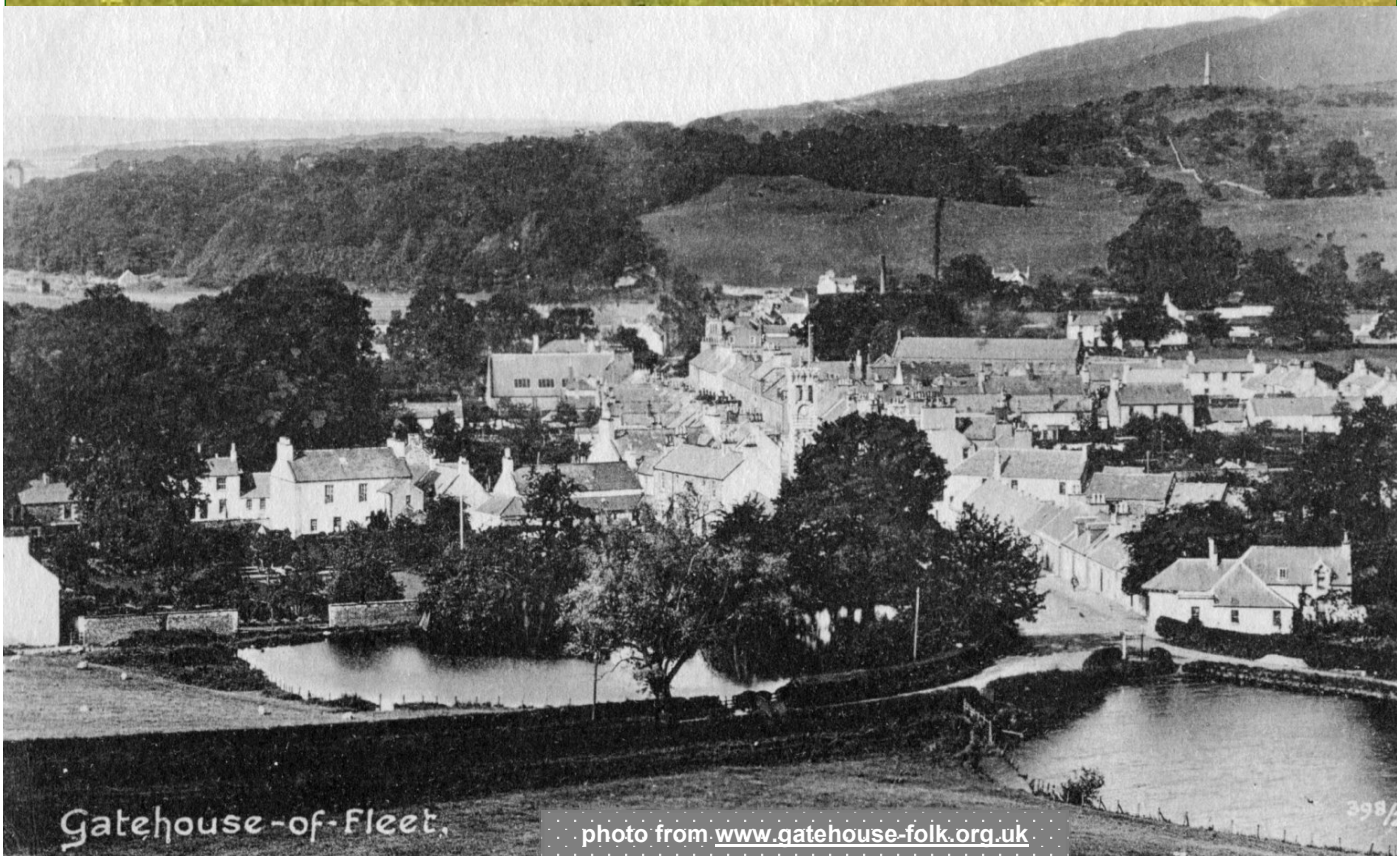


Draft for consultation
**Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area
Character Appraisal and Management Plan
Supplementary Guidance**

September 2024



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Introduction

This document appraises and summarises the character of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area and how to manage it. It identifies and notes common themes, many significant features, historical layout, architectural detail and general setting and some examples of significant built structures and spaces. The management plan section suggests how the positive themes, features and details of character might be preserved or enhanced. The combined character appraisal and management plan will help guide the design of future proposals within Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area to have positive outcomes in respect of historic and architectural character. It will be used to assess the impact of new development, alterations, enhancement, upgrades or demolition proposals affecting Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area. It will also encourage regular maintenance by emphasising its importance.

What is a conservation area?

Conservation Areas were first introduced in the UK in 1967; the current legislative framework for their designation is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). Section 61 of the 1997 Act defines a conservation area as *“an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance...”* Local planning authorities are required to identify areas which merit this status and to review them.

In a conservation area it is the character that is of interest, drawn from a combination of buildings and spaces. Planning controls seek to preserve or enhance the character of the entire conservation area by maintaining the integrity of its elements including the layout and pattern of development, architectural themes and many of its details.

Conservation area status does not prevent new development but requires that care should be taken to ensure that development is designed to preserve or enhance the historic and architectural character and appearance and not harm it. Design proposals for all new development, including proposed demolition of individual buildings, must address the context and demonstrate how they have done this so that the wider character will be preserved or enhanced. Alterations to, or loss of buildings and spaces that contribute positively to character are generally to be avoided.


Conservation area status does not prevent change that is necessary to a building or group which will prolong the life of the building and improve the comfort of the occupants even if planning permission is needed.

Buildings should be adapted to reduce the effects of climate change, improve energy efficiency, move to lower carbon heat sources, and generate renewable energy where possible. Changes should be carried out in a way that is appropriate to the fabric and design of the building. Traditional buildings need to use materials and techniques compatible with the original construction. This will preserve individual buildings or groups and preserve or enhance the character of the whole conservation area, as the 1997 Act requires.

In a conservation area, development proposals should

- be based on a clear understanding of historic and architectural character and its significance to cultural heritage;
- be designed to avoid or minimise detriment to character or architectural and historic interest and cultural significance;
- demonstrate that the design of the proposal is the only way of achieving its benefits.

Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area

Conservation Area boundary 

Listed buildings and structures



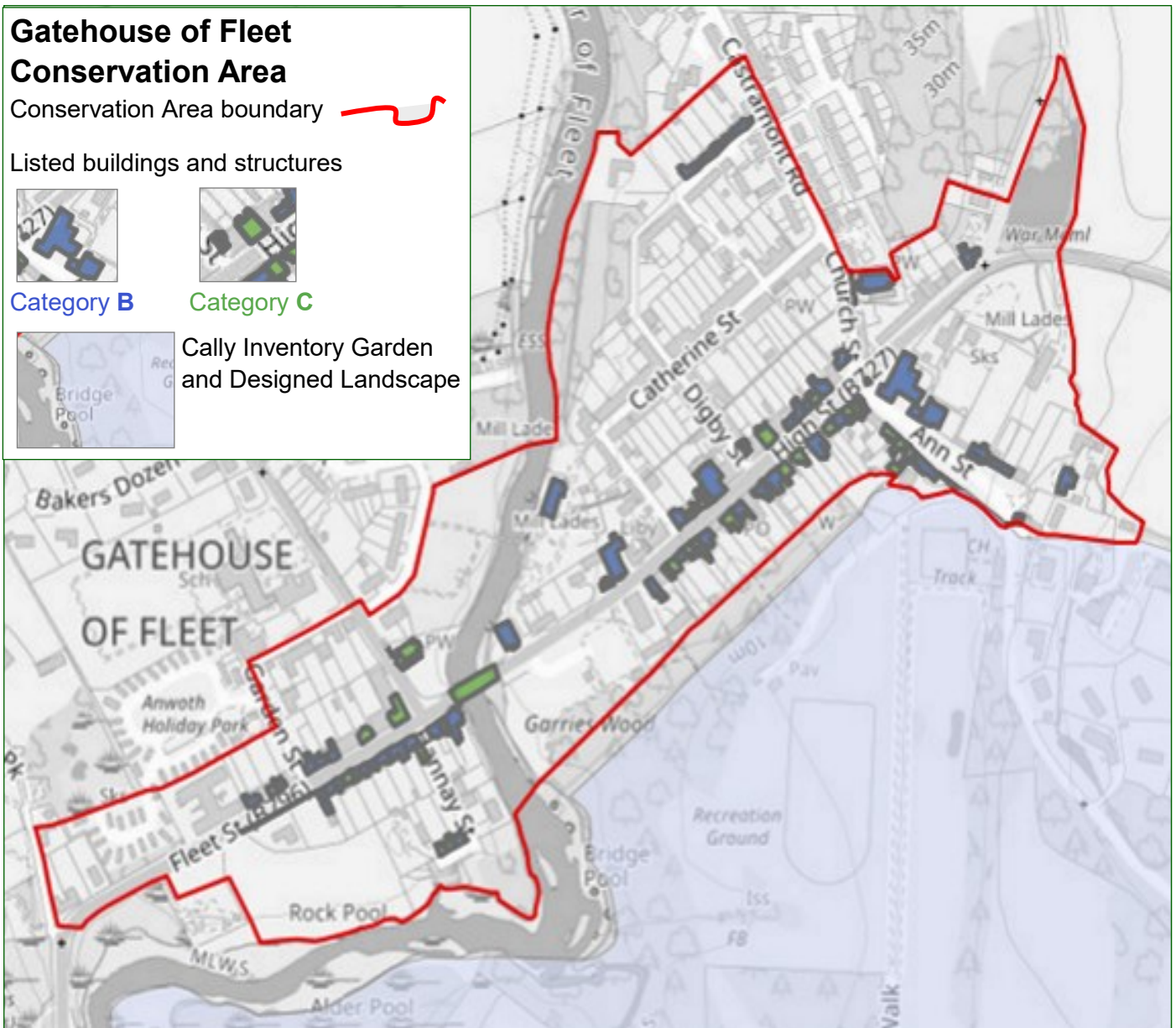
Category B



Category C



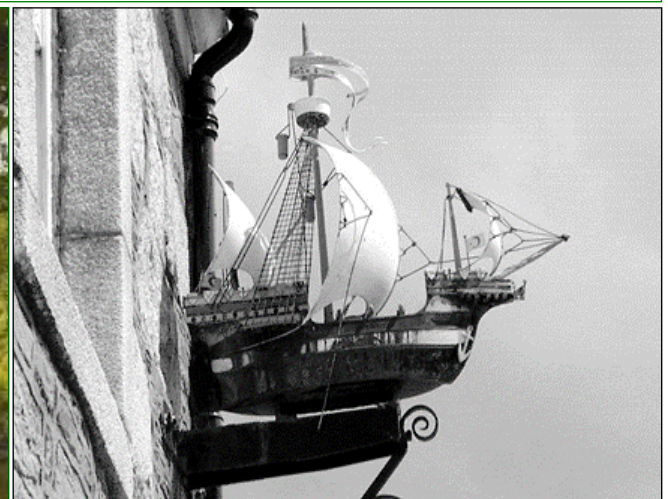
Cally Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape



The boundary of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area.

The spatial information and statutory designations can be found on Past Map which is provided and managed by Historic Environment Scotland.

On [Pastmap](https://www.pastmap.gov.uk/) website, information can be found at a more detailed scale. In the Place search box type **Gatehouse of Fleet**; select **Listed Buildings**, **Scheduled Monuments** and **Conservation Areas** from the Data Layers; choose Gatehouse of Fleet and click **GO**.



Planning controls in a conservation area:

Legislation requires that permission is sought for the following works in a conservation area:

Demolition of all or most of a building needs Conservation Area Consent with some exceptions. In NPF4, demolition is strongly discouraged and where a building makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area there is a presumption against demolition. The intended use of the cleared space may also affect the decision and require that a design is submitted for new development proposed on the site and the approved scheme delivered alongside the demolition. Applications are normally made online.

<https://www.eplanning.scot/ePlanningClient/default.aspx>

Alterations or additions to the exterior of all buildings in a conservation area require Planning Permission or formal Prior Approval e.g: small house extensions; roof alterations including dormers or rooflights; chimney alterations; stone cleaning; elevation painting; application of render or other cladding; changing windows on principal or road-facing elevations; changing exterior doors; and creating hard surfaces outside buildings. Decisions consider the impact of the proposal on the character of the property, those near it and of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area. Sometimes officers will request alternative designs which remove or reduce detrimental impact on character but achieve an equivalent outcome. Listed Buildings need additional consent for alterations.

<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15329/Apply-for-planning-permission>

Trees in conservation areas have special protection. Proposals to remove branches, fell a tree or carry out work affecting its roots

must be notified to the Council six weeks in advance which will allow sufficient time for the impact of the proposed works to be considered. The Council may decide that a Tree Preservation Order should be placed on the tree or group of trees if it/they make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. National planning policy supports the retention of trees. The extent of the proposed works to the tree/s may be completely rejected or alternative works may be requested which are more sensitive.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15334/>

Trees make a positive contribution to character and setting and provide a very significant green backdrop in parts of the conservation area.



Attachments such as satellite dishes or equipment may need planning permission in conservation areas and they may impact negatively on character. It is usually possible to find discrete designs, locations or alternative solutions.

<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15329/Apply-for-planning-permission>

New buildings in a conservation area need Planning Permission. Design should take account of the context, character and themes of surrounding buildings and spaces. Pre-application guidance and advice may be sought in advance of submitting proposals using the link below.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15327/Planning-advice-and-enquiries>

An **Article 4 Direction** was introduced in Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area on 10th August 2006. Permission is required for works normally exempt from permission in Classes 30, 31, 41 and 67 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (as amended). It covers most works carried out by the Council or Community Council, including on or beside roads, and for telecommunication operators' equipment.

Planning Policy

Scotland's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

NPF4 was adopted in February 2023. It can be viewed here: [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) There are six overarching spatial principles and 33 policies and many of these affect the historic environment. The small number considered below have most direct significance.

Spatial principles

Just transition supports change needed to reach net zero including improving the resilience of historic assets to climate change, reducing carbon emissions through adaptation of historic buildings; and protecting or improving biodiversity. To make Scotland successful and sustainable the historic environment needs protection and enhancement through the planning system. NPF4 seeks to preserve character, encourage maintenance and promote enhancement of historic places.

Conserving and recycling assets has a strong presumption for the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings and minimising demolition of all or parts of structures. *"We will make productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in carbon, minimising waste and building a circular economy."*

Policies

Reducing demolition of buildings and with or without historic designations features in many policies and especially when they are part of the wider historic environment.

Policy 7 Historic assets and places makes direct reference to conservation areas, recognising that Scotland's cultural heritage contributes to economy, identity and quality of life. Its principles and intent are *"to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places."*

Policy 7 has a presumption to retain, maintain and adapt buildings in conservation areas where they contribute positively to historic or architectural character ensuring they have beneficial uses, which also minimises waste and acknowledges the embodied energy locked up in building fabric. Sensitive alterations can minimise waste and carbon emissions and support energy efficiency. Demolition should be a last resort.

It refers to the need for the character of conservation areas to be understood for good decision-making to happen. Character appraisals and management plans do this.

Conservation area designation seeks to sustain local historic character, identity and sense of place; sensitively reduce the impact of the built environment on climate change; and maximise economic benefit of historic character, for the benefit of current and future generations of people.

Historic Environment Scotland [HES] has a range of learning resources, publications and guidance setting out national policy and good practice: [The Engine Shed publications and guidance](#)



Some examples of the guidance available from Historic Environment Scotland .

Local Policy

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to the stewardship of historic areas across the region, recognising the important contribution they make to the local economy and quality of the environment.

Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), adopted in October 2019, includes Historic Environment policies which are very similar in intent to those of NPF4.

LDP policies are used as part of the decision making for planning applications. The policies are successful when owners and occupants understand the need for the use of sensitive, appropriate adaptations or alterations and the importance of ongoing maintenance.

This document is part of the advice to support sensitive, well-designed, development which preserves and helps manage the character of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area, in line with the policy intent.

