

The Cockermouth Partnership
& Allerdale Borough Council

COCKERMOUTH CONSERVATION AREA

Draft CHARACTER APPRAISAL



March 2006

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST	3
2.	ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST	5
2.1	CONTEXT	6
2.2	HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT	11
2.3	CHARACTER ANALYSIS	22
2.4	SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST	36
3.	PRESERVATION & ENHANCEMENT	39
3.1	INTRODUCTION	39
3.2	HERITAGE AUDIT	39
3.3	RESPONSE	52

MAPS

01	Location, Boundary, Setting (Context) & Key Views
02	Spatial Arrangement, Urban Landmarks, Views & Greenery
03	Contributions of Buildings & Spaces to Special Interest
04	Statutory & Policy Protection (Constraints)
05	Conservation Area(s) Boundaries as Proposed

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Appraisal is to define the special interest of the Cockermouth Conservation Area, to identify where this is vulnerable to loss or erosion, and to suggest improvements. It has been researched and written by consultants on behalf of the Cockermouth Partnership and Allerdale Borough Council. One of the roles of the Partnership is to administer the Cockermouth Market Towns Initiative, a scheme aimed at improving the economic, social and cultural well being of the area, and to arrest a decline services and facilities. Allerdale Council has a duty to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through its planning and other roles.

A Conservation and Design Guide follows on from the findings of the Appraisal. The aim is to enable informed decision making amongst all those involved in change within Cockermouth. The starting point for this should be a clear understanding of what it is about the character and appearance of the Conservation Area that makes it special. Hence this Appraisal, which is presented in three sections:

- **Section 1** comprises the assessment of special interest and a summary of attributes that make up the unique character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- **Section 2** consists of a 'heritage audit' which looks at which bits should be preserved and where enhancement is necessary or desirable. It also examines the Conservation Area boundary and provides recommendations for revision, and subdivision.
- **Annex 1** sets out a summary of the planning legislation and policy framework that governs conservation areas at a local and national level.

The result is an assessment which, supported by maps and photographic illustrations, should be used to encourage improvements reflecting and enhancing the town.

1.1 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

SETTING AND SPATIAL QUALITIES

- 01 Views of major landmark buildings such as the Castle and the Jennings brewery tower set against the mountainous backdrop
- 02 The rural landscapes at the extremities of the Conservation Area, their field patterns, old lanes and the banks of the rivers and becks.
- 03 The contrast between the northern edge of the historic core and the open landscape north of the Derwent,
- 04 Views of roofscapes.
- 05 Particular viewpoints such as:
 - Tute Hill.
 - All Saint's churchyard.
 - The small park above the lower end of Cocker Lane.
 - The head of Station Street.
 - The path along the front of Fell View.

- Harris Park and its environs.

The latter offers spectacular views towards Skiddaw, down onto the Cocker and north across the town, albeit obscured, in part, by trees.

- 06 The medieval layout of streets, spaces and burgage plots resulting in the linear development and characteristic narrow frontage buildings, and the way that this contrasts with the regular plots of later housing on the fringes.
- 07 The semi-private rear yards, courts and passageways which relate to the system of medieval tenure.
- 08 The contrast between the spaciousness of Main Street and the Market Place, and the narrow interconnecting streets.
- 09 The way in which density eases and the area opens up when moving south from the medieval core, through Georgian developments to the Victorian Harris Park.
- 10 The landmark religious, educational, institutional and financial buildings of contemporary national architecture.

HISTORIC INTEREST AND USES

- 11 The concentration of shops, inns and other businesses in the historic core.
- 12 Development alongside the rivers and becks, such as the brewery, mills, tannery buildings and other fragments of the industrial past, including the remnants of the mill stream to the north of the Derwent, and isolated clusters of development along the Cocker upstream of the old viaduct.
- 13 The historic links between industrial and residential development, as seen in the proximity of workshops, cottages and frontage buildings in the historic core, Gote mills and adjacent terraces, and the old ropewalk on Kirkgate.
- 14 The significant archaeological interest of the historic core, and the industrial archaeology of outlying areas, particularly former water-powered industry.
- 15 The commercial character of buildings on the junction between Station Street and South Street which derive from the development of the railway.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

- 16 A hierarchy of architectural design where the most elaborate buildings are on the most important streets.
- 17 The classical sense of order, proportion and verticality (but often not detail) typifying virtually all façades and unifies the townscape.
- 18 The classical structure of shop fronts with entablature (beam), columns (with base) supporting it and stall riser below supporting the display window.
- 19 The eclectic detailing of the later buildings (ie which came after the railway) which characterises the periphery, such as Harris Park which has decorative bay windows, dormers, bargeboards, eaves and window treatments.
- 20 Later terraces built as set pieces with a strongly unified design.
- 21 Roofs which are subservient to façades .
- 22 Landmark buildings of national architectural styles.

DETAILS AND MATERIALS

- 23 Cumbrian green slate roofs (diminishing courses), characteristic of earlier buildings, and Welsh blue–grey slate for post railway buildings.
- 24 Walls finished with stucco or smooth render to imitate stone.
- 25 Dressed stone or moulded stucco opening surrounds, quoins, string courses, etc. These are often emphasised by contrasting paints or distempers.
- 26 Rubble and dry stonework visible on rear elevations, outbuildings, minor structures and boundary walls.
- 27 Sash windows and panelled doors of painted timber, often of a later date than the building, some with fanlights or door cases (some elaborate).
- 28 Cast iron rainwater goods, with moulded gutters often supported on corbels or brackets, sometimes forming part of the façade below.
- 29 The few surviving iron railings and gates (including park and estate railings), and surviving evidence of lost ironwork.
- 30 Surfaces of cobbles or incised clay pavers, flagged paving to yards and other private areas, sometimes with granite kerbs.

NATURAL INTEREST AND GREENERY

- 31 Rivers, banks and other areas of greenery providing ecological (as well as visual) interest to the area.
- 32 Rows of pollarded lime trees along Main Street, Station Street, Market Place and Kirkgate.
- 33 Maintained green spaces such as the Croft Bowling Green, All Saint's churchyard, Memorial Gardens, Gote Road cricket pitch, Harris Park, and the Lamplugh Road recreation ground, as well as many smaller spaces.
- 34 Blocks of woodland in the Harris Park area.
- 35 Large private gardens which act as a transition to open spaces or riverbanks.
- 36 The close proximity of undeveloped rural landscapes.

2. ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area is created by those elements and attributes which make up its character and appearance. It is desirable that decisions relating to the management of change within and around a conservation area are governed by an objective understanding of these qualities. The more defined these are, the firmer the basis for the formulation of proposals for preservation and enhancement.

Set out in this section of the Appraisal is a detailed examination of the special interest of the Cockermouth Conservation Area, organised under the headings of:

- Context,
- Historic development

- Character analysis.

Subjects covered are: landscape setting, historic development, archaeology, character areas, spatial qualities, uses and activity, architecture and details, building materials, and greenery and green spaces.

2.1 CONTEXT

2.1.1 Location

Cockermouth is situated in western Cumbria, about halfway between the Lake District town of Keswick and the industrial ports of the Solway Coast. Penrith, Carlisle and the M6 Motorway are all within 30 miles. The town is no longer served by a railway.

The historic core of Cockermouth is built around the confluence of the Rivers Cocker and Derwent that have shaped the town and are important to its character.

Allerdale Borough Council is responsible for administering local services including planning, cleansing, environmental health and licensing. Cumbria County Council is principally the education, social services and highways authority. The Town Council is an elected body with devolved powers and finance to maintain and promote certain neighbourhood amenities and facilities. The 2001 census recorded the population of the town as 7877, though this figure does not include some 7000–8000 residents in its rural hinterland. It is a large market town which, despite the decline of its traditional farming and textile base, still has an important role in the economy of the region.

The Conservation Area (Map 01) covers an area of approximately 140 hectares, embracing nearly all the pre-C20 town and extending north, south and east into countryside. It stretches just over 2 kilometres north–south, from the low escarpment north of the Derwent to the A66 by-pass. A similar distance separates the eastern extremity of built development (St. Helen's Cottages) and the meadows that line the banks of the Derwent in the west. Five separate conservation areas were originally designated in 1967. In 1975 these were amalgamated and extended under the newly created Allerdale Borough Council. Further extensions were designated in 1993.

2.1.2 General character and plan form

Although the rivers and becks played a major part in the siting and development of Cockermouth, the buildings generally look in and not outwards. Development is concentrated along the four streets which radiate out from the Market Place:

- **Main Street** runs west following the line of the Derwent.
- **Castlegate** climbs steeply north east to the gates of Cockermouth Castle.
- **St. Helen's Street** meanders east along the line of Bitter Beck, then out through an area of modern suburban housing and into the countryside.
- **Kirkgate** rises south and uphill from the start of St. Helen's Street.



A corner of Kirkgate



Looking east along Main Street

All Saints Church occupies an elevated site south of the Market and east of the Cocker. Christ Church lies at the western end of South Street. The Castle sits on the steep-sided headland that commands the point where the two rivers meet.



All Saints Church

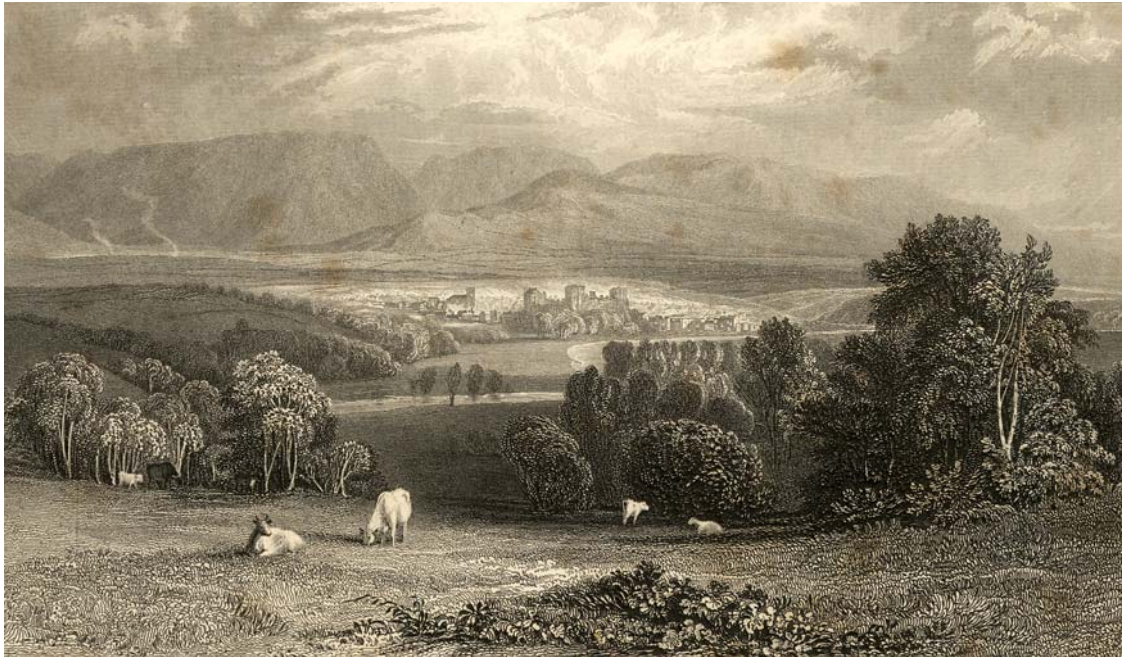


Christ Church

The compact historic core consisting of these 4 streets extends west along Crown Street and the start of Low Road. Here the character of the Conservation Area changes as it heads north over the Derwent Bridge towards a cluster of old mills, the road to Papcastle and the parkland of Hames Hall. Otherwise, the area to the north of the Derwent is essentially open and rural in character. Suburban terraces and villas characterise the Conservation Area as it spreads south, along the west bank of the Cocker and the high ground up onto the open plateau on which sits Harris Park. The southern end of Kirkgate leads to a steep drop to the remains of an old tannery alongside Tom Rudd Beck. Otherwise, leafy suburbs eventually lead to open countryside.

2.1.3 Landscape setting

Cockermouth lies just to the north and west of the Lake District National Park, the fells of which are very much part of its character, despite not being obvious when in the centre of the town. The spire of All Saints and the outline of the Castle set against Grasmoor is perhaps the classic distant view of Cockermouth. The towers of Jennings Brewery and Christ Church, as well as Derwent Mill add to views from the north of the town.



