

Dumfries and Galloway Council

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

# Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area Character Appraisal

*Supplementary Guidance - February 2020*





# Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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That description was written in 1792 in and, whilst Gatehouse may not have risen among the ranks of the manufacturing towns as anticipated, it can still be described as being *“neat and beautifully situated”*.

## Background

Gatehouse of Fleet has an interesting history as a planned town, which developed towards the end of the 18th century to serve the cotton mills and other industrial development under the guidance of James Murray.

## Local Context

The Burgh has a population of about 986 (2011 Census) and is within the Local Authority area of Dumfries and Galloway. It is situated close to the Solway on the Water of Fleet between Castle Douglas (14m) and Creetown (11m).

The main A75 Gretna to Stranraer trunk road now bypasses the town. This has removed heavy traffic from the town centre but has reduced some opportunities for passing trade. However, Gatehouse is a recognised holiday centre and tourist destination with a number of local attractions.

## Introduction

*“...This neat and beautifully situated village stands to the S. W. of the Parish, on the banks of the Fleet. Its increase has been rapid. Though the first house in it was built as an inn, not above 30 years ago, it now contains upwards of 160 houses, and 1150 inhabitants. The cotton works, which have swelled it to its present size and population, promise soon to give it a rank among the towns distinguished for industry and commerce; ...”*

From ‘The Statistical Account of Scotland, (SAS) Number XXIV, Parish of Girthorn, by the Rev. Mr. William Thorburn, 1792’





## The Character Appraisal

This conservation area character appraisal was first adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the Stewartry Local Plan which was replaced by the Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP is reviewed every 5 years and the conservation area character appraisal is considered by the Council to remain relevant and is therefore adopted as Supplementary Guidance to Local Development Plan 2, October 2019.

Policy HE2: Conservation Areas ties the conservation area character appraisal to LDP 2. The policy reinforces the importance and value of 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...”*

## The Conservation Area

A conservation area was first designated in 1974, covering the centre of the town, and was extended in early 1979 to include Catherine Street, Birtwhistle Street and Garden Street. Recently the area was redesignated to include the Mill Dam at the eastern end of the High Street and the Burgher Park play area behind St Mary’s Church. The boundary of the revised area is shown on the map on the centre pages.

## Purpose of this Document

This document has been prepared by Dumfries and Galloway Council as required in Government Guidance. The Appraisal promotes the need for a sustainable approach to the development and management of schemes affecting the appearance of the town starting with an understanding of its historical and architectural character.



The emphasis is on the re-use of older buildings, repair and maintenance, attention to historical, traditional detailing and on sensitive use of modern or traditional materials and techniques.

This does not, however, preclude good modern design. It is important that new development should be sympathetic yet innovative. There is scope for good modern architecture and it is hoped that simple parody or pastiche of the older more traditional form of development will be avoided.

Gatehouse of Fleet is a living, working town for its inhabitants and others. It must remain economically active and continue to draw visitors. The Appraisal is only a starting point from which the Council’s stewardship of the built fabric of the town can be developed and from which the people of Gatehouse of Fleet can build their own responses and approaches to the care, use and future of the town.

With proper care and management of the conservation area Gatehouse can live up to its early description and continue to prosper.

This Appraisal will provide the agreed framework, in support of current guidance and policy, within which development can be managed, by the Council as Planning Authority. It has the aim of securing the physical, economic and social well-being of the town.



### **Content of Document**

This Appraisal is divided into four principal sections:

**Understanding the Town** – describes the historical development and structure of the town;

**The Character Appraisal** – includes an assessment of the conservation area overall and draws out its significance by considering the elements that make up the character of the town; where appropriate it considers the area in discrete parts. It also gives an analysis of issues and conflicts showing where change is threatening the character of Gatehouse.

**Suggested Guidelines for Future Management** – proposes how the conservation area can be managed and offers criteria that the Council as Planning Authority will apply in considering proposals that affect the character of the area.

**Implementation and Review** – ensures the appraisal is updated and remains a useful working document. This section also identifies areas for further work and enhancement opportunities.

### **Other Relevant Documents and Plans**

#### **Local Development Plan 2**

The Council's LDP2 was adopted in October 2019. It replaces the first LDP adopted in 2014. LDP2 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.

LDP 2 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.

When formally adopted, LDP 2 will provide the statutory policy framework for the area defining the principles and practices to be adopted by

the Council in considering development proposals.

The plan also identifies the open areas along the southern flank of the town, Garries Park, Garries Wood and the river side, together with the river valley on the northern side as important areas that should be protected from development.

### **Fleet Valley National Scenic Area – Management Strategy**

The town lies within the Fleet Valley National Scenic Area (NSA). This is one of three designated in Dumfries and Galloway. The Management Strategy for the NSA develops a shared vision of the future of this outstanding landscape and details the actions required to safeguard and enhance its special qualities.

The Strategy emphasises the importance of Gatehouse of Fleet as an urban centre for its own architectural and historic qualities. It also recognises the town's position in the wider landscape at the head of Fleet Bay where it marks the change from valley to estuarine landscape. Among the objectives in the Strategy is that of seeking to:

*...“reinforce and maintain the individual character of settlements within the NSA, and ensure new developments reinforce the character of this landscape”...*

The Strategy has been adopted as supplementary guidance in LDP2.





## Historic Built Environment Supplementary Guidance

This document intends to assist individuals and organisations who wish to develop proposals in the historic built environment. It provides steps to follow which are necessary to find a balance between preservation and change.

To reach that balance, the historic elements of the built structure, the site and its setting must first be understood and both the historic and the architectural significance must be assessed and evaluated. In this way, well-conceived, sensitive, creative proposals can be put forward. This is the principle of 'informed conservation'.

The overriding objective of this Supplementary Guidance (SG) is to achieve consistent, high quality development in the historic environment which ensures that historic significance and character is preserved.

