

Dumfries and Galloway Council

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

Annan Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Supplementary Guidance - February 2020





Annan Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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Introduction

In 1725 Daniel Defoe left a valuable account of his visit to Annan:

"... The first place of note we came to in Scotland was Annan ... It was a town of note and a seaport and having a good river and harbour, was esteemed a town of good river, but it was not situated for strength and the English took it so often specially the last time burnt it to the ground ... that it never recovered. Here was a good salmon fishery, and a trade to the Isle of Man, and by that to Ireland, but as the face of its trade is altered since that time, and by ruins of the place, the merchants and men of substance removed to Dumfries, the town continues to all appearance in a state of irrevocable decay ... was but a dull welcome into Scotland to see, not only by this town, that remains of old devastations ... were so visible, so unrepaired, and, as we might say so likely to continue unrepaired; ..."

The future of Annan is now more secure than the above picture paints. Through the proper care and management of the conservation area we will, hopefully, not have cause ever again to rue the lamentations of Daniel Defoe.





Background

Annan has a rich, if troubled history. Its period of 19th century prosperity has left the town with a fine architectural legacy. However, Annan is now facing a difficult economic period, one that may threaten the very fabric of the town itself.

This Appraisal will provide the agreed framework within which planned and managed development can proceed with the aim of securing the physical, economic and social well-being of the town.

Local Context

Annan is a Burgh with a population of around 9,000 situated in the Dumfries and Galloway Council area. It developed as a seaport and market town serving the lower Annandale area and is the lowest crossing point of the river Annan.

The town saw considerable prosperity in the latter part of the 19th century and into the earlier part of the 20th century. It is now in decline with many empty properties and a diminishing retail sector as trade is drawn to Dumfries and Carlisle. The main A75 Gretna to Stranraer trunk road by-passes the town removing heavy traffic from the town centre but also reducing the incidence of passing trade.

The Character Appraisal

This conservation area character appraisal was first adopted as supplementary planning guidance to a Local Plan which was replaced in 2014 by the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan (LDP1) a document which is reviewed every 5 years. The conservation area character appraisal is considered by the Council to remain relevant and will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance to LDP2 which was adopted in October 2019.

Policy HE2: Conservation Areas ties the conservation area character appraisal to LDP2. The policy reinforces the importance and value of a conservation area character appraisal as the policy states that:

“The Council will support development proposals within or adjacent to a conservation area that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area and is consistent with any relevant conservation area appraisal and management plan...”

This Appraisal is divided into 3 main sections:

Understanding the Town – (Extent of Area) this section describes the historical development and structure of the town;

The Character Appraisal – (Heritage Merit and Heritage Need) this section describes and assesses the Annan conservation area and then considers the individual streets. It also highlights some issues and conflicts showing where change is threatening the character of Annan and what action is necessary;

Implementation and Review – to ensure the appraisal is updated and remains a useful working document. This section also identifies longer term management and enhancement opportunities.

The Appraisal is supported by other supplementary guidance linked to Historic Environment Policies of the Local Development Plan.

Historic Built Environment, Supplementary Guidance (HBE, SG) which assists individuals and organisations to develop sensitive proposals in the historic built environment. It encourages people to follow the principles of ‘informed conservation.’ It sets out the necessary stages and steps to take to find the best balance between preservation and change. The historic elements of built structures, sites and setting must first be understood; the historic and architectural significance must be assessed; and the whole should be evaluated to reach that balance so that well-conceived, sensitive, creative proposals can be put forward.



The overriding objective of both supplementary guidance (SG) documents is to achieve consistent, high quality development in the historic environment which ensures that the historic significance and character of Annan Conservation Area is preserved.

Both LDP2 and the HBE, SG promote the need for a sustainable approach that starts with an understanding of the historical and architectural character of the town. There is an emphasis on the re-use of older buildings, repair and maintenance, attention to historical and traditional detailing and on the sensitive use of materials and techniques.

This does not, however, preclude good modern design. It is important that new development should be sympathetic and innovative. There is scope for good modern architecture, and it is hoped that parody or pastiche of the older more traditional form of development will generally be avoided. Annan is home and workplace for its inhabitants and the Appraisal itself is only the starting point from which the people of Annan can build their own responses and approaches to the care, use and future stewardship of the town.

Other Relevant Documents and Plans

Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2)

The Dumfries and Galloway LDP2 was adopted on 4th October 2019. The Plan recognises the importance of the natural and built environment in helping to shape the economic well-being of Dumfries and Galloway.

Policies are included in LDP2 that promote the protection and enhancement of the built heritage.

LDP2 addresses a range of issues from housing land to industrial allocations, from transport to tourism. Its purpose is to guide development, to protect the environment and takes into consideration community issues, tourism and countryside matters. The Plan has been developed over several years following intense public consultation.

LDP2 will provide the statutory policy framework for the area defining the principles and practices to be adopted by the Council in considering development proposals.

Scottish Burgh Survey – Annan, 1981

This is one of a series of reports on the history and archaeology of historic towns of Scotland. It was commissioned by the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate of the Scottish Development Department with a view to providing background information upon which to base a policy for urban research.

The survey comprises an historical outline of the town and identifies those areas likely to be of particular historical or archaeological importance dating from before the 19th century.

The Burgh Survey provides an important guide to help inform the archaeological implications of new development.

Annan Regeneration Masterplan

The masterplan although now dated identified several achievable short, medium and long term projects with the aim of improving Annan as a place to live, work and visit.



Understanding the Town

Setting and Context

Geology, Topography and Landscape

Annan is situated on the east bank of the River Annan about 1½ miles from the Solway. It is centrally located between Dumfries, Carlisle and Langholm.

The district is gently undulating, broadly level coastal plain, primarily pasture land with some arable.

The river and its environs have helped to shape the town both economically and physically. Soils are largely sands, gravels and glacial clays being, in the lower reaches, alluvial deposits while the underlying rock is sandstone.



This sandstone varies in quality but is for the most part good freestone⁴ much used for building in the area with several former quarries in the vicinity. Some fissile⁵ rock was also extracted and used for stone slates but is not now evident.⁶ Limestone, coal and ironstone are also found, though none have been commercially exploited. However, a number of disused limekilns reflect the early use and importance of lime in building.

Archaeological Potential

The motte and bailey and the known complex of early buildings at the west end of the High Street are the two areas of direct archaeological importance, where further investigation may allow a development of the

understanding of the Medieval period. Other parts of the High Street and the closes and wynds leading off may also have important archaeological remains.

These areas are shown in the Burgh Survey as Areas of Archaeological Interest. Any proposed development that leads to ground disturbance will need to be effectively monitored and opportunity given for archaeological investigation and recording.

