



Contents

1	Purpose and Introduction	4
2	Planning Context and Policy Background	6
3	General Guidance	7
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- History- Setting<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Landscape- Local setting- Topography and views- Development Pattern- Spaces and Landmarks- Streetscape- Trees- Architecture and Development Form- Materials- Architectural details	
4	Allerdale's Conservation Areas	22
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Main Towns- Coastal Settlements- Rural Villages- Other	
5	Conclusions	28

1

Purpose and Introduction

Purpose

- 1.1 Conservation Areas bring considerable opportunities for regeneration, investment and tourism and retaining and enhancing their character is important to maintaining these economic advantages. The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide help and guidance to the public and developers when considering proposals for development in a Conservation Area, by assisting in identifying its main qualities and characteristics so that its 'special interest' can be protected and reinforced. If the main qualities and characteristics of a conservation area have been identified, then designing sympathetic and appropriate new development will be easier and will allow for the significance of the conservation area to be preserved and, enhanced as is required by National Guidance and Local Policy.
- 1.2 Most Conservation Areas have some buildings whose historic appearance has been lost or degraded by inappropriate coverings (such as pebble dash), and by insertion of windows of a style/opening method which do not fit the historic character of their building. The main towns all have areas where the quality of the public realm (i.e. public spaces such as roads, pavements and squares) does not adequately compliment the quality of their historic layouts and buildings. For example many areas could be significantly enhanced (and some have been) by reducing the amount of tarmac and replacing some of it with more traditional or natural paving materials.

Introduction

- 1.3 No one is surprised that the most popular and valuable housing areas and the most popular town centres are those which have a historic layout, historic buildings and a general historic 'feel'.
- 1.4 Being a popular shopping and visitor destination provides huge economic benefits for the area, but protecting our historic assets is often seen as something we do for a greater good, rather than for economic benefit. Historic buildings are often seen by individual landowners and investors as harming the potential for economic growth, but the much poorer quality modern buildings that result when new ones take their place, often remove the long term economic benefits to the local area that would have existed if the historic building(s) were retained and converted, as they add quality, attractiveness and value to the area as a whole and in the long term.
- 1.5 Conservation area designation itself does not add value to an area, but maintaining and enhancing the quality of its buildings, features and public realm does add considerable long term value.

1

Purpose and Introduction

- 1.6 Conservation Areas are legally defined as ‘*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*’. They cover an area as a whole, including its roads and pavements, trees, open spaces and signs (although this list is not exhaustive) as well as its buildings.
- 1.7 Allerdale Borough Council is responsible for 21 Conservation Areas (those outside of the National Park) which cover the oldest parts of the Borough’s built environment and those with the most surviving and least spoilt historic fabric and character.
- 1.8 Allerdale’s main towns of Workington, Cockermouth, Maryport and Wigton all have important conservation areas, as do many of the smaller agricultural settlements and villages. Allerdale’s Conservation Areas (outside of the National Park) are:
- Allonby
 - Blennerhasset
 - Bowness
 - Caldbeck
 - Cockermouth
 - Gamelsby
 - Greysouthen
 - Hayton
 - Kirkbampton
 - Maryport
 - Mawbray
 - Papcastle
 - Port Carlisle
 - Silloth
 - Torpenhow
 - West Curthwaite
 - West Newton
 - Wigton
 - Workington (St. Michaels, Portland Square and Brow Top)
- 1.9 Each Conservation Area has its own special characteristics and significance with positive qualities as well as economic and physical challenges. However there are also some common characteristics and challenges that can be identified which exist in most conservation areas. The individual planning considerations and management aims of the conservation areas can be very similar, although the solutions to specific problems could be different.
- 1.10 More detailed historic descriptions and character appraisals exist for Maryport (draft) and West Newton. Cockermouth has a conservation and design guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which includes a list of the key characteristics of the Conservation Area and Cockermouth and Wigton have (informal) Shopfront Guides. These are available on Allerdale’s website (or accessed through a search engine by putting the word ‘Allerdale in front of the name of the document you are interested in).