## Understanding the Town

### Setting and Context

#### *Topography and Landscape*

Gatehouse of Fleet is situated mainly on the eastern side of the narrow wooded glaciated valley of the Water of Fleet at the lowest crossing close to the river's outfall to the Solway.

The area is geologically complex with intrusions and compression, folding and erosion of overlying strata giving diverse and interesting rock outcrops. The dominant building stones comprise granite and greywacke (whin). Soils are made up from glacial deposits, clays and river sands and gravels. Some clays proved suitable for brick making.

The river and its environs have helped to shape the town both economically and physically. The upper part of the High Street and the adjoining Catherine Street and Birtwhistle Street are on the east bank on land, a raised beach, that quickly rises from the flood plain. Fleet Street

and the development to the north lie on the lower level on the west bank of the river.

The river provided an important means of communication and was straightened and canalised to accommodate larger vessels.

The present wider landscape is largely a legacy of the enclosure and agrarian improvements of the 18th century. Many dykes were built to a design now known as the Galloway Dyke, with large boulders in the upper courses showing light through, possibly to deter sheep from jumping over them.

#### *Archaeological Potential*

Though the town is of the 18th century there is evidence of a long history of human settlement in the Fleet Valley, particularly in the upland to the north of the present town where evidence of prehistoric field systems can still be seen.

A small Roman fort was built to guard a crossing of the Water of Fleet just north of the town and a sequence of fortifications from the 12th to the 15th centuries highlight the importance given to protecting the river crossing.

Within the limits of the conservation area, there are no records of significant archaeological finds having been made and no information to suggest that significant buried features, pre-dating the 18th century development, exist. Any features which do come to light during the course of ground disturbance should be reported to the Council Archaeologist or to the Stewartry Museum so that they can be recorded.

### Development of the Town

#### *Historical Development*

James Murray established the town as a cotton manufacturing centre in the latter part of the 18th century. There is little evidence of any substantial settlement here before this. The Statistical Account of 1792 refers to the rapid rise in population over the preceding 40 years where it is noted that "*No village or town existed in the parish at the former date [1755]*" (SAS p298). Gatehouse of Fleet was designated a Burgh in 1795



The Old Turnpike Road runs on the high ground above the raised beach, now comprising Ann Street and the Ford Road.

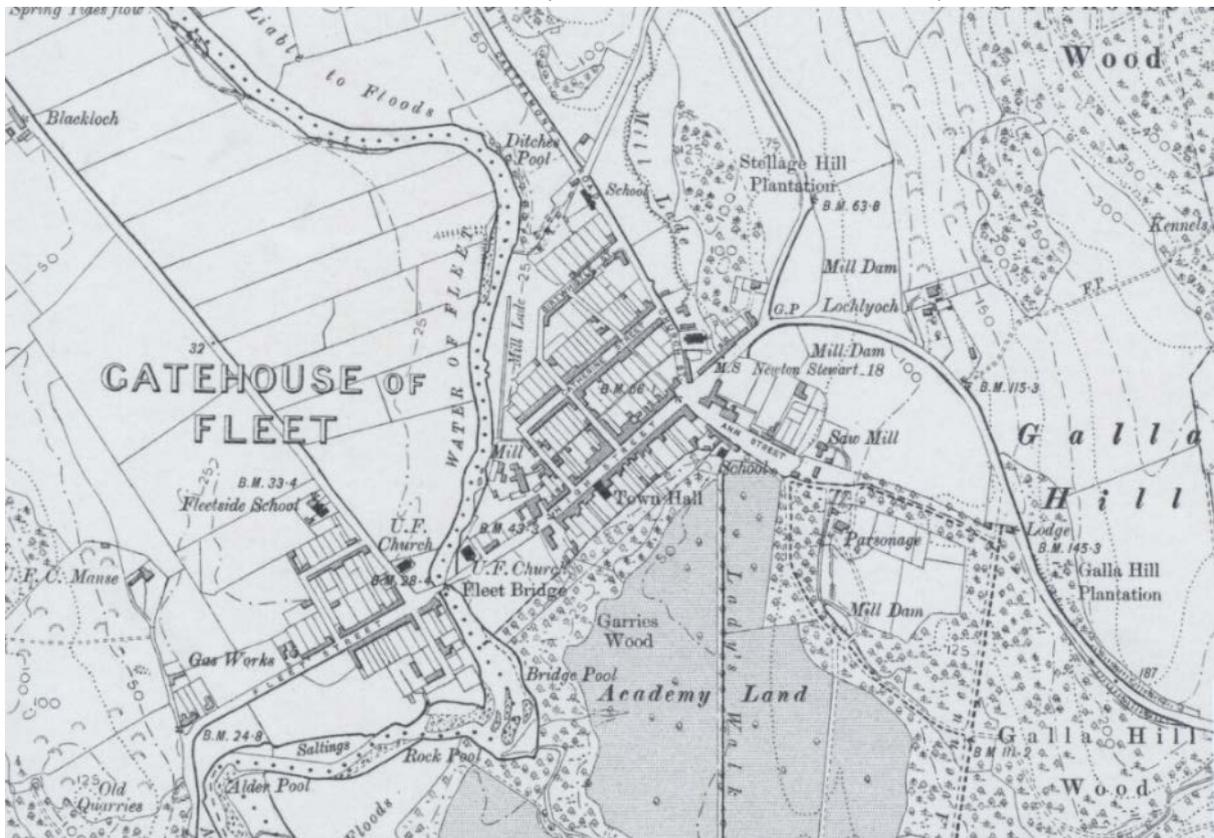
of railway transport stopped further growth. Gatehouse is a good example of arrested industrial development.

The first mills were developed in partnership with Messrs Birtwhistle and Sons from Yorkshire in 1785. Industries included a tannery and brewery. Water power was crucial and a system of lades and a tunnel to bring water from Loch Whinyeon were built. The river was straightened to ease shipping movements in 1824.