LDP2 Policy HE2: 'Conservation Areas' promotes a sensitive and informed approach to development within conservation areas. To assist developers to design changes which are appropriate, it refers to adopted Supplementary Guidance (SG) including [Historic Built Environment SG](#); a range of [guidance](#) specific to places; and Council [Planning Guidance](#) (PG) including [Windows and doors in Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas PG](#)

There is also general shop-front guidance on the website.

Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area

The Burgh of Gatehouse of Fleet is a settlement in Kirkcudbrightshire on a crossing point of the River Fleet. It is set in the Fleet Valley National Scenic Area and surrounded by woodland and open green space.

From the late 18th to mid-19th century Gatehouse was a local centre of industry but today it is a vibrant small town with little industry but many historic and natural attractions and a strong community.

Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area was designated on the 2nd November 1974 and reviewed and updated on 29th July 2005.

On 10th August 2006 an **Article 4 Direction** was introduced controlling development in Classes 30, 31, 41 and 67 of the general permitted development [Order](#) .

Gatehouse has a recorded population of 1,016 (Scottish Census, 2022). The town provides a selection of services to its residents and the local rural agricultural community, as well as visitors.

The historic character of the town and individual buildings is closely linked with its success for tourism and leisure which is reflected in the conservation area boundary.



Looking west along Fleet Street in 2023

Gatehouse began where people crossed the Fleet between McCulloch's 15th century Cardoness Castle and the Cally policies. Historic maps show a bridge crossing and a ford crossing further into the bay.

Murray and his family developed and changed Gatehouse dramatically over



Looking east along Fleet Street in 2023

several decades beginning by James Murray building the 18th century Cally House.

The name Gait House existed before the town, probably named after the staging inn near a wooden bridge where the gait (hill track) crossed over the Fleet.



Left: Herman Moll's Middle Part of Galloway from 1745 <https://maps.nls.uk/view/00000265>

Below: John Ainslie, 1797 map showing the route of a ford <https://maps.nls.uk/view/216442614>



The route was the military road used by armies going to Portpatrick and on to Ireland for the 'Plantation of Ulster'. It was also a trade route, with an early post office. Parts of the original Gait House inn live on in the fabric of The Murray Arms.

However, the bridge was replaced in stone in a different location in the mid-18th century.

In the late 18th century it became a Burgh of Barony.



Above: A-Listed Cally House: 1765 original design by Robert Mylne, wings by Thomas Boyd added 1795 ; J B Papworth porch added 1837; 20th century additions.
Below: James Murray portrait by Joshua Reynolds.



Purpose of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area character appraisal identifies themes and elements of the townscape, significant to its character.

The management plan, is informed by the appraisal, providing guidance on how the identified character should be preserved and enhanced.

Some change to a conservation area is inevitable to support current social and environmental challenges. To accommodate new uses and users, sensitive and sustainable adaptation of buildings and spaces is required.

Gatehouse of Fleet CACAMP means to guide owners, occupiers and developers to design in a manner that preserves historic and architectural character. It supports and encourages sympathetic development where the key positive elements and themes of the character are preserved, reinforced or enhanced and encourages sustainable new uses and adaptations to create comfortable, healthy, resilient places which continue long into the future.

Gatehouse of Fleet CACAMP notes the planned layout of the former mill town and the pattern and mix of development which began beside a single inn and bridge. It recognises that the combination of grouped and individual buildings and their original purpose is central to character even where they have changed use. The importance of the detail of the buildings in how they have used local traditional techniques and materials from the time of construction is noted. Together these themes and elements make up the character of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area.



Early 20th century postcard showing the granite clock at High Street/Ann Street junction. Designed by Frederick Thomas Pilkington, erected 1871, now B Listed.



54 High Street was the original Town Hall designed in 1884 by J R Pearson on the site of an inn; remodelled 1970s to designs by A C Wolffe and in 1995 by Stewartry District Council architects. It has a mix of rough faced sandstone on the street elevation and bright ashlar through the pend. The arched pend with columns leads to a rear garden.

Gatehouse of Fleet's economy benefits from the historic and architectural character especially tourism as it helps attract investment. The character is linked with the landscape setting, interesting history of the town and its particular layout. The distinctive pattern of streets, the open spaces and the routes each relate to watercourses including the Water of Fleet. The range of buildings of differing scale and design are linked to their original purpose and age. The history and changing role of the settlement is integral to its current appearance and character and the materials and colours in use are distinctive.

The **purpose** of the Gatehouse of Fleet CACAMP is to guide proposed change so that it will:

- **respect the landscape setting and topography** of the conservation area;
- **preserve, reinforce and enhance** the original planned layout;
- **achieve good, sensitive, design** for building adaptation, spaces and new development;
- **keep historic references and relationships** which influenced layout, appearance and character, including archaeology;
- **support regeneration which** restores, repairs and repurposes buildings or spaces;
- **encourage the use of historic buildings** especially if under-occupied ; and
- **support and catalyse well-considered ideas for enhancement proposals.**

One of a few remaining traditional shops in Gatehouse.





The guidance is divided into two parts:

PART ONE - History Development and General Character

The historical development of Gatehouse of Fleet and an overview of the significant themes and elements which come together to create its character.

PART TWO: Managing Character

Management requires the character to be preserved and enhanced particularly when making planning or enhancement decisions.

Proposals will be supported which maintain:

- the layout of the historic centre;
- the pattern of development;
- retention of elements of uniformity ;
- recurring architectural details;
- traditional building materials; and
- the form and features of buildings which contribute positively to character.

Good management will support and catalyse initiatives and actions, both individual and collective, which enhance character.

PART ONE - HISTORY DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF GATEHOUSE OF FLEET CONSERVATION AREA

National and Regional Context

Gatehouse of Fleet is one of the larger settlements in the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere and lies within the Fleet Valley National Scenic Area and within the Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area. It is within the transition zone of the Galloway International Dark Sky Park. The lower stretches of the Water of Fleet run through the town to its estuary in Fleet Bay on the east side of Wigtown Bay, on the Solway Firth coast.

Its location is of historic importance as a crossing of the Water of Fleet, originally a ford between 12th century castles, then a wooden bridge and finally a stone bridge. 15th century Cardoness Castle was built by the McCulloch's in the west. Cally House replaced a 17th century Lennox/Murray family house in the 18th century for James Murray. The woodland setting of Cally Inventory Designed Landscape is to the south-east.

The River Fleet and the Fleet Valley provide a ribbon of trees alongside water through the conservation area.

Planning objectives for Gatehouse include recognising and respecting the heritage and landscape characteristics and the importance of the settlement within the Fleet Valley NSA. In LDP2 Gatehouse is designated a Local Centre within Stewartry Housing Market Area. Two small housing sites were allocated in LDP2 with one largely developed.

The census for the locality shows a small population increase from 986 in 2011 to 1016 people in 2022.

Housing development is currently allocated beside the eastern edge of the conservation area on a vacant site allocated for up to 8 dwellings in LDP2. It has some challenges and potential for archaeological interest resulting from previous uses including as a pond for the mill lades.

Tourism is an important source of income for the town's hotels, pubs, cafés and craft shops.

Local services Gatehouse has a primary school, pharmacy, doctor's surgery, library, fire station and small shops.

Open space for leisure, sports and play are in Garries Park and Cally Woods. **Cycling** is growing in the area and the community have an initiative to improve and integrate cycling links with other settlements. There are many local footpaths and the Solway Coast is very near.

The larger towns of Kirkcudbright, Castle Douglas and Newton Stewart, have secondary schools, more leisure facilities and supermarkets. The A75 by-passes Gatehouse of Fleet. The earlier road passes the northern lodges at the entrance of Cally, through the town, over the Water of Fleet and

past Cardoness Castle.