2

Planning Context and Policy Background

- 2.1 The need for Conservation Areas was first recognised in the planning process in the 1960's, largely due to public outcries at some of the comprehensive redevelopments of the 1960s. Until then the only elements of our built environment that could be protected from demolition were listed buildings. But saving individual buildings did not protect streets or the wider context or setting and it was realised that this often lead to a complete loss of the building's context and therefore its meaning and significance.
- 2.2 The legislation covering Conservation Areas is contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72 of the Act requires Local Planning Authorities to pay special attention in the exercise of planning functions, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area.
- 2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, and the conservation of heritage assets is one of its 12 core principles. The whole NPPF needs to be read together to understand the overall priorities, but Chapters 7 '*Design*' and 12 '*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*' set out the relevant principles and policies for new development (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)
- 2.4 Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) - Strategic and Development Management Policies was adopted in July 2014. The main relevant policies are S4 '*Design Principles*' and S27 '*Heritage Assets*'. However, the whole plan needs to be taken together to take account of all development principles and there are many other policies that may also be directly relevant to development in a Conservation Area including: S5 '*Development Principles*'; DM7 '*Town Centre Development*'; DM10 '*Improvements to the Public Realm*'; DM14 '*Standards of Good Design*' and DM15 '*Extensions and Alterations to Existing Buildings and Properties*'.
- 2.5 Supplementary Planning Documents, such as this one, are designed to provide more detailed guidance and help on how to achieve compliance with adopted local planning policies. In this case it is for the benefit of the Conservation Areas and all who use them.
- 2.6 For some of the larger Conservation Areas, including Cockermouth, Maryport, Silloth, Wigton and Workington, Allerdale Borough Council has removed some of the 'Permitted Development rights' that normally allow alterations to houses without planning permission. This is done through 'Article 4 Directions'; if you are altering a house within these areas, you should check whether or not an Article 4 Direction applies.

3

General Guidance

- 3.1 The specifically relevant parts of the NPPF and Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) as mentioned in Chapter 2, establish the basic principle that no application should be approved if it will cause harm to a conservation area, unless there is a public benefit to the proposals that will outweigh that harm.
- 3.2 This section contains guidance that will apply to all conservation areas and include processes that are required to be gone through, ideally, before anything is designed. If there is a character appraisal of the area, then this should be the starting point. If there is not, the first stage is to gain some understanding of the history, geography and character of the Conservation Area and what gives it its special qualities. Basic information about Conservation Areas is contained at: <http://www.allerdale.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/conservation/conservation-areas.aspx>

History

- 3.3 There needs to be an understanding of the basic history of the area, the reason, or likely reason, for the development of the settlement in that location, its early industries and any subsequent industries that have been important to the economic base or physical development of the area as well as any other factors that have caused it to develop in the way that it has. It is not normally too difficult to identify the area containing the earliest surviving buildings, and then work out later stages of development from there.



Woods Map of Cockermouth

- 3.4 However, it takes more research to identify which buildings in an area were important to which industries and how they were used. If you are thinking of converting, demolishing, extending or obscuring any historic building, it is important that its original and later purpose(s) and history is understood so that the impact on its historic and/or architectural value can be understood and, if necessary, mitigated against, and recorded.
- 3.5 In order to assess the character of a conservation area, and to assess the effect a proposal will have on it, its setting, landscape, topography, views, development pattern, streetscape, development form, architectural style, materials and details all need to be taken into account. The following links may help in finding someone who can carry out appropriate assessments for you:

- www.aabc-register.co.uk
- www.careregister.org.uk
- www.buildingconservation.com/directory/prodlist.php?category=Conservation+planning+and+policy+consultants

3

General Guidance

Setting

Landscape

- 3.6 The wider, or landscape, setting of a conservation area and elements within it should be protected from substantial harm, as set out in the NPPF and Allerdale Local Plan.



Allonby with Scottish Hills behind



Maryport North Quay with Scottish Hills behind



Cockermouth Brewery and hills to the south east



Cockermouth Castle and Lake District Fells

- 3.7 The effect of any applications on the setting of the Conservation Area should be considered at the outset. An evaluation of the effects on setting will include changes to appearance and any views into, out of or within the Conservation Area. Changes can be positive; for example, by better revealing important views or attractive elements or by screening less attractive elements. If a proposal will cause any harm to the significance of a heritage in any way including by affecting its setting, then there will need to be a public benefit to the proposal that is considered to outweigh that harm if the application is to be approved. Historic England guidance '*Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3*' (March 2015) (<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/>) is useful in explaining how impacts on setting should be evaluated.