The Conservation Area

The conservation area, first designated in 1970, was relatively small and was centred on the western part of the High Street and included Bank Street. It was extended in 2003 to include the eastern part of the High Street, the Motte and Bailey and part of Port Street. The revised boundary was defined to encompass the early 19th century core of the town

The boundary is shown on the map on the centre pages.

Development of the Town

Historical Development

The town seems to owe its origin to a combination of factors: the strategic position on the river Annan where it was both navigable and fordable; being on one of the main route-ways into Scotland from the south and west; and the foundation in the 12th century of the Bruce Motte. Thus Annan developed as a local defensive point, market and port. Annan had been made a Royal Burgh by 1538 and had Parliamentary representation from 1612.

The early history of the town is one of turbulence being caught up in the border warfare and in the various conflicts for the Scottish Crown. Little evidence remains of the early town as it was repeatedly raided and sacked. Even by the end of the 17th century it was no more than a town of “mean and low condition”; though the town council had made an order in 1699 to remove the “peat stacks and dung hills”. In the early 18th century the population was about 400. The town lacked any

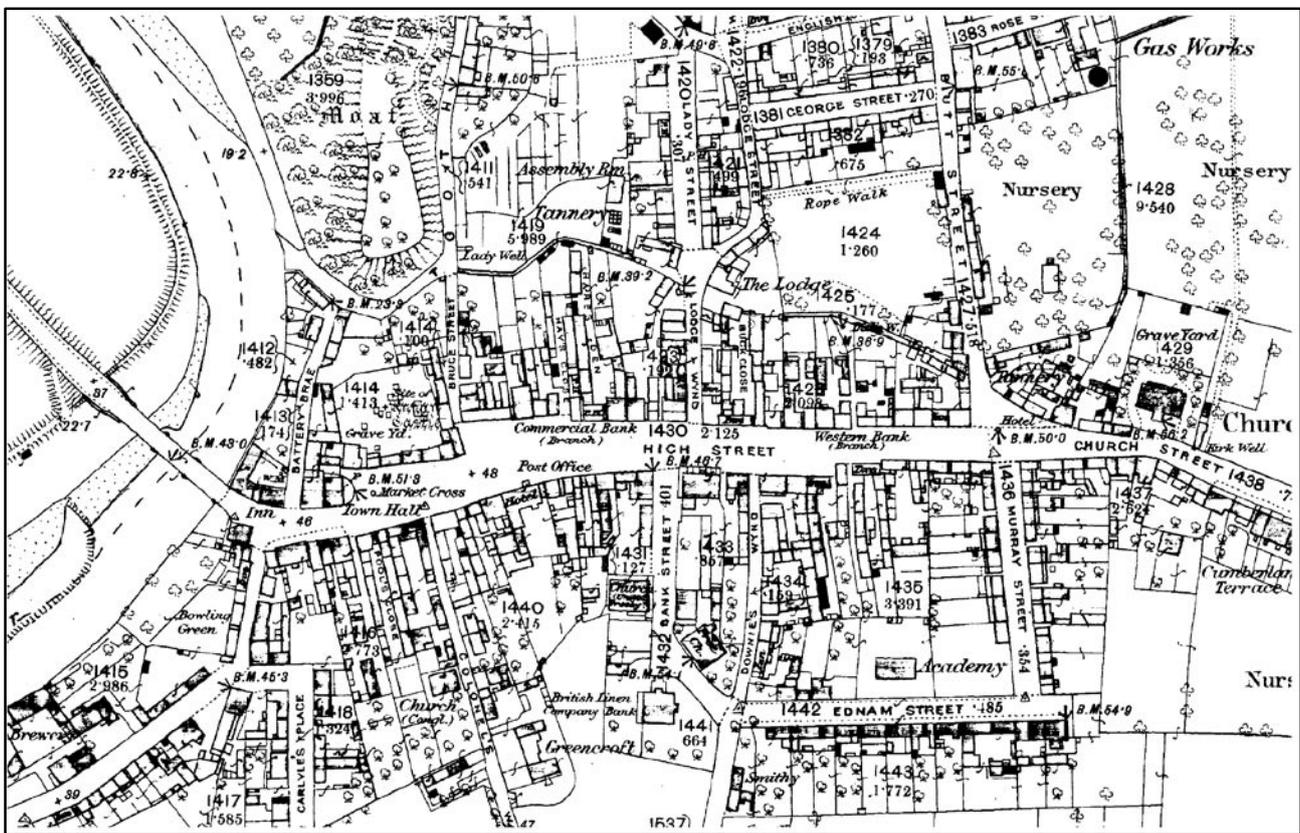


military significance and trade had been channeled to nearby towns such as Ecclefechan and Lockerbie.

Until the 18th century Annan appears to have consisted of a single main street without back lanes. Access to rear plots would have been along narrow closes set at right angles to the street. Limitations were later imposed on the form of development and had the effect of making building more regular and having a principal frontage to the main street.

In 1725 when Daniel Defoe wrote about the town it had little to commend it; "... the town continues to all appearance in a state of irrevocable decay ...".

During the 18th century the economic position of Annan began to improve due to the construction of a cotton mill, an upgraded harbour and improved farming methods leading to increased prosperity and trade.



Plan 1 - Central Annan in the Mid-19th Century - Ordnance Survey 1859



The introduction of steam shipping and construction of a canal between the Solway and Carlisle encouraged further coastal and foreign trade. Mid-19th century prosperity encouraged the industrialists and merchants in the town to invest in the infrastructure of Annan and its surroundings, with most of the existing town centre buildings dating from this period.

Expansion of the town occurred along the High Street to the east of the earlier core and along several streets including Butts Street, Port Street, Greencroft Wynd, Lady Street and Downies Wynd. Road improvements led to the widening of several thoroughfares and the loss of buildings. This would have opened up the tighter medieval layout creating the principal spaces as they are now.

By the mid-19th Century the town is described as being “... *well built, and the streets are capacious and generally well paved. The church and town-house are each adorned with a handsome spire.*”⁹

Modern Development of the Town

The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map shows the town had grown considerably with new housing eastwards along the High Street, the development of Bank Street, and further consolidation and infilling of burgage plots. Annan grew rapidly from the mid-18th century, more than trebling in size between 1755 and 1836.

The arrival of the railway in 1850 help to shift the trade routes from water to land. Sea links and the river access had been of considerable importance from pre-history right through until this time, but now the harbour began a long period of slow decline. New roads and railways were built to serve Annan but it eventually lost its regional importance as a market town.

The late 19th and the 20th centuries saw the continued expansion of the town. Earlier development, adjacent to the historic core was a continuation of traditional terraced housing, usually in local red sandstone. Some have considerable character and high quality detailing such as Charles Street and Cumberland Terrace.

