of the design whilst there should be no impediment in incorporating access requirements, consideration does need to be given to the visual impact such as ramps and railings should be sensitively incorporated into the townscape.

In rare cases, where for example a fine fore-stair may be an important part of the architectural make-up of the building, alternative, less intrusive means of accessing the building may need to be found. Such measure may include the use of an alternative access door or the use of temporary arrangements.

Potential Threats to the Area

As with all developing and economically active town centres Dumfries faces a number of challenges. Wider economic challenges, the retraction of town- centre retailing and changing public expectations are combining to put pressures on the town that were not there before.

These pressures and changes affect investment in the area and so cumulatively impacts on the economic well-being of the area. Resultant physical changes include lack of investment or poorly considered works of repair and alteration which have the potential to damage the character of the conservation area. However, some changes such as the sensitive repair and reuse or adaptation of older buildings can have a positive impact.

There is also a legacy of a time when the need to protect the historic built environment was not recognised to the same extent that is being encouraged today. The resultant development and incremental changes although undertaken with the best of intentions are not always as we might now wish for.

In the area appraisals above a number of issues and conflicts were identified. These are here brought together for clarity. Any that are specific to a location are noted separately below.

Wider challenges or threats to the character of the conservation area

Gap Sites, other vacant sites and the open aspect of car parks – This includes the loss of individual buildings and more widely the loss of enclosure and widespread demolition, principally a legacy of the mid-20th century as part of road improvements. Some of the sites are now used for car parking. The more significant of these, gap site whose development would make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, are shown on Plan xx.

Underused and vacant buildings and poor condition of some buildings - Across the conservation area there are examples of buildings that for a variety of reasons are either no longer suited to modern needs or have simply been neglected. Sometimes the issue is simply that of lack of regular maintenance of, say the rainwater goods, which quickly leads to blockages and water damage to other parts of the building.

Their deteriorating condition and poor appearance harms the appearance of the area and can have a knock-on effect on the viability of neighbouring properties.

Modern replacement doors and windows and intrusive equipment can have profound impact on the appearance and character of the conservation area. Changes in materials, proportions and detailing alter the balance and symmetry of the original design. The loss of good traditional materials, and craftsmanship lessen the value of our historic environment.

Insensitive alterations to traditional buildings and use of inappropriate materials –

Often the result of misguided, but well intentioned, works or repairs using inappropriate materials or less durable modern materials and detailing such works can have a damaging effect on a traditional building. The use of cement mortar, for example, can exacerbate a dampness problem even though the original intention might have been preventative.

Loss of architectural detailing and loss of original features – This is a fairly widespread issue across the conservation area. Some losses result from neglect and poor maintenance where original fabric or architectural elements deteriorate to the extent that they need to be replaced and the replacement is inappropriately detailed or specified. In other cases it may be the result of misguided attempts to improve the property, again using wrong details and specification.

Large scale modern buildings or out of scale extensions - This can include buildings that may not necessarily be over-large in themselves but whose design or layout impacts on the smaller scale of the historic environment.

Traffic management measures that are inappropriate to the setting or context of the surrounding area –

There are necessary legislative standards that have to be met, however, there is still scope to consider the types of works and materials that whilst still serving to improve traffic safety can be undertaken in a visually sensitive manner using, sometimes, traditional materials. To help minimise the visual 'clutter' and stop the proliferation of signs and posts, street signage and information or direction signs can be placed in coordinated groups, on shared poles or placed on existing structures.

Poor streetscape, poorly maintained surfaces and visual clutter – Whilst it sometimes is the result of traffic management measures poor streetscape can arise from many agencies, public utilities and individuals undertaking uncoordinated works and 'improvements' to streets, to signage, and the introduction of street furnitures such as planters, bollards, pedestrian barriers.

Inappropriate shop frontages, sometimes arising from pressures of modern retailing methods and pressure for corporate imagery from national multiples -

Also associated with this is poor signage and inappropriate advertisements – All too often older shop fronts have been altered using modern materials and a lack of appropriate design and detailing. Equally important is the detrimental impact of security shutters. These are having a marked impact on the character and quality of the streets of central Dumfries.

The Council's Shop Fronts guide, which is in preparation, will give guidance on the essential elements and design criteria that need to be considered if the quality of the shopping environment is to be maintained. Pressure from the larger multiple chains for standardised treatment of frontages should be resisted.