3

General Guidance

Local Setting

- 3.8 The landscape within, and immediately surrounding, the conservation area, often makes an important contribution to its historic context. The natural features such as coastlines and rivers may explain not only the origins of the settlement but the reasons why it has developed in the places and in the shapes that it has.



Rubby Banks, Town Hall and the River Cocker, Cockermouth



Allonby from the north

3

General Guidance

Topography and Views

- 3.9 Topography is extremely important to how much and how a settlement is viewed from within and outside and as such is crucial to its setting and character. Viewing the area from the highest building or hills around will assist in understanding the topography and how any new development, in particular its roofscape, will fit in with it.



Maryport Harbour



Silloth with Scottish hills in the distance

3

General Guidance

Development Pattern

- 3.10 Much of the character of a conservation area is derived from the evolution of the street pattern. In towns, there will be a hierarchy of streets relating to their commercial importance. Their historic role will have affected road width, average plot sizes and average number of building storeys, as well as the quality of materials and architectural design.



Historic Map of Wigton

- 3.11 Most larger settlements, including those which had regular markets, developed with a series of continuous terraces of buildings because the cost of land was high and because it was commercially advantageous to have uses in close proximity to each other. This leads to compact linear street patterns, which often provide an attractive rhythm of windows, roofs and chimneys.



Burnfoot/Market Hill, Wigton



Brow Top, Workington

3

General Guidance

- 3.12 New development should respect this pattern and fit traditional street frontage lines and patterns. This does not rule out contemporary architecture and detailing providing that it respects the traditional overall shapes, footprints and, usually, materials.



Contemporary architecture fitting street pattern, Parliament Street, York



Plan showing ad-hoc agricultural frontages in Westnewton

- 3.13 On the other hand, smaller, more rural villages often developed as a cluster of farms which resulted in very ad-hoc frontages. This more random (visually at least) layout is just as important to a settlement's individuality, and any new development should take account of this and not create formal or straight layouts that would dilute this important element of character.

- 3.14 Historically, town centre areas had a wide mix of uses within a densely packed area, which created very compact forms of development, built right onto the street (or yard) frontage and with very narrow frontages. These often result in a juxtaposition of building shapes and sizes with distinctive roofscapes which provide an interesting and unique character. These patterns are very important to recognise and reflect when designing new development and is something that is often overlooked particularly in rear streets and yard areas.



Burnfoot, Wigton

3

General Guidance

- 3.15 Gaps and spaces, create patterns and sun/shade contrasts that contribute to the character of an area and gaps left either deliberately (e.g. for markets or for drying cloth or grazing animals) or left incidentally due to very specific building shapes, as well as back yards and lanes, are also very important to the feel of a place and these qualities should not be lost by new development patterns.



Important space in Allonby

- 3.16 Development proposals should be appropriate to their site and should reflect approximate plot sizes and building heights as well as in how they address the frontage (e.g. building line, door position and size of openings).

Spaces and Landmarks

- 3.17 Public spaces and spaces between and around buildings and the views they allow can be the most identifiable and unique aspects of a conservation area and are important to consider before demolishing or building. Landmark buildings on corners and buildings such as churches, monuments and other large or unique buildings should not be obscured if at all possible. Conversely, the demolition of buildings that will reveal unattractive buildings or sites should be timed to coordinate with replacement buildings or with the tidying up of any site or building revealed by the demolition.



Cockermouth Brewery yard with landmark All Saints Church and Brewery chimney

3

General Guidance

Streetscape

- 3.18 The development pattern creates the backdrop of the streetscape. The streetscape itself is made up of the spaces between the buildings and how they look and feel. How they look and feel is affected by the size and shape of spaces, how they are enclosed the ground surface materials, the balance between road, pavement and green spaces as well as the colour and texture of the materials, the street furniture and any signs.