Later forms of development included both public and private housing in peripheral estates and industrial areas. Some redevelopment in the town centre has also occurred. The most notable being the construction of a new access road off the High Street linking to Port Street and the loss of the cattle market in favour of a modern supermarket.



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The Character Appraisal

Urban Structure

The Historical Character as expressed Today

It appears that few if any buildings survive from before the 18th century and the main character of the buildings that now enclose the High Street is late Georgian, Victorian and early 20th century. There is a mixture of modest earlier buildings with finer, more disparate, buildings exhibiting considerable architectural quality and decoration.

The early medieval street plan has now been modified by changes to road junctions as well as some infilling and redevelopment of the plots to the rear.

20th century development largely occurred beyond the conservation area. Within the area development included changes to earlier buildings, infill and some limited redevelopment.

Road improvements were also made, largely to accommodate motor vehicles. Until the construction of the by-pass in 1989 the High Street was also the principal traffic route for the A75. The need for modern traffic management formalised the space by redefining the carriageway, adding signage and traffic controls.

Plan Form and Grain

The layout of the town contributes significantly to its character and appearance. The principal influences on the shaping of the town centre are the castle defending the river crossing, the development of a community around the castle and outwards from the crossing point of the river and the development of the principal route that led from Annan, now the High Street.

The enclosure provided by the buildings, and the effect on the spaces of dominant individual buildings is interrupted by side streets entering the

The long burgage plots running back from the street are the evidence for the mediaeval layout. It can still be seen in areas such as Pools Court, Downies Wynd and Hays Close. At one time these closes, wynds and courts were the main living and working areas of the town but where conditions would have been quite unacceptable to us today.

This contrasts with a more orderly approach in the latter part of the 19th century as streets such as Bank Street, Murray Street and Charles Street were laid out and adjacent housing areas, often in terraces, were developed. A good impression of the early origins and the strong, tight urban form of Annan can be seen in the 1859 Ed. Ordnance Survey Map of the town (Plan 1).

Hierarchy of Open Spaces

The principal open spaces may be grouped as The High Street, the Closes and Wynds, The Motte and Bailey, the Grave Yard, the Riverside Walk and the Harbour.

The High Street

Though primarily a thoroughfare the High Street is also the main defining open space in Annan.

The street is slightly curved and varies in width with several distinct but irregular spaces, the principal ones being in front of the Town Hall, the area by the War

Memorial and the Fish Cross. A further area is defined by the curve in the street as it rises to the east.



High Street

The enclosure provided by the buildings, and the effect on the spaces of dominant individual buildings is interrupted by side streets entering the High Street. The planned streets, Bank Street and Murray Street are in contrast with the older routes out of the centre, (see below).

The construction in the early 1990s of the Port Street relief road through the site of the former petrol filling station has created a wide opening on the south side of the High Street and isolated Bridge House on an island site.

The townscape audit has identified the type and quality of existing surfaces. The High Street was cobbled with setts in 1883 but now consists of a wide tarmac carriageway marked out for car parking on the northern side. Footways are paved with various surfaces including *in-situ* concrete, tarmac, concrete blocks, and concrete flags and more recently added stone flags. Footways are edged with concrete kerbs. The planned streets, Bank Street and Murray Street contrast with the older routes out of the centre.

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Closes and Wynds

These were formerly important links to the rear of the Burgages. Now, many closes and wynds are either neglected and in poor repair or have been given over to vehicular traffic. Some have no footways are narrow and enclosed by buildings and high boundary walls.

Some developed into small courtyard housing areas with considerable character. Notable among these is Fairfield Place/ Hare's Den. Nearby in Hay's Place the back wall of the row of cottages is all that remains of the rows of housing that once led off most closes and wynds.



Others, such as Downies Wynd, provide useful and well-used links away from the High Street often serving business or public premises. Older routes, such as Port Street, Bruce Street and Lady Street (formerly Lodge Wynd), out of the central area are narrow and irregular.



The Motte

The Motte is now heavily overgrown with mature trees. The bailey is laid out as an informal park and play area. It was brought within the revised conservation area both because of its historical significance and for its special character and prominence, especially in views of the town from the west.

Grave Yard

Though closed this important open space is the site of a 16th century castle, of which traces can still be found. It was a burial ground from the 17th to the 19th century. The graveyard has potential for public access as it is within the town centre.

Riverside Walk

A short riverside walk has been created leading from the south side of the bridge towards the harbour and a new cycleway bridge has been erected just beyond the conservation area

The Harbour

Though not within the conservation area it is important to recognise the role the harbour has played and could again play in the economy and architectural quality of the town.

At one time the harbour was important to Annan both commercially and socially. The area is now under threat with several former warehouses having been demolished. Those that remain are ruinous and neglected or have been 'repaired' in modern unsympathetic materials and have lost much of their original architectural integrity.

A separate initiative to regenerate the Harbour and its environs is being pursued through the Community Planning process. The successful implementation of such a scheme will have a considerable benefit for the centre of Annan.



Urban Structure – Issues, Conflicts and Opportunities

The key issues in terms of Urban Structure relate to the closes and wynds. Through the reduction in density of occupation and use, and the treatment of the rear portions of properties fronting the High Street neglect and lack of use in these back areas continues.

There is a risk to the essential character through development of the back plots, joining plots together and making provision for car-parking and better vehicular access to the rear of properties.

Where opportunities arise, particularly in the areas identified in Plan 2 development proposals should seek to recreate the form and complexity of the earlier townscape.

This would include modest linear development along the former closes, such as Downies Wynd or Hay's Place; breaking up large building masses into vertically proportioned elements, such as the Corner House Hotel where it fronts Lady Street; recreating frontage buildings, such as facing Fish Cross or on the open land at the rear of Bridge House

Rear areas that have been opened for car parking, such as the area between Downies Wynd and Murray Street, can be considered for landscaping and/or structural work to reduce the expansive nature of the spaces.

The Old Graveyard could be opened and paths laid out and seating introduced to create a quiet, restful sanctuary.

Plan 2 shows areas that may be regarded as having developed in a form that does not directly reflect the more traditional townscape.



Plan 2 - Central Annan Today - Areas that no longer reflect their 19th Century origins

Streetscape

Public Utilities and Roads

The quality and design of street works has an important effect on the character and appearance of the town. The need to accommodate the motor car and financial constraints have led to design and engineering solutions at variance with sensitive development of streetscape especially in areas where the historic setting is important. This can be seen in the materials used, standardised components and street furniture and the layout of junctions.

Whilst it may not be possible to revert to more traditional surfacing materials generally, much can be done to maintain the general open character of many of the spaces in the town by good choice of materials and a more subtle definition of areas. It may also be possible to introduce natural traditional or good quality modern materials at key locations.