Plant and equipment, such as air-conditioning units, and telecommunications equipment attached to buildings or set inappropriately in public areas – These are becoming increasingly intrusive. Even when placed on the rear or less important elevations of individual buildings, these installations often impact on the minor streets such as those on Munches Street or closes such as that adjacent to Coffee Close where such installations are prominent.

Energy efficiency and the introduction of renewable technologies – A variety of installations but mostly roof mounted solar panel could have a very significant impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Development that restricts or detrimentally impacts on the more important vistas and views into or out of the conservation area – It is important that the assessment of new development takes into account wider views as well as immediate neighbour impact.

Specific Threats

Some of the wider threats mentioned above are highlighted by specific cases within the conservation area where, for example, a poorly maintained building is blighting its immediate surroundings, or inappropriate interventions in recent decades have significantly impacted on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Such examples should also form the first level of potential enhancement schemes or at least management of the sites to reduce their negative impact. As such they are included in the suggested enhancement schemes below. However, as most are in private ownership, liaison and detailed discussion and potentially further support from public bodies may be necessary. This may also have funding implications for the Council that need to be considered separately from this appraisal.

These include:

Whitesands flooding risks – The issue is being considered separately and forms part of the proposals that being developed on behalf of the Council at the time of writing.

Larger scale modern buildings on the Whitesands frontage – Over time the gradual redevelopment of these and if funds permit the pro-active redevelopment. Consideration would need to be given to the development of site briefs and or a development plan for the area. This would need to tie into, or be part of, the above initiative.

Lack of coherent streetscape and townscape in Irish Street – Over time the gradual redevelopment of vacant sites or the redevelopment and improvement of poorer quality buildings and, if funds permit, the pro-active redevelopment. Consideration would need to be given to the development of site briefs and or a development or improvement plan for the area.

Gap sites on Queensberry Street – The once continuous façade of the buildings on the Queensberry Street frontage has been broken leaving gaps whose visual impact is worsened by the unfinished and temporary appearance of the now exposed gables adjacent.

Poor condition of properties and neglected streetscape in Brewery Street – Owners of properties fronting Whitesands have effectively neglected the rear elevation even though these are onto Brewery Street, which itself is a well-used cut from Friars Vennel to Whitesands and to the rear of Barbours.

Part 2 - Managing the Conservation Area

Managing the conservation area to ensure that those aspects that are cherished and contribute to its historic character are protected while allowing good development to enhance the area as well as retain its economic future is a delicate balance involving a wide variety of initiatives.

Planning Policies and Guidance

The national framework for policy in respect of the historic environment is given in:

- Scottish Planning Policy 2014;
- Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland 2014

The Council has also produced Supplementary Guidance under LDP2. This gives detailed policy guidance in respect of development that may impact on the historic environment.

Proposals for new buildings within the conservation area must now be accompanied either by a Design Statement.²¹ (local developments) or a Design and Access Statement (major and national developments). Design and Design and Access Statements set out the rationale behind the design and access arrangements of new development. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 imposes a duty to consider the needs of disabled people in development proposals.

Further statutory powers are also open to the Council. See Appendix 1 Section 1.3.

Conservation Area Enhancement

From the issues and conflicts identified above the following broader actions to help secure the future historic and architectural character of the conservation area have been identified.

Note: Advice on new development and making changes to existing buildings in the conservation area is contained in the Supplementary Guidance on the Historic Built Environment being developed under published alongside the Local Development Plan LDP2, which should be read in conjunction with this appraisal.

Wider Enhancement 1 – Improve the design and quality of new and infill development

– Through development management based on guidelines in this appraisal, new development should follow the basic design criteria established and evident in each character area. These will include massing, proportion and use of materials. Modern design will be encouraged if it contributes positively to the area and does not overwhelm or distract from the historic townscape.

Wider Enhancement 2 – Improve the design of new shop fronts and encourage the reinstatement of traditional shops

– In line with guidance on shop fronts, contained in the Supplementary Guidance, ensure that good traditional shop fronts are retained and sensitively repaired, and manage signage to ensure that it is part of the design of the shop front especially in the use of traditional fascias. Where new shop fronts or redevelopment of existing inappropriate shop fronts are proposed ensure that the design of the new front is appropriate to the setting and the building. In some case well- proportioned simple modern frontages may be a welcome design solution.