An 1832 view of Cockermouth in its Lakeland setting

Geologically, the centre of Cockermouth is built on a small area of glacial gravel, bounded to the south and east by the rising topography, and within an area of sands and gravels, silts and heavy soils, and a prevalence of boulder clay. The result is a fertile landscape, a good location for livestock and therefore a market town.

Rock is present in a band of Skiddaw Slate grits, which is not useful for building. However Buttermere, Honister and other local quarries have for centuries produced high quality slates, the prevalent roofing material in the centre of Cockermouth. A band of carboniferous limestone that encircles the Lake District runs north and west of Cockermouth, manifest in the old quarries at Brigham and Broughton that provided stone for some of the grander buildings in the town, as well as the dressings to many others and the walling of later development. Further west are the basalt beds that form the red sandstones of the Cumbrian Coast, imported and used on buildings such as the HSBC Bank.



Looking north along Station Street

The historic core of Cockermouth is on an area of low lying ground that straddles the Cocker as it flows north and east to join the Derwent. Much of this part of the Conservation Area (and of that to the north) is susceptible to flooding. South and west of the rivers the land rises gently to a narrow shelf (on which sits the Sainsbury's supermarket, its car park and the adjacent Auction Mart). Looking north down Station Street reveals glimpses of the pastures that rise above the Derwent meadows. The land climbs to The Moor, a relatively flat area of land with large areas of suburban development; Harris Park and the adjacent playing fields. These spaces enjoy magnificent views of the fells of western Lakeland. Steep slopes drop to the banks of the Cocker and Double Mill. The hills to the east of the Cocker provide panoramic views of the town centre and beyond, revealing a certain uniformity of roofscape (a function of a common building height of 2–3 stories and slate coverings).



Roofscape from high ground east of the Cocker

Good views of the town can also be obtained from the meadows to the north of the Derwent, a rural landscape in which field patterns and fragments of older development survive, such

as the walled lane which loops round the southern boundary of the James Walker factory site, and the old mill stream. The latter emphasises the importance of water in the development, and hence character, of Cockermouth. This can be appreciated from either the Derwent or Harris Bridges or any of the 6 bridges that span the Cocker.



Views of Cockermouth from north of the Derwent



Land adjacent to James Walker factory



Remnant of old mill race

Much of the open landscape beyond the built up area of town is designated as Locally Important Landscape. The banks and beds of the Derwent and the Cocker are protected by their status as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and planning policies. Further details of these and other aspect of policy and legislation which affect the landscape setting of the Conservation Area can be found in Annex 1. Proximity to the Lake District National Park also restricts the way in which the surrounding landscape can be used or developed.



View looking east from the Derwent bridge

2.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

2.2.1 Origins

The information contained in this section is drawn from secondary sources including J. Bernard Bradbury's *History of Cockermouth* (Bradbury, 1995) and the same author's *Cockermouth in Pictures* series (volumes 1–10 1983 to 1993). Use has also been made of work carried out by English Heritage and Cumbria County Council, which in turn draws on sources such as The Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological Society, especially Angus J. L. Winchester's *Medieval Cockermouth* in volume LXXXVI (Winchester, 1986). A mapping exercise has also been undertaken, covering all editions of the large scale Ordnance Survey maps back to the first edition of the County Series in 1866 (twenty five inch) and 1867 (six inch). These have been compared with the Brigham Tithe Map of 1841 and John Wood's 1832 Plan of Cockermouth.

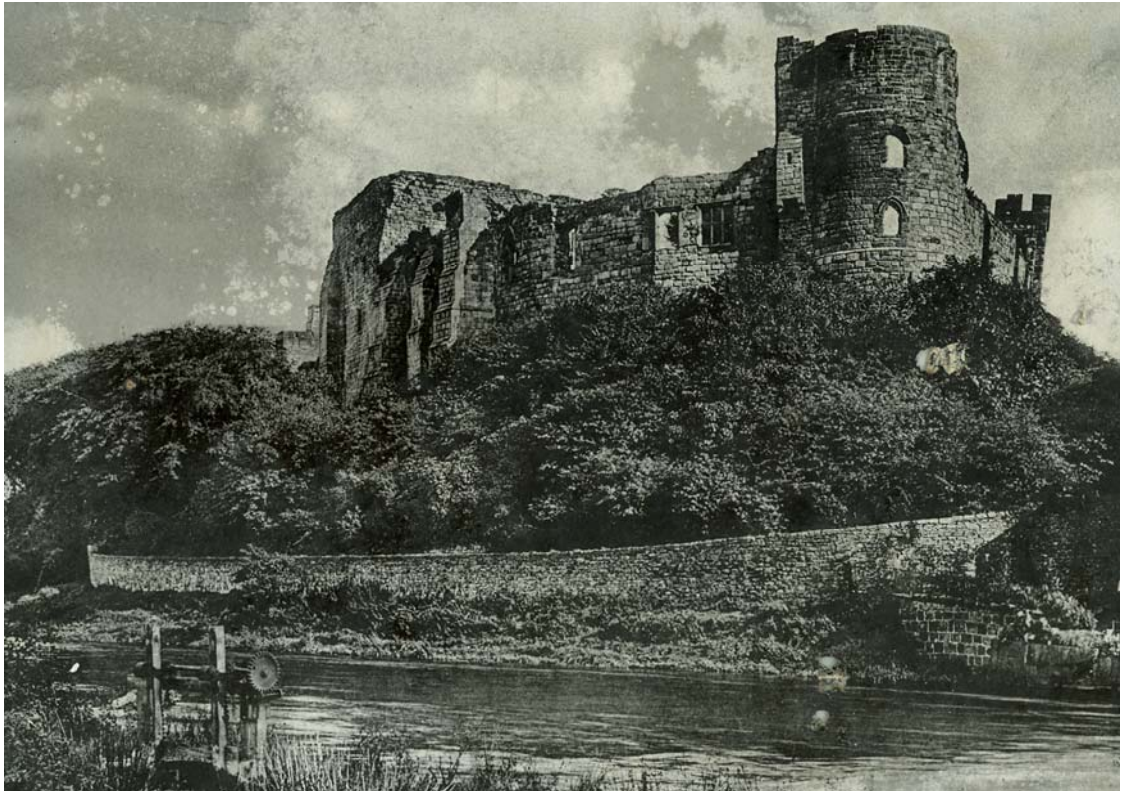
PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN PERIOD

There is no known evidence of any prehistoric occupation of the site of Cockermouth, though nearby there are a number of prehistoric sites, including a late Iron Age and Romano–British farmstead in Fitz Woods to the west. Nor is there any indication of Roman settlement other than the cavalry fort Derventio on the site of Papcastle, which led to a civilian supporting settlement. Derventio was a staging post in the chain of Roman forts that supported the defences at Hadrian's Wall, facilitating supplies from the Cumbrian ports. It was occupied between the late C1 & C4, after which the mountains of the Lake District protected the ancient kingdom of Rheged (Cumbria) to survive for some time despite Anglo–Saxon and Norse invasions.

MEDIEVAL GROWTH

By the late C10 the Vikings had settled and cultivated much of Cumbria, with the southern part coming under Saxon control c.944 and the northern part Scottish from 1018. In 1072 a manor (estate), including the land now occupied by Cockermouth, was granted by King Malcolm of Scotland to Waldeve, second son of Gospartic the Earl of Dunbar, who may have founded a Castle before 1106. Waldeve's heirs are thought to have founded the borough of Cockermouth in the C12 as a centre for their territories. A borough charter of c.1210 confirms privileges on a number of persons, evidence that the town had been in existence for some time. This is supported by grants of land c.1200 to two monastic houses and a charter given at 'Cokyrmoth' c.1150 by Alan son of Waldeve.

Construction of a motte and bailey castle by William de Forbitus II (an heir of Waldeve by marriage) in the mid C12 is another indicator of the settlements *before the Norman Conquest*. Its earth mound occupied the end of the steep sided ridge which overlooks the Derwent and the Cocker, a commanding position suited to defence and control by the Normans *of the local population*. To the east, separated by a north-south ditch, lay the bailey with barracks, stables, barns, workshops and storehouses. The mound on Tute Hill is possibly a surviving fragment of an earlier, superseded motte. It has been suggested that 'tute' means 'look out'.



Cockermouth Castle from the north bank of the Derwent

Although William de Fortibus III erected the first stone castle on the site c.1225, most of what survives relates to rebuilding and expansion in the mid-late C14 by Thomas de Lucy (owner 1343–65) and Gilbert de Umfraville (owner 1368–1381), whose work was finished by his widow's second husband, Henry Percy the first Earl of Northumberland. Further work and repairs continued until 1649 when the Castle was dismantled. It remained a ruin until 1676 when parts of the structure were made

habitable. Further accommodation was erected in the C19 by the Egremont family, in whose ownership the Castle and its grounds remain.

Market Place is the centre of the earliest part of the medieval town, which may have been an existing rural settlement connected with St. Helen's Chapel (the site of which is unknown). This may explain the huddled, irregular burgage plots that characterise development fronting the Market Place, Castlegate and St. Helen's Street. It is thought that this Church was founded by de Forbitus c1220 at the same time as his castle. The present church dates from 1853–4, the 3rd or 4th church.



Market Place c.1910

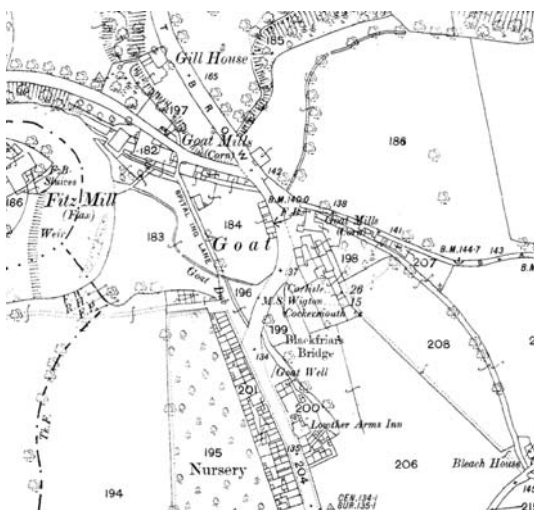
A survey c.1270 lists two water driven corn mills, a fulling mill, a dye works, eight corn measures, market tolls and three smithies. The existence of a fulling mill and a dye works suggests a woollen industry, possibly located in the area around Brewery Lane, the industrial area of the old town. Demand for land on which to build was high so that development was already (by C13) being planned in burgage plots. The burgage plots (most of which still exist) lay each side of Main Street, extending south to a back lane (now South Street) and north to the banks of the river. Map based evidence indicates that Waterloo Street subsequently cut across the plots (the boundaries each side are contiguous), though this might represent the widening of an earlier lane in conjunction with development of the river bank. Medieval Main Street, a second 'beast' market, was developed up to what is now the Trout Hotel and the start of Crown Street. The burgage plots along the east side of Kirkgate (set back facing The Square) are also a component of the original town, possibly in a settlement called Ureby (or Overbury) which existed to the southeast of medieval Cockermouth.

LATE AND POST-MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT

Cockermouth suffered from economic depression, plague and unrest during the C14 and C15, in particular an epidemic of sheep murrain which spread through northern England in the 1270s and 80s. This would have greatly reduced the income of a town

whose economy was highly dependent on livestock. However, there was economic growth in the C15 and in the latter half of the C16, when the town was described by John Leland as a “goode market town” and by William Camden as “wealthy”. Four post medieval mills are known to have existed, two within the Conservation Area: Rubbybanks Mill (demolished 1971) and Double Mills, now the Youth Hostel.

Although the extent and form of medieval Cockermouth remained virtually unchanged until well into the C19, the actual buildings did not. C18 wealth, derived from a rapidly expanding textile industry, led to the almost total rebuilding of the town in a smart but low key Georgian style. The only significant survival is the mid C16 Percy House at 38–40 Market Place, (though there may be earlier buildings behind existing façades). Gardens and orchards were lost to linen and textile firms who erected tentering yards, weavers’ cottages, and carding and spinning mills in them. Notable C18 residents included young William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and Fletcher Christian (1764–93, leader of the infamous Bounty mutiny). Fearon Fallows (1789–1831), astronomer to George IV was also born in Cockermouth.



