

Allerdale

Local Development Framework



Cockermouth Conservation Area

Conservation and Design Guide

The
COCKERMOUTH
Partnership Ltd



01

Summary

1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Summary of Special Interest	3
1.3 What is a Conservation Area	6

02

Guidance

2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Maintenance	9
2.2.1 Introduction	9
2.2.2 Day to day maintenance	10
2.2.3 Minor repairs and maintenance	11
2.3 Repair and Replacement	11
2.3.1 Purpose	11
2.3.2 Principles	12
2.3.3 Roofs	12
2.3.4 Rainwater goods	14
2.3.5 External walls	14
2.3.6 Windows and glazing	18
2.3.7 External doors, door cases and other woodwork	22
2.3.8 Railings, gates and boundary walls	23
2.3.9 Pavements	24
2.4 Alterations	25
2.4.1 Extensions	25
2.4.2 Shop Fronts	28
2.4.3 Energy and environment	34
2.5 New Buildings	35
2.6 Public Realm	36
2.6.1 Openness & enclosure	36
2.6.2 Encouraging activity	37
2.6.3 Sense of local identity	37

03

Further Information

04

Useful Contacts

05

Maps

01 Location, Boundary, Setting (Context) & Key Views
02 Contributions of Buildings & Spaces to Special & Special Interest

01

Summary

Plan Objectives and Outline of Contents

The Cockermouth Conservation Area Conservation and Design Guide has the following objective:

To enable conservation to play an active part in regeneration by ensuring that change is managed in a way that sustains and enhances the character of the built environment. This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is aimed at providing guidance for the owners of buildings and land within the Cockermouth Conservation Area, including advice on improvements and repairs as well as new buildings and demolitions, in order to ensure that such works meet the required standards of the area.

This document followed the production of a Character Appraisal of Cockermouth Conservation Area (available from Allerdale Borough Council). It will be adopted by Allerdale Borough Council as a Supplementary Planning Document, forming part of the group of planning documents known as the Local Development Framework (LDF), and will become a material consideration in planning, listed building, conservation area, advertisement and some highway decisions.

The guidance in this document relates to Allerdale Local Plan policies CO1–CO3

English Nature caveat

The river and riverbanks of the Cocker and the Derwent form part of the Cockermouth Conservation Area. These waterways have been internationally recognised for their role in nature conservation, and both have been designated by the European Union as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Any new development or modifications to existing buildings in this area which could be considered as having the potential to adversely affect the ecological integrity of the riverbanks or river would not be supported by this SPD. All new development in this area should comply with the European Habitats Regulations 1994 (as amended).

1.1 Introduction

This Guide aims to provide those considering works on buildings or sites within the Cockermouth Conservation Area with some advice on maintenance, repair and the designing of alterations and new buildings. Many of the issues covered are as applicable to buildings of recent date as they are to the older stock, although the focus is on the latter. Advice is intended as guidance and not a specification of works. More context and an assessment of Cockermouth's character is contained in Cockermouth Character Area Appraisal

1.2 Summary of Special Interest

The following is a list of aspects of Cockermouth's Conservation Area, which summarise what it is about the character and appearance of the Conservation Area that constitutes its character. These have been derived following a detailed study and the production of a Character Appraisal.

Setting and Spatial Qualities



Views of Cockermouth from north of the Derwent

01 Views of landmark buildings such as the Castle and the Jennings brewery tower set against the mountainous backdrop

02 The rural landscapes at the extremities of the Conservation Area, their field patterns, old lanes and the banks of the rivers and becks.

03 Views of roofscapes.

04 Particular viewpoints such as:

- Tute Hill.
- All Saint's churchyard.
- The small park above the lower end of Cocker Lane.
- The head of Station Street.
- The path along the front of Fell View.
- Harris Park and its environs.
- The latter offers spectacular views towards Skiddaw, the Cocker and north across the town (albeit obscured in part by trees).