Fleming Square, Maryport



Portland Square, Workington



Before and after upgrading and public realm works, Market Place, Cockermouth, showing how the feel of a place can be altered by different surface materials.

- 3.19 As well as the wider context of the whole street, smaller details such as traditional walls and railings, old gates, lampposts, drinking troughs, water fountains and boat fixings also provide context, setting and interest. Useful links include:

- www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all-north-west/
- www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/341513/pdfmanfortreets.pdf

3

General Guidance

- 3.20 Historic street signs, signposts, milestones, lampposts, post boxes etc. as well as historic adverts can add significantly to the character and significance of a conservation area. These should be retained wherever possible.



- 3.21 Modern standard highway signs, bollards, lighting columns, notice boards and litter bins can all create a cluttered appearance unless they are well designed and sited. Often many of these aren't necessary and a 'clutterbusting' exercise can be undertaken to remove unattractive, redundant or unnecessary signs. This clearly needs to be undertaken in conjunction with the Town or Parish Council as well as Allerdale Borough Council and the County Council (as Highway Authority) to ensure that no statutory or important safety signs are removed.



3

General Guidance

Trees

3.22 Trees are specifically protected by Conservation Area legislation, in recognition of their potentially very important contribution to the setting, character and significance of a Conservation Area.



3.23 As they vary in size and shape, colour and density throughout the year, their presence can be a dynamic and lively contribution to the character of a Conservation Area. In addition there are many less visual qualities and benefits of green spaces and vegetation, including the existence and experience of wildlife and associated sounds and smells as well as the opportunity for many leisure activities.

3

General Guidance

Architecture and Development Form

3.24 Conservation areas are by definition, areas that have a mixture of many of the qualities described above. But, the elements that are probably most consciously noticed or appreciated are the buildings themselves, their form, height, scale, materials, architectural style, surface articulation, colour and detailing. Useful links include:

- www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/building-in-context
- www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/constructive-conservation-sustainable-growth-historic-places/ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/valuing-places/>



Market Place, Cockermouth



Portland Square, Workington

Materials

3.25 Normally, all pre-C19, as well as most C19 buildings, were constructed from the most readily available local building material. This is because building materials were extremely expensive to transport before the arrival of the railways and even for quite a long time afterwards, it was only wealthy customers who would have materials imported from elsewhere and only for the more prestigious buildings.



Bowness on Solway

3

General Guidance

3.26 The predominant use of local materials creates a unity and harmony with the surrounding landscape, as well as within the settlement that is rarely achieved by modern building materials.

Design

3.27 Building patterns and styles were also developed by local builders to be particularly suitable to the local materials and conditions. This is known as vernacular architecture. In smaller settlements, this continued until the early C20. From the C18, pattern books from early architects were available, but generally only to wealthy customers. In cities and market towns, some examples of 'polite' architectural styles exist. These are usually banks, theatres, post offices, schools, libraries and other civic buildings.



Carnegie Theatre, Workington

3.28 'Architecture' is described as the art and science of designing buildings, and developed as the designing of a building became a separate process from the building process. The architectural profession as we would recognise it, started in the early C19 and the Royal Institute of British Architects was founded in 1834.

3.29 A high quality of design will always be expected for alterations and new developments in Conservation Areas. However, what is an appropriate high quality development in one conservation area or one part of a conservation area may not be acceptable in another, as local context and distinctiveness will determine what is appropriate where. Useful references are:

- www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/building-in-context
- www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/constructive-conservation-sustainable-growth-historic-places/
- www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/valuing-places/



Extension to Market Hall, Wigan



Modern extension to Georgian townhouses in York

3

General Guidance

Architectural Details

- 3.30 In addition to the form and style of architecture, it can be the small details of the architecture that can be the most varied between different Conservation Areas, and for that reason they are often very important in maintaining and creating distinctiveness and so should not, if at all possible, be removed or degraded.
- 3.31 Obvious examples are windows. As shown in these photos, the traditional buildings have all been retained, but the later windows and pebble dash render on one property adversely affects the character of this group of houses and this part of the Conservation Area.