By the end of 19th century the town had grown to the size that is included within the conservation area and all the principal street frontages were developed largely as we now see them.

The originally designated area was some 1,000 acres but from the mid-19th century the arrival

Plan 1. Gatehouse of Fleet Ordnance Survey 6 inch, 1892-1960 series revised 1907 published 1910



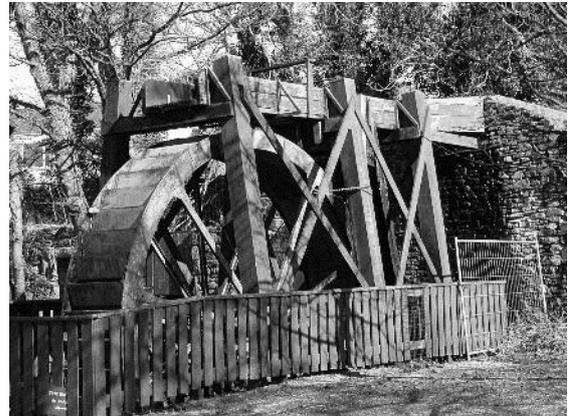


### Modern Development of the Town

Because of the decline in the industries established by James Murray, their change to other uses, such as the bobbin mill, and finally the closure of most local manufacturing, the town changed very little from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Cally Estate policy in the twentieth century continued to help shape development of the town. Since the 1960's the Estate policy has been to feu land for housing in discrete areas away from the town. Also much of the farmland around the town is subject to conservation agreements with the National Trust for Scotland.

Newer development has taken place on peripheral areas in a very distinctive 'cluster' form. Post-war housing development and a new school extended the town to the north on the western bank of the Water of Fleet and along Castramont Road, while isolated larger houses were built in woodland on the hillsides to the east and west.







## The Character Appraisal

### Urban Structure

#### *The Historical Character as expressed Today*

The historical development of Gatehouse is crucial to its present form and character. The short period of development and the lack of later pressure on the settlement means that the town's origins remain clearly defined.

The overarching conservation significance is the fact that it is a planned town with a strong hierarchical structure. This is evidenced in the street pattern; the uniformity of the houses, two-storey on the High Street, single on others, and the legacy of the mills and other industrial buildings. The town's role and links to the Cally Estate and its setting in the wider landscape are also significant.

Within the conservation area lies a town which was only founded in the 1790s and largely complete and in its present form by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Modern development has hardly encroached on this core and the town retains its architectural coherence.

#### *Plan Form and Grain*

The Plan of the town is crucial to its character and appearance today. This is best appreciated from the 1907 Ed. Ordnance Survey Map (Fig 1).

The streets are laid out in a grid of three parallel streets with cross streets. The High Street is the most dominant. Two cross streets link it to Catherine Street as does the pre-existing Old Ford Road. This is now a footway and is only slightly out of alignment with the grid. This linear form extends over the river into Fleet Street. The formal layout of the upper part of the town is also reflected here, but to a lesser extent, in Garden Street and Hannay Street. Thelade running the full length of the town between the High Street and Catherine street following the grid-like plan form.

Houses were of brick or whinstone and set on plots 30 feet wide by 150 feet deep to provide cottage gardens.<sup>7</sup>

Ann Street, formerly known as Murray Street, was aligned along the old turnpike road. It is distinct from the other principal streets. Being earlier, it has a more informal character, widening from north to south creating a large open area before Cox's Lodge.



### Hierarchy and Character of Open Spaces

#### *Principal Streets*

The main streets of the town function as thoroughfares. They have a strong linear feel heightened by the enclosure given by the terraces of houses. Interest is provided by openings, such as the pends and connecting streets.

The High Street opens out around the Clock Tower at Horatio Square and in front of the Murray Arms Hotel. Here the angled entry of Castramont Road (formerly Church Street) further emphasises the break from the more formal street pattern.

Ann Street is more informal and is approximately triangular. It is a significant area in the town both for the contrast it provides with the more formal, planned streets and for the quality of building, walls and planting that help to define the area.



**The Mills and Mill Lades**

The open areas associated with the former mills (the riverside Bobbin Mill is now the Mill on the Fleet centre) and the system of lades provide attractive public and private spaces very significant to the character of the town. Mature trees link the town with the river valley which is generally well wooded. The restored mill dam at the north end of the town is a pleasant amenity area and reminder of the town's origins and industrial past. The mill dam originally extended to the opposite side of the road and is shown on the 1st Edition O.S. map.

The lade running between the High Street and Catherine Street is a mostly private and more intimate open space. It forms the property boundaries almost equidistant between the two streets. Views of the lade are gained from the cross streets; the Old Ford Road footpath; and closer to the Bobbin Mill where it emerges to power the water wheels. The Mill was restored in the 1990s to become a visitor centre



**Main Car Park and River Frontages**

At the lower end of the High Street is the principal car park, which opens onto Garries

Wood beyond. This area, though at a lower level than the High Street, has a significant impact on the character of the street.

**Garries Wood and Cally House**

Garries Wood and the parkland of Cally House provide the context and setting for the town from the south and east. The area now known as Garries Park, a part of which was once a nursery, is a significant public open space for formal and informal recreation. Mature tree cover interspersed with open ground gives the town a strong backdrop especially when viewed from the southern end of High Street and Fleet Street. Walkways from the High Street, such as that through the former Town Hall, provide key links into the area.

Cally House and Grounds and the extensive area around it are included in the Historic Environment Scotland Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. A large part is now given over to forestry but the extent of the original park, woodlands and formal gardens continues to be significant in the context of Gatehouse of Fleet.