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

06 The medieval rear yards, courts and



Fern Bank from playing field

passageways

07 The spaciousness of Main Street and the Market Place, and the narrow interconnecting streets and the contrast between them.

08 The way in which density reduces and the area opens up when moving south from the Medieval core, through Georgian style housing to the Victorian Harris Park.

09 The landmark religious, educational, institutions and commercial buildings which are examples of national architectural styles.

Historic interest and uses

01 The concentration of shops, pubs and other businesses.

02 Development alongside the rivers and becks, such as the brewery, mills, tannery buildings and other fragments of the industrial past, including the clusters of development along the Cocker upstream of the old viaduct.

03 The historic links between industrial and residential development, as seen in the proximity of workshops, cottages and frontage buildings in the historic core, Gote mills and adjacent terraces, and the old ropewalk on Kirkgate.

04 The significant archaeological interest of the town centre, and the industrial archaeology of outlying areas, particularly the water-powered industries.

Architectural interest

01 A hierarchy of architectural design where the most elaborate buildings are generally on the most important streets.

02 The classical sense of order, proportion and verticality typical of most façades and unifying the townscape.

03 The classical framework of shopfronts with entablature (beam), columns (with base) supporting it and stall riser below supporting the display window.

04 The mixture of detailing of the later buildings (post railway) which characterises the periphery, such as Harris Park, many of which have decorative bay windows, dormers, bargeboards, eaves and window treatments.

05 Later terraces built as set pieces with a strongly unified design.

06 Roofs which are subservient to façades .



Station Street, Cockermouth



Mountain View (Alma Place), Cockermouth

01

Summary

07 Landmark buildings of national architectural styles.

Details and Materials

01 Walls finished with stone, stucco/smooth render to imitate stone.

02 Dressed stone or moulded stucco window and door surrounds, quoins, string courses, etc. These are often emphasised by contrasting paints or distempers.

03 Rubble and dry stonework visible on rear elevations, outbuildings, minor structures and boundary walls.

04 Sash windows and panelled doors of painted timber, some with fanlights or door cases (some elaborate).

05 Cumbrian green slate roofs (diminishing courses), characteristic of earlier buildings, and Welsh blue-grey slate on most post railway buildings.

06 Cast iron rainwater goods, with moulded gutters often supported on corbels or brackets, sometimes forming part of the façade.

07 The few surviving iron railings and gates (including park and estate railings), and surviving elements of removed railings.

08 Surfaces of cobbles or incised clay pavers, flagged paving to yards and other private areas, sometimes with granite kerbs.

Natural Interest and Greenery

01 Rivers, banks and other areas of greenery providing ecological and visual interest to the area.

02 Rows of pollarded lime trees along Main Street, Station Street, Market Place and Kirkgate.

03 Maintained green spaces such as the Croft Bowling Green, All Saint's churchyard, Memorial Gardens, Gote Road cricket pitch, Harris Park, and the Lamplugh Road recreation ground, as well as many smaller spaces.

04 Blocks of woodland in the Harris Park area.

05 Private gardens which act as a transition to open spaces or riverbanks.

06 The proximity of undeveloped rural landscapes.



Harris Park, Cockermouth



Gardens backing onto the Derwent, Cockermouth

1.3 What is a Conservation Area and How Does it Affect Me

A conservation area is a legally designated area that has been identified as being of “special architectural or historic interest” where the local authority has a duty to “preserve or enhance” its character and appearance. There are stricter planning controls over a number of types of building operation, including:

- less ‘permitted development’ so that certain works to dwellings in Conservation Areas that wouldn't normally require permission do require planning permission.
- demolition of (unlisted) buildings requires conservation area consent, and
- virtually all works to trees require conservation area consent.