King Street, Maryport, before and after re-instatement of original window details



Shipping Brow, Maryport before and after removal of C20 inappropriate windows and pebbledash

3

General Guidance

- 3.32 In these shops in Cockermouth, the top sections of traditional shopfronts were covered by large boards, removing some of the detailing and elegant proportions. The removal of boards and reinstatement of the original details creates a much more pleasing effect and also allows more daylight in.



Before and after return to traditional shopfront proportions, Market Place, Cockermouth

- 3.33 Less obvious building details, but ones which are still very important to retaining local distinctiveness are shown below.



Decorative dentilles, bargeboards, and finials, Cockermouth



Old bakery chimney, Allonby

3 General Guidance

3.34 Unique architectural details contribute to character and distinctiveness:



4 Allerdale's Conservation Areas

- 4.1 Most of Allerdale's Conservation Areas fit within three broad categories: the main towns; (Workington, Cockermouth, Maryport and Wigton); the coastal settlements (Allonby, Silloth, Bowness and Port Carlisle) and the rural villages. Papcastle does not fit clearly within these categories.
- 4.2 Most of the surviving historic buildings in Allerdale are constructed of local sandstone, or rubble dressed with sandstone. There are many individually designed buildings, some such as churches and Pele Towers, as well as vernacular farm buildings or cottages which are many centuries old. From the late C18 onwards many buildings were built, or re-faced, in a local Georgian style of architecture, frequently consisting of a rendered facade with sliding sash windows (in straight rows and columns) with raised sandstone bands surrounding them. Until the mid C19, most roofs were covered with local 'green' Cumbrian slate. After this the railways brought in cheaper Welsh slate which started to be widely used.
- 4.3 As has been stated above, each of the Conservation Areas has its own pressures and physical problems, but there are some common problems that exist in many of them. For example many have buildings whose historic character has been harmed by inappropriate coverings (such cement render or pebble dash), and by the insertion of windows of a style/opening method which do not fit the character of the building. The main towns all have some areas where the materials and quality of the public realm (i.e. public spaces) does not adequately compliment the quality of their historic characters.
- 4.4 A very basic outline of the main Conservation Areas (by category, in order of size of conservation area) is set out below. These do not comprehensively describe or evaluate the conservation areas and before any development proposals are put forward, an evaluation of the character of the conservation area and what is significant will be required as well as how the proposal will affect that significance (positively or negatively).

Main Towns

Cockermouth

- 4.5 Cockermouth's Conservation Area encompasses most of the pre-C20 development in the town. Its medieval market town layout is very evident, particularly in the oldest parts including Market Place, Castlegate and Kirkgate, as well as parts of Main Street. Some of the buildings in this area have C17 and older elements behind the facades, and a very high proportion of buildings in this area are listed.

4 Allerdale's Conservation Areas

- 4.6 From the late C18, the town developed larger industries, initially using water from the two main rivers. A number of the industrial buildings still exist converted (mostly to residential) which has maintained some of their character and an important link to the area's history. Many Victorian terraces were developed on the, then, edges of town, particularly on the higher land to the south. Some of these are high quality terraces adorned with architectural detailing which adds significantly to the character of the conservation area.
- 4.7 Cockermouth's historic character remains strong and is undoubtedly part of the reason why it is a very popular place to live and visit. One of the detractors from the character of the Conservation Area is the quantity of traffic travelling through its heart.
- 4.8 Until recently, some poorly designed shopfronts and shop signs were a notable detractor from the distinctiveness of the Conservation Area. However, work following the 2009 flood has significantly improved many of the formerly poor quality shopfronts in Main Street in particular, although a number of inappropriate shopfronts still exist in Station Street.
- 4.9 Much more information on Cockermouth's conservation area is contained in the Conservation and Design guide, and is available at: <http://www.allerdale.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/planning-policy/current-local-plan/supplementary-planning-documen/cockermouth-conservation-area.aspx>. There is also a draft shopfront design guide which is available on request.