Above: Extract from G Taylor and A Skinner's Survey, 1776 **NB: North is to the left hand side**

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/74400396>

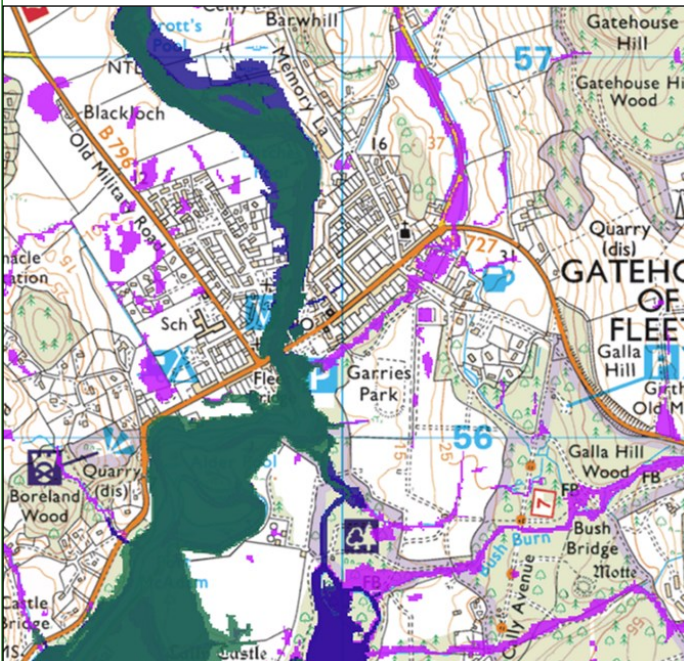
Below: One of the lodges at the entrance to Cally Estate



The settlement was planned and first developed in the late 18th century when landowners in the region were changing farming practices to take advantage of a demand for cattle in the English cities. Common grazing and tenanted land became large parks and, later, stone walls created smaller fields for select herds and flocks. The Murrays at 'The Cally' reputedly had 1000 Galloway bullocks in the 18th century for the English markets every year.

Flooding

Gatehouse of Fleet is mainly on the east of the river in the valley although the west side is partially developed. The network of watercourses are linked to its industrial past. It is more than 2km inland but the last part of the river was straightened and deepened in the 19th century resulting in more tidal effect from the sea. The rainfall catchment for the Fleet is wide as a result of the topography and surface water gathers in a few places. There is some risk of flooding. The potential for flooding and a rise in the water table is a factor to be taken into account for existing buildings and the design and placement of new development.



Map shows 0.5% chance of annual flooding by 2080s

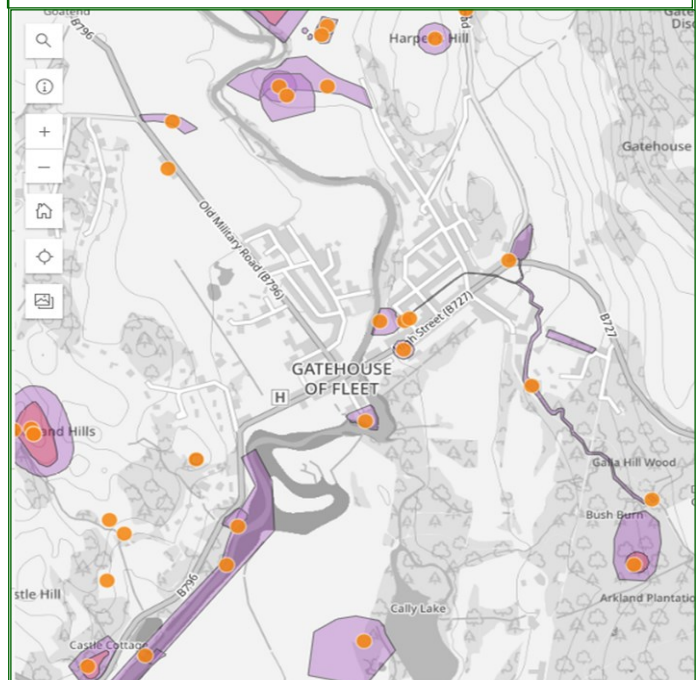
- Coastal flooding
- River flooding
- Surface water flooding

Archaeological Interest

The town dates mostly from the late 18th century, but evidence of earlier human settlement in the Fleet Valley exists. North of the town, is Pulcree Motte which is a Scheduled Monument. Barwhill has evidence of an Iron Age enclosure; a square barrow from between Bronze Age and Roman times; and a Roman quarry and road. Harper Hill has the remains of an Iron Age settlement.



Pulcree Motte is quite visible in the winter months



Archaeology Records



Scheduled Monuments



Archaeology Interest



Extract from D&GC Historic Environment Viewer — a map record of archaeological : [DGC - Archaeology \(dumgal.gov.uk\)](http://dumgal.gov.uk)

Inside the conservation area there are a number of known places with visible or established archaeology or potential for discovering historic detail particularly related to the former mills, mill lades and along the route of the early 17th century road.

History of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area - from Roman to Modern

Just north of the town is a small cluster of remains including a Roman fortlet. To the west close to Anwoth, Trusty's Hill fort is thought to have existed in the late 6th century. It has remains of a fort, and is now a Scheduled Monument and is thought to have had centuries of occupation.



Left: Image of a carved stone found on Trusty's Hill, described as a symbol stone and thought to be prehistoric; some say it is Pictish. It is sometimes referred to as the 'devil's specs'.

There is a motte at Cally in woodland near the entrance, the remains of the original dwelling possibly from the 12th century, probably a wooden castle with good views over the ford crossing of the Water of Fleet.

From the 12th to the 15th centuries, a series of fortifications were constructed, some of which have endured in some form over several centuries.

In the 15th century, Cardoness Castle was constructed by the McCulloch family, supporters of John Balliol's claim to the throne. In the 16th century, as a result of debts, the castle went to the rival Gordon family and a feud followed. In 1684, Godfrey McCulloch shot William Gordon and in 1694 when Godfrey returned from France, he was the last man to be executed on the 'the maiden'. Cardoness eventually became Murray property.

In the early 17th century English armies were processing to Ireland for the Plantation of Ulster. Gatehouse was on the route from Carlisle and Dumfries to Portpatrick. The Murrays of Cally built a stone inn near the crossing and opened a post office inside it. Parts of the inn survive in The Murray Arms complex of buildings.

Through the 17th century, the Murrays were developing cattle farming on their land. Cattle trysts were taking place at 'Gait-house' by 1700, thousands of animals being gathered to graze and drink on the droving route south. One of the drover families that became important locally, was Birtwhistle of Skipton.

The Honourable Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture had been formed in 1723 allowing land-owners to share new breeding practices. In the 18th century smaller field systems replaced cattle parks, separating cows and bulls with stone dykes becoming common in the landscape.

In 1721, a flood washed away the wooden bridge on the route to Ulster and a new stone bridge was built. There may have been a linen mill at Gatehouse in the 1730s and there were certainly waulk mills using or sheep fleeces at Skyreburn and Enrick. A bleachfield was created at Gatehouse to lay out cloth in the sun; possibly both linen and later cotton.

Although Gait House was still a tiny settlement, James Murray moved to it for a short time until his new mansion, Cally House, was finished. Cally House was built in 1763. The Gaithouse coaching inn was extended and when Murray left the settlement, it is said that stone from his town house was also used to extend and improve the Gaithouse which was renamed The Murray Arms. Gatehouse became a Burgh of Barony in 1795.



Part of *Timothy Pont's survey 1560 - 1614 transcribed by Joan Blaeu 1596-1673, The Middle part of Galloway, ... - Blaeu Atlas of Scotland, 1654 (nls.uk)* **NB: the map is orientated with north to the right hand side.**

James Murray had a grand plan, evolved alongside the changes in farming. He would employ and house former tenant farmers and cottar families put off the land by new cattle breeding practices and they would go on to make profit for him and other investors. He began to lay out a new village which would be known as Gatehouse of Fleet. In 1765, a three street, planned settlement was being built by local people. A leather hide tannery was built in 1768 and would use tannin from local bark mills. The people creating the settlement would go on to live and work in it.

Water power was essential for the mills so a system of lades with a tunnel and sluice was created to bring water from Loch Whinyeon.

In 1777 an advertisement was placed in the Dumfries Weekly Journal to encourage people to settle and invest in the developing new town of Gatehouse. This led to a range of tanneries by John Barrowdale and George Atkinson, breweries, cotton mills being built. The population in 1812 was more than 1200 because of the work in the town.