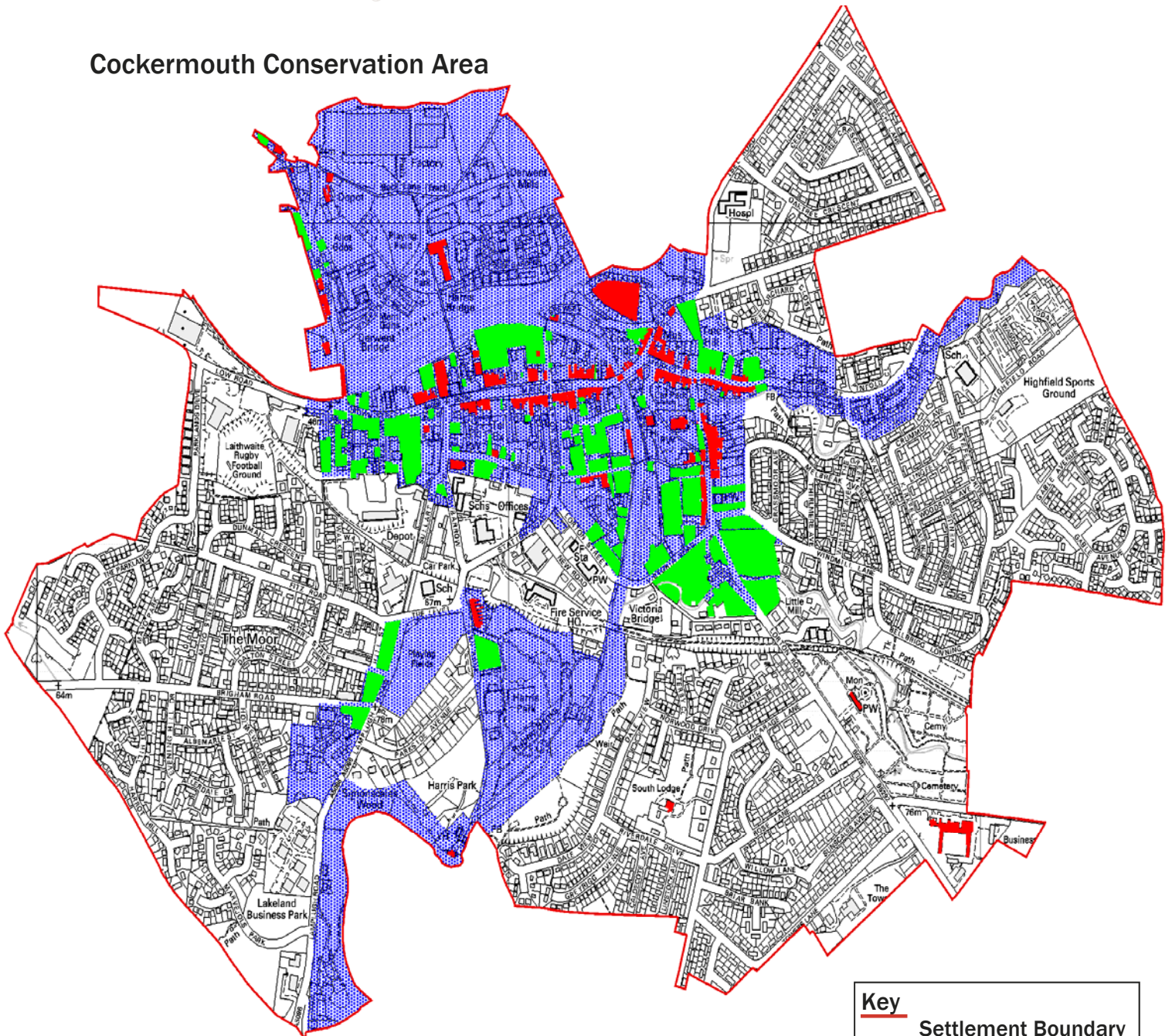
Local Planning Authorities also have the power to reduce permitted development rights through an Article 4 Direction. Article 4 Directions apply to most of the houses within Cockermouth's Conservation Area. This means that the normal permitted development rights that apply to most houses, do not apply within the Conservation Area. As such virtually all external changes to a building will require planning permission.