**Urban Structure – Issues and Conflicts**

*The main urban structure within the conservation area does not appear to be under threat from major development or redevelopment. LDP2 housing allocations are not within the conservation area.*

*Possible areas of conflict arise in areas that are presently undeveloped, such as the gardens fronting Roseberry Terrace or the lower end of Castramont Road, should these and similar areas be proposed for infill development.*

*Any redevelopment of the former garage, once an open area of water and sited on the mill dam will have a particularly strong impact on the character of the town.*

*The regular structure of the planned town layout, especially the long plots, could be under threat if development were to encroach on to backland areas or if terraces or parts of terraces were to be redeveloped.*



## Streetscape

### **Streetworks**

The quality and design of street works has an important and comprehensive effect on the character and appearance of the town. Cost constraints and vehicular circulation have led to design and engineering solutions that have been less than sensitive to the historic setting. This is seen in the materials used, standardised components, the layout of junctions and street furniture.

Footways are paved with smaller, square, grey concrete flags and are mostly edged with concrete kerbs. Roadways are mostly hot rolled asphalt or stone surface dressed.

Traffic and parking management schemes have resulted in the extension of footways at road junctions to form nibs out into the High Street which some regard as intrusive.

### **Pedestrian Links**

Though the main pedestrian flows are along the main roadways there are several important paths and side lanes within the conservation area.

One of the more important of these is Old Ford Road, a narrow path, which runs from the High Street at Horatio Square to Birtwhistle Street. Older maps show this as the route to a fording point on the river beyond.

The pend at No 38 High Street gives an intriguing glimpse of the wooded area behind. Another, the link through the Old Town Hall, now provides an attractive path through a formal garden into Garries Wood and the playing fields beyond.

The network of paths also includes the steps from the former Bobbin Mill to Victoria Street and the path adjacent to the bowling green leading from Ann Street to the Park.

### **Visual Experience**

Within the town the close-up views of streets, buildings and the spaces around or enclosed by them are important. These are characterised by architectural details, the grouping of buildings

and how buildings are used and the strong, linear form of the main streets.



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 view from Venniehill is one of the most important as it both highlights the original form and scale of the town and how modern development can stand out in contrast.

The main approaches to the town are along the former A75. Good views over the town are gained from the approach as it passes the main gates to Cally House. This highlights the importance of the area behind the garage and how development there would have a significant impact on the conservation area.

Further down as the Toll House comes into view the linear structure of the town again assumes significance.

The entrance to the conservation area along Fleet Street is more constrained but as the river is approached the view towards the High Street, the Angel Hotel and the riverside trees dominate the scene.

Views out of the area are often dramatic with several vantage points offering outstanding views of the surrounding hills and a more dramatic landscape. These include views from the upper end of Ann Street, along the High Street and Fleet Street and westwards along Catherine Street.



### **Streetscape – Issues and Conflicts**

*Unsympathetic alterations to the surfaces, materials and detailing of repairs and improvements to roadways, footpaths and closes could threaten the character of the conservation area and in any case can have a considerable impact on the character and appearance of the area.*

*Statutory Undertakers' works require careful monitoring to ensure appropriate reinstatement of existing or traditional materials. Over time it may be possible to integrate the traffic management works with the footways.*

*Whilst it may not be possible to revert to traditional surfacing materials generally, the open and informal character of Ann Street or around the clock tower can be maintained, and traditional materials can be introduced at key locations.*

*Ann Street is particularly sensitive and any improvement schemes would require careful consideration to ensure that the present informality is not lost through the injudicious use of kerbing and increase in the areas of modern surfacing materials.*

*The importance of the former Angel Hotel and the riverside trees in views from the west side of the town should be noted.*

*Development can impact on views into, out of and within the conservation area. The character of the area could be threatened by injudicious development.*



## The Character of Buildings

### *The General Character of Buildings*

Gatehouse is relatively compact and uniform and its buildings are mostly simple, elegant terraces of houses from the late 18th to early 19th century. There is a simplicity in their street frontages derived from both the general style of architecture of the period and the early controls on building that has led to an elegant austerity in the character of the streets.

This style includes simple vertically proportioned sash and case windows, set regularly in either two or three bays with a door directly below one of the upper floor windows.

Many houses also have a pend door, usually less elaborate to one side. The scale of individual buildings varies but only to a limited extent thus maintaining the uniformity.

Buildings are generally set with roofs parallel to the streets. Roofs are moderately steeply pitched, mainly of slate. There is a notable lack of dormers.

Rainwater goods are mostly of cast iron with ½-round gutters, though some more elaborate, profiled and decorated examples can be seen, as at No 8 Woodside Terrace or 29 Fleet Street.



Gabled buildings terminate terraces on the High Street where side streets break through. However, the cluster of buildings around the former brewery at the lower end of the High Street mainly have hipped roofs.

The importance of details, such as regular fenestration, chimneys and chimney cans add to the complexity and quality of the views throughout the town. The largely regular skyline and eaves lines with small changes in

the scale of building frontages, for example, informs how new buildings may be successfully integrated.



### *Materials and Colour*

Materials and colour play an important part in defining the character of the conservation area. The predominant building material is whinstone and granite or locally made brick, the latter, usually rendered and/or painted on principal elevations.

Applied colours are mostly varying shades of white, cream and yellow. Bold, applied colour, with a few recently applied exceptions, is not a traditional or defining feature of the conservation area, nor is the use of contrasting margins.

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. Man-made concrete tiles in fading shades of brown and cement grey have impinged on this general character. The SAS, 1792 mentions use of a locally extracted slate but it is not known if any now survives. Many roofs exhibit fine, graded slating laid in random widths with particularly large slates on the lower courses. A good example of such a roof can be seen at the Cally Estate Office in Ann Street.

An important contribution to the colour and general character and to be kept as such is the weathering, lichen and algal growth on natural stone and some staining –all part of the patina of age.



## **Skyline and Key Buildings**

Key buildings contribute to the character of the conservation area in many ways. They are interesting buildings in their own right and important as part of the composition of views and the juxtaposition of buildings and spaces.