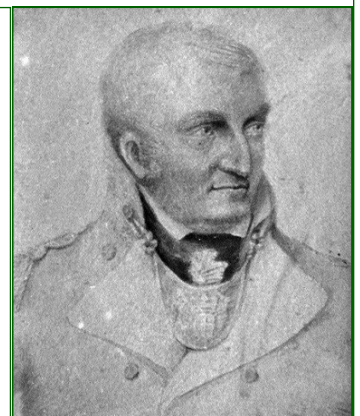
"...This neat and beautifully situated village stands to the S. W. of the Parish, on the banks of the Fleet. Its increase has been rapid. Though the first house in it was built as an inn, not above 30 years ago, it now contains upwards of 160 houses, and 1150 inhabitants. The cotton works, which have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

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

The Birtwhistle family invested in a mill with Murray's agreement in 1785, now the Mill on the Fleet. Birtwhistle's son Alexander settled in Gatehouse. Watercourse changes were made to power the new industries.

John Birtwhistle of Craven, Skipton was a mill investors.

<http://www.gatehouse-folk.org.uk>



Boat Green was the quay for cargo using the sea. In 1824 the Water of Fleet was canalised, a deep channel dug by tenants of Murray's Irish estate suffering in the Irish famine. The river was diverted along the new route so larger vessels came in to the town. It was cleverly done as an area of farmland was also reclaimed. A swing bridge was built in 1825 for public access to the shore.

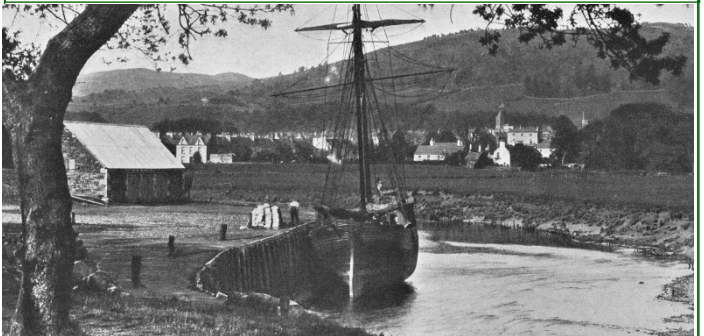
In 1836 David McAdam pioneered the building of a new quay, named Port McAdam. The remnants are visible. Exports of barley and imports of lime were common. Near to Cally, at Enrich, there was a small copper mine, productive from 1820 to the mid-19th century, exporting copper ore to south Wales.

By late 18th and early 19th centuries, much of Gatehouse was built and included a brass foundry, brewery, brickworks, soap factory, four cotton mills, cloth weaving, tanneries and workshops for many artisan trades.

In the British colonies, enslaved people were used to grow and pick cotton in very poor conditions. This meant that cotton was cheap



Above: The quay at Boat Green. Below: Port McAdam.



and plantation owners profits were high. It should be acknowledged that the original source of cotton for the industrial mills in the UK including Birtwhistle's cotton mill, was those plantations.

By 1858 Birtwhistle Mill had become a bobbin mill supplying weaving in Paisley.

In 1861 the Portpatrick and Wigtownshire Railway was built about 6 miles away. It closed in 1965.



1866 W. Gordon's Plan of Gatehouse from Dumfries Archival Mapping Project [View map: Gordon, W., Plan of Gatehouse - Estate Maps, 1730s-1950s \(nls.uk\)](#)

Description of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area

The origin of the name Gaithouse has been referred to earlier, a gait being a track and the house being the 17th century inn built by the Murray family on the old route from Carlisle and Dumfries to Port Patrick, the port to Ireland. The part of the town closest to the Murray Arms and Ann Street has some elements which pre-date the remainder of the planned town so they have a different, less formal layout.

High Street and Fleet Street form the main spinal route. The western end of High Street is sometimes called Woodside Terrace. The war memorial and mill pond mark the beginning of the conservation area from the east with the toll house. Girthon Parish Church, the Old Posting Stables and single storey cottages terraces and the B-Listed Horatio Square House are an eclectic mix in scale and design, forming a distinctive group beside the Murray Arms and town clock.



The town clock at Horatio Square.

The junction of Ann Street, Woodside Terrace, Church Street and High Street is a key node area of the conservation area at its eastern end.

Ann Street is a wide street with large individual dwellings and a mill at the end.

Street Pattern and Form

In 1765 James Murray, had set out his sketch plans for a three street settlement and had begun to encourage investors to build industrial mills and employ local people to work in them.

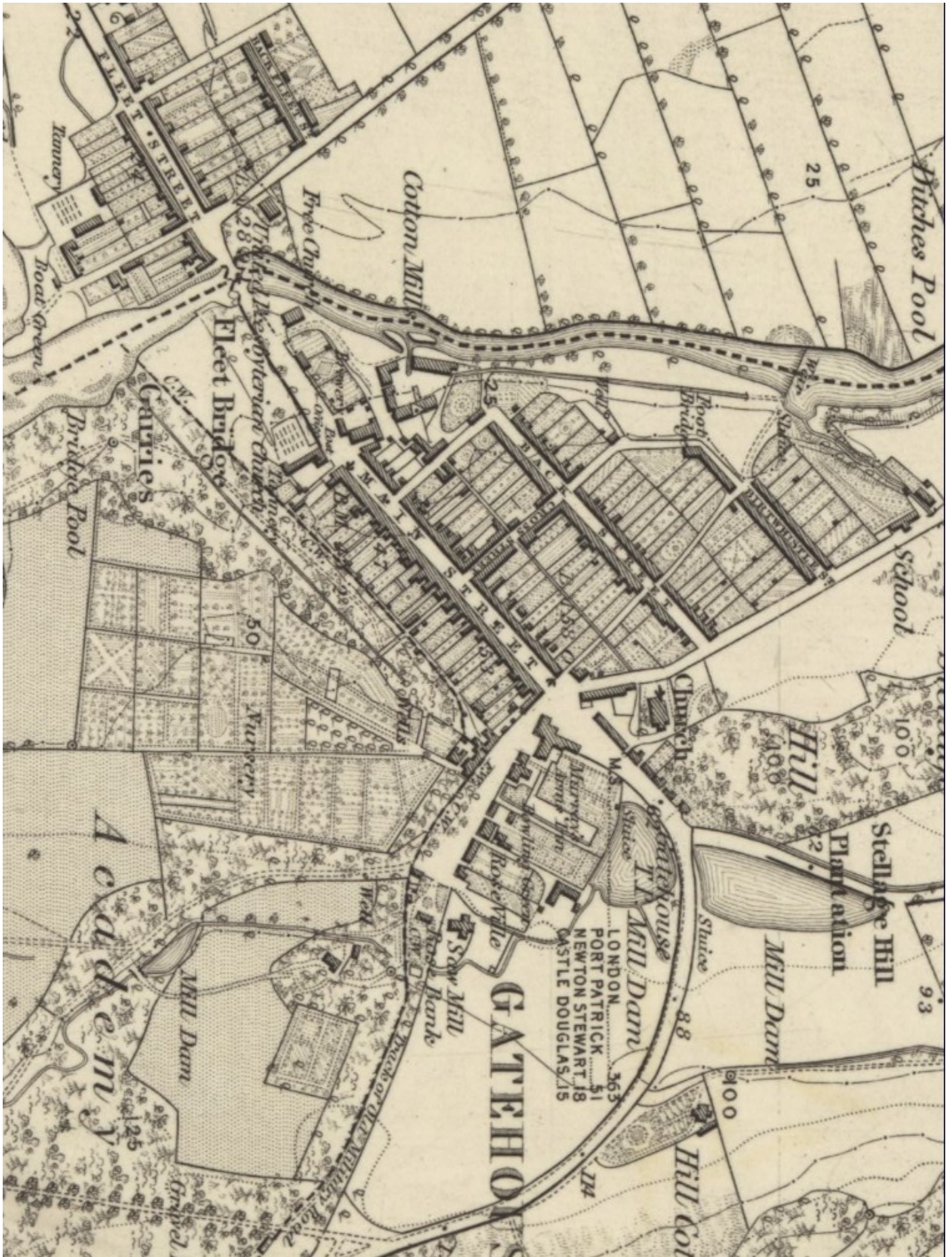
Victoria Street	was	Bankhead Street
Digby Street	was	Cross Street
Catherine Street	was	Back Street
Ann Street	was	Murray Place
Garden Street	was	Back Fleet Street
Old Military Road	was	Rusko Road
Church Street	was	part of Castramont Street
Hannay Street	was	unnamed

An 1866 plan of Gatehouse shows a grid of streets with different names the present day but the same layout.