Planning permission will not normally be granted for works which would result in a loss of architectural or historic features that contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. This includes, not only windows, doors and other architectural characteristics, but also historic plot boundaries, spatial arrangements, and key views. Simple repairs to the existing fabric of most buildings and exact like for like replacement does not generally require planning permission. However listed building consent will be required for works which affect the character or appearance of a

listed building. This often includes work to the interior as well as the exterior, and to any structures within the curtilage of the building.

01 Summary

Cockermouth Conservation Area



Key	
	Settlement Boundary
	Conservation Area
	Properties subject to an Article 4 Direction
	Listed Buildings

02

Guidance

2.1 Introduction

The preservation and enhancement of the Cockermouth Conservation Area depends on appropriate and good quality:

- 1 Maintenance works.
- 2 Repairs and replacements.
- 3 Alterations.
- 4 New buildings.
- 5 Public Realm Improvements

1 to 3 above are primarily about preservation although lost features of historic value may be restored where there is evidence of what was there before and works which have a negative affect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area can be removed. New buildings should enhance the area, perhaps via the development of a poor quality site or the replacement of a building that has a negative impact on the local character.

The key to the effective conservation of the built environment is understanding the impact of any changes. Works should not be carried out without establishing:

- why they are necessary.
- what they are trying to achieve, and whether this is likely to be successful
- whether they might have any adverse consequences.

This involves assessing each site in terms of its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, its historic value, form of construction and technical performance, including

the presence of defects or any other threats to the survival of its fabric. Advice should be sought on all major projects, from an architect, building surveyor or planner who is experienced in working with historic environments. Some projects may require the input of an archaeologist, especially within the old medieval core of the town.

Even small works should be based on an understanding of how a particular building works, in itself and in relation to its setting. Any work to larger buildings and buildings of exceptional historic value should be based on a conservation plan.

Conservation area designation does not prevent change but creates a framework in which the town could develop without losing any of the attributes which make it special. Hence this Guide.

2.2 Maintenance

2.2.1 Introduction

Regular maintenance of a building is the best and most economic way of conserving its fabric. Looking after any building is the responsibility of owners and occupiers. A building that is looked after will retain its value and the need for extensive repairs will be avoided. Protection from water and damp penetration is the most important. Roofs, gutters and downpipes should be the first to be repaired.

Owners of larger buildings might consider creating a maintenance plan based on annual visual inspection and a full survey every five years. A maintenance plan is normally a prerequisite to the grant aiding of repairs by English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund.

2.2.2 Day to day maintenance

Building owners and occupiers should ensure that the following tasks are carried out on a regular basis:

- **Clearing leaves** particularly after the autumn, is probably the single most important action that owners and occupiers can take with particular attention paid to gullies and rainwater goods. Heavy rainfall is the best time to identify faults.
- **Controlling plant growth** which can accelerate decay and sometimes causes structural damage. Ivy should be killed by cutting near the ground and allowing it to wither before attempting to remove it.
- **Removing bird droppings** which contains damaging salts. However, there are health and safety issues involved, and large deposits should be removed by a specialist firm.
- **Looking for insect attack and fungal decay** both of which are caused by damp penetration and poor ventilation.
- **Checking ventilation** to ensure that any grilles which ventilate the spaces under floors are not blocked. Lack of ventilation may lead to conditions in which fungal decay can take hold.
- **Clearing snow** which can accumulate in gutters and other areas, allowing moisture to bridge flashings, damp proof courses. Wooden or plastic shovels should be used to clear snow.