The use of intrusive security shutters should also be prevented. These, when closed, have a significantly detrimental impact both visually and in creating dead frontages that discourage use of the street when shops are not trading.

Wider Enhancement 3 – Encourage property owners to undertake property repairs regularly and in a manner that is based on sound conservation principles especially in the case of older buildings and using traditional materials and techniques – In line with advice in the Supplementary Guidance and other conservation publications such as the Historic Environment Scotland series 'INFORM Guides'.

Wider Enhancement 4 - Continuation with street surface renewals and maintain existing traditional elements - Considerations might include whether or not distinctive materials or detailing should be used in different areas in order to differentiate parts of the town centre.

Where traditional materials exist, either overtly such as the granite kerbing, or perhaps hidden, such as granite setts under tarmacadam these should be retained and reinstated. Where they cannot be used in situ, setts should be recovered and cleaned for re- use elsewhere.

Wider Enhancement 5 – Upgrading and improving the environment of the closes and other public realm areas – This is a general aspiration but as some closes are publicly adopted they can be upgraded by the Council as funding permits; though many may also require the co-operation and support of the adjacent landowners.

Consideration should also be given to the design and quality of street furniture. The variety of bus shelters, lamp standards, bollards, pedestrian barriers, waste bins and other, often intrusive, structures and elements leads to a discordant and visually cluttered effect. The quality of the townscape could be greatly enhanced by a carefully detailed and co-ordinated approach to these elements. Any historic items that remain should be retained. New items do not necessarily need to be 'historic' in design as this usually means a poor copy of earlier highly detailed forms. Good simple modern units using high quality materials should be installed.

The role of public art could also be considered and where appropriate good quality artworks installed on suitable sites provided that they enhance and contribute in a positive way to the area. An added bonus would be their relevance to the area or to historic characters associated with the area.

Wider Enhancement 6 – Improvement of traffic management measures especially signage and lighting – As with street furniture above, a co-ordinated approach to traffic management would help to reduce clutter. Rationalisation of signs would enhance the street scene allowing buildings and views to dominate again. Regular audits of signage should be undertaken to identify unnecessary signage.

Wider Enhancement 7 – Promote a wider appreciation of the built historic environment –

Potential initiatives could include a focus on the implementation of good conservation practices but will also promote the wider understanding of the historic built environment and develop an appreciation of its value to the area and its communities.

Potential Enhancement Opportunities

Reappraise the area fronting the Council Headquarters to include the area between the leisure centre, the cinema, St Andrews Church and the Theatre Royal – There is scope to redevelop or at least consider the setting and relationship between several important public buildings with the possibility of creating a civic and cultural complex with open spaces of high quality.

Reinstate frontage development to Loreburn Street – Part of the land is a short stay car park that is important to the central shopping area allowing good access to the northern end of the High Street and to Queensberry Street. However, consideration should be given to how the street enclosure can be reinstated whilst still visually signposting the main shopping area and retaining parking.

Reappraise Nith Place and consider a scheme to enhance the area – There is scope to develop a unified public space that provides a new focus and setting for the western end of St Michael Street as well as creating a new pedestrian friendly area. The present dominance of traffic and the associated street furniture, signage and other elements, presently uncoordinated, make this area visually unappealing and difficult to navigate on foot.

Provide support for the Midsteeple Quarter Project – Supports the regeneration of Dumfries Town Centre and seeks to development new housing and business units.

Support the re-use and renovation of Rosefield Mills – A particularly prominent listed building on the riverside and a building preservation trust is investigating a range of potential uses.

There are numerous opportunities to increase the use of historic buildings which are important to the town's history and townscape. The changing economic climate may result in commercial and office buildings becoming available which would provide opportunities for re-use. Adapting and finding new uses for buildings will be supported in principal and would also enhance civic pride. There may be opportunities to seek external funding to support renovation projects and improvements to the town centre's historic environment.

This list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive but is intended to serve as a starting reference point for further action.

It should be noted that this appraisal does not commit the Council to any specific funding for the projects suggested above. Separate consideration of funding and priorities will need to be given by the Council based on the development of a prioritised programme once a detailed management plan has been prepared and funding streams identified.