Development along Gote Road 1867



Industry on Tom Rudd Beck 1832

The flax and spinning industry led to the creation of a new industrial suburb on the Gote Road in the 1770s, where the Harris brothers perfected the first ever range of coloured threads. They made use of the fast flowing river and a new mill race which was dug across the meadows north of the Derwent to serve High and Low Gote mills in early C18. Fitz mill (flax) was built across the river in 1794 (demolished about 1980). Foundries, tanneries and other water dependent industrial buildings were also established adjacent to the watercourses. Evidence of this survives throughout the town e.g. around the Skinner Street area on Tom Rudd Beck and on the strip of land between Waterloo Street and the Derwent. The Harris family relocated to Derwent Mill, (built in 1834, extended 1847 and 1855), and their C18 flax mills were converted to corn.

New residential development filled the historic core, including to the west of Kirkgate, north along Challoner Street and west along Crown Street. South Street, Castlegate and Derwent Bridge House also date from this time. The ‘gothick’ Hames Hall, thought to be designed by Sir Robert Smirke, dates from early C19.

Major roads serving the town were turnpiked and Derwent Bridge & Cocker Bridge were rebuilt in 1822 & 1828. Cockermouth thrived as an industrial and agricultural town and a major stop on trading routes to and from the Cumbrian ports. Innkeeping

accounted for a fifth of all business in the early C19. Wood's map shows houses fronting the streets with burgage plots behind and a ring of ancillary buildings on the back lanes. Buildings were beginning to fill in the old gardens particularly around the Market Place and along Castlegate.



Extract from Wood's map of 1832 (Cumbria Record Office ref. D/Lec. Plans)

VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN EXPANSION

The machine age intensified development, increasing the density of workers' cottages and new factories. By 1851 the population of the medieval town area was 5,775, double that of 1801. Cockermouth had become a Victorian industrial town.



Extract from 1841 Tithe Map showing density of yards around Market Place and Main Street (Cumbria Record Office ref. DRC/8/47)

The Cockermouth Union Workhouse was built 1840–43, around the same time as the opening of the first National School on New Street (subsequently used as a Methodist Chapel before conversion to housing), and soon after the 1834 opening of the gasworks serving the Cockermouth Gas Light and Coke Company. However expansion really took off with the arrival in 1847 of the railway from Workington.

Grecian Villa (1847), St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church (1856) and the development of New Derwent and Horsman Streets in 1855–57 added to the changes. A number of large buildings were also constructed including the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel of 1848 (now the Town Hall), the 1826 Savings Bank adjacent to the Old Courthouse (built from stone salvaged from the demolished Moot Hall which was in the Market Place), the Congregational (United Reform) Church of 1850 designed by Charles Eaglesfield and (following a fire which destroyed its predecessor) All Saints Church, erected to the design of the London architect Joseph Clark and dedicated in 1854.

The development of the edge of The Moor also began in the 1850s with the construction of Mountain View (Alma Place) and Skiddaw View, two terraces of housing which front the stretch of Lamplugh Road (then called Gallowbarrow Brae) between Fitz and Brigham Roads.



Old National School on New Street



Grecian Villa



Methodist Chapel (Town Hall)



Congregational (United Reform) Church



Horsman Street



Mountain View (Alma Place)

Christ Church, serving a newly created parish west of the Cocker, was built in 1865 designed by a Mr Bruce of Whitehaven. In the same year the railway was extended

east to Keswick and Penrith. This required the realignment of Gallowbarrow via a short stretch of new road. The old road was rejoined by a short, upgraded stretch of Kittison Lane, now called The Level (the Lane beyond is now Fitz Road). A new station was built and the old station turned into a goods depot. The impact of this led to dramatic changes: In order to access the station, a new road was created along one of the old burgage plots, creating Station Street (Station Road after it crosses South Street). This opened up the southern end of the town. Railway transport meant more efficient movement of produce and livestock, and large auction buildings with cattle pens were built on South Street, moving the economic heart of the town away from its medieval centre.

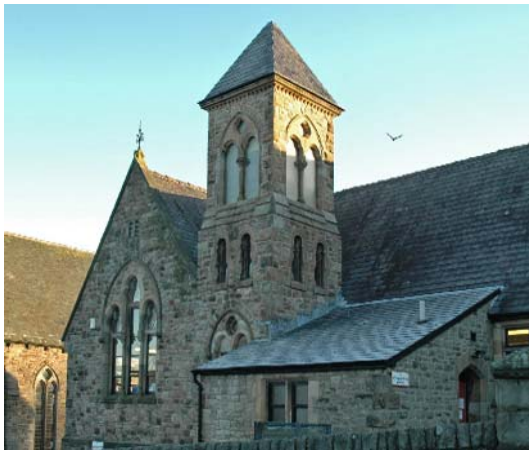


Station Street from Station Road c.1900

The years between the mid 1860s and 1900 saw further expansion of the town, despite a decline in fortunes (the population had dropped to 5,355 by 1901). More building took place near Lamplugh Road (Henry Street, Hill Street, Brigham Road, the house, High Moor and the Italianate villa, Holmewood) and the two short terraces on Fern Bank appeared just south of the railway, along with a pair of villas on the opposite side of the road (the upgraded old lane serving Double Mills). Harris Park was laid out in 1893 in honour of the marriage of the Duke of York to Princess Mary. The Park was originally the site of the 1896 Wordsworth drinking fountain that is now on Sullart Street.



View from Harris Park c.1900 with Wordsworth Fountain in original location



Fairfield Board School

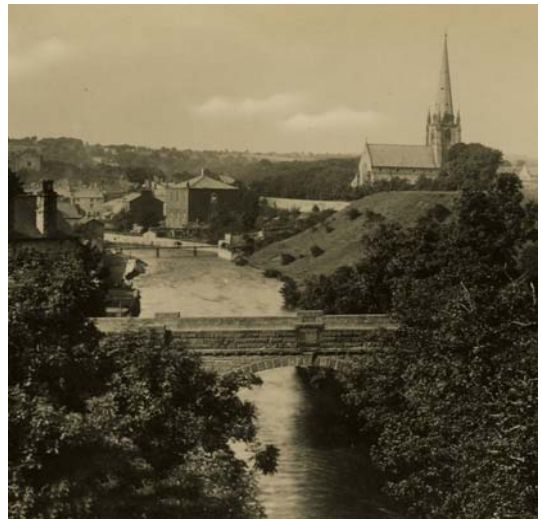


All Saint's parish rooms

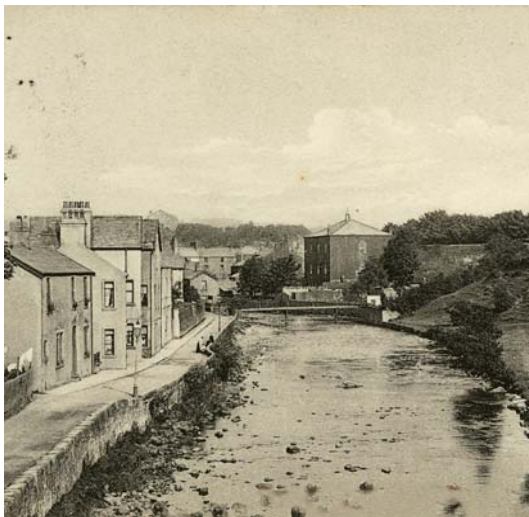
Further development took place on New and Horsman Streets, and along the southern side of South Street, the latter including the Church Rooms of 1880. Short terraces of housing appeared at the eastern end of South Street (Croft Terrace) and on Crown Street. Fairfield Board School was built in 1876 and 1887, and new parish rooms were built 1896–7 on the site of the old grammar school adjacent to All Saints. Stone buildings including the Police Station, the Conservative Club and the current Barclays Bank were all built in the 1890s, with the Carnegie Library and the HSBC Bank soon after. Bridge Street was formed to give access to a new footbridge serving Derwent Mill (Harris Bridge), and Drill Hall on Charley Hill was built in 1886 (now a sports centre). In Main Street, the statue of the sixth Earl of Mayo (by W. & T Wills of London) was erected in 1875 and the 'Neddy' clock commemorating Edward Waugh in 1893 (demolished 1932).



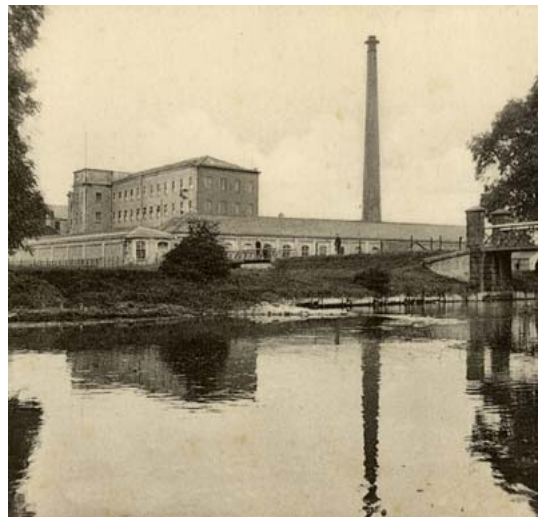
Main Street c.1910



Victoria Bridge c.1900



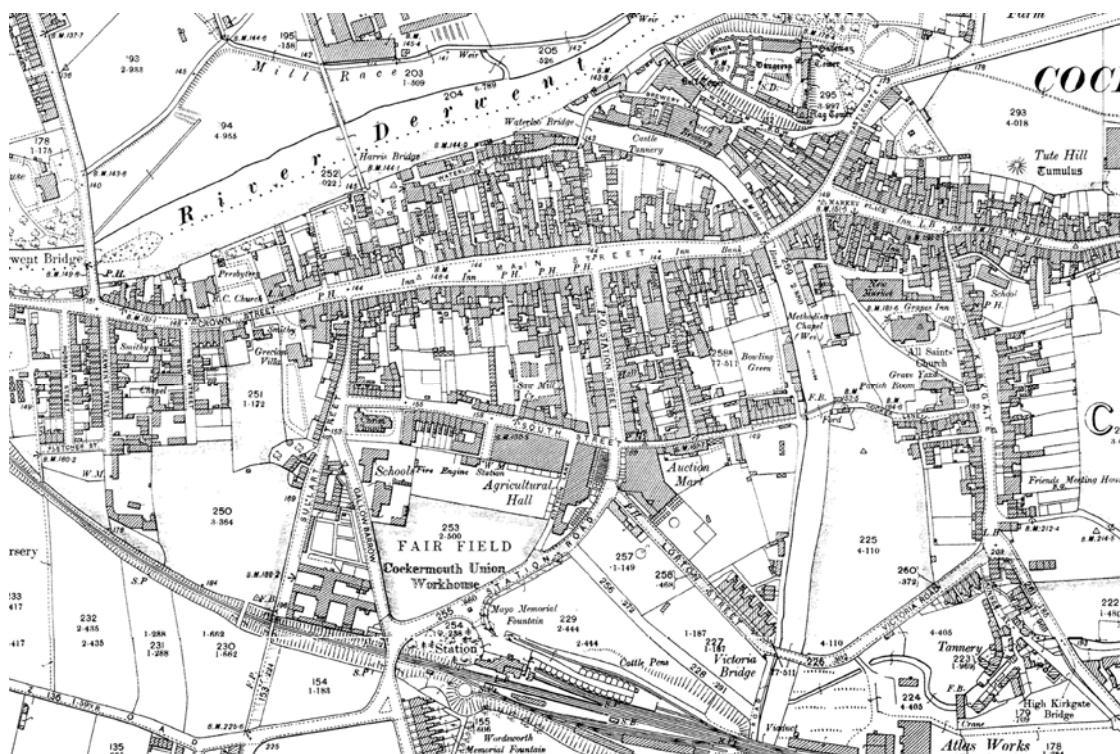
Rubbybanks Road c.1910



Derwent Mill c.1910

The lime trees on Main Street, Station Street, Market Place and Kirkgate were planted by a nurseryman called Peter Burn who was appointed to plant 100 trees in celebration Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. 1887 was also a year of bridges, with the erection of the Brewery (Waterloo) footbridge, the Quaker Bridge connecting Cocker Lane with South Street and the Victoria Bridge over the Cocker. The Brewery building is also of this date.

The construction of Victoria Bridge brought Victoria Road and Lorton Street, a new link between Station Road and the head of Kirkgate. This resulted in two new terraces of housing and the loss of the southern end of The Square. Edwardian housing was built facing the river along Rubbybanks Road as far as the new bridge. Fell View and Wordsworth Terrace also date from this time. The Grand Theatre on Station Street was built on the eve of the First World War.



Historic core of Cockermouth in 1900

DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1918

The interwar period saw further suburban expansion. Semi-detached houses were built south along Lorton Road, west along Brigham Road, Henry Street and Fitz Road, and east along Castlegate Drive (a late C19 road bypassing St. Helen's Street towards Embleton). The only building of particular note from this time is the 1932 Methodist Church on Lorton Street.