Saturated & damaged stonework due to missing downpipe

02 Guidance

2.2.3 Minor repairs and maintenance

The following are examples of minor works of repair and maintenance that it is recommended be carried out by a local builder:

- Repairs to roofs including slipped slates and dislodged flashings.
- Maintenance and repairs of eaves, gutters and downpipes.
- Rodding and inspection of underground storm water drains.
- Minor re-pointing of stonework and patch repairs to renders and stuccos.
- Repainting external woodwork (every five years, depending on paint system).
- Repairs to cracked glazing and the replacement of loose putty.

Further guidance on maintenance can be found in the *Stitch in Time* leaflet available from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

2.3 Repair and Replacement

2.3.1 Purpose

Regular maintenance should minimise the need for major repairs to all buildings. However, some elements will eventually reach the end of their life, in which case consideration will have to be given to replacement. Replacements should be of traditional materials and techniques to avoid the loss of



Loss of original features (non smooth wall finish, windows and doors) resulting in loss of architectural and historic interest

historic value of the building and the gradual erosion of the character of the Conservation Area.

2.3.2 Principles

The following principles of repair, drawn in part from the English Heritage publication *The Repair of Historic Buildings* and Appendix C of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15, *Planning and the Historic Environment* provide a good starting point from which to understand the approach and philosophy to historic building repair:

Minimise intervention: Interventions should be kept to the minimum necessary to ensure long-term survival and use.

Avoid unnecessary damage: The authenticity of an historic building depends on the integrity of its fabric. Replacement of historic fabric, no matter how carefully done, will adversely affect the appearance of a building, reduce its value as a source of historical information and is likely to erode local distinctiveness.

Analyse the cause of defects: To repair or replace decayed fabric without having understood why it rotted is unlikely to solve the problem.

Let the building 'breathe': Most modern buildings are made of hard, strong and impervious materials. They rely on physical barriers such as damp proof courses and membranes, cavity walls and cladding to exclude moisture. Historic and traditional buildings are quite different. Old buildings have solid walls and most have a porous fabric that absorbs moisture which then needs to evaporate i.e.

to 'breathe'. To repair such buildings with hard, impervious materials will damage the old fabric. Further guidance can be found in the SPAB Information Sheet *The Need for Old Buildings to "Breathe"*.

Normally traditional materials should be used. Cheap, modern materials such as plastic might be perceived to offer advantages in the short term, but often have unforeseen problems in the longer term and may adversely affect the character and appearance of the area.

2.3.3 Roofs

The predominant roof covering across the whole of the Conservation area is slate, which should be used for any works of repair or replacement. However, there are two types of slate used in two different ways:

Cumbrian 'green' slates, mostly Buttermere slates from Honister laid to 'diminishing' courses (i.e. the slates get progressively smaller as the roof rises). These slates are also of varying widths and relatively thick. They are characteristic of nearly all buildings that pre-date the railway.

Welsh slates are blue-grey in colour and laid in regular courses. The slates are thinner than the Cumbrian slates and of regular sizes. They can be found on many of the buildings that date from the second half of the C19, particularly in the southern, suburban parts of the Conservation Area.

To retain the character the right type of slate should be used and laid in the correct manner. Compare the roof of Christ Church (1865) with that of the

02 Guidance

adjacent Fairfield School (1867 and 1887) to appreciate the difference.

Ridges, verges and other details should all be bedded in natural lime mortars.

Artificial slate, although sometimes difficult to distinguish when new, weathers in a different way. Artificial slates have generally proved to be a poor option in the exposed climate of Cumbria and as such are not advised.

Concrete and clay tiles are not in keeping with the character of Cockermouth's conservation area.

If insulation is introduced into the roof it should be placed at ceiling level or between the rafters, subject to the provision of adequate ventilation (via eaves gaps, not vents fitted to the roof slope). Insulation on top of the rafters will raise the profile of the roof causing problems of detailing at the eaves and where it abuts adjacent buildings.

The introduction of high levels of insulation into older buildings can cause condensation and decay through a lack of breathability. The English Heritage guidance note *Building Regulations and Historic Buildings* provides advice.