Maryport

- 4.10 A Roman fort was developed immediately to the north of the present town, the outlines of which are still very evident and are included within the Conservation Area boundary. A fishing village and port existed on the site of Maryport at the mouth of the Ellen until Maryport Town was created in its present form in the mid/late C18 by Humphrey Senhouse who built a new port and town (named after his wife Mary) on a grid plan on the high ground just inland of the harbour.
- 4.11 The Conservation Area is characterised, in part, by the harbour and C18/C19 buildings associated with it but it is centred around the new town which is made up of a shopping core and long terraces of mostly simple but well proportioned local Georgian style town houses, set along quite spacious hilly streets. On the northern side are some larger detached properties, with more elaborate architectural features. Fleming Square, surrounding a large cobbled square, is at the heart of this and provides a focus to the Georgian 'new town'.

4 Allerdale's Conservation Areas

- 4.12 Further east are Victorian terraces, which are quite different in style but reflect the grid lines of the earlier town and also contribute positively to the town's character. This architecture and layout, together with the town's spectacular setting above the port and views across the Solway, provides a spectacular and very distinctive character.
- 4.13 A significant problem faced by Maryport's Conservation Area is the poor local economy and low land values, which means that building maintenance and improvements are not encouraged by good returns. As such, there is a notable lack of upkeep of some buildings including some prominent and historic buildings.

Wigton

- 4.14 Wigton is a medieval market town at the centre of a large agricultural area. Its churches and former market places give the town its layout, whilst its central streets remain its shopping centre. The town grew significantly in the early C19 with many industrial developments and this led to a large expansion of residential development, mostly in the local Georgian style.
- 4.15 Wigton has a number of institutional, public & ecclesiastical buildings within the Town Centre which provides a variety of architectural styles, which break up the predominance of Georgian fronted buildings in the centre. It also has some attractive small Victorian terraced housing with the Conservation area. Traffic still runs through the central streets and public realm and shopfront improvements could significantly improve the character of the Conservation Area.

Workington

- 4.16 Workington has three conservation areas: Portland Square, St. Michael's and Brow Top.

Portland Square

- 4.17 This area on high land to the east of the current town centre, was designed and laid out by the Curwen Family of Workington Hall (just to the north) in the 1770s as residences and commercial properties. Its architectural style is Georgian with many townhouses of varying sizes set out in a grid around Portland Square, a long rectangular cobbled space.
- 4.18 Whilst the area is now very largely residential, much commercial activity occurred in the area from its construction and into the C20. Its retail heart is Wilson Street and Market Place, however limited commercial activity remains. At the eastern side of the Conservation Area are some large later Victorian residential villas. Some buildings in the

4 Allerdale's Conservation Areas

St. Michael's

4.19 St. Michael's Conservation Area is named after the large St. Michael's church at its northern edge which, together with St. Michael's school is set within an open area of grassland. These, together with St. Michael's (former) rectory, form the historic core and much of the distinctive character of the Conservation Area. St. Michael's was one of the first parts of Workington to be developed, however, the majority of the existing architecture is Victorian, built after the railway station which also provides a context and character to the Conservation Area. The area suffers from being dissected by two busy main roads as well as a lack of investment in its buildings and its public realm.

Brow Top

4.20 This area is essentially two streets running east-west back to back. Those with the greatest character are the houses on Brow Top. These face north and overlook a lower plateau which was estuary before the C17, and probably the reason for the first development of this site and its outlook. The buildings are C18 and C19 and range from large classical 'villas' and other large detached properties, reported to originally be home to sea captains and the like, to smaller terraced properties.

4.21 The south facing properties to the rear form the north side of Finkle Street, one of the Town's shopping streets, and are dominated by their ground floor shop frontages. Control of the overgrown vegetation on the north side of Brow Top would enhance the quality of the local environment and may allow greater appreciation of the quality of the architecture. Improved shopfronts and associated signage would enhance the character of the Finkle Street side of the Conservation Area.

Coastal Settlements

Silloth

4.22 Silloth was built from 1856 as a Victorian seaside resort with a small deep water dock. It was served by a railway from Carlisle. Behind the beach and promenade is a strip of trees and The Green, a very large grassed area separating the town centre from the coast. The main part of the town was developed on a grid pattern and is fronted by Criffell Street which is set behind a wide cobbled street overlooking The Green. Criffell Street consists of large three storey Victorian buildings, many of which were designed as hotels. The Green and the impressive architecture fronting it provides a very distinctive Victorian Seaside Resort character which gives the impression of being a larger town than it is.