From Fleet Street, looking east, **Fleet Bridge** leads the eye onto a cluster of imposing buildings centred on the former brewery and the view is closed by the impressive façade of the former Angel Hotel. a

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

**The Angel (former) Hotel** – dominates the western end of the High Street. This is not because it is unusually large in itself. It rises to three storeys on the main block, is a visual stop to the High Street and the main building frontage is on the return elevation overlooking the river. The broad elevation and hipped roof provide a building of significance at a scale that is complementary to and compatible with surrounding buildings.

**The Parish Church** – again punctuates the skyline with a tower at the northern end of the High Street. The main body of the church only comes into view on the approaches after turning down Church Street (Castramont Road).

**The Murray Arms Hotel** – is an elegant 18th century building that is one of the most imposing in Ann Street and having considerable presence at the upper end of the High Street.

**The Clock Tower** provides a focal landmark in the street.

**The (former) Brewery and Brae Cottage** – a fine 18th century group that mark the beginning of the main part 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. Also, within the conservation area, are many good individual buildings whose

strength comes from their contribution to the general streetscape. These must be carefully considered in any proposals that might affect them directly, their context or setting (see description of streets below).

### **General Character of Buildings – Issues and Conflicts**

*The principal threats to conserving the character of the conservation area arise from the loss of details, changes to the materials of construction, how materials are applied, the use of strong modern colours, and the shape and detailing of windows and doors. The introduction of different materials and styles of windows and the repainting of some buildings have led to a disruption in the visual unity.*

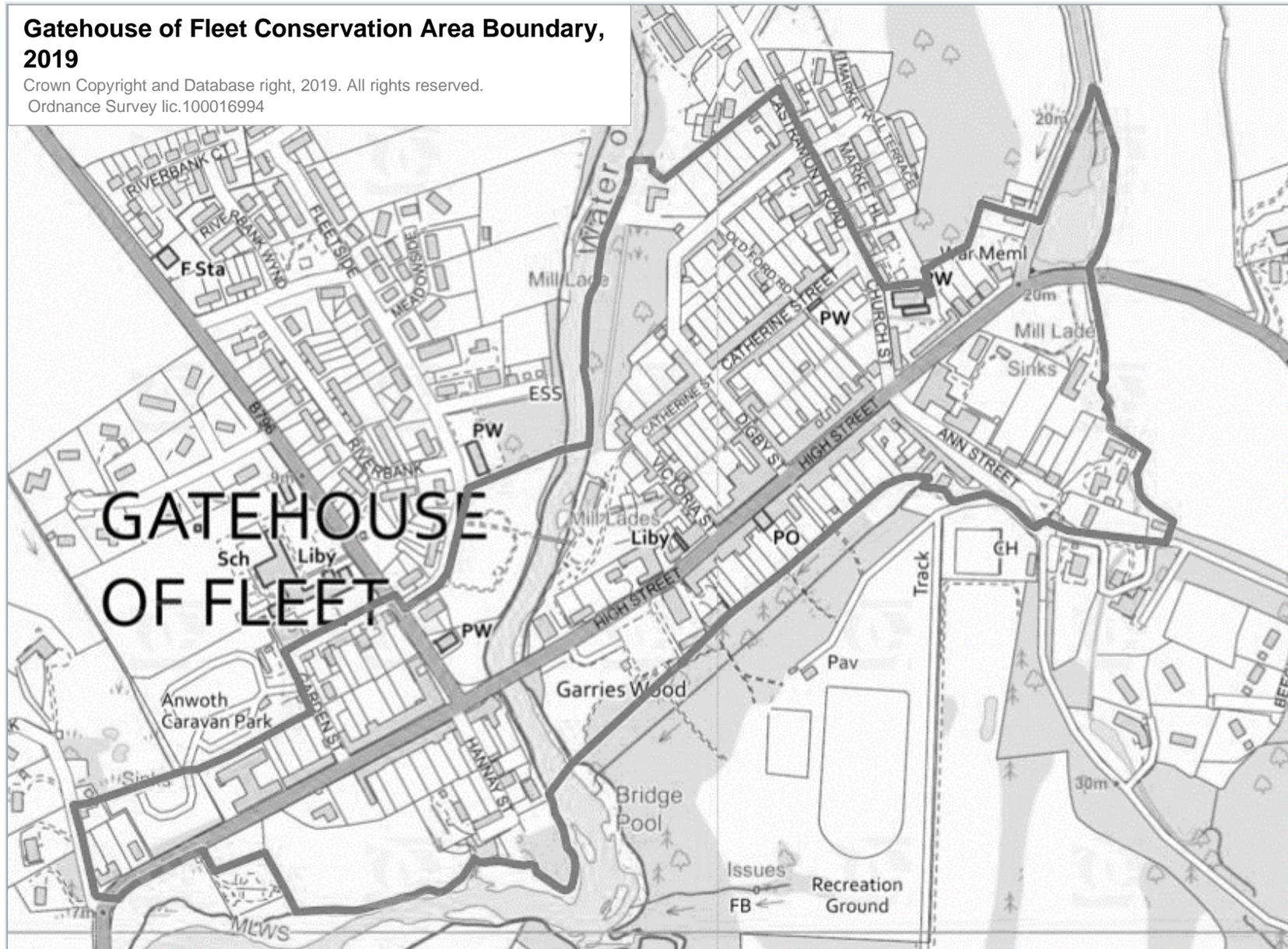
*The scale and proportion of new buildings can also have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the area; especially if the scale and proportions of existing older buildings are not respected and so are not reflected in the new development. The prominence of key buildings could be affected by inappropriate development that is out of scale or has overtly strong architectural expression.*

*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; Fleet Street, Ann Street, and Catherine Street with Birtwhistle Street.*



## Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area Boundary, 2019

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Ordnance Survey lic.100016994





## The High Street

### Description and Character

High Street is mainly straight with a slight deflection one-third of the way along from the river where, after first rising it follows more level ground above the raised beach.