Cumbrian green slate roofing laid to diminishing courses



Welsh slate roofing laid to regular courses



junction at the abutment of different roof coverings

Flat roofs are not characteristic of the Conservation Area and as such should be avoided in most situations.

Chimneys should be retained and repaired whenever possible. New clay pots may be necessary if they have been lost. The stability of tall chimney stacks might have to be investigated by a structural engineer.

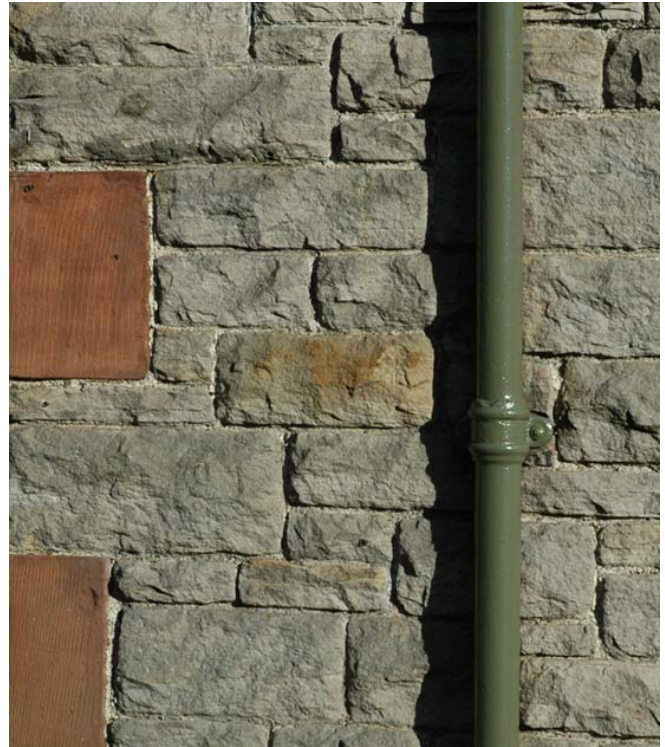
2.3.4 Rainwater goods

In order to help retain local character, cast iron rainwater pipes and gutters should be retained and repaired if possible using new lengths of pipe or gutter of the correct profile. Attention should be paid to matching fixings and supports that form a part of the architecture of the building. Full replacement should ideally be in cast iron but otherwise (painted) aluminium or stainless steel. Plastic is not in keeping with local character and is much more susceptible to impact or frost damage.

2.3.5 External walls

A large proportion of the traditional façades in the Town Centre are finished in smooth render called stucco. Natural stone is only used as a facing material in landmark buildings such as churches and banks, or in later Victorian & Edwardian developments. Brick has been used as a facing material in some locations, though it is a material which is alien to the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Stucco was used to mimic natural stone and is characteristic of the Georgian–Regency period from which a large proportion of the buildings in the



Traditional cast iron downpipe with eared fixing to stonework

Conservation Area date. It continued well into the latter C19, especially in areas where real stone was expensive or hard to come by. Stucco is smooth and generally 'lined-out' to give the impression of a stone wall. In the C18 & C19 it was usually left unpainted, or at the most given a coat of pigment that added to the illusion of real stone. However, during the C20 a trend for brighter colours emerged, which has now become a distinctive element of the Conservation Area's character.

02

Guidance



Stone dressing (quoins) to corner



Stucco (lined out to mimic stone)



Stonework of the Carnegie library



Moulded stucco window head

The stucco facing in Cockermouth is enhanced by the use of real stone or moulded, cast stucco for the dressings around openings or to the corners.

Guidance on the repair of stucco can be found in the book *Mortars, Plasters and Renders in Conservation* published by the Ecclesiastical Architect's and Surveyor's Association (EASA). It is important that any replacement of stucco uses a render mix which allows the backing masonry to 'breathe' and that it is smooth finished and continues the original lining-out.