High Street, Swan Street and Birtwhistle Street seem to have kept the original names.



A tannery opened on the south side of High Street in 1768, using locally sourced hides but closed in 1840. It is now the shop and café in the central open space beside the bridge over the Fleet and the car park covers the tan pits.



OS Kirkcudbrightshire, Sheet 43 6" 1st edition, surveyed 1849-50 showing the layout of Gatehouse in the mid 19th century.

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/228778957>

A second tannery was across the river on Hannay Street close to Boatgreen; now a house. A brewery was built in 1769 across High Street from the first tannery. The buildings remain but are now mainly residential. It is B-Listed.



1769 Brewery

Behind the brewery on the north side was Birtwhistle's cotton mill complex dating from about 1786, the river fronting mill is B Listed. There was a sawmill in Ann Street, which was called Scott's Mill which is now converted to residential use and B Listed .

There were two more mills, one beside Birtwhistle's which was a cotton mill which closed in 1811 and another in Fleet Street, Papple's Mill which was only open for a short while and is now residential.

The mills interrupted the grid pattern of the streets by creating more open areas around large footprint buildings which were also associated with mill lades and ponds and bleachfields.

There were also a great many pubs and inns through Gatehouse. They were generally part of terraces or on street corners among residential and trade premises. Some have remained and others had new uses and eventually became dwellings such as the Blue Bell Inn on the corner of present day Catherine Street. The Bay Horse was on Ann Street and became a joiners shop and, more recently, a house. The remaining hotels and



The Bay Horse pub became a joiners and now a dwelling, Ann Street

pubs are along High Street or Ann Street.

Retail and trades were along High Street often paired with a family dwelling and long rear plots. There were tailors, chemists (apothecaries), grocers and bakers with a few persisting as cafes, craft shops or dwellings.

The craft trades were found along Digby Street and Victoria Street, such as smiths, masons and joiners .

Murray owned Catherine Street with lodging houses or direct rental to workers, some overcrowded. Some occupants were from Murray's estates in Donegal. There was at least one small shop and some trades.

Birtwhistle Street and Swan Street were the furthest back of the streets and most modest. They housed the workers and weavers in the cotton mills. Unusually they are brick terraces, using local clay, like mill houses in England. Alterations have taken place merging some of the small units. This group and the whole street is a significant feature and element of the character of the conservation area.

The style of the houses in each street was different from those in another with a clear historic hierarchy which largely remains visible and is a feature of the character of the conservation area.



Swan Street leading to Birtwhistle Street looking east showing the painted brick frontage. The dwellings were small with very little added detail, reflecting the economic status of the occupants.

Setting, Topography, Landscape, Location, Viewpoints and Key Approaches

Gatehouse has hilly land rising to the north but to the south and west the land is closer to sea level. The road approach from the west leads past Cardoness Castle and cottages at Boreland where there are remains of workings and a wooded hill to the north. The road turns almost 90 degrees onto the long, straight Fleet Street where the conservation area begins.

Fleet Street becomes High Street at the bridge over Fleet Water where the road curves north a little, rises a few metres and falls back gently and relatively straight to Horatio Square.

Terraces of dwellings are dominant on Fleet Street channelling the view.

Fleet Bridge provides a break for an open area. On the north side is the Mill on the Fleet and on the south side the car park beside the



High Street looking east showing the leafy hills in the west and the rise and fall of the street..

former tannery (local shop) where the land is relatively flat. There is a mix of meadow and woodland from the Cally Estate here and around Garries Park.

On the north side the converted Rutherford Hall marks the entry to the Mill on the Fleet area. It is marked by a very fine copper beech tree. The mill was formerly the Bobbin Mill or Birtwhistle's Mill and is now a visitor attraction and local history centre.

The open area creates an impression of a



Open area and car park by the bridge over the Fleet.

village centre, reinforced by the large car park and local shops and café. The openness remains a strong feature of the conservation area, contributing very positively to its character.

Through the town, the Water of Fleet creates an artery of green with tall vegetation and trees and meadows along its banks providing a backdrop for and link to many of the historic buildings that depended on water for their operation. It is also a link to the sea as the river allowed freight to come into Gatehouse. Paths that wend their way along the edge of Cally Woodlands and Garries Park provide a green setting and backdrop in a similar way to the Water of Fleet.



Mill on the Fleet in the present day. An older mill wheel is also displayed on site as an artefact of interest.



Far Left: a view along the Water of Fleet which provides a green breathing space and woodland views and background to many built parts of the conservation area.

Left: one of the paths around Garries Park at the back of properties on the southern side of the conservation area also providing a wooded, green backdrop.





Top: A view of Girthon Parish Church from the lanes in the north of the conservation area with a stone wall topped with boulders, mostly granite.

Above: A view south down Old Ford Road towards the town clock in Horatio Square

Right: the impressive copper beech beside Rutherford Hall close to Mill on the Fleet attraction.

Buildings

The elevations of most buildings in Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area are a mix of granite and coursed or rubble whinstone. The majority are painted white or pale shades of cream; harled and painted or rendered in shades of grey; or plain stone with pale painted window and door margins. The pallor of the elevations is an influential feature in terms of the character of the conservation area. There are a small number of unpainted stone commercial or civic buildings which

make a feature of their materials and a number with ornate entrances. These are important individual and features punctuating more uniform frontages.

The majority of buildings in the grid pattern streets are 2-storey terraces but single storey, 1½ storey and 3 storey buildings are relatively common too. Tall, large footprint, former mills and warehouses and commercial buildings in the conservation area are visible reminders of reason for the existence of Gatehouse and key to its character. Many are now painted.



Clockwise from top left: A selection of elevations of buildings from Boatgreen, Ann Street, Woodside Terrace and the western end of Fleet Street.

Stone	Description	Use
Whinstone (local name for stone usually greywacke but also dolerite, or basalt.)	Whinstone is usually partly metamorphosed, hard, granular, sedimentary stone in shades of grey.	A common building stone in the conservation area as both coursed and random rubble stone for elevations although often painted or rendered and painted white or cream The Commonly used in garden walls and sometimes for kerb stones.
Granite (silver-grey granite probably quarried quite locally)	Hard, metamorphic, speckled grey, stone quarried locally close to Creetown.	Squarish cut for quoins, roughly for lintels, sills and steps, much of it is now painted. Used for the town clock and statuary as well as informally, uncut, in garden and field walls.
Sandstone (red, cream or brownish-red and shades between from regional Permian deposits)	Sedimentary rock often with a big colour range but mostly brownish red where used in Gatehouse of Fleet.	Usually cut into ashlar or bull-faced blocks; used in the main elevations of designed buildings; used around windows, for string courses and cornices and with uncut stone in rubble walls.



Above: B Listed Angel Hotel from the late 18th century; Classical proportions and features painted whinstone elevations with painted sandstone window margins and quoins and a painted stone string course.

Right top: Middle of High Street, terraces dating from the early 19th century Western end of High Street with Part of Woodside Terrace with a simple 3-bay house with paired windows on the first floor and a gabled 1½ storey 3 bay house. Below it is a modest 2 bay terrace on Digby Street.

Below: Fleet Street from the western end has terraces of 2 and 3 bay 2-storey dwellings from the late 18th century some with ornate door and window mouldings, others simpler. All have grey slate roofs and most have retained large chimneys.



Roads and Street Surfaces

The majority of surfaces are tarmac but there are areas of smallish concrete paving slabs from the 20th century.