Enclosure provided by the buildings is interrupted on the north side by the planned Victoria Street and Digby Street. These contrast with the more irregular and wider Ann Street. The south side is more continuous with some important pedestrian links to Garries Park.

The massing and scale of buildings is largely uniform 2-storey with, only minor variation. Gable ends face the side roads but piended roofs dominate the lower end around the brewery. Visual interest comes from houses which break the general eaves line: e.g. the *Bank of Fleet Hotel*; by a gable on the frontage; or a pedimented window e.g. *the Library*, no. 65. A larger three-storey block is prominent at the corner with Ann Street but is not wholly out of place.



Architectural embellishment is limited and where present quite modest in its implementation. A number of simply defined Venetian windows, such as no.36, and good traditional joinery relieve the uniformity.

### Key Buildings, Sites and Vistas

Some of the key buildings have been described above. In addition, *Woodside Terrace* at the northern end culminating in the charming Toll House with its bowed, or apsidal, wings is notable.



The former *Town Hall*, fronted in red sandstone, now altered with an arched opening through to the gardens, and the *Chemist Shop* at no.20 High Street contribute to the many faceted elements of the street's character.

Nos.77 and 79 are an elegant pair of Regency houses, complemented by a low piended roof wing, overlooking the car park at the lower end of High Street.

*Rutherford Hall*, the former *United Reformed Church*, is a dominant land mark. Behind, the *Mill on the Fleet*, provides a dramatic reminder of the mill complex that once stood here.

A large number of buildings in the High Street are included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest confirming their individual and collective importance to the town.

Views along the High Street are significant both for the intimate qualities of the street scene and the glimpses of the setting provided by the higher ground around the town.





### ***The High Street – Issues and Conflicts***

*The primary threat to the character and appearance of the High Street is derived from incremental alterations to building elements, such as changes to windows, doors, rainwater goods and to the addition of intrusive modern components such as over-large roof windows.*

*On commercial properties there is a tendency to introduce corporate signage in modern styles and materials. In particular the Bank of Scotland has a frontage that is out of character with the building and the street generally. There is also a risk to older shop fronts from the desire to modernise.*

*Re-painting facades using modern paint in brighter more vibrant colours than were traditionally available can also have a considerable, sometimes detrimental, effect on the conservation area.*

## **Fleet Street**

### **Description and Character**

The straight, strongly linear form of Fleet Street is its most dominant characteristic. Two rows of largely uniform terraced houses belie the interest and quality found in individual buildings. The SE side eaves are mostly level while opposite on the NW side there is more variation in height.

The lead-in from the west is softened by the undeveloped area to the south. The relatively new Nursing Home, replacing the former gas works and garage, on the north side is not wholly out-of-place having used some traditional elements in its design. Though it integrates well at street level, through the use of regular, mostly traditionally proportioned openings, the bulk and depth of the building with the larger roof betrays its modernity. It stands out in views from the west as having a different scale to that of nearby older development.

### **Key Buildings, Sites and Vistas**

Within the terraces there are several notable individual buildings, such as *no 9 Fleet Street* with its shop front and oriel window, *no. 29*, which has a fine door surround of Doric columns and a pediment and stands a little higher than its neighbour. *nos. 14 to 18 and 24 to 30 Fleet Street* show the use of local stone to good effect with rich variation in colour and texture. The early, wall mounted *posting box at no 30* should also be preserved in situ.

Another key building is the Anwoth Hotel, now *the Ship Inn*, which presents a strong gable with a broad stack and good complement of clay chimney cans. The model ship sign adds interest.

Good joinery detailing, particularly the 6-panel doors typical of Gatehouse are still to be seen on *nos. 24 to 30*, using shaped, fielded upper panels and flush beaded panels below.

The most important views are constrained and along the street. To the west the gorse covered Venniehill provides the backdrop to the view. Mature trees in gardens beyond the main terraces soften the urban forms and provide a visual link to the open hillside.

Looking east, towards the High Street interest is provided by the angled Bridge Terrace, the river valley and beyond the bridge the approach to the High Street marked by the Angel Hotel.

Again the hillside above the mill dam gives a dramatic backdrop to the town.

Further interest is provided by glimpses along the side streets such as along Hannay Street to Boat Green.

The mature trees on the river side, framing the view eastwards, are very important to the character of this part of the town giving both a focal point and a transition between the two parts of the town.



***Fleet Street – Issues and Conflicts***

*As with the High Street the principal threats to the character are likely to arise from incremental changes to individual houses; replacement windows and doors and other alterations.*

*Some buildings have been rendered with dry dash (or pebble dash) and several roofs have been reslated with small regular slating, possibly replacing graded random width slate roofs.*

*The Fleet Valley Nursing home highlights the difficulty of integrating larger-scale modern buildings into the traditional streetscape. Though it has traditionally derived elements, the larger volume and depth of the building make it stand out.*

*The open area to the south is protected from development. The remaining area of undeveloped land directly next to the terraces will require careful consideration*

**Ann Street**

***Description and Character***

There is a greater variation in style and a less formal layout in Ann Street which is the former main thoroughfare. Cox’s Lodge was the Toll House when the turnpike road ran through what is now part of Cally Park; the route being shown on the earlier OS maps as the ‘Track of the Old Military Road’. The former route continues

across the High Street into what is now a footway, The Old Ford Road.

The wedge shaped street gives a visual impression of gentle informality as it widens and in the variety of building styles. In particular the terraced houses on the south side vary in height and style punctuated by the large bay windows at No. 3 and the elegant door and window surround at the Estate Office.

Enclosure on the south side is maintained by the substantial stone estate wall leading to the Cox’s Lodge entrance to Garries Park with its substantial gate piers. On the north side the grouping is more irregular. The rising ground to the east and the former Scotts cotton mill, now flatted dwellings, and Cheriton11 Wood provide an impressive backdrop and closure.