Existing traditional street furniture and other features such as fountains, drinking troughs or seats need to be maintained. Special attention to detail is required when work is being done to such existing items. It is also important not to introduce unnecessary or inappropriately styled new street furniture to avoid intrusive visual clutter.

The scope to work in a manner that is sensitive to the historic character of Annan yet meets statutory requirements needs to be examined more fully. For example, the disposition and size of traffic signs, the use of standardised markings and the geometry of road junctions may need to be modified from the standard technical requirement to ensure a more subtle and less intrusive approach. This may require discussion with the Scottish Executive as well as within the Council. It is hoped that this will lead to the development of more detailed design standards which can be adopted in areas of historic importance.



Pedestrian Links

Pedestrian flows are principally along the main roadways. The closes and wynds are also very important. Their interest also lies in their intimate scale and the paving materials. Many have retained their original cobbles or setts but are now in need of repair, some having been patched with tar macadam or concrete. Providing good links to the town centre the closes also afford views into the back areas of many of the main High Street buildings. Downies Wynd and Greencroft Wynd are particularly important but their use has been partly given over to vehicular traffic with some lessening of their attractiveness for pedestrians. Fairfield Court, shown as Hares Den on the early Ordnance Survey Maps, is an attractive close of traditional houses that has potential for sensitive repairs and improvement.

Commercial Signage and Shop Fronts

The quality of the street is greatly influenced by the appearance and architectural quality of shop fronts and signage. Whilst there are good examples of traditional shops in Annan, such as No. 117 High Street, others have been altered using simpler modern materials or corporately imposed signage and detailing. Large highly reflective fascia panels that are out of scale with the shop front or the building are intrusive in an intimate townscape of a historic Burgh such as Annan.



Some buildings incorporate shop frontages as part of their architectural design, such as the Corner House Hotel. Here a mixture of new signage that does not relate to the underlying architecture and replacement glazing and framing have, as in a number of other cases, eroded the original integrity and character of the building as originally designed.

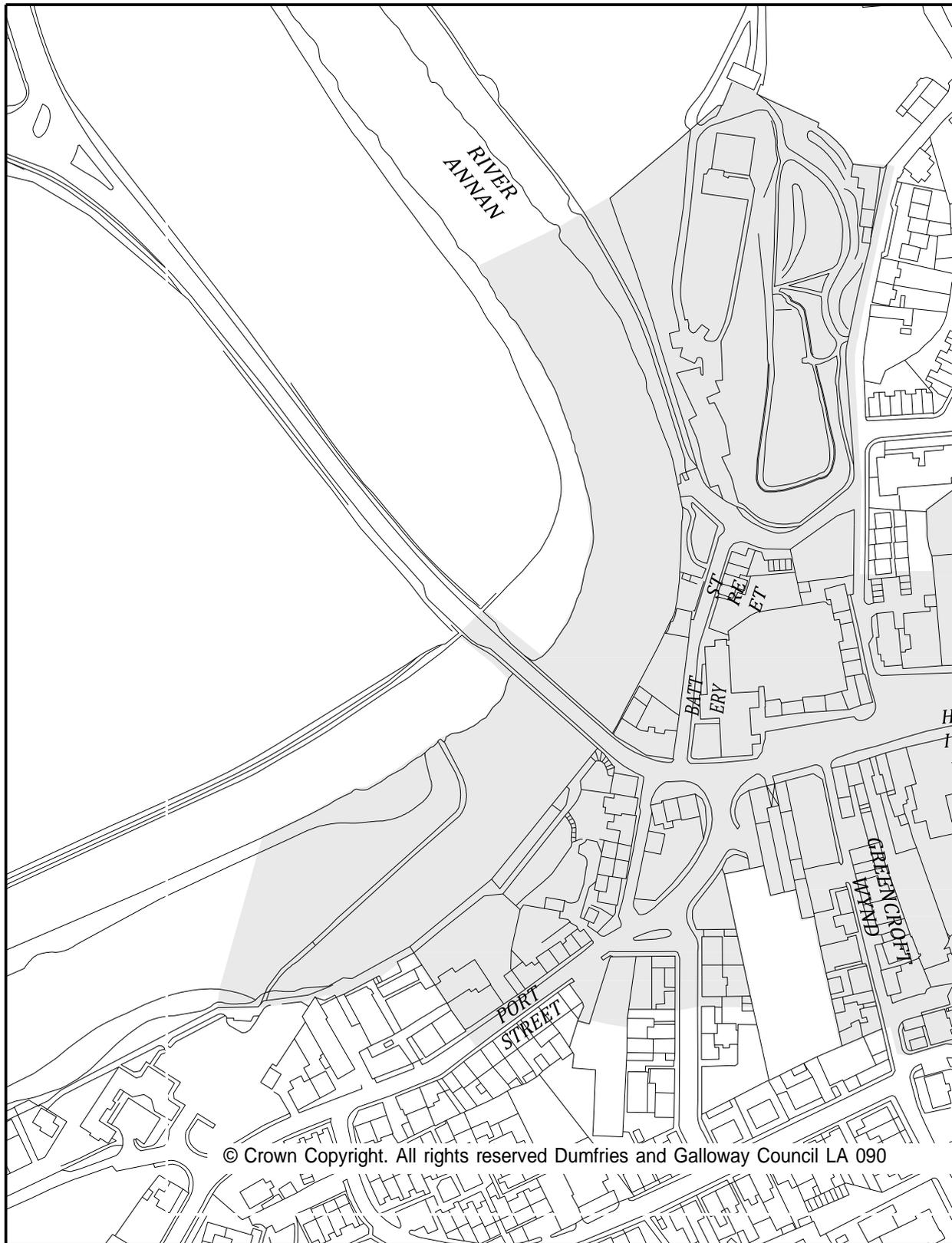
Streetscape – Issues, Conflicts and Opportunities

A potential threat to the character of the conservation area arises through unsympathetic alterations to the surfaces, materials and detailing of works of repair and improvement of roadways, footpaths and closes.