There are more historic areas of river stone cobbles and stone paving as well as many stone kerbs, both whinstone and granite most of which are important elements of the historic interest and character of the conservation area.

A number of cast iron gully covers have survived which have historic character and interest.



Windows and Doors

Throughout the conservation area there are many interesting timber doors and windows. There are also some decorative door pieces and mouldings above windows.

Doors: Many dwellings along High Street have retained two-leaf storm doors. Traditional raised and fielded panel doors have continued to be the dominant door type. Some have been adapted to replace panels with glazing. There is a selection of both plain and decorative fanlights above doors and



there are groups of doors in terraces of shared design, both ornate and simple. Plainer vertically planked doors that lead through pends to the rear of properties contrast with the domestic front entrance is of interest. In the back streets where the terraces are simpler, door formats reflect this simplicity too.

The variety of fanlights and doors and some embellished surrounds and drip canopies contribute positively to character and help differentiate visually between the status of the buildings on which they are found.

Windows:

The majority of windows through the conservation area are timber, sliding sash

and case windows. Many are original or replica originals. Others have been adapted using secondary glazing to retain the external fabric and appearance of the traditional window. Modern internal shutters are also in evidence as another energy efficiency measure.

There is a variety of window formats ranging from 1-over-1 pane to multiple panes. They may differ between top and bottom sashes. There are paired windows in and replica timber sash and case designed to sensitively match the traditional. A small number of replacement windows have been introduced which are not sympathetic particularly if the opening mechanism is not sliding or the frame is heavier than traditional timber windows.



A small selection of windows in the conservation area and a few details of door openings.

Roofscape, Townscapes and Building Facades and Architectural Embellishment

The roof heights throughout the conservation area vary. There are long same height terraces but these are interspersed with lower ridges and some front facing gables.

The materials used for roofing throughout Gatehouse are slate with sandstone skew stones and ridges. However skew stones are noticeably absent in many of the terraces.

Shared chimneys are present in all streets but they are not as regular in the roofscape as might be expected. Whether this is because they have been removed or it is a historic matter is not completely clear.

than others in the conservation area. The commercial buildings that still are hotels or pubs are also more embellished.



A large number of the buildings in the conservation area began life as simple terraced housing or large scale industrial buildings and have a simple, utilitarian design.

Some of the grander buildings have architectural features appropriate to their Georgian and Classical design such as string courses, window hood mouldings and specific dentil courses. The town hall which has been much altered is unusual in that it has a red sandstone frontage, pillars and a through pend and has a grand appearance although much of those features are from the late 20th century.

Dwellings and former retail premises on the High Street have more architectural features

Shopfronts

The conservation area has evidence of once having a lot more shops. Those that remain are often traditional in appearance from the Victorian or Edwardian period and large downstairs windows remain from the late 18th and very early 19th centuries.



The story of the town can be read in the elevation designs. Some examples of existing and former shops are seen in the photos with a well kept timber consoled frontage with wide recessed door and a canopy; simple enlarged shop display window shops in two places; a delicately decorated metal frontage probably brass; and a stone frontage with transoms and a central door.

They are painted in modest shades and colours with a few exceptions. The subdued colour range is a theme of the character..

Open Spaces - Public and Private

There are two main formal open spaces.

It incorporates a car park and a decorative shelter with information panels but there is room for sitting out and simply taking in the comings and goings. The space is on the southern side of Fleet Street beside the bridge over the river. It leads out of the conservation area to Garries Park sports ground and perimeter walks. and into Cally Estate.

The second is much smaller and hidden behind and through the pend of the town hall on High Street. It is laid out with formal gardens and sculptures and links to some of the paths along the side of Garries Park and Cally Woods.

There is open space around the Mill on the Fleet and it also leads to paths near the river and in and out and a round the north side of the conservation area.



Open space around the car park on Fleet Street



Above and below: The small, formal garden behind the old town hall



Boundaries

There is quite a variety of boundary treatment throughout the conservation area. A range of different styles of railings and gates enhance the entrances to some of the higher status properties. Stone walls, some topped with granite boulders in the local dry stone dyke style, others originally whinstone pointed with lime featuring a variety of copings including terracotta half round 'bricks' and mainly brick walls.



There are hedges contributing positively to character, some formal on raised banks and others more informal with mixed species.



Sculptures and Works of Art/Statuary

In the area around the Mill of Fleet a number of public art features or purpose designed signage has been introduced. Those are relatively recent additions and are linked to helping visitors navigate and enjoy the activities in Gatehouse of Fleet.



Each is interesting and has a purpose to stimulate thought or admiration or inform. There are not too many focused in the same place to distract from each other.

There is a granite war memorial at the eastern end of the conservation area which is surrounded by railings and kept well. This has

important historic links with families of the community at the time of the wars.

The clock tower at Horatio Square dates from 1871 designed by F T Pilkington using mainly granite as the building stone and a square plan with multiple architectural features.

PART TWO: Managing the Character of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area

General Management Points

The historic character of Gatehouse of Fleet has been recognised through its designation as a conservation area.

Managing development

To preserve and enhance the special character of Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area, the existing built character and mix of heights, simple and more ornate designs should be retained and repeated when development is proposed.

Former mills and warehouses should retain their industrial, relatively plain and functional character, before and after they have changed use. Incremental change affecting the character should be avoided.

The pattern and layout of Gatehouse came about as a planned town with a clear hierarchy of streets. When they were built, the dwellings in the streets north of High Street and Fleet Street generally had lower status; the linking streets had a mix of trades and simple dwellings; and, High Street and Fleet Street had higher status residents and businesses. Ann Street had commercial buildings and some large dwellings. The dwellings in the narrower streets were smaller and simpler. Although the streets were planned a long time ago and occupation of buildings is very different, the characteristic building hierarchy survives and is still consistent within each street. It is a particular feature of the character of the conservation area which should be retained. Alterations and development should reinforce this hierarchy of buildings.

Matching buildings in building groups is an important feature to continue. Some are simple vernacular terraces in the smaller

street and others are buildings in designed terraces. It applies to many of the streets with different levels of embellishment. For example, matching the door and window details used in terraces in Fleet Street.

Existing range and mix of timber doors should be retained particularly where doors face the street so that the high proportion of two-leaf storm doors and particularly decorative designs is not diluted and simpler doors are also retained.

Fanlights are an important feature above doors. The number of designed, decorative and plain fanlights and their proportions in relation to the door is a key repeating feature of some streets. Retaining existing fanlights, or replicating them if repair is not practical, is the best way to preserve this element of character.

Window variety is part of the character of the conservation area. The existing variety of pane format and opening mechanisms of windows should be retained. The majority are sliding sash and case, set into reveals in the traditional manner. The opening mechanisms should not interrupt the plane of the elevations. Where there are modern top hung windows the opportunity should be taken to reinstate sliding sash and case to reinforce the existing character if change is proposed.

Colours of elevations in Gatehouse are mostly pale grey, white or beige. There are some window margins and quoins (corner stones) with contrasting colours but also mostly soft shades of a colour. Bare stone should not be painted. Windows and doors are generally painted in modest shades although there are some brightly painted doors. Elevations should continue to use soft pale shades, ideally white, beige and grey. Window and door margins should continue to use restrained colours.

Roofscape features include chimneys and gabled half dormers both of which should be retained and used as the model for new roofscape design. **Chimneys** should not be removed or reduced in height but may be lined with lead trays but also adapted for ventilation. They should not be painted unless they already are. **Stone ridges and skew stones** should be retained and re-used or replaced in matching materials. **The method of slating** should be random in the traditional Scottish style using a range of diminishing sizes and course and matching colours. This may need careful specification and advanced ordering rather than a quick verbal exchange which may result in a modern method and poor slate choice.

Decorative details such as brattishing and railings should be retained and repaired so that they continue to contribute as interesting features in the conservation area on bay window roofs for example.

New development within or close to the conservation area, should primarily respect the layout of the planned streets and replicate it rather than introduce modern development set back from street edges. There is a great range of heights and widths of buildings but the mix closest to the development should be the cue for that design and the form and height should reinforce the existing. Designs for infill development should follow closely the street pattern closest to it.