A massive expansion of the town took place after WWII, with large suburbs of low density housing and schools built or expanded. The Memorial Gardens opened in 1956 and Harris Park was extended in the 1970s. The Lake District National Park was created in 1951, its boundary drawn to avoid towns such as Cockermouth.

The railway was closed in 1966 and the station demolished allowing for the development of a new fire station and mountain rescue centre. The railway is now used as a recreational path and cycleway. Much of the line of the mill race was lost, with only a short stretch surviving to the east of Derwentside Gardens (the balustrade of an old bridge at the northern landing of Harris bridge is still visible). All the footbridges have been damaged by flooding and replaced by modern bridges.

2.2.2 Archaeological significance and potential

There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Cockermouth Castle and motte on Tute Hill, and the farmstead in Fitz woods. An extensive survey of the medieval core of the town and its environs, undertaken by English Heritage and Cumbria County Council (undated), indicates that it has significant archaeological potential. This is borne out by information held by the Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record which, in addition to scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings has identified 30 archaeological sites within and immediately around the Conservation Area.

Investigations in Bridge Street show that there are well preserved deposits, while significant finds and well preserved artefacts have been unearthed at 75–80 Main Street. It is also believed that much of the road network remains unchanged from the medieval period, and that many of the burgage plots have existed since the C13.

There is also significant industrial archaeology, particularly the water powered industries and the intensive yard developments of the C18 & C19.

2.3 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

2.3.1 Character areas

Cockermouth is a complex town resulting from over 8 centuries of development. The Conservation Area boundary includes urban and rural environments, with varied characteristics. Densely packed medieval streets and Victorian suburbs, contrast with open fields, meadows and wooded river valleys, containing remnants of an industrial past.

The vast majority of buildings in the area date from a 150–200 year period in which there was relatively little change in architecture, materials or construction techniques. However, there are significant differences in character between planned Victorian housing and the medieval core. Despite this, identifying distinct character zones is not straightforward. Where clear distinctions can be drawn between the character of different parts of the Conservation Area, the differences mainly relate to land use, density and greenery. The following areas can be identified:

- 01 The **historic core** of the town is a dense, urban environment related to the rivers but where (with one major exception) greenery is limited. This area covers all of the Conservation Area south of the Derwent, west of the entrance to the sports centre on St. Helen's Street, and north of Victoria Bridge, including buildings around Skinner St and the head of Lorton Rd.
- 02 The area **north of the Derwent** and including the east of the river and north of the Castle. It is a largely rural landscape but containing industrial and residential developments with limited architectural value.
- 03 **Harris Park** and south of the Victoria Bridge, which includes pockets of late C19 suburban housing notable for its space and richness of its greenery.
- 04 The area to the east of the entrance to the sports centre on St. Helen's Street, a strip of land along **Bitter Beck**, and an area of modern housing stretching towards open countryside, with few buildings of architectural merit.

Whilst the character areas identified are discussed below, it should be noted that the boundaries areas are blurred, particularly by views and movement patterns.

2.3.2 Spatial qualities

Map 02 illustrates the relationship between buildings and spaces, the location of landmark buildings, key views and areas of greenery.

HISTORIC CORE

A framework of medieval streets and burgage plots is overlain with a later structure of yards and lanes, which is filled with small, regular plots of post railway development.

Victorian and Edwardian residential expansion together with some commercial and institutional developments is the end of a chain of building and rebuilding starting in the C13. Much identity of the historic core stems from this piecemeal redevelopment.

Part of the character of this area also derives from a consistency of building style and materials, along with features such as the rivers and openness of the surroundings.

The medieval street pattern is characterised by continuous frontages of burgrave plots. Certain building lines curve or are set back to define distinct spaces such as: the Market Place, the beast market of Main Street and the Square on Kirkgate. These contrast with the narrow streets that run between. The result is a series of unfolding, sometimes surprising, views that lead to and from the Market Place.

The skyline is broken with prominent chimneys set amongst the classically derived architecture which gives a strong vertical emphasis to the views. The repetitive, qualities of the architecture help mask the varied sizes of the plots, and it is, in places, difficult to discern one property from another. Most individual buildings are subservient to the whole, the only exceptions being certain 'landmark' buildings of 'polite' architecture, some of which break the street frontage e.g. Wordsworth House.

Behind the façades are a series of courts and yards, often difficult to access and generally not in public view. Doors to narrow passageways between buildings can be hard to tell from front doors (the absence of a threshold is a sign). Some yards are unkempt while others are well cared for, but they all have historic interest. Empty plots exist in one or two places. The garden behind number 12 Main Street for example is a remnant of the pre-industrial town. Station Street's carriageway and western side was created out of a single burgrave plot (rear extensions backing onto the lane known as The Loft are encroachments on an adjacent strip of garden). Challoner Street (formerly Kitty Went), Low Sand Lane (formerly Sullart Sand Went) and High Sand Lane (Went) are tight and enclosed like Cockton's Yard and Banks Court, indicating that they are pre-Victorian.

The dense, enclosed pattern of the medieval town is also present in areas of C18 & C19 expansion (west side of Kirkgate and Mackreth Row, and Derwent Street). The plot sizes are small and hence density is high, as it is in the late Victorian–Edwardian terraces (Eg Ashgrove, Lorton Street and Wordsworth Terrace/Fell View).

Relief from the intensity of the built environment is provided by All Saint's Churchyard and the Croft Bowling Green. Both are oases of calm with the elevated location of the former affording impressive views across the town and to the Cocker.



Irregular frontages on Main Street



Regular frontages of later development



Challoner Street looking south



Cockton's Yard

The historic core opens up towards its edges with lower density suburban development, particularly the Edwardian Rubbybanks Road and the 1920s Kirkbank, which both have public gardens (with good views). Large commercial buildings, car parks, schools and other individual buildings reinforce the openness south of the historic core. This openness is also noticeable at the top of Kirkgate where it starts to drop down to Tom Rudd Beck from where there are spectacular views of the Lake District, particularly from the raised pedestrian area along Fell View.



All Saint's churchyard



Croft bowling green

Private gardens play a key role in the sense of openness, particularly the gardens of Waterloo and Crown Streets, Fell View and those to the rear of St. Helen's St.



Detached gardens to front of Fell View



Gardens backing onto the Derwent

NORTH OF THE DERWENT

The main spatial characteristic of the area north of the Derwent is openness. Most buildings and structures are separate objects in the landscape. Some of these are in

harmony with the landscape such as Gote Mills, but many not, such as the sheds of the James Walker factory and the adjacent business park which occupies a block of land which is approximately the same size as the whole historic core. Derwent Mill is relatively subservient to views south across allotments at Gote Road.



Gote Road looking north



High Gote Mill and cottage

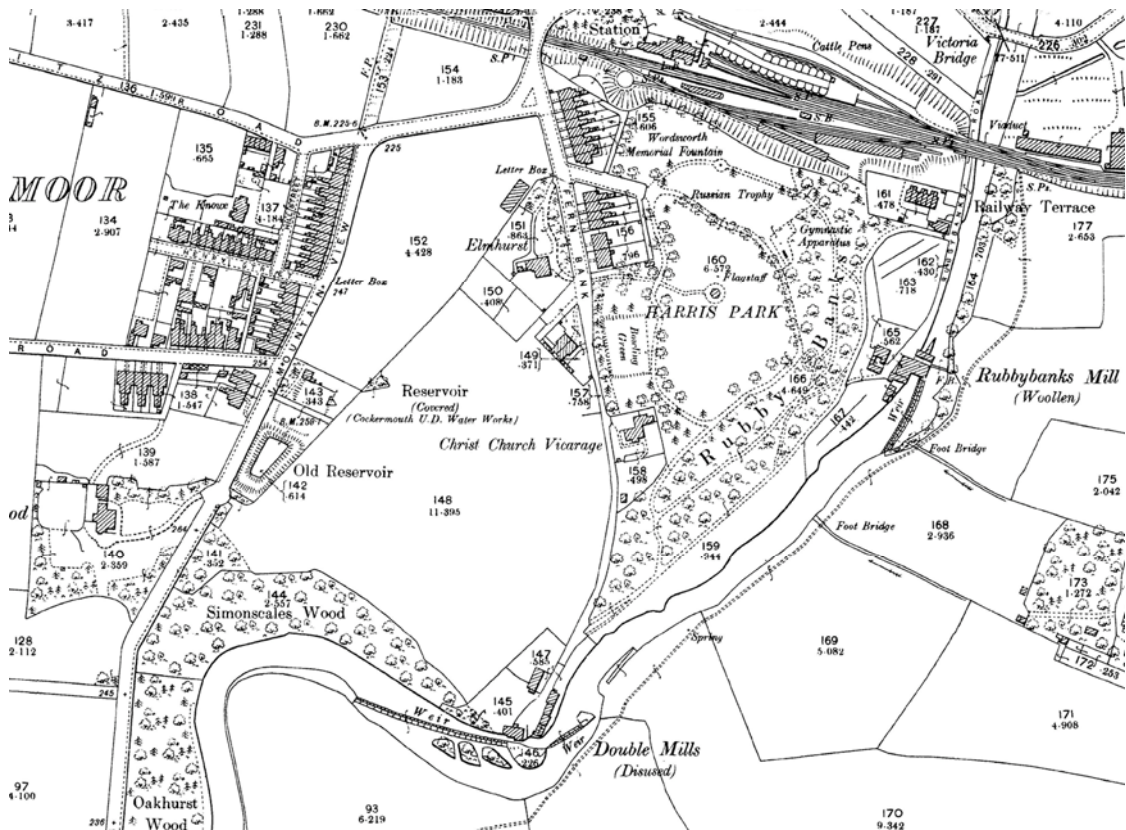
There is a coherent spatial character at High and Low Gote Mills and the adjacent terraces, the detached Bridge House (Derwent Villa) and the adjacent Derwent Bridge. Fragments of walling (including the parapet of the old Blackfriar's Bridge) and the lines of the watercourses are the only evidence of the historic relationship between buildings and water. The openness of land to the west of Gote Road is preserved by the cricket pitch which backs onto gardens which link the built environment with the wider landscape.



Remnant of mill race at High Gote mill



Cricket pitch to west of Gote Road

HARRIS PARK*Harris Park area in 1900*

Open landscape is also the dominant spatial characteristic of the Harris Park area. Most of the land within its boundary is parkland, playing fields, meadows or river valley. The most important built environment is the frontages of the Fern Bank, Mountain View and Skiddaw View terraces which face the playing fields on the Lamplugh Road. The frontages contrast with the enclosed yards to rear of the houses. West of the Lamplugh Road are streets that characterise much of the later development of the historic core.

There are a number of detached villas on or just beyond the boundary of the Conservation Area. The most striking house, Holmewood, is now isolated by later housing. Elmhurst and Rosebank relate well to the terrace on the opposite side of Fern Bank. Some groups of building on the wooded banks of the Cocker relate to water mills and pumps or the railway.

Harris Park is open (apart from the boundary of the bowling green). Tree cover is peripheral, and generally confined to steep slopes to the north and east. These largely obscure views across the town although the Cocker can be glimpsed through the trees and there are views east to Skiddaw.



Fern Bank from playing field



Mountain View from playing field



Harris Park



Double Mill from meadows to south

EAST BITTER BECK



St. Helen's Street: post-1945 housing



Fragment of older housing

The Conservation Area east of the older part of St. Helen's Street comprises a road running through mainly post war housing, a tract of open farmland and land alongside a wooded caravan park. Only the Bitter Beck and the fragments of industry suggest any relationship to historic Cockermouth. However, the road is an old routes serving the medieval town (which might be even older).

2.3.3 Uses and activities

HISTORIC CORE

As stated above, the medieval system of land tenure has shaped the historic core of Cockermouth. Subsequent development of these plots created semi public back

yards which were originally gardens or orchards but were appropriated for the textile industry which demanded long, thin well lit buildings for carding, weaving & tentering (stretching) of cloth. This explains the elongated shape of many of the yard buildings and the tight spaces accommodating weavers cottages.

Burgage plots created the widths of the subsequent buildings (these are mostly Georgian dwellings, a few with shops on the ground floor). Large private houses (such as Wordsworth house) and Hotels & Inns were numerous. Many hotels survive (the majority on Main Street) while others have been converted to flats or other uses. These buildings, often bigger than their neighbours, demonstrate that Cockermouth was the centre of a thriving rural economy with regular animal fairs. Animal markets required abattoirs and tanneries, such as those that survive in fragments adjacent to Tom Rudd Beck where it is crossed by Skinner Street and High Kirkgate Bridge.