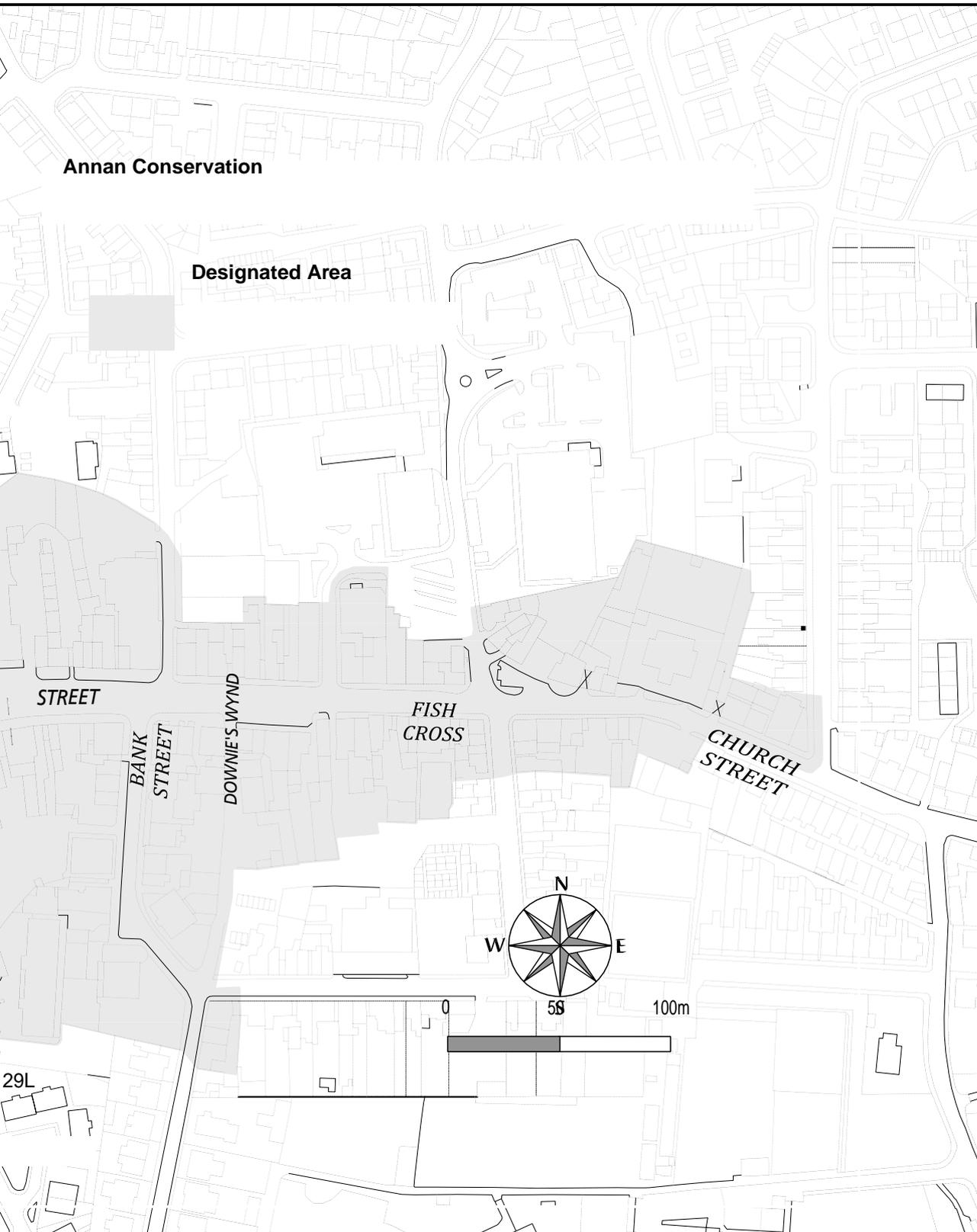
In addition to the schemes that were carried out as part of the National Lottery funded Townscape Heritage Initiative [THI], future maintenance of street surfaces and edges should have regard to the context and requirements being imposed. Principal thoroughfares and main carriageways will continue to be dressed in tar macadam but scope for more traditional or appropriate modern modular/block detailing will exist in pedestrian areas, within closes and wynds and in defined static spaces. The design and quality of street furniture, lighting and surfacing materials needs to be given further consideration.

Street lighting, in particular, should reflect the quality of the area and as appropriate new, more sympathetic, traditional or modern designs of lighting units should be introduced.

There is considerable scope for more sensitive treatment of areas in front of the principal buildings; though piecemeal schemes should not be undertaken without considering a comprehensive plan for the central area including Bank Street.



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Traffic and other signage should be reviewed and redesigned to lessen their intrusiveness and cluttered appearance. Unsympathetic commercial signage, shop fronts and advertisements, shutters and shop canopies have the potential to harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. These need to be carefully designed using matt surfaces and traditional materials and detailing.

The Character of Buildings

The General Character of Buildings There is a great variety in the buildings of the town. The underlying character is derived from simple, restrained late 18th and early 19th century town houses. These could be described as vernacular style or at least having vernacular origins but adhering to simplified Georgian design principles. Many of these have been modified and converted to shops on the ground floor. They are mostly two-storey and have a simple uncomplicated appearance.



Superimposed on this is the character provided by the buildings of the second half of the 19th century. This is mainly one of a grander, more ornate building style, predominantly in local red sandstone. Terraces of housing, generally towards

the edge of the conservation area also have more formal designed appearance with elements, such as windows and doors taking on a greater architectural role compared with their earlier counterparts.

Visual Experience, Skyline and Key Buildings

Many of the more intimate visual experiences described in this Appraisal relate to the close-up views of streets, buildings and the spaces around or enclosed by them. These are crucial to an understanding of the general character of the town and how development, whether it is alteration of existing buildings or new buildings, can affect that character. Thus, the irregular skyline and eaves lines and small changes in the scale of building frontages, for example, can inform how new buildings can be successfully integrated.

However, wider, sometimes more-distant views of the town are also part of the visual experience as are the views on the principal approaches to the conservation area. The main approaches to the town are along the former A75; from the west over the bridge into the High Street and from the east along Church Street. Other approaches though less direct are important too.

The river dominates the approach from the west. The town centre rises behind the bridge with the foreground dominated by the long horizontally oriented Council offices. The former waterside development, with modern flatted development, stretches to the south. To the north the tree covered Motte and Bailey softens the urban form of the town. Crossing the bridge the buildings at the end of Port Street, the Blue Bell Inn and centrally to these, Bridge House, provide an important traditional grouping that presents an attractive and interesting entrance to the town.



From the east the approach along the former A75 is more varied as it passes through more modern and industrial development. The approach to the Church past the formal Cumberland Terrace and the row of shops and houses adjacent to the church, do not fully reveal the nature of the conservation area owing to the bend in the street.

Principal buildings contribute to the overall character of the conservation area in many ways. They are important both as interesting buildings in their own right and as part of the composition of views and the juxtaposition of buildings and spaces. Of special note are the Town Hall and the Old Parish Church at each end of the High Street.

Opening up of back areas, particularly for car parking has left the rear of properties on the High street visible. Views are often dominated by commercial and light industrial buildings, open spaces and service areas.

Views out of the centre are more limited and are mostly closed by the topography or the curved streets. This reinforces the urban, town-like character of the central area.