The ground surfaces are varied with a central tar macadam roadway giving onto greens and river-washed cobbled fore courts and driveways. Occasionally used for markets and fairs, the width of the area and the lack of through traffic suggest that this may have further potential for civic and public functions.

**Key Buildings, Sites and Vistas**

Among the more prominent buildings are the *Hotel and Inn* at the entrance to Ann Street. These are both architecturally impressive having good Georgian detailing and proportions and serve as a social and physical focal point.





*Roseville* is a fine example of an elegant town house built in coursed granite with pinnings and with original detailing that is greatly enhanced by the fanlight, steps and swept railings. Cox's Lodge with its large roof, overhanging both eaves and verges, and the diamond pattern glazing is a fine contrast to the other houses in the street.



*Cheriton Wood*, solidly closing the view along the street, has iron railings and gates.

The forecourt of river-washed cobbles enhances the simple but elegant terrace, *Neilson Square*, built 1812.

Views along the street from the east lead the eye from the elegant and varied buildings around the narrowing space to the focus provided by the *Masonic Arms* and the *Murray Arms* and the *Clock Tower* with *Horatio Square* opposite and culminate in the setting to the townscape given by the rounded hills beyond; these providing a strong connection to the wilder landscape of the Southern Uplands.

Turning into the street from the High Street the wooded hillside rising above *Cox's Lodge*

confirms the town's relationship with the parkland to the south.

### ***Ann Street – Issues and Conflicts***

A large proportion of the buildings in Ann Street are statutorily listed so changes to these require consent. However, alterations to the remaining buildings would still impact on the character of the area. New development is likely to be limited to extensions of existing building as there is little scope for in-fill.

The effect of changes to the road layout, use of materials and detailing could be detrimental if kerbing were to be introduced or a formalised standard approach used.

### **Catherine Street / Birtwhistle Street**

#### **Description and Character**

Of the two principal streets, Birtwhistle is the more uniform with its rows of brick-built terraces extending into Swan Street. The main row on the north side shows simple but effective dentil cornicing at the eaves, where the bricks are laid projecting at an angle. This row was built as weavers' cottages and is believed to have once contained a power shaft running the full length from which individual looms could be operated.

Catherine Street is a mixture of one and two storey houses. In many cases the latter having been raised from originally single storey houses. This gives the street a variation and character that sets it apart.

Further interest is provided by occasional dormers, some with elegantly decorated barge boards.



Victoria Street and Digby Street are cross streets providing direct links to the High Street. There is a slightly less formal character having a variety of single and two-storey houses and workshops.



Buildings are oriented both along the street and gable end on.

As the ground drops away to the northwest, beyond Swan Street and Birtwhistle Street, there is a definitive edge to the older built up area with open views up the Fleet Valley. There are infill development opportunities on parts of Roseberry Place and the Old Ford Road. A recently completed bungalow was not set on the line of Old Ford Road.

**Catherine Street / Birtwhistle Street – Issues and Conflicts**

*The main threat to the character of the area arises from unsympathetic changes to individual properties. This becomes more obvious in those terraces that are designed as a whole.*

*Though opportunities for new development are limited the impact can nevertheless be significant. Land off the Old Ford Road is part of the original planned layout with approximately equal plots stretching back from Catherine Street and Birtwhistle Street. New building will need to reflect the older established patterns of development.*

**Guidelines**

**Urban Structure**

Development will be judged on its impact on directly adjacent areas, on its impact on views into, out of and within the conservation area.

The Council will consider how modern infill development relates to the structure of the older plan of the town. It is important to have regard to the density and general scale of the existing town houses. Rooflines, building proportions, plot sizes and boundary treatments and the layout of such development all contribute to the successful, or otherwise, integration of new development.

Requirements for parking and vehicular access in particular will need to be carefully considered to prevent an erosion of this character.

Sites that are viewed on the approaches to the town will be judged by the context they set for the conservation area and their impact on the streetscape. These include both private and public open areas, for example, the view of the church across the gardens from Old Ford Road, the former garage and adjacent fields at the eastern end of the High Street and the undeveloped area along the south side of Fleet Street.

**Suggested Guidelines for Future Management**

**Introduction**

It is important that positive action is taken to manage and enhance the conservation area. The following guidelines set out actions and criteria that can be applied when judging development proposals affecting the character and setting of the conservation area.

The guidelines are grouped to reflect the analysis and appraisal in the foregoing sections. Issues that are more generally applicable are brought together and apply in all parts of the conservation area.





## Streetscape

The repair and replacement of footways need to be done sympathetically. This does not preclude modern materials but requires careful application and design. Variation in slab sizing and bonding pattern and cobbled gutters would give a more pleasing and traditional appearance. Texture and colour should be chosen to complement the adjacent buildings. Granite chippings in the surface layer of concrete slabs or asphalt should be used where practical and where natural stone slabs or cobbles cannot be used.

A review of the traffic and parking management scheme should be undertaken when resources allow. Where appropriate changes should be incorporated that reflect the principles outlined in this Appraisal.

The scope to work in a manner that is sensitive to the historic character of Gatehouse of Fleet 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 less intrusive approach. It is hoped that this will lead to the development of more detailed design standards that can be adopted in areas of historic importance.

Special attention to detail is required when work is being done to street furniture, such as the drinking basin on the Clock Tower.

Unnecessary or inappropriately styled new street furniture that could become intrusive visual clutter should not be introduced. Bollards, for example, should only be used if they are essential. Even then, they should be compatible with the style and materials of the surrounding area.

The transformer in the car park is intrusive and mitigation should be considered.

In the longer term the traffic calming measures state re-examined with a view to achieving a more integrated and less intrusive scheme, possibly utilising more traditional materials laid flush or near flush to define the spaces rather than raised concrete kerbing.

Reinstatement of surfaces by statutory undertakers and the roads authority needs to have regard to existing traditional materials.