Part 3- Appendices

Appendix 1 – Listed Buildings

The Historic Environment Scotland website holds the listed building database. To search for a listed building by category, date of listing or council: -

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/search-for-a-listed-building/>

Appendix 2 - Glossary of Terms

Glossary of Terms Used in the Appraisal

Aggregate - Small stones or rock chippings used in mortar for harling.

Ashlar - Finely worked stone, where the blocks are cut to even faces having a square edge and laid in even course with narrow joints.

Astragal - Commonly the glazing bar between window panes. It is also a classical moulding.

Bell Cote - A small housing for a bell or bells, usually of masonry at a gable, but sometimes a timber structure on the roof-ridge.

Buttress - A brick or stone structure built against another structure to support it.

Clachan - A small village or hamlet.

Cornice - Mostly used to refer to the decorative junction between the walls and ceilings. It is also a classical architectural feature and a projecting band of stonework to mark an upper storey of a building.

Cupola - Small domically roofed structure crowning a roof or dome.

Denudation - The process by which the removal of material, through means of erosion and weathering leads to a reduction of elevation and relief in landforms and landscapes.

Dormer - Window projecting from the roof slope. Dormers can be wall-head or wholly in the roof.

Façade - The face or front of a building.

Fascia - A wide band of material covering the ends of roof rafters in a building.

Fenestration - The arrangement of windows in a building

Finials - A distinctive section or ornament at the apex of a roof, canopy, etc. on a building.

Gable - Peaked external wall normally at the end of a pitched roof, also usually at right angles to the front wall.

Granite - Dense, crystalline rock used for building. Main source in Dumfries and Galloway is Dalbeattie and Creetown; both are of a distinctive grey colour.

Harl - Scottish form of roughcast, external finish to walls. It consists of lime and aggregate and thrown or "dashed" against the wall. Also known as wet dash.

Isthmus - A narrow strip of land connecting two larger land areas.

Lime putty - Lime mortar before the addition of sand or aggregates. It is made by slaking quick-lime in water.

Margin - The framing in stone of window and door openings. Sandstone was most commonly used as it could be worked to give good even and flat surfaces against which the joinery could fit.

Massing - The cumulative volume of individual or groups of buildings; their apparent size and volume.

Mortar - Traditionally made from lime putty and sand or other aggregate is used to bed building stones.

Pagoda - An ornamental structure of that design, erected in a park or garden.

Panelled - Form of joinery construction used in later and higher quality doors with timber framing panels. Doors are commonly 4 or 6 panelled.

Pends - Openings or passageways through or between buildings from the street to rear courts or yards.

Pilasters - The flat version of a column, consisting of a slim rectangle projecting from a wall; used also of plain piers or pilasters without classical orders which are more correctly termed pilaster strips.

Rail - Horizontal member in window sashes and doors. Meeting rails are the two elements that meet, usually at the centre, when sash and case windows are closed. (See *Style* below).

Render - Smooth coating, usually on external walls. Usually refers to cement mortar render a modern and cheaper alternative to stucco.

Ridge - The apex or upper meeting between two roof slopes.

Sandstone - One of the main building stones of the area ranging from deep red to light buff and grey. It is mostly of a high quality and can be carved to produce fine architectural details.

Sash and case - Traditional form of window with two sliding sashes balanced by weights in the timber case.

Scale - Used in connection with buildings and townscape the relative size.

Secondary glazing - Inner glazing fixed separately from the main window to provide insulation and sound proofing

Skew - Part of a gable wall which is above the roof slope, it is usually capped by flat bedded skew stones.

Skewputt - The bottom most stone of a line of skew stones. It is sometimes decoratively finished and usually projects from the wall,

Slates - Thin flat stones used to cover roofs and used as hanging to walls and dormer sides.

Slates, grading - The method of laying slates in diminishing sized courses up the roof slope. One advantage is that the larger, thicker, slates having fewer joints are at the lower part of the roof.

Stucco - Fine grained, hard plaster used for precise decorative finishes to walls.

Style - The vertical side element of window sashes and doors. (see Rail above).

Tympanum - An architectural element located within the arch or pediment.

draft

draft

Dumfries and Galloway Council

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

Draft Supplementary Guidance - January 2018