Materials and Colour

Though not necessarily apparent at first, colour plays an important part in defining the character of the conservation area. The predominant building material is the deep, warm red, locally quarried sandstone. For example, *“The materials for building the bridge, consisting of red sandstone of excellent quality, were dug from Gallowbank quarry, nearly a mile farther up the river, and floated down on the stream on a barge or punt, constructed for the purpose.”* But even within this ubiquitous material there is much variation in colour, texture and quality which adds a richness and subtle quality that is easily negated by more uniform modern materials.

Some of the older buildings have been painted, some rendered or harled. The colours are mostly varying shades of white, cream and yellow. Bold,

applied colour is not a defining feature of the conservation area. Recent painting schemes which have tended to use stronger colours are not characteristic of the area.



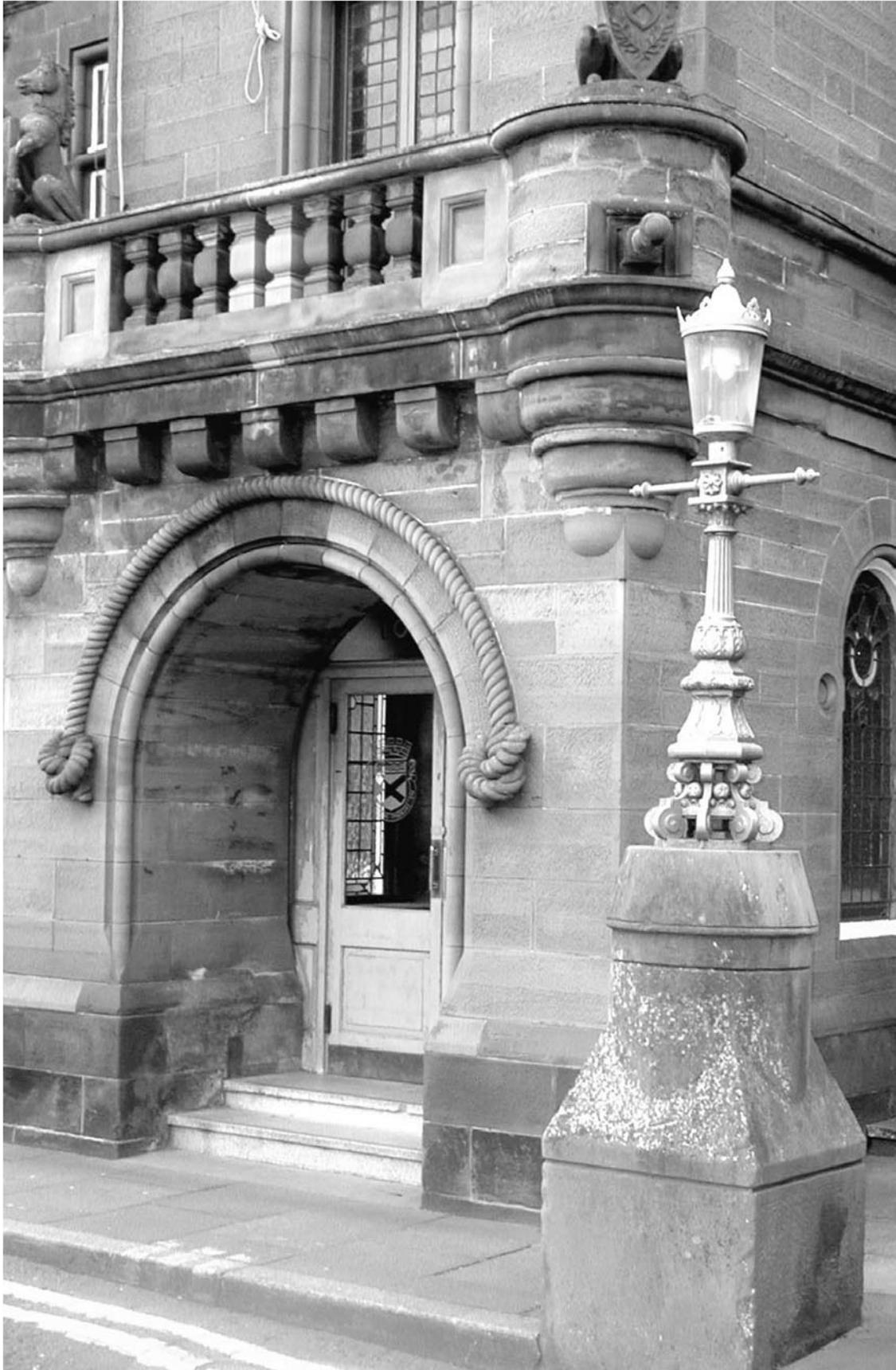
Roofs are mostly varying shades of grey from the natural Cumbrian slate that was formerly the predominant material. Occasional use of more uniform Welsh slate has introduced a blue/purple range of slate colour; while the use of man-made concrete tiles is impinging on this general character with fading shades of brown and cement grey.

An important contribution to the general colour and character is that of the effects of weathering on natural stone. Some staining, lichen and algal growth are part of the patina of age.

The Character of Buildings – Issues, Conflicts and Opportunities

The setting of key, landmark buildings is vulnerable to insensitive development, particularly road development, such as at Bridge House.

Alterations or lack of maintenance of some buildings are also threatening the architectural or historic integrity of individual buildings. The main impact of such alterations is from poorly designed and proportioned shop fronts.



Annan Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The loss of chimneys and chimney cans is having a considerable impact on the skyline. Restoration of those lost can be eligible under the repair grant programme.

One of the strengths of Annan is the variation in building styles. Existing buildings should be carefully restored to their original design to retain this character and variety. The design of new buildings, where opportunities arise, can draw on the qualities inherent in the streetscape and reflect the general proportions, massing and materials but expressed in an original manner.

Having considered the more general aspects of the conservation area, the appraisal now focuses on four areas to help refine the analysis. These are; The High Street; Port Street; Bank Street and The Castle and its Environs.

The High Street

Description and Character

The massing and scale of buildings, along the High Street varies from earlier, lower two-storey houses, to the later larger, still two-storey buildings and finally to some three and four-storey relatively massive individual buildings of a more confident and prosperous Victorian era.



Many architectural styles are represented within the town. These include, Classical Georgian, Scots Baronial, and Renaissance.

The overall arrangement is quite unplanned and the view along the High Street, especially the central parts on the northern side, is one of an eclectic mix of massing and styles, unified by a limited palette of materials and for the most part by a simple vertically emphasised fenestration.