Many water using industries shaped the character of the historic core. Mills and factories were built fronting the banks of the Derwent and the Cocker. Hatters Croft (now flats) adjacent to the bowling green is a surviving example. Others are converted to housing, eg in Waterloo Street. Jennings Brewery is the latest building to occupy a site that has been in industrial use since the middle ages. Adjacent buildings are also industrial, although the conversion of some to residential use has changed the character of the area. Industrial uses often create unusual land shapes, such as the long strip of land behind the gap between 31 and 33 Kirkgate. This was historically a ropewalk, identified as Elliot's Ropery on Wood's map.



Jennings brewery from Cocker Bridge



Ropewalk (Elliot's Ropery)

Development of the railway and the removal of the beast market precipitated commercial development on the junction of South Street and Station Street. Buildings such as Mitchell's Auction Mart and the Agricultural Hall were far larger than any buildings thus far (outside the Castle) giving this edge of town a new commercial feel. The removal of animals from Main Street (late C19) enabled its transformation into the primary shopping street, with many ground floors altered to create shopfronts using large sheets of glass (that had just become available). Frontages such as Nicholson's upholstery, 11 Main Street and 5 Castlegate show what existed before. Station Street was a planned development of shops from the station. The lime trees represent a late stage in the 'gentrification' of the medieval streets.



Mitchell's Auction Mart on Station Road–Lorton Street

Victorian growth in the town introduced new building types such as schools, banks halls etc, built of imported stone and in contemporary designs. These affected the character of the town due both to the uses and the architecture.

NORTH OF THE DERWENT

The land north of the Derwent has historically been a mix of agriculture and industry with associated housing. It is still a working landscape although the balance between farmland, industry and housing has altered. Where there were fields there is industry and where there was industry there is housing. It's special interest lies in the traces of industrial past and its relationship to the C18 residential suburb.

HARRIS PARK

Although compromised by post war suburban development, the rural character of the Harris Park area remains substantially intact. What is not rural is residential or recreational use. There are no shops or businesses other than the garden centre and the only evidence of industry is remnants of the mills on the Cocker which led to the building of Fern Bank and Rubbybanks Road.

EAST BITTER BECK

A traditionally rural area with industrial remnants, recently partially developed with housing, a sports centre (incorporating the old Drill Hall) and (just beyond the Conservation Area boundary) Cockermouth School.

2.3.4 Architecture and details

Classical architecture influences the proportions and window patterns of almost all of the pre C20 buildings, but with some vernacular details. Classical (Georgian)

architecture derives its inspiration from the buildings of ancient Greece and Rome, particularly from the column and beam. It is the size, proportion and spacing of



Variety in the design of facades that follow the classical model

columns, and the supported beam (entablature) that sets the vertical and horizontal 'grid' that governs the pattern of void and solid. Hence the size and location of openings, storey heights and the placement of elements such as string courses and cornices, rules for which were set out in pattern books. This structure applies even though the columns themselves are not explicit in the majority of local buildings.

Facades that follow the classical model are divided into regular bays with storey heights that express the notion of a 'base', 'middle' and a 'top'. This is also illustrated in the 3 storey Victorian terrace of buildings on the east side of Station Street and the Edwardian single storey former District Bank building (no. 2). Both exhibit columns supporting a beam, regardless of the differences in height. These examples also illustrate that classical buildings can be small or large and plain or elaborate (such as Wordsworth House or the highly decorated Grecian Villa). In architectural terms, it is the proportions, order and sense of verticality which unites buildings throughout the Conservation Area, whether humble or grand.

The status of a classically inspired building is often indicated by the degree to which it has been enriched with mouldings or other detail, including door cases or fanlights. Windows and doors are particularly important in this context as they are often the only decorated elements. Double hung sash windows and panelled doors are a hallmark

of most buildings built in the C18 & C19 in Cockermouth. Roofs are almost all subservient, with the top of the façade terminated by a moulded gutter. There are a few parapets with stone or stucco cornices, but the majority of eaves are open.

Windows and doors vary widely, reflecting changes in taste and glass making technology (large pieces of glass were not readily available before the 1830s, hence smaller panes). Original windows and doors have often been replaced in a later style so that many windows are late Georgian or Victorian regardless of the age of the building. The basic form and function of the sash window gives the area a common character, so attempts to replicate sashes with top hung or side hung casements never look right. The same applies to panelled or boarded doors, which are logical pieces of joinery and cannot successfully be replicated with modern materials.



Different patterns of sash window (Mountain View)

Status is also evident in a hierarchy of location, with the more important buildings on the main streets (many of the grandest in the Market Place) and less important buildings in the subsidiary lanes and yards,

Shopfronts are, with the exception of Station Street and modern buildings, later insertions in earlier buildings. However, even these use a classical framework, in that they have a stall riser/base below the display window with columns/pillars (or pilasters) supporting the fascia/beam above, and are often symmetrical.

Distinctive treatments of the reveals (the bit between the frame & the wall surface) of windows and doors and string courses and quoins add interest to the architecture, with stone or moulded stucco surrounds used to accentuate the openings. Most C18 & C19 buildings are finished with smooth stucco, lined-out to imitate stone (which was more expensive). In central areas many have been painted in bold colours.

Some later Victorian buildings returned to a Georgian style but with more eclectic detailing such as bay windows, dormers, fretted bargeboards, characteristic of an Italianate style of classical architecture such as at Harris Park. Whole terraces are designed and built together, elaborately detailed of stone rather than stucco. Good examples are Croft Terrace, South Street and Ashgrove, Lorton Street.



Ashgrove Terrace on Lorton Street

Finely cut stone ashlar, sometimes 'rock-faced' is used for many of the buildings (and bridges) of the late C19. The architecture is often deliberately non-classical and idiosyncratic. A Gothic Revival style was used for churches and associated buildings except the Friends Meeting House, Kirkgate and the Wesleyan Methodists Chapel (now Town Hall). The Carnegie Library and the later banks are a mixture between Edwardian Baroque and Arts and Crafts influenced (e.g. HSBC Bank, Cocker Bridge). Elements of a Venetian style, popular in the mid C19, are seen in Mitchell's Auction Rooms and 84 Main Street (adjacent to the library). The quality of the architecture is demonstrated by the many buildings which are listed or which make a positive contribution to its character and appearance (see map 03).

2.3.5 Building materials

WALLS

An absence of locally available, easily worked building stone meant that builders used stucco to achieve a smart, classical look. River cobbles and other rubble was only used for the structure, although stone from quarries such as Brigham & Broughton was used for quoins and opening surrounds. Use of rubble stone is often visible on the rear of buildings and in structures that are either hidden or of low status. Brick was sometimes used for walling prior to rendering.

Imported stone was used sparingly until the railway brought a variety of limestones and sandstones, which were then used for public, religious, institutional and commercial buildings. Colours vary from the buff and creamy-brown of the Cumbrian limestones to the rich red of stones such as St. Bees and Shawk, and there is an example of (what appears to be) Threlkeld Granite (33–35 Market Place). The majority of stone walling is coursed with thin, ashlar joints, though the surfaces of the stones are often left 'rock faced'. Dressed stone was generally reserved for lintels,

cills, reveals and other details. The green staining of many stone surfaces, particularly red sandstone, is caused by the lime trees. It is not damaging and is part of the Town's character.



Stucco lined-out to mimic stone



'Rock faced' ashlar stonework

Stucco is very important to the character and appearance of the main public facades of much of the Conservation Area. Its purpose was to mimic stone, not just to keep out the weather. C18 & C19 stuccos were patent materials that were often marketed in 'stone' colours which would not therefore have originally been painted, other than perhaps with a wash of copperas or other, designed to enhance the illusion of real stone. Their smooth, lined surfaces contrast with the wet-dash render (harl) which is used in rural Cumbria and on hidden elevations and yards within the town.

ROOFS

The roofing material throughout the town is slate. However there are two main types which look and are laid differently. This difference is important to the special interest of different parts of the Conservation Area:

- In the older parts of the Town and north of the Derwent, are local Green slates from the quarries/mines of Buttermere and Honister. These are varied in width and are laid to 'diminishing' courses.
- Most post railway buildings, especially on the southern edge of the town and Harris Park area have blue-grey Welsh slate, which is thinner and more regular than the Cumbrian Greens, laid to regular, even courses.

Both have their own character, as can be seen by comparing the roof of Christ Church with that of the adjacent Fairfield Schools. The type of slate has a marked affect on the character and appearance of the buildings and their streets.



*Cumbrian green slate laid
to diminishing courses*



*Welsh slate laid
to regular courses*

CHIMNEYS

Chimneys are invariable of brick or render with clay pots.

RAINWATER GOODS

Gutters and rainwater pipes are traditionally of cast iron, with large moulded gutters and are a significant feature of many buildings. Fixings and supports are often decorated.

BOUNDARIES

There are few iron railings to be seen in the Conservation Area, though much evidence of their existence can be found. A number of wrought iron gates survive, as well as many base walls, piers and copings. Estate and parkland railings/gates can be found around Harris Park and the Castle. Dry and rubble stone walls are common.

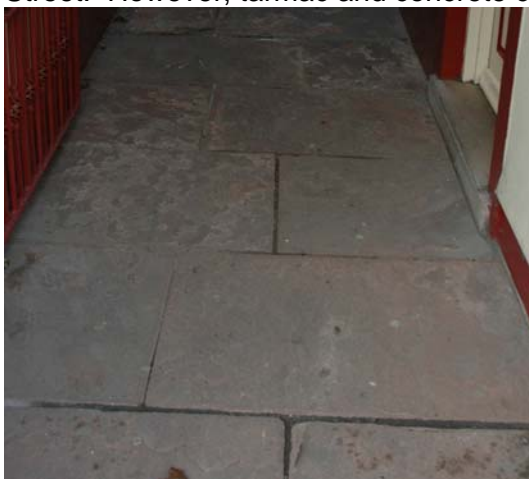


Surviving wrought iron railings

Evidence of lost railings

SURFACES

Cobbled road surfaces exist on Kirkgate, South Street and Crown Street. Stone flags can be found in some yards and passageways, some steps and in All Saint's churchyard. Clay pavers with a diamond pattern exist in parts as do granite kerbs. Stone setts have recently been laid in the Market Place and the eastern end of Main Street. However, tarmac and concrete cover the majority of surfaces.



Stone flags



Cobbles



Clay pavers



Tarmac and concrete

2.3.6 Greenery and green spaces

The landscape and spatial characteristics are largely dependant upon green spaces and vegetation. The most important areas of greenery (including large private gardens) to the Town's character are show on Map 02.

HISTORIC CORE

The biggest impact of greenery on the character of the historic core is to the east of the Cocker and along the north bank of the Derwent, the only others of note being the Croft Bowling Green, and the private gardens of Challoner House and the Trout Hotel. Most of the trees are east of the Cocker, notably in the churchyard, on the

steep slopes to the river below Kirkbank and in private gardens. Also important are the pollarded lime trees on Main Street, Station Street, Market Place and Kirkgate. These were planted to celebrate Queen Victoria's golden Jubilee in 1887 and together with riverside trees contribute significantly to the character and setting.

NORTH OF THE DERWENT

The allotment gardens, the wooded garden to Bridge House, the cricket pitch, playing field and memorial gardens are of value to local character, as are trees at the lower end of the Gote Road, on Spital Ing Lane and along the northern edge of Memorial Gardens. Surrounding farmland is also important to the Town's setting.

HARRIS PARK

Large expanses of open space trees are key characteristics of this part of the Conservation Area.

EAST BITTER BECK

The banks of the beck are the only significant swathes of green other than farmland and the caravan park.

2.4 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

From the assessment of special interest can be drawn attributes which define what it is special about the character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

SETTING AND SPATIAL QUALITIES

- 05 Views of major landmark buildings such as the Castle and the Jennings brewery tower set against the mountainous backdrop
- 06 The rural landscapes at the extremities of the Conservation Area, their field patterns, old lanes and the banks of the rivers and becks.
- 07 The contrast between the northern edge of the historic core and the open landscape north of the Derwent,
- 08 Views of roofscapes.
- 09 Particular viewpoints such as:
 - Tute Hill.
 - All Saint's churchyard.
 - The small park above the lower end of Cocker Lane.
 - The head of Station Street.
 - The path along the front of Fell View.
 - Harris Park and its environs.

The latter offers spectacular views towards Skiddaw, down onto the Cocker and north across the town, albeit obscured, in part, by trees.