Window alignment in new development should respect the generally vertical alignment of windows in the Georgian manner.

Window and door formats in new development should continue the interesting, wide variety of traditionally proportioned timber doors noted in the appraisal.

Sustainable materials generally suggest that timber is the best as it is a carbon neutral product and can be repaired and carefully shaped to fit slightly distorted openings in stone buildings and is more likely to be recycled at the end of its life which can be very long if carefully maintained.

Climate change adaptations to improve energy efficiency should first look at thorough maintenance and restoration of traditional windows and whether incorporating secondary glazing would be as good as or better than replacement.

Climate change adaptations are possible outside, or inside, traditionally constructed solid wall buildings, including Listed Buildings, but they need to take full account of the solid stone or brick wall, and allow vapour permeability otherwise the living environment can be adversely affected. There may also be decorative features to take into account. This is likely to mean that materials different from the most common methods need to be used. Advice is available through Historic Environment Scotland with a link at the end of the document. Renewable energy and modern heating systems can also be installed with the necessary permissions. If existing roof slopes cannot provide suitable orientation or space, outbuildings or free-standing garden structures may be acceptable alternatives. All proposals should be fully considered in respect of formal permissions before agreement with companies selling them.

Shop fronts in the conservation area may remain in commercial use with a dwelling above or alongside or the whole building may now be residential. As part of preserving the story of use and the legible historic character of the conservation area, the existing shop front openings and surroundings should be retained, even when conversion is proposed.

The shape and size of some of the simpler shop windows and openings can be retained relatively easily, with little alteration. Internal adaptations can be made for privacy and in the future it might easily be used as a shop again. There are already good examples of this having taken place in Gatehouse Conservation Area.

Building materials

New development and extensions should take their cue from existing street frontage materials referred to in the appraisal; including slate roofs, stone or rendered and painted elevations with whinstone, granite or red sandstone details

Preserving established historic views.

There are a number of views identified in the appraisal which exist as a result of the street form, layout and topography. Development and road engineering works should consider the impact on this aspect of the character when works are proposed, including siting of bus shelters and other equipment or facilities that would interrupt those views.

Advertisements and signage

At present there is a restrained approach to advertising which is the best most appropriate in the conservation area. Moving adverts and bright or lit signage should be avoided.

There may also be an inclination to site signs where they might distract from interest features by using regular signage for road restrictions and directions. Ideally existing signage could be considered holistically to reduce any clutter and look at what signs might be needed going forward.

Historic themes

There is a strong link between the industrial past of Gatehouse and the sea in respect of the canalisation of the river to allow freight to come and go from Port McAdam and before that smaller boats using Boat Green. It is an

important part of the historic character of the settlement but it seems to no longer be made much of. There may be an opportunity to revive that link in some way as another interest in the settlement.

Encouraging the use of traditional materials and skills

Owners and occupiers of traditionally constructed buildings and trades in the conservation area may find benefit in having refresher training or information regarding upgrade and maintenance of traditional buildings and features. This would allow better preservation and enhancement of fabric and detail of individual buildings and a collective approach to the care of the character of the conservation area as a whole.

A programme of hands on skills education for the repair and restoration of traditional stone and lime buildings would benefit both owners, trades and decision makers. These could be delivered in collaboration with other local and nearby community groups.

Courses have been provided in Whithorn and occasionally near Carrick which focus on some elements of traditional building skills. Scottish and UK wide organisations have information and can provide training in the use of natural hydraulic lime products.



Some of the available materials to maintain or insulate traditional stone buildings - such as sheep wool and lime mortars.

General management matters

Empty and under-used buildings and gap sites

There were no vacant buildings noted in Gatehouse except those for sale or undergoing renovation or alteration. Most buildings and land in Gatehouse seem to find an economic use which ensures their restoration.

Climate Change Adaptations

Improving the energy efficiency of existing fabric and installing renewable energy micro-generation is possible in most properties. Before deciding the best options, information about the impact on historic fabric and building methods should be explored so as not to reduce the building's lifespan. There is no advantage in using materials or methods that would inadvertently result in the development of damp living conditions. There are a range of possible types and sitings of renewable technologies some of which are discreet and suitable for use on traditional buildings even in conservation areas. By choosing materials and technologies carefully, minimal visual impact and limited physical impact on the fabric can be achieved.

Road and Pavement Surfaces

There is already a mix of surfaces across the conservation area. The use of whinstone and granite kerb stones is significant in some streets and should be preserved and be the used for any new kerbs. Areas of cobbles and stone setts should also be preserved intact. Unusual historic cast iron gully covers on the roads should be retained.

Demolition of buildings in a conservation area needs to be justified on the basis that what will be removed does not make a positive contribution to character and making changes to it would not enhance character. In exceptional circumstances an argument may be made based on Policy 7 of NPF4.

Maintenance and general care and repair

There is not always an opportunity to encourage individual owners and occupants to care for their buildings other than by example. At present, there are no historic building and places grants available locally. However, maintenance should be part of every owner's annual budget. In order that buildings provide a comfortable living or working space and to be most energy efficient before adaptation or intervention, some basic maintenance is needed.

Keeping rain and ground water out as damp buildings are harder to keep warm

Water should be kept out, starting with the roof by promptly repairing slipped slates. Lime mortar fillets, haunches and lead flashings around chimneys, skew stones and ridges should be checked every year. Water ingress can damage roof timbers and plasterwork. Rainwater goods should be kept in good working order, not blocked and taking the rain water from the roof away from the building elevations. Elevation pointing should be checked and repaired or renewed in the best material for the building - lime mortar for stone and cement for modern brick or blockwork. At the footings of walls, hard surfaces and built up soil should be removed or avoided as rain splashback and damp material against the wall causes damp. A damp building loses heat much more easily than a dry building.

To take water away from the building and roof, rain water goods with a bigger capacity may be

needed. Cast iron rainwater goods are strong, resilient and serviceable for many decades as long as they are repainted and fixings and joints are checked. They can be re-bored if there has been any kind of rust build up.

Appropriate materials

Using 'new' products for 'quick fix' solutions may turn out be irreversible or make it difficult for a proper long-term repair in the future. It is important to know how any new fixes can be reversed. Some can't. It should be noted that cement pointing can permanently damage a stone building and cause stone surface damage on the exterior and damp and mould in the interior. All the conservation groups across Scotland have learned this through bad experience.

Damp in stone and lime buildings

Injected damp proof courses are ineffective in solid stone walls because there are no through joints and the chemicals interfere with the natural moisture movement through stone which is essential for the walls to dry naturally as intended. For a short period of time, electrolytic techniques may be effective to deter damp but the wires used gradually corrode and stop working. It is much more effective to remove the source of the damp as set out above, already.

Vegetation on buildings should be carefully and quickly removed to prevent roots causing increased gaps in the masonry or lifting lead flashings – buddleia, ivy and Russian vine are common vandals so grow with caution.

Windows, doors and timber shopfronts

Timber elements including windows and doors should be painted regularly with traditional weather resistant paint; natural plant oil based paints are good for nourishing new, bare wood as well as being protective. Small areas of cracked or broken putty and damaged timber can be cleaned away and filled or repaired easily or by splicing in good timber.

Sliding sash and case window pulleys and cords can be tightened, and draft strips added. Adaptation and alterations are also a way forward such as secondary glazing. It is worth looking at the guidance from Historic Environment Scotland. It is also a good idea to consider alterations in stages rather than trying to do everything at once to allow lessons to be learned.

Alterations that affect the exterior of buildings

By thinking about the internal layout, alterations to allow pipes and vents to come through external walls can be discreetly positioned, ideally on less prominent elevations. The same applies to alarms and telecoms equipment. It is good practice to remove old equipment and wires and make good any gaps and holes with appropriate materials.

Below are links to Further Information from Historic Environment Scotland's publication series:

[Managing Change in the Historic Environment](#)

[Maintaining Your Home](#)

[External Walls](#)

[Roofs](#)

[Windows](#)

[Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings](#)

[Doorways](#)

[Shopfronts and Signs](#)