The scale of building is most prominent in the area around the Bank Street/Lady Street junctions with the High Street. The street adopts a grandeur that is further developed on Bank Street. Working west towards the Town Hall there is a return to mostly more modest two-storey buildings occasionally punctuated by larger or more imposing buildings which show their original importance; such as the Royal Bank

of Scotland. Opposite, the range from the former Co-operative store to number 23, the former garage, is well crafted and architecturally of considerable interest.



Generally architectural embellishment varies from none on the modest earlier buildings to a great exuberance of detail and decoration on a few key buildings, such as the Corner House Hotel.

Further east the High Street takes on a more domestic and vernacular feel. Number 119 has a fine richly ornate late 19th century shop front while the building above is an elegant early 19th century town house of much character. Generally, fewer buildings assert their presence; the main exception being Argyle House on the corner with Murray Street. Beyond this, numbers 111 to 115 show an elegant restrained style with good stone pilaster detailing.

Key Buildings, Sites and Vistas

Notable buildings whose context should be carefully considered in any development include:

THE TOWN HALL – dominates the western end of the High Street, not because it is unusually large in itself but because of the fine tower and spire. The broad elevation and roof provide a building of significance at a scale that is complementary to and compatible with surrounding buildings.

THE OLD PARISH CHURCH – again punctuates the skyline with a fine spire at the eastern end of the High Street. The main body of the church only comes into view on the approaches to it as it is set back from the road behind the line adjacent terraces.

BRIDGE HOUSE – is an elegant 18th century building that is one of the most prominent buildings both on the approach to the centre over the bridge and along the High Street, restored as part of the THI. It is now isolated on an island site but was once symmetrical and formed part of a continuous line on the south side of the High Street. These are landmark buildings in views within the town and, in the case of the taller buildings, views from further afield.



The graceful, sweeping arches of the bridge lead into a cluster of imposing buildings centred on the old town hall. The new horizontal mass of the Council offices adds a distinctively modern element to the overall composition. However, the massing of this office block may be considered too large for the more intimate older townscape.

In addition there are a number of buildings which stand out as helping to define the character of the High Street. The corner buildings at the junction of the High Street with Bank Street and Lady Street provide an extension of the grander scale established further along Bank street. The flamboyant Corner House Hotel, rising unusually to 4 storeys, displays an exuberant use of carved detail in its sandstone façade, while No 73, the former bank diagonally opposite, shows a sophisticated well-proportioned but restrained classical front to the street.

Individual buildings such as the Queensberry Arms Hotel, or the Royal Bank of Scotland, opposite, also give strength to the quality of the street scene rising as they do in bulk and scale beyond the general scale of buildings.

The Victorian exuberance is given a calming effect by the more restrained earlier buildings that survive along the High Street. Here the views along the street are given added interest by variations in eaves and ridge lines and by chimneys. However, the loss of cans and chimney stacks is beginning to have an adverse impact on this skyline.

Views along the street are also very important. The entrance to the conservation area at the eastern end is marked by a finely detailed row of shops. The corner building on Charles Street has good details in its chimneys, dormers and corning.

Looking west, the orientation of buildings and the widening of the street makes the Town Hall and the former Bradford & Bingley Office particularly prominent, the latter having suffered from the loss of its pitched roof.



The High Street – Issues, Conflicts and Opportunities

The primary threat to the character and appearance of the High Street arises from the under-use or redundancy of buildings and in unsympathetic alterations especially associated with changes of use and lack of repair.

The loss of chimneys and chimney cans is having a considerable impact on the skyline of the High Street.

If the opportunity arises, the open site opposite the Parish Church should preferably be redeveloped with buildings that are set close to the pavement thus reinstating the original building line and continuous frontage.

Port Street

Description and Character

The character of Port Street has in recent years been considerably altered through the loss of roadside warehouses at the rear of Bridge House and through the construction of the link road from the High Street.



The short stretch of Port Street leading directly from the High Street is bounded on the west side by two-storey houses, of mixed styles. On the High Street corner stands an elegant 19th century house and shop which contrasts with the much smaller property adjacent. The double set-back of these properties from the row of houses,

the first of which is two-and-a-half-storey, creates an interesting and attractive entry to the street.

To the west side the street has lost a range of warehouses and is now an open development site. The link road has made the site an “island” site, exposed from three sides.

The conservation area includes the first terraces beyond the link road. These are modest in scale and character but are important to and define the character of the area. Many of these properties have been altered, occasionally in a manner that might be regarded as unsympathetic to the historic character of the street. The south side is dominated by elegant Albert Hall building.



To the east is a range of buildings leading from No 23 High Street and forming Pool’s Court. There are also larger modern industrial buildings. The spaces in front of these are often occupied by agricultural machinery. The activity generated gives life and function to this part of the town and should not be seen as detracting from the character of the area.

Key Buildings, Sites and Vistas

The key site, on which development might reasonably be expected is the island site to the rear of Bridge House. The form and scale of development will need to be carefully considered so that it not only reintroduces the enclosure of Port Street but also relates to and does not detract from Bridge House.

One of the key buildings is Albert Hall. It is dominant in views along Port Street, from the High Street, and from the new link road. It is a simple, well crafted building with round-arched openings.

It may be considered suitable for conversion to a non-commercial use and care will be required to ensure it retains its architectural integrity. The open land in front of the building and nearby areas seem to be underused and not well maintained.

Port Street – Issues, Conflicts and Opportunities

The principal issue to affect Port Street has been the construction of the link road and the changed emphasis that gives to the views and traffic flows. The development of the site behind Bridge House will need to consider the historical character of the street and building lines and the scale of development will need to take this into account.

There is scope for considering how the open spaces, both public and private, fronting the new link road might best be used and if some re-organisation of these areas might lead to better usage and a visual improvement.

The quality and character of Port Street as a whole, rests with the regular simply proportioned terraces whose character is being eroded by inappropriate alterations.



architectural ideas is not detrimental to the street scene. On the contrary, it greatly enhances the quality of the visual experience.

This shows that individual buildings can indeed be very different from each other but yet retain a sense of uniformity to the overall character and quality of the townscape. No one building totally dominates the scene yet each of the more imposing buildings around Bank Street does make its own statement architecturally.

These buildings were erected with attention to architectural detailing and joinery. The loss of railings from the street boundary of several buildings has been unfortunate.

Bank Street

Description and Character

Bank Street is a relatively short but wide street. It was first planned in the early 19th century and contains some of Annan's finest and most prestigious buildings. The street retains the air of grandeur and elegance that resulted from the period of Victorian and Edwardian prosperity

Notwithstanding a considerable variation in style and massing these buildings are coherent through the ubiquitous use of red sandstone. The variation between, for example the Old Library and the Erskine Church, representing quite different

Key Buildings, Sites and Vistas

Almost every building on Bank Street may be regarded as a key building. The Church of St Andrew, dominating the corner as Bank Street turns towards Ednam Street; the closure provided by the former Bank and Manager's House, built in a Classical style; or the former Library and Public Hall, in an 'Elizabethan Renaissance' style.