- 10 The medieval layout of streets, spaces and burgrave plots resulting in the linear development and characteristic narrow frontage buildings, and the way that this contrasts with the regular plots of later housing on the fringes.

- 11 The semi-private rear yards, courts and passageways which relate to the system of medieval tenure.
- 12 The contrast between the spaciousness of Main Street and the Market Place, and the narrow interconnecting streets.
- 13 The way in which density eases and the area opens up when moving south from the medieval core, through Georgian developments to the Victorian Harris Park.
- 14 The landmark religious, educational, institutional and financial buildings of contemporary national architecture.

HISTORIC INTEREST AND USES

- 15 The concentration of shops, inns and other businesses in the historic core.
- 16 Development alongside the rivers and becks, such as the brewery, mills, tannery buildings and other fragments of the industrial past, including the remnants of the mill stream to the north of the Derwent, and isolated clusters of development along the Cocker upstream of the old viaduct.
- 17 The historic links between industrial and residential development, as seen in the proximity of workshops, cottages and frontage buildings in the historic core, Gote mills and adjacent terraces, and the old ropewalk on Kirkgate.
- 18 The significant archaeological interest of the historic core, and the industrial archaeology of outlying areas, particularly former water-powered industry.
- 19 The commercial character of buildings on the junction between Station Street and South Street which derive from the development of the railway.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

- 20 A hierarchy of architectural design where the most elaborate buildings are on the most important streets.
- 21 A classical sense of order, proportion and verticality (but often not detail) used in virtually all façades, which unify the townscape.
- 22 The classical structure of shop fronts with entablature (beam), columns (with base) supporting it and stall riser below supporting the display window.
- 23 The eclectic detailing of the later buildings (ie which came after the railway) which characterises the periphery, such as Harris Park which has decorative bay windows, dormers, bargeboards, eaves and window treatments.
- 24 Later terraces built as set pieces with a strongly unified design.
- 25 Roofs which are subservient to façades.
- 26 Landmark buildings of national architectural styles.

DETAILS AND MATERIALS

- 27 Cumbrian green slate roofs (diminishing courses), characteristic of earlier buildings, and Welsh blue-grey slate for post railway buildings.
- 28 Walls finished with stucco or smooth render to imitate stone.
- 29 Dressed stone or moulded stucco surrounds (window or door), quoins, string courses, etc. These are often emphasised by contrasting colours.

- 30 Rubble and dry stonework visible on rear elevations, outbuildings, minor structures and boundary walls.
- 31 Sash windows and panelled doors of painted timber, often of a later date than the building, some with fanlights or door cases (some elaborate).
- 32 Cast iron rainwater goods, with moulded gutters often supported on corbels or brackets, sometimes forming part of the façade below.
- 33 The few surviving iron railings and gates (including park and estate railings), and surviving evidence of lost ironwork.
- 34 Surfaces of cobbles or incised clay pavers, flagged paving to yards and other private areas, sometimes with granite kerbs.

NATURAL INTEREST AND GREENERY

- 35 Rivers, banks and other areas of greenery providing ecological (as well as visual) interest to the area.
- 36 Rows of pollarded lime trees along Main Street, Station Street, Market Place and Kirkgate.
- 37 Maintained green spaces such as the Croft Bowling Green, All Saint's churchyard, Memorial Gardens, Gote Road cricket pitch, Harris Park, and the Lamplugh Road recreation ground, as well as many smaller spaces.
- 38 Blocks of woodland in the Harris Park area.
- 39 Large private gardens which act as a transition to open spaces or riverbanks.
- 40 The close proximity of undeveloped rural landscapes.

3. PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The protection afforded by conservation area designation recognises the importance of the character and appearance of a large part of the town and its setting, and imposes on Allerdale Borough Council a duty to:

- pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area when exercising any of its functions under the planning acts, particularly those which concern the control of development, and
- formulate and publish proposals for the Area's preservation and enhancement.

Designation does not prevent change. Alterations, extensions, new buildings, demolitions, changes of use, landscaping and other types of development are inevitable if the town is to thrive. However, change must not be at the expense of the special interest of the area and so:

- planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in a loss or erosion of attributes that positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area, and
- development that would positively add to the character and appearance of the area will be encouraged. This includes the reinstatement of attributes which have been lost, the removal of buildings that have a negative impact on the special interest of the area.

In order to preserve and enhance, areas of vulnerability need to be identified, such as how and where the special interest has been lost or is being eroded. Understanding this provides a more objective basis for the management of development and the promotion of enhancement. Identifying what is vulnerable also provides:

- part of the evidence base for local planning policy,
- support for conservation area management, and
- a basis for directing public and private investment in the area.

3.2 HERITAGE AUDIT

Elements taken together, that make up the special interest of the Conservation Area. include: Listed buildings and features; unlisted buildings and structures; layouts; uses; building condition; shopfronts; public realm; greenery and green spaces.

3.2.1 Listed buildings and other protected elements

There are 102 listed buildings and structures, the locations of which are shown on Map 03. Any works which would affect their character requires listed building consent. Repairs do not generally need consent. All parts of a listed building are protected, including interiors and any building or fixed object within its curtilage. However, not all parts will be of the same value in terms of its special interest and most listed buildings can accommodate some degree of alteration, with skill and care.

Of the 102 listed buildings 88 are within the central core of the town. Some listings are for groups of buildings. The Derwent and Cocker Bridges are also listed, as are

Cockermouth Castle, the Mayo Statue, All Saints Church, Christ Church and the Congregational Church. There are also a number of paved surfaces that are listed independently (mainly in Kirkgate). There are also independently listed structures such as the gate piers at the Kirkgate entrance to All Saints Churchyard.

Two buildings are listed Grade I: Cockermouth Castle and Wordsworth House (with its garden, walls and gate piers). A number of listed buildings are listed Grade II*:

- 5 & 7 and 6 Castlegate,
- Castlegate House,
- 45 & 47 Kirkgate,
- 71 Main Street (Norham House),
- 38, 40 & 42 Market Place (Percy House), and
- All Saints Church (ecclesiastical Grade B).

Cockermouth Castle and the motte on Tute Hill are also Scheduled Monuments. This means that all works, including repairs requires consent. Allerdale Local Plan contains a policy (CC02) for surveying and recording below ground archaeology in the Medieval town, this area is shown on Map 04.



Mound (motte) on Tute Hill

Other aspects of the Conservation Area are protected by different statutory and policy designation (refer Map 04). The rivers Derwent and Cocker are both Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which means that nature conservation interests should take precedence over development. Their beds and banks are also protected by a specific policy in the Local Plan (CEN1). The outer areas of the Conservation Area are protected from development by housing and other Local Plan policies. Most of the area north of the Derwent is protected, along with the eastern end of the arm that extends along Bitter Beck and the meadows to the south and west of the Youth Hostel. The conversion and re-use of buildings in the town centre courts and yards is also controlled (policy CC01).

A variety of other local and national planning policies also control development, all of which help to ensure that its special interest does not suffer.

CRITERIA

The contribution of unlisted buildings (excluding shopfronts which are considered separately) to the special interest of the Conservation Area has been assessed and ranked as positive, negative or neutral, depending upon:

- Age, style, materials and other characteristics which reflect Cockermouth.
- Their relationship to listed buildings, eg the unlisted 9–12 Fern Bank form a group with the listed 1–8 Fern Bank adjacent.
- Their association with the history of Cockermouth including roads layouts, plots and the planned suburbs.
- Landmark qualities, eg HSBC bank, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church and presbytery, and the 'pepper pot' corner at Mountain View (51 Lamplugh Road).
- Traditional uses such as former mills at the northern end of Gote Road, Derwent Mills and the Auction Rooms on Station Road.
- Uses which contribute to character such as Jennings Brewery, pubs and hotels, and sports pavilions at Gote Road and The Croft bowling green.

Positive buildings are those which meet one or more of these criteria. Even if not listed, there is a strong presumption in favour of the retention of such buildings.

Negative buildings are those which undermine the character or appearance of the Conservation Area by virtue of their poor design, inappropriate materials or their failure to respect historic plot or street lines. Their redevelopment or improvement is encouraged.

Neutral buildings are those which exhibit none of the qualities that contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area, yet which do not harm its character. Such buildings might be redeveloped as long as their replacement is better or at very least, no worse. Neutral buildings offer opportunities for enhancement of the area.

Buildings that lie immediately beyond the boundary have also been assessed with particular attention on those visible across open spaces and where changes to the boundary are considered necessary. The assessments are shown on Map 03.

ASSESSMENT

Most of the buildings within the Conservation Area make a positive contribution. Buildings that detract from its character and appearance include large C20 buildings, extensions and infill buildings. Some have a disproportionately adverse affect:



Council depot on Old Hall Went



Telephone exchange on South Street



Wilkinson's superstore on South Street



Former abattoir etc. on Lorton Street



Garage on Gote road



James Walker Factory

- The Council depot and adjacent toilets on Old Hall Went car park, the former is unused and of no architectural merit, and blocks views of All Saint's Church.
- The telephone exchange and postal sorting office on South Street. Neither the form, scale or architecture pay regard to the character of the Conservation Area.
- Wilkinson's supermarket on Lowther Went, whose large footprint fails to respect the medieval structure of the area.
- The former abattoir and agricultural depot on Lorton Street which is visually detracting (although associated with the historic use)

- The veterinary surgery on Wakefield Road. This group of nondescript buildings and security fencing impinges on the attractiveness of the Memorial Gardens and land to the north of the Derwent.
- The garage on the western side of Gote Road disrupts the street line and sense of enclosure characteristic of the approach to Cockermouth via Derwent Bridge.
- The James Walker factory complex and Derwent Mills Commercial Park. Although these are of economic importance, it is unclear why they are in the Conservation Area, although they do affect its setting.
- Derwent Secondary School which is outside the Conservation Area but has an adverse visual impact on the Bitter Beck valley.

Virtually all modern housing is graded neutral in its impact because neither its form, architecture or materials have added positively to the character and appearance of the Town. The layout of much of this housing fails to respect the historic grain of the town. However, even where the layout is appropriate, the proportions (size and shape of the building, windows & doors), or materials (plastic windows and textured render) and inappropriate application of historic features (eg on the block of flats that fronts Low Road between Horsman and Derwent Streets). Use of inappropriate materials is the reason why the new blocks of flats surrounding The Croft bowling green is not considered to be positive.

Examples of housing which does add positively to the area are; 10–16 Fletcher Street and the Stricketts Court development behind 75–85 Main Street (the use of textured render is not ideal but the locations are not too prominent in the town).

3.2.2 Spatial qualities

The spaces around buildings have also been assessed. Positive and negative spaces are shown on Map 03. Other than the positive spaces identified below, all publicly accessible spaces have been assessed as neutral.

POSITIVE SPACES:

- All Saint's churchyard.
- Major spaces including the old beast market on Main Street, the Market Place and the stretch of Kirkgate between no. 25 and Mackreth Row.
- Yards including Cockton's Yard, Old Kings Arms Lane and Banks Court.
- Large private gardens, ranging in scale from the Castle grounds to the gardens of Challoner House, South Street, Prospect House, west of Kirkgate, the Trout Hotel, Crown Street and Wordsworth House.
- Parks and recreational spaces, including the Croft Bowling Green, Harris Park, the playing fields on Lamplugh Road and the Gote Road cricket pitch.
- Cultivated areas such as the allotments gardens to the east of Gote Road and the detached gardens of Fell View.

There are no formal public squares or spaces except possibly the forecourt to the Town Hall at the top of Market Street and The Square on Kirkgate.



Banks Court



Allotments east of Gote Road

There are certain types of space which add positively to character and appearance:

- All yards and connecting lanes and alleyways behind Main Street, Market Place, Castlegate and St. Helen's Street.
- Private gardens which preserve the openness or historic pattern of development, such as those on the east side of Kirkgate and those which back onto the cricket pitch on the western side of Gote Road.
- Strips of open space that line the banks of rivers and becks. These are soft green spaces between the Derwent and Waterloo Bridges, or 'hard' spaces such as along Rubbybanks Road between South Street and Victoria Bridge.
- Areas of open countryside (including farmland and playing fields) that surround the Conservation Area and which help provide the Town's setting.

It is important that the spatial qualities of these areas are preserved and where appropriate enhanced.