The use of textured render on the public faces of most houses is not traditional. Smooth render is more in keeping with the character of the main streets.

Render repairs require great care in execution if they are not to disfigure the façade and detract from the special interest of the Conservation Area. Decayed areas should be cut-back to lines that follow the architecture, which in most cases will mean horizontal and vertical lines that correspond to the lining-out of the stucco or doors/windows. Moulded stucco features can generally be removed and re-fixed without too much trouble, though replacement pieces will need to be made for any areas that are irreparably damaged. BRE Good Building Guide 23 (see further information p 35) offers advice on such repairs.

Natural stone which is mainly sandstone in Cockermouth is generally laid in regular courses with fine joints ('ashlar'), though with the surface sometimes left 'rock faced' and fully dressed stone used on cills, lintels and other details.

Stone is a highly durable material that should last for many years without any need for maintenance,

other than perhaps isolated areas of re-pointing. This should be carried out by hand, with extreme care so as not to damage the edges of the stone, and make sure that any pointing is brushed back or otherwise recessed back from the edge of the stone. Modern cement based mortars cause irreparable long term damage to the masonry by trapping water in, and should be avoided. Lime mortars should be used, with natural hydraulic lime being ideal for most sandstones. The EASA publication already mentioned and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) Technical Pamphlet *Repointing stone and brick walling* are both useful.



Stone laid as rock-faced ashlar

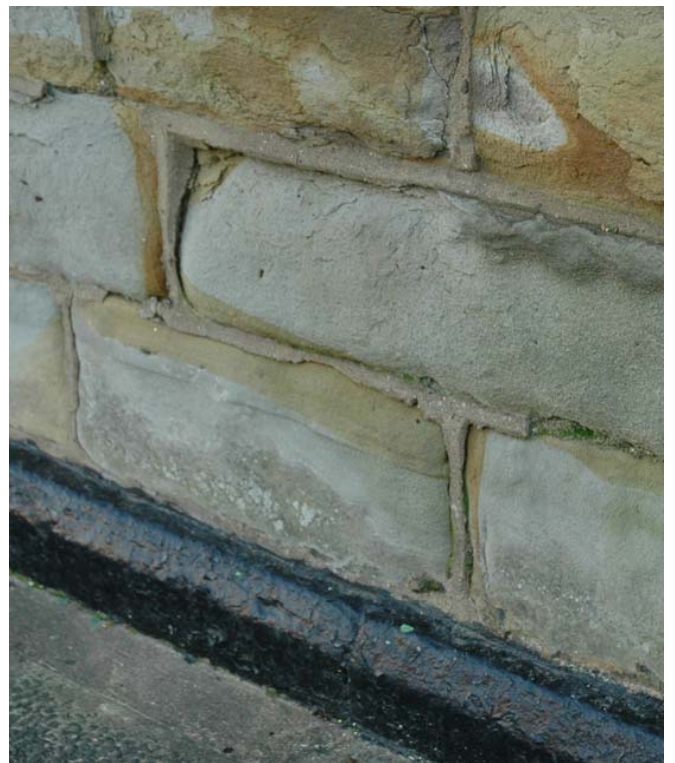
02

Guidance

The temptation to clean stone should normally be resisted as the stonework can be damaged. The green staining that is visible on a number of buildings in the town centre is a sap from the lime trees, deposited by insects and is not damaging.



Stone laid as squared rubble



Damage caused by inappropriate hard, impervious cement pointing

2.3.6 Windows and glazing

The double hung sash window (where the top & bottom sashes move) is typical of buildings within the Conservation Area that were built before 1914. Side or top hung casements are only characteristic of buildings of more recent date, such as inter-war and recent housing. Traditional sashes are made of painted softwood and are important to the character of the town particularly on the fronts and other public facades of buildings.