4

Allerdale's Conservation Areas

Allonby

- 4.23 Allonby is set on a wide sweeping bay with extensive views south to Maryport and north to Dumfriesshire. It originated as a fishing and farming settlement with local services providing for farms further afield. It has strong Quaker links and a history of attracting wealthy incomers and benefactors, which has led to the construction of some interesting buildings in a variety of architectural styles. It has thrived into the C20 and C21 as a destination for holiday makers and day trippers as well as a desirable place to live.

Bowness on Solway

- 4.24 Bowness is the site of a Roman fort on Hadrian's Wall on the banks of the Solway Estuary. Its C12 St Michael's Church is thought to be built on the granary of the Roman fort. It is the largest village on the western Solway Plain and has grown organically with much vernacular architecture including farm buildings, as well as later Victorian properties.
- 4.25 In 1869 a railway bridge was built to link Bowness to Annan in Scotland which linked into the Maryport to Carlisle line, but the bridge was considered to be unsafe and was demolished in 1934 soon after the railway closed. This may have reduced its use as a holiday destination, but it remains popular for day trips as well as for long distance cyclists and walkers following Hadrian's Wall.

Port Carlisle

- 4.26 Port Carlisle is one mile east of Bowness on Solway and was developed as a port in the early C19 in order that boats could dock and make their way by canal to Carlisle. Much of the large sandstone docking quay remains and is an essential part of the history and character of the Conservation Area. The canal was used until the 1850s after which the canal basin was turned into a railway line, which was operational until the 1930s; the old sidings and station platform can still be seen.
- 4.27 Port Carlisle's houses were built at the time of the construction of the canal in the early C19 mainly on one single sided street. The architecture is simple but very well proportioned and almost all of its buildings are listed. The village became a destination for day trip tourists from Carlisle and elsewhere, which is a function it still fulfils.

4

Allerdale's Conservation Areas

Rural Villages

4.28 The remainder of Allerdale's Conservation Areas (outside of the national park) are fairly small rural villages which developed around a number of traditional farms. Many of the villages are linear in their layout but a few are clustered around a village green. In addition to being a collection of farms, these villages were local centres which had shops, pubs and schools which also served outlying and more isolated farms. Much of the architecture is vernacular in origin, some with later additions or frontages added in a more polite, mostly Georgian, style. Many of the former farm buildings are purely residential now and some of the villages have few if any working farms. Schools, churches, pubs and shops still exist in some but others have no remaining local services. The main reasons for the loss of character and distinctiveness in most of these villages are the development of houses of generic modern design, that have not taken account of local characteristics. However, much character has also been lost by the inappropriate alteration of traditional buildings, such as by cement rendering or pebble dashing or the installation of inappropriate windows and doors. Sometimes such alterations can lead to the almost total loss of historic character of old buildings so that they are barely identifiable. The impact of individual inappropriate buildings can have a significantly adverse impact upon a small village.

Other

Papcastle

4.29 The Village of Papcastle contains the site and remains of a Roman fort. Its oldest buildings are related to its agricultural roots. In the early to mid C19, it developed as a wealthy Victorian suburb of Cockermouth, which is a function it still fulfils, but it retains the visual character of a distinctive settlement. Its positive characteristics derive from and include its position on a south facing slope looking towards the lake District fells, its organic layout, vernacular cottages and farm buildings as well as large Victorian houses, many mature trees and gardens.

5

Conclusions

- 5.1 Whilst some Conservation Areas have economic and physical challenges, much research shows that attractive historic areas fare much better economically than settlements that are not valued for their historic layouts and assets.
- 5.2 National Guidance and Local Plan Policy require that no harm is caused to the character, appearance or significance of Conservation Areas (unless there is some overwhelming public benefit to offset that harm) in order that we don't allow our conservation areas to deteriorate.
- 5.3 This guidance explains the important principles that need to be considered before it is possible to design buildings or other structures/features that will conserve or enhance the positive qualities of the area. It cannot simply explain what is appropriate or good design as that will vary considerably according to its local context.

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