NEGATIVE SPACES

In broad terms, negative spaces are those which:

- Destroy the line of the street, for example the car parks and service yards of the telephone exchange, sorting office and supermarkets on South Street.
- Cut across historical boundaries or plot lines. This has happened with housing such as Victoria Court off High Sand Lane, Irene Court at the end of Waterloo Street, and the semi-detached houses on Whinfell Avenue (these encroach on the historic burgage plots to the east of Kirkgate).
- Isolate or damage the setting of buildings. This has happened with housing in the grounds of Holmewood, the large villa on the western side of Lamplugh Road.
- Have poor quality surfacing. Car parks are the main offenders, particularly those fronting the street (e.g. in front of the Congregational Church on Main Street) or which occupy large areas of land. Empty, unkempt areas behind shops are also a problem, particularly to the north of Main Street.

The following areas are major detractors from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and should be prioritised for improvement:

- Land associated with the telephone exchange and the postal sorting office, particularly if redevelopment is proposed.
- Car parking associated with the Lowther Went shopping centre, including that to the rear of the Leslie Cleeland shop.
- Old Hall Went car park and its environs, including the area between Market Street and the River Cocker up to the Cocker footbridge.
- The old gas works depot site at the southern end of New Street which, although just outside of the Conservation Area, affects its character.
- The service yard and car park serving the Sainsbury's supermarket on the corner of Station Road and South Street, the fire station and garage sites on Lorton Street, and the area of Station Road to the southwest of the old Grand Theatre.

Some spaces have been assessed as both positive and negative, reflecting the fact that they might be historically important in terms of their physical presence, but have poor quality attributes. An example would be a burgage plot which is used for parking.



3.2.3 Building occupancy and condition

A visual survey of buildings reveals little evidence of vacancy or under occupation, other than some empty floors above shops (e.g. 20–22 Main Street) and buildings that are currently undergoing repairs and renovation e.g. The Ship Inn on Market Place and the old Five Cellars building at 69 Main Street (both listed). The only entirely vacant building noted was 1 Gallowbarrow, opposite Fairfield Infants School.



Vacant and derelict building at number 1 Gallowbarrow

The general condition of the built fabric is reasonable, although the rear of many shop and commercial premises are in a poor condition (e.g. Jade Garden takeaway, 94–96 Main Street and some buildings to the rear of the Wordsworth Hotel). The Castle Bell Tower (badly leaning) and Kitchen Tower (suffering from water ingress) are the only structures that are included on the English Heritage Buildings At Risk (BAR) register for listed buildings and scheduled monuments. There is not an up to date buildings at risk survey. However, the following buildings appear to be in need of repair:

- 5 Castlegate (listed Grade II*), where the bowed shop fronts are suffering from fungal decay.
- 22 Main Street (Ciao Bistro, listed Grade II), which is in need of redecoration at least.
- 28 Market Place (listed Grade II).
- The base of the old windmill adjacent to Foundry House, Brewery Lane, a part of a Grade II listed building that is in a poor state.
- 1 Gallowbarrow (above).
- 17 Henry Street, just outside the Conservation Area.

All of these buildings should be investigated further. There may be other buildings at risk and there are many which could be improved to the benefit of the Conservation Area. The Town Hall is an example.



Number 22 Main Street



Base of old 'windmill' on Brewery Lane

3.2.4 Shopfronts

Most of the shops in Cockermouth are along Main Street, Market Place and Station Street, though there are some on South Street and individual shops elsewhere.

Few of the buildings on Main Street, the Market Place or St. Helen's Street originally had shopfronts and the overall quality of design is poor. Over half the shops on Main Street and Station Street are of poor/average quality. The shopfronts in the Market Place are better, although some traditional shopfronts are damaged. Particularly poor shopfronts are Lloyds TSB, Main Street and the National Westminster, Station Street.

Signage is generally of a low standard, particularly where corporate image ignores all local characteristics (e.g. Blockbuster and Boots).



Poor quality modern shop front



High quality traditional shop front

There are some recent examples of good new shop fronts. Percy House Gallery at 38–42 Market Place uses a traditional approach that is subservient to the architecture of its Grade II* listed premises. The Front Room wine bar and bistro at number 2 Market Place demonstrates a more contemporary approach, with discrete signage that complements the shopfront as a whole.

3.2.5 Public realm

The quality of the public realm (including paving, street furniture, lighting, signage, etc) is generally poor other than areas of recent improvement such as Market Place, Cocker Bridge, and the end of Main Street.

Pedestrian surfaces are mostly asphalt or concrete, much of which is cracked and with some poor quality dropped kerbs. Roads are invariably tarmac. Street furniture, lights and signage are mostly nondescript and uncoordinated.

The only extensive good quality surfacing is the cobbled forecourt fronting 13 to 55 Kirkgate, though there are similar areas fronting 38 Kirkgate, 27 Crown Street and 24–28 South Street. Some recently refurbished yards are well done. The setts and flags at Church Went create a good quality public realm. A number of streets retain their granite kerbs and distinctive diamond pattern clay pavers, the most complete examples are on Waterloo Street. It is only the number of high quality buildings that prevents the public realm having a more detrimental affect overall.

3.2.6 Greenery and green spaces

Public green spaces in the Conservation Area are well maintained (other than between Low Sand Lane and the Waterloo Footbridge). Grass is mown on a regular basis and trees are carefully managed, although there has been a loss of lime trees from Station Street and Market Place. This suggests that there is no strategy to ensure their retention/replanting. Old pictures show less trees on the banks of the Cocker and the edge of Harris Park, which allowed spectacular views west and north.

3.2.7 Survival of historic fabric

The Conservation Area has suffered progressive loss of historic buildings, particularly in Derwent Street and Gote Road, but increasingly throughout. Examples include:

- Old Hall and yards,

- cottages and yards between Main Street and South Street (Lowther Went),
- the old Auction Mart (Sainsbury's supermarket),
- yards and buildings replaced by Irene Court,
- the public hall on Station Street (National Westminster Bank),
- historic mills, tanneries and associated buildings including Rubbybanks Mills and the recently demolished Tannery on Skinner Street,
- various industrial buildings to the north of the Derwent, including the Mill Stream, Goat Dub and other elements associated with the mills of Gote Road,

WALLING AND FINISHES

The smooth stucco which is characteristic of most of C18 & C19 walls, have often been replaced by a more rustic wet dash or modern dry (pebble) dash. This change has eroded the character of many areas, particularly where it has been used on new buildings. The recent re-rendering of a house on Croft Terrace (on South Street) demonstrates the inappropriateness of textured renders. Only on hidden elevations is the use of textured renders appropriate.



Contrast between stucco (right) and inappropriate textured render

ROOF COVERINGS

Due to its durability, slate roof coverings (Cumbrian & Welsh) survive extensively. However concrete tiles exist on some roofs, notably on Market Place, the end of St. Helens St, and some buildings around Kirkgate. Some new developments have artificial slates. These are less durable and weather in a very different way.

WINDOWS

The trend for replacement windows has led to a severe loss of character in some parts of the Conservation Area. Many traditional timber sash windows have been replaced in plastic. This is not just a matter of 'correct' historical patterns or profiles but also the use of a material that is inherently inferior in terms of both appearance

and performance. Plastic windows are not durable in the long term and are unsustainable in the wider environment.

There are many misconceptions over the need for window replacement. It is very rare that a timber window made before 1945 cannot be repaired much more economically than it can be replaced. Streets in which the negative effect of the loss of timber windows can be clearly seen include Gote Road, Mackreth Row, the C19 streets south of Crown Street, the streets behind Skiddaw View and Mountain View, Lamplugh Road and the front of Fell View.

EXTERNAL DOORS

The erosion of character due to the inappropriate replacement of front doors is similar to that of windows. Gote Road and Derwent Street have suffered most.



Timber sash windows (right) compared with poor quality plastic replacements (left)

RAINWATER GOODS

A large number of buildings retain their cast iron rainwater goods, although plastic is increasingly being used for replacement and on new buildings. The Gote Road area has lost almost all of its old gutters and downpipes.

GATES AND RAILINGS

Few complete gates and railings survived WWII. The character of many streets is lessened by their absence, as is demonstrated where they survive (eg Christ Church, Harris Park and on Deer Orchard House at the top of Castlegate and 2 Fell View). All fragments should be kept as historic evidence. This would allow, when combined with photographic evidence, accurately copying and reinstatement. Wrought iron gates survive on some shop fronts.

BOUNDARY WALLS

Most stone walls and copings that formerly supported railings have survived, as have many dry stone and rubble boundary walls which contribute to local character.

PAVING AND EXTERNAL SURFACES

Stone flags remain in a number of yards (e.g. 2 St. Helen's Street), as do cobbles (e.g. Cockton's Yard) and diamond pattern pavers (e.g. Banks Court and various front paths). The approaches to a few late C19 houses are distinguished by encaustic tiles, though these are not typical of the area.

IMPACT ON SPECIAL INTEREST

The main threat to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is the gradual loss of traditional wall and roof finishes, windows, doors and rainwater goods. The loss of timber windows and doors, or the use of the wrong type of render might be considered to be of minor concern individually, but when these losses are cumulative, damage to the character and appearance (and special interest) of the town becomes evident. This is well illustrated by comparing:

- Croft Terrace at the eastern end of South Street, and
- Gote Road to the north of the Derwent.

Croft Terrace is a late C19 terrace of eight houses which, with the exception of its iron railings and loss of smooth render to one house, survives almost entirely intact. This completeness extends to milk shelves by the front doors. The loss of glazing bars in some replacement sash windows has an effect on the completeness of the terrace but is not significantly detrimental in this instance as the windows are quite narrow and each pane of glass retains a vertical emphasis.

Conversely, the loss of historic features from the late C18 terraces on Gote Road has considerably damaged its character and appearance. The loss of stuccoed finishes, the intrusion of concrete and clay roof tiles, the extensive loss of windows and front doors (in some cases, the alteration of opening sizes), plastic rainwater goods a modern garage extension have all meant that it is now very difficult to see the architectural or historic value of the Terrace.

3.2.8 Other issues

A number of other issues, not directly relating to the built fabric also contribute to the vulnerability of character and special interest:

- Impact of cars and traffic.
- Lack of economic investment.
- Certain development pressures.
- Flooding.
- Lack of public understanding and appreciation.
- Lack of control and coordination over developments.

IMPACT OF CARS AND TRAFFIC

Cockermouth does not have traffic problems on the scale of many other towns, but there are many areas where vehicles have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

- Main St where traffic and parked cars do not create a relaxing shopping experience, due to noise, fumes and safety concerns.
- High Sand Lane, Waterloo Street, Castlegate, Kirkgate, Challoner Street, South Street and Rubbybanks Road have restricted access and circulation space leading to standing traffic and fumes during busy times.
- Gote Road, where a heavy volume of traffic detracts from of an area which has already suffered much erosion of its special interest.
- Car parks, which are generally not landscaped and which in many instances have a negative affect on the Conservation Area.

Unfortunately traffic is at present an economic and social necessity. Control and mitigation of the adverse affects require clever management.

LACK OF ECONOMIC INVESTMENT

Following the post war decline of its rural and industrial economic base, Cockermouth has suffered from a prolonged period of underinvestment. This has resulted in the loss of important buildings which, at the time of their demolition, were considered to be uneconomic to retain, inadequate maintenance and repair, and a lack of investment in paving, signage and other elements. However, there are indications that this trend is now being reversed: Buildings that were recently in poor condition, underused/empty have been improved and activity is evident in most formally vacant buildings. New pavements have been laid at to the north western end of the Market Place, Castlegate, Cocker Bridge and the eastern end of Main Street. In addition, a regeneration study and master plan for the Market Place area is in progress (2006).

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

While investment is needed to maintain buildings, economic growth can lead to pressure for inappropriate alterations and extensions, and an absence of investment can therefore lead to less loss of historic fabric.

There are growing demands for alterations and extensions, particularly in response to the apparent legal obligations of the *Disability Discrimination Act*. However, it does not necessarily require the alterations of buildings. Similarly, the perceived need to alter existing buildings for energy efficiency often unnecessarily threatens historic buildings.

FLOODING

The area between Main Street and the Derwent has recently suffered flooding. This is a threat to the survival of the historic fabric in one of the most archeologically important zones, both in terms of water damage and the need for flood protection.

LACK OF PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

The preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area depends upon owners and users of buildings, who instigate repairs, alterations, extensions and new

buildings. Everyone needs to understand why and how the Area is special in order to value sensitive and good quality developments and alterations.

It is apparent that there are misconceptions as to the meaning of conservation area designation. Some believe that nothing can change and that no development which is contemporary in character will be permitted. This view means that the town will not be progress or be enhanced. The town needs good quality, interesting new architecture that enhances its character.