Consideration should be given to the relationship of spaces around the Clock Tower and Horatio Square with a view to seeking improvements that unify the spaces and may allow for future informal use. It is appreciated that the needs of maintaining through traffic will influence whatever may be achieved.

A co-ordinated approach should be developed to the provision of bus stances, local signage and litterbins. Consideration should be given to good modern design rather than false 'Victoriana' that has no precedence locally.



### General Character of Buildings

It is important to judge proposals in the context of the original buildings and their neighbours.

The variety, range of detailing and subtlety of form and character should not be lost through inadequate specification, by the use of modern substitute materials or by injudicious painting schemes.

Where new buildings are developed they should, for the most part, be simple rectangular under steeply pitched slate roofs with ridges running parallel to the road. They should also not cover too large an area nor have too deep a plan form and should follow existing building lines and frontages. Within the conservation area there is limited need for new landmark buildings.

Buildings, whatever their age or origins, should be regarded as part of the archaeological record of a place. Planning policy requires that they should be recorded prior to any alteration or demolition.

The use of colour should broadly reflect established traditional details. This appraisal does not specify a palette of colours that is considered appropriate; however, strong, vibrant and colours from modern ranges of paints will be resisted. Colours should where possible relate to and complement locally found natural materials.

The introduction of a measure to bring minor works under planning control will give the opportunity to review and consider proposed alterations in the context of the street scene and the conservation area.

Such a measure also provides a consistent approach between listed buildings and unlisted buildings within the area allowing for continuity and more equitable planning control. They will also allow a more critical examination of proposals that otherwise may further erode the finer detailing.

These general principles will be applied throughout the conservation area and should be assumed in the individual areas as follow.

### High Street

Where the opportunity arises, possibly when alterations are proposed, owners of properties with previous unsympathetic alterations will be encouraged to assess how their buildings contribute to the character of the conservation area. The Council will encourage reinstatement of traditional materials: -natural slate, timber sash and case windows to their original design.

**Traditional shop fronts** should be retained wherever appropriate and schemes for improvement, repair or reinstatement will be encouraged.

### Fleet Street

Consideration should be given to the layout of new development on the area of land included within the LDP2 boundary which could draw on and be informed by the existing group at right angles to the main terrace, and Garden Street, opposite, possibly as an extension of the town's grid plan.

### Ann Street

There should be no extension of tarmacadam in Ann Street and traditional cobbles should be cared for, repaired and re-laid appropriately. Formalisation, by the use of kerbs, should be avoided unless suitably designed and not intrusive. A brief for maintenance of grassed areas, road re-surfacing and reinstatement of traditional materials should be prepared.

### Catherine Street / Birtwhistle Street

The design of proposals for infill development, particularly off back lanes - Digby Street, Victoria Street and Old Ford Road development will pay careful regard to the character of the surrounding area particularly form and layout of adjacent property.

Whilst there is scope for new interpretation of traditional forms and detailing, buildings that are over-large or otherwise dominant or those that do not reflect the traditional layout will not be permitted. Achieving the right plan depth, traditional roof shape, size and massing will be crucial to successful integration of new development even where new treatments and materials are proposed.



## 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's website. These cover a range of materials and design topics such as Lime Mortar, Traditional Windows and Traditional Roofing materials and practices.



#### *Public Realm*

In undertaking works of repair, maintenance or improvement the Council, as Highway Authority, will consider the need to enhance the setting and appearance of the conservation area.

Works will be programmed as necessary and within budgetary constraints will seek to upgrade the use of materials and design in accordance with the guidance in this Appraisal and other Guidance documents.

A number of potential areas for further work have been identified where a more sensitive approach will be required. In particular a review of the future maintenance strategy for Ann Street and the possibility of undertaking works around the Clock Tower will be considered.

Traffic and other signage will be monitored and opportunities for rationalisation and improvements considered as they arise.

#### *Development Control*

A Direction under Article 4 brought minor development under planning control however, permitted development rights in conservation areas were tightened in 2011. Small changes can make a considerable impact on the character and appearance of the area. This includes minor work to dwelling houses, such as changes to windows and doors. Some works in the public realm and by statutory undertakers were also brought under planning control by the direction.

The day-to-day administration of development control will have regard to this appraisal, the current guidelines, both national and local, and LDP2.

### Priorities for Action

#### *Enhancement Opportunities*

The Council can, when funds permit, promote schemes to enhance the character of public spaces in the town. To that end this appraisal has identified, subject to a more detailed design brief, the following

- works in Ann Street and the area around the Clock Tower to provide a reinstatement of traditionally paved informal spaces; and
- consideration could be given to a re-appraisal of traffic management measures undertaken during the early 1990's to determine whether changes in detailing and the use of more traditional materials would be appropriate to soften the visual impact and provide for better integration into the historic townscape.

A periodic review of the conservation area will be carried out to determine what opportunities there are for enhancement works. Presently public investment is limited to maintenance and repair of road surfaces, footways and green areas.



## Other Initiatives

The Council, with Historic Environment Scotland, funded a Town Scheme in Gatehouse of Fleet which allowed for grants to be offered towards the repair of certain buildings within the conservation area, subject to eligibility and budgetary constraints. Similar schemes might be pursued in the future.

This Appraisal is only a starting point from which the Council's stewardship of the built fabric of the town can be developed. Several other initiatives that can directly or indirectly inform and support the care and development of Gatehouse of Fleet. The Gatehouse of Fleet Development Initiative, the Murray Usher Foundation and other groups in the town are already undertaking important projects and work to promote the well-being and conservation of the town.

Examples of such schemes include the development of an historic town trail and links with local schools that encourage project work based on the history and architecture of the town and the annual historic walk as part of Gala Week.

Further consideration could be given to specific projects or funding aimed, for example, at elements of the townscape such as a shop fronts repair scheme.

## Conclusion

### 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.

It is important that as the development of the conservation area progresses the appraisal is also reviewed and updated.

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