An important group of buildings, just beyond Bank Street but closing the view as the corner is approached is the block of shops and houses on St John's Road. This is an elegant mid-19th century group with traditional shops and regularly arranged windows. Alterations have, however, started to erode the character of this block.

The entrance to the conservation area along Bank Street is more formal yet the double bend out of St John's Road, with different key buildings, such as the Church or the former Post Office, taking the visual focus, provides the sense of anticipation without revealing the full character at once.

Bank Street – Issues, Conflicts and Opportunities

The principal threat derives from under-use or in some cases disuse for the building and under-investment in their repair and maintenance.

Though there are limited opportunities for development the adaptation of buildings to new uses can have serious implications for their appearance. Alterations to some buildings have started to undermine the original architectural integrity and quality of the area.

The need to meet new regulations such as the provision of fire escapes must be set against the architectural integrity of the building.

Development in the grounds of 27 Bank Street should respect the garden setting of the main aspect and must be minor and ancillary to the main building.

Good timely maintenance and the reinstatement of original windows, doors and other architectural elements are also important.

The reinstatement of railings will also have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the street.

Development opportunities are limited but proposals must have regard to the setting and architectural qualities of adjacent buildings.

The Castle and Environs

Description and Character

Battery Street (formerly Brae) and Bruce Street provide the main approaches to the Motte. These streets are narrow, and irregular with terraced housing in blocks adjacent to the roadside. The newer Council Office now dominates the higher part of Battery Street.

The streets merge to climb a gentle hill at the side of the Mottes which is enclosed by a sandstone wall. Formerly known as Toot Hill the street becomes Bruce Street with a mixture



of 19th century and more modern development. The Motte, now dominated by mature trees and vegetation is the most important element of the landscape, not only from adjacent streets but also in views across the river from the west. The Motte itself is no longer complete as a considerable part has been washed away by the river but nevertheless it defines the character of this part of the town.

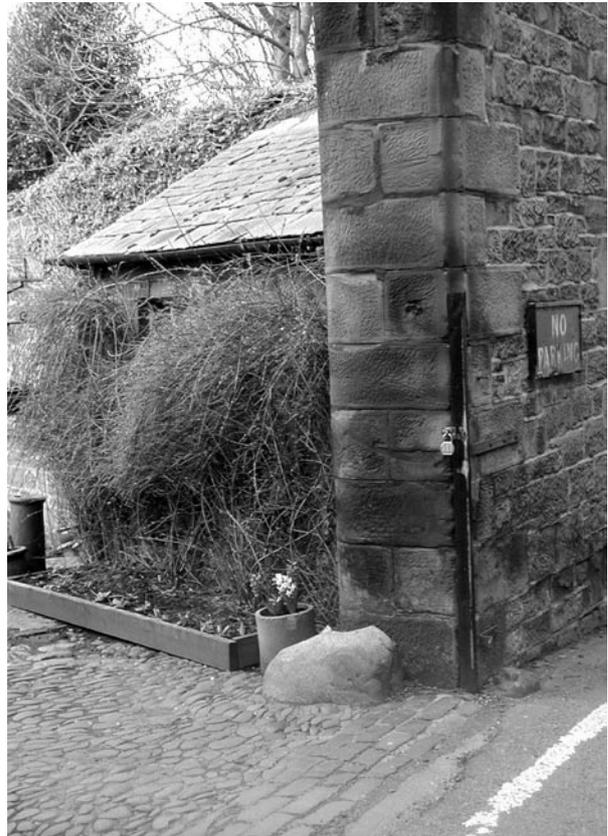
Key Buildings, Sites and Vistas

Most buildings are of a modest scale and type though the Council office, by its massing and omnipresence must be regarded as a key building. At the northern end of Bruce Street the attractively proportioned Moat House, though much altered, provides a picturesque setting to views back into the conservation area from beyond.

The Castle and Environs – Issues, Conflicts and Opportunities

The future management of the Motte is crucial to its protection and interpretation. A management plan should be prepared which takes into account the diverse needs of public access, reasonable maintenance programme and its cultural and historic significance and that the tree cover is in conflict with the archaeology of the site.

The refurbishment of Moat House needs to be enabled to prevent its further deterioration though any scheme will need to protect its character. It may be necessary to allow some land at the rear to be made available for use with the building as well as for vehicular access and parking.



Implementation and Review



Management of the Conservation Area

Policy Development

LDP2 and supporting documents have established the broad policy framework for guiding development in the Conservation Area.

These will be kept under review. In addition, further guidance on technical aspects of conservation are available from Historic Environment Scotland and in the Council's Historic Built Environment Supplementary Guidance. These cover topics such as Lime Mortar, Traditional Windows and Traditional Roofing - materials and practices.

Public Realm

The Council will maintain those areas being improved as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative in accordance with the standards and details agreed and implemented during the THI.

Further works in the conservation area will be subject to scrutiny and where appropriate will have regard to current guidance in terms of materials and detailing.

Priorities for Action

Town Centre Funding

The THI ended in 1997 but the Action Plan outlined how to promote the restoration and regeneration of the town centre. The focus of this plan could be continued through additional funding sources for:

- a) significant projects – key buildings whose restoration will be prioritised and significant grants made available;
- b) property grants scheme – funding general repairs and restoration of other eligible properties within the THI area; and
- c) public realm – enhancement of key public areas
Under the proposals for public realm works areas adjacent to the Town Hall, and the Royal Bank of Scotland, entrances to the wynds, closes and courts and the setting for significant buildings have been improved through the THI.



Enhancement Opportunities and other Initiatives

Whilst funding will not always be available unless specifically sought, it is proposed that, periodically, further works will be brought forward to build on the work achieved under the THI. These will include the Council's own street works and any privately funded schemes, possibly in association with development and other funding opportunities.

Areas of particular interest will include the closes and vennels, the groundscape in the larger side streets and yards, such as Fairfield Court, Pools Court and Greencroft Wynd. Detailed schemes will be brought forward as funding permits.

An Economic Study has developed a programme of initiatives that form an integral part of the regeneration of Annan town centre.

Following the THI it is proposed to seek agreement with Historic Environment Scotland to offer a more limited range of grant for repair work to buildings within the conservation area.

Conclusion

Review of the Appraisal

The Appraisal was initiated as part of the bid to the National Lottery Fund in support of the Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme but forms 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.

It is important that as the development of the conservation area progresses the appraisal is also reviewed and updated. It is proposed that periodically revisions to this appraisal will be considered by the appropriate local and community groups and by the relevant Committee of the Council.

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