LACK OF COORDINATION AND CONTROL OVER DEVELOPMENTS

The size and complexity of the Conservation Area makes it very difficult for anyone to maintain a clear overview of all that is happening, where the pressures on the historic environment lie and what should be done. Lack of resources including a lack of specialist conservation staff at local authority level and erratic levels of financial commitment makes it difficult to ensure consistent decision making.

3.3 RESPONSE

What is needed:

- Opportunities for enhancement, including good quality new development and reinstatement of certain historic features where appropriate.
- Consistent development control and enforcement decisions,
- Management strategies involving all those who affect activities in the town,
- Proposals for positive intervention, and
- Robust planning policy.

3.3.1 Preserving the Special Interest

The preservation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is dependent on:

- A Retaining all buildings and spaces that have a positive impact. This would be assisted by the following principles:
- Applications for planning permission to extend or alter buildings judged as positive to character should be justified by a conservation statement identifying the significance of the building to the character and appearance of the conservation area and explains why this will not be reduced by the proposed development.
 - The demolition of positive buildings will only be allowed if a replacement scheme is put forward that will bring greater benefits to the town than the existing building.
 - Planning permission will only be granted for a new use if it is clearly appropriate to the Area's character.
 - Design guidance on alterations to buildings should be prepared and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- B Retention of street lines and historical sub divisions of land:

- Planning permission will be resisted for development which would result in new or wider gaps in terraces or other continuous frontages, or which would destroy the historic pattern of the former burgage plots.
- C Ensure that development adjacent to the conservation area does not adversely affect its setting:
- The same design criteria will be applied to proposed development outside of the Conservation Area area if it affects its setting.
 - Site specific briefs should be prepared for the old gas works/depot site at the southern end of New Street, any development of the Sainsbury's site on South Street, the fire station and garage sites on Lorton Street, and the area of Station Road to the southwest of the old Grand Theatre.
 - Planning permission will only be granted for development north of the Derwent if it does not compromise views of Cockermouth Castle with its mountain backdrop, All Saints Church spire and other landmark buildings.
 - Consistently apply local planning policies dealing with Sites of Special Scientific Interest, environmental issues, the limits of housing development and landscapes of local importance.
 - Investigate extending environmental policy protection to the beds and banks of Bitter Beck and Tom Rudd Beck.
- D Securing the future of those parts of the Castle, the old windmill on Brewery Lane and any other buildings identified as 'at risk':
- A strategy should be developed with English Heritage and owners of the Castle to ensure the stabilisation and repair of the Bell and Kitchen Towers.
 - Ownership and plans for the old windmill should be investigated, with the possibility of public investment.
 - Liaison with the owners of 5 Castlegate, 22 Main Street, 28 Market Place and 1 Gallowbarrow over the condition and future of their buildings should be instigated, and arrangements made for the survey of their properties.
 - Possible legal action to prevent further deterioration to any buildings at risk.
- E Retention of the trees that characterise Main Street, Station Street, the Market Place and Kirkgate, Harris Park and other important spaces:
- A management strategy for the maintenance and retention of important rows and banks of trees should including a replacement strategy.
 - It needs to be widely understood that the green sap from the lime trees deposited on buildings is not damaging and is a part of the Town's character. This should not be an excuse to remove lime trees.
- F No further loss of smooth rendered façades, natural slate roofing, timber sash windows, traditional front doors or cast iron rainwater goods should be permitted.
- Liaison with Building Control should ensure the correct application of Part L (re energy) of the *Building Regulations* in the context of the Conservation Area and so avoid unnecessary replacement of windows and doors.
 - Procedures should be established for the monitoring of traditional building materials and features throughout the Conservation Area.

- Design guidance on the repair of traditional buildings will be published and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- G The management of development pressures within the Conservation Area, including disabled access, energy conservation and flood protection:
- Planning permission will only be granted for works which will not result in the loss or erosion of the special interest of the Conservation Area.
 - Liaison with the Council's disability and building control officers should ensure correct application of the *Disability Discrimination Act* and Part M (Access and buildings) of the *Building Regulations* to avoid unnecessary and harmful alterations.
 - Consideration should be given to a disaster strategy for securing the protection of the historic environment in the event of flooding.
 - Design guidance covering the alteration and extension of buildings within and around the Conservation Area.
- H Increased public awareness and support, through the promotion of the surviving evidence of the working history of the town:
- This Appraisal should be advertised and made available to the public. A summary in leaflet form would be useful.
 - Interpretive material that draws public attention to the special interest of the Conservation Area should be promoted.

3.3.2 Opportunities for enhancement

Enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be achieved by encouraging, supporting and where appropriate instigating:

- A The removal, redevelopment or improvement of buildings and spaces that have a negative impact on the special interest of the Conservation Area. Priority should be given to those sites which have the greatest capacity to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in particular the:
- Council depot building, public toilets and the Old Hall Went car park and its approaches, including the access road and car park around the Town Hall.
 - Telephone exchange, postal sorting office and associated land.
 - Car park associated with the Lowther Went shopping centre and adjacent telephone and sorting office site.
 - Former abattoir and agricultural trading depot on Lorton Street.
 - Veterinary surgery on Wakefield Road.
 - Garage on Gote Road.
- Particular attention should also be paid to all areas of street frontage car parking. Any redevelopment of gap sites should aim to recover the line of the original street frontage, especially along South Street and Gote Road.
- B Improvements in the standard of shop fronts and signage should be driven by design guidance. The preparation of a shop front design guide is included in the Local Development Scheme.

- C Improvements in the quality of the public realm. A strategy for the upgrading of the public realm devised in conjunction with the County Highways should cover:
- Pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular surfaces,
 - street lighting,
 - bins, seats and other items of street furniture,
 - road signs, barriers and other highway items,
 - inspection covers, post boxes and other utilities
 - trees, planting and other soft landscaping.
- Improvement schemes should include those for the Market Place, Kirkgate and Main Street, retaining historic surfaces and features.
- D Management of planting including; the slopes of the Castle motte, the slopes below Kirkbank and the northern edge of Harris Park (where unmanaged tree growth has obscured important views of the town).
- E Reinstatement of stuccoed wall finishes, painted timber windows and doors, cast iron rainwater goods and other lost features:
- Target properties where original features have been replaced without planning permission or listed building consent. Enforcement may be required if building owners cannot be persuaded to reverse unauthorised alterations.
 - Building owners should be encouraged to reinstate original features through design guidance.
- F The reinstatement of missing railings, gates and associated ironwork, based on photographic or other evidence.
- G The preparation in conjunction with Cumbria County Council of an integrated transport strategy in which the interaction between road traffic, the needs of business, public transport, cyclists, pedestrians and disabled access is looked at.

3.3.3 Conservation Area boundary

Preservation and enhancement would be assisted by the rationalisation of the Conservation Area boundary, the robustness of which has been examined. The designation of the current Conservation Area resulted from the amalgamation of five separate conservation areas administered by the Cockermouth Urban District Council (which was absorbed by the new Allerdale Borough Council in 1974). The rationale for this merger stemmed from a desire to protect the rural setting of the Conservation Area. This pre dated the adoption of the Allerdale Local Plan in 1999 which contains policies to protect the landscape and riversides. The Local Plan also has a policy which specifically protects the setting of the conservation area. The boundary of the conservation area predates Government guidance in PPG15 which states that “designation is unlikely to be appropriate as a means of protecting landscape features, except where they form an integral part of the historic built environment”. As such it is considered that a number of changes to the boundary are desirable, particularly the omission of land which is now protected by other policies. The recommendation is to have 3 conservation areas reflecting the character zones:

- The historic core of Cockermouth, Victorian and Edwardian extensions and the open riverside of Memorial Gardens and north bank of the Derwent.

- Harris Park, the Lamplugh Road playing fields and the associated late C19 suburban development.
- Gote Road - Spital Ing Lane and associated industrial heritage.

A number of small additions are recommended for inclusion in the historic core and Harris Park parts of the Conservation Area.

OMISSIONS

The following parts of the Conservation Area are recommended for omission (numbered 01 to 07 on Map 05):

- 01 West of Gote Road including the cricket pitch, an area which is protected by its designation as Locally Important Landscape.
- 02 The remaining part of the Conservation Area north of the Derwent which is designated Locally Important Landscape, including Hames Hall and its setting which are protected by listing.
- 03 The area north of the Derwent which covers the James Walker Factory, Derwent Mills Commercial Park, the St. Leonard's Close and Derwentside Gardens housing estates, Millfield Park, the Wakefield Road car park and the adjacent playing field, but not the stretch of Back Lane alongside the northern boundary of the old High Gote Mill land. Derwent Mill and its setting are protected by listing.
- 04 Bridge House and Bridge End House and gardens, both of which are listed, as is Derwent Bridge. The adjacent stretch of river is a SSSI and designated as Locally Important Landscape.
- 05 The area to the east of Tute Hill and 43 & 44 St Helen's Street which is largely characterised by post-war housing.
- 06 The slopes of Simonscales and Oakhurst woods, the meadows below and the stretch of the River Cocker as far downstream as Victoria Bridge. The river is a SSSI and its banks north of Double Mill Youth Hostel are subject to Environment Policy. Although gradient and tree cover mean that there is no real opportunity for development in the woods, it is recommended that the Environment Policy is extended to these areas.
- 07 Holmewood and its former curtilage. The house has been severed from the Conservation Area by the Holmewood Paddock housing development.

Omissions should be subject to a tree survey to determine the need for any Tree Preservation Orders and an appraisal of those buildings which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area as it currently stands, some of which might be candidates for listing, eg:

- The cricket pavilion to the west of Gote Road.
- The former Drill Hall (now Sports Hall) on Charley Hill.
- 47, 72, 71–81, 83–85 and 87 St. Helen's Street.
- The remains of the old St. Helen's Tannery alongside Bitter Beck.
- Wyndham House and Lodge (now caravan park), and St. Helen's Cottage at the eastern end of St. Helen's Street.

- Oakhurst (garden centre) and Holmewood (residential care home) at the southern end of Lamplugh Road.

ADDITIONS

The following areas (numbered 08 to 12 on Map 05) are recommended for addition to the historic core of the Conservation Area:

- 08 Fairfield Infant's School (formerly Board School) buildings which form a group with the listed Christ Church.
- 09 An adjustment of the boundary to align it with the wall of the Sainsbury's supermarket rather than the former Auction Mart, and which brings into the Conservation Area an additional positive building.
- 10 Three properties on Lorton Street, the inclusion of which helps relates the former Palace Theatre to the Conservation Area.
- 11 Jubilee House (Mottram Hair Salon) on Victoria Road, bringing into the Conservation Area a building which typifies its character.
- 12 The corner of the field opposite Castle Cottages and the Estate Yard, which is an important part of their setting.

The following areas (numbered 13 to 15 on Map 05) are recommended for addition to the Harris Park part of the Conservation Area:

- 13 Housing at the eastern ends of Fitz Road, Henry Street and Bringham Road, and High Moor and its garden. This group of streets is part of the development that includes the terraces of Mountain View and Skiddaw View which are within the Conservation Area.
- 14 The Italianate villas of Elmhurst, Rosebank and Harris Park and their gardens on the western side of Fern Bank. These houses are part of the late C19 suburban character that distinguishes this area and relate well to the opposite houses and the edge of the Park.
- 15 Railway Terrace and adjacent pump house, a surviving remnant of railway history and a good example of rock-faced ashlar, typical of later buildings.

These changes would help focus on what is special and making management of change easier to understand.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A draft of this Appraisal was made available via a public exhibition held in Cockermouth over two weeks during March 2006. Drafts were made available for study and comment, and the copies of the Appraisal Summary were distributed. Consultants were in attendance to answer questions over a period of two days. The draft was formally presented to Cockermouth Town Council at a meeting held in the Town Hall on 15th March 2006.

CONTACT DETAILS

Allerdale Borough Council

www.allerdale.gov.uk

Allerdale House
Workington
Cumbria CA14 3YJ

Tel: 01900 702702

For all planning and conservation issues, including consents.

Cumbria County Council

www.cumbria.gov.uk/planning-environment/historic-environment

Cumbria County Council
County Offices
Kendal
Cumbria
LA9 4RQ

Tel: 01228 606060

For Historic Environment Record and issue concerning archaeology.

English Heritage

www.english-heritage.org.uk

Suites 3.3 & 3.4 Canada House
3 Chepstow Street
Manchester M1 5FW

Tel: 0161 242 1400

For issues concerning scheduled ancient monuments
(involvement in matters such as Grade I and II* listed buildings via Allerdale BC).