There is rarely any reason why original sash windows should not be retained and repaired. Replacement of the whole window is rarely necessary, despite what window companies might suggest. Many sash windows have lasted for two centuries and if repaired & looked after will continue to do so. The window sills do sometimes rot beyond (easy) repair, however these can be replaced without affecting the rest of the window. Replacements are often carried out due to misunderstandings of the nature of timber decay and/or the incorrect belief that old windows have to be replaced to save energy. The Government Department of Communities and Local Government 'Review of the Sustainability of existing buildings . The Energy Efficiency of Dwellings Initial



Double-hung sash windows on an early Victorian Terrace (in this case, the replacements to first floor windows are an attempt at a revival of earlier pattern)

02 Guidance

analysis' has found that changing single to double glazing has the longest payback period (average an of 97.6 years) of all household energy efficiency measures.

It is relatively easy to have a sash window repaired and overhauled, and always far cheaper than replacement. Decay is usually confined to the lower parts of the window on elevations exposed to the sun and there are many techniques available for repairing such defects. Most involve the splicing—in of new pieces of timber or the insertion of resin into holes. These repairs should be undertaken by a specialist, of which there are many. Listed building consent is required to replace windows in a listed building. It is advisable to undertake discussions with the conservation officer at the Council (or English Heritage for Grade I or II* buildings) before window replacements are considered.

Repairs should ideally retain old crown or cylinder glass, which is thinner than modern float glass and has a distinctively uneven surface which reflects light in a way which adds to the character of a building. If modern glass is put in instead then sash weights may need to be upgraded to cope with the heavier glass. Guidance on repairs is available from the Council (*Repair and Maintenance of Traditional Buildings: Design Guidance*). English Heritage, SPAB, the Georgian Group and the Victorian Society (see Section 3 Further Information). Original sash frames cannot be re-fitted with sealed glazing units because they are too deep to be accommodated within the original glazing bars and rails. They are also too heavy to be held in with putty and need to be bead-glazed which, even if possible, would result in an increase in the visible thickness of the window members (as well as a sash that would be too heavy for the weights). If

more sound or heat insulation is required, repair and draught stripping will normally be sufficient, but if not then internal secondary glazing could be fitted. This can be done very discreetly.

On the rare occasion when original windows have to be replaced, it is recommended that the new window be a close match of the original in order to retain the building's historic character. New sealed glazing units do not have the same historic character. The application of false glazing bars to the glass also looks unconvincing as do top or side-hung casement windows which attempt (when closed) to look like a sash window. Important aspects of the design of a window are the width, depth and shape of the frames and the glazing bars.

Original sashes comprising a larger number of smaller panes (typically 6 or 8 per sash) are older than those with fewer panes or a single sheet of glass in each sash (cylinder glass and hence large sheets first became available in the 1830s). However there was a revival of interest in older forms of window towards the end of the C19 so some date from then. The presence of 'horns' at the mid-rail position is an indicator of a more recent date. If the existing windows must be replaced, the following points should be taken into account:

- Any evidence as to the appearance of the original windows. Local history libraries, the County Archives and the National Monument Record in Swindon all hold large collections of photos.
- The pattern and details of windows on adjacent buildings, especially if part of a terrace or other

development which was designed as a whole and where elements are repeated.

- The date the building was originally constructed and the type of windows that survive on other local buildings of the same date.
- Evidence of the removal of glazing bars.

Proposals to reinstate original (or earlier than existing) windows should be supported by a statement which explains the chosen design.

02

Guidance



Typical sash window: Georgian & Regency



Regency sliding sash window



Regency-Victorian sliding sash window



Later/modern sliding sash window, note horns to later types

2.3.7 External doors, door cases and other woodwork

Many issues concerning windows also apply to front doors although door patterns are more varied than window patterns. Traditional timber doors should be retained and repaired. Replacements should reinstate an original style door if at all possible.

Front doors were not normally glazed particularly where they have fanlights above, although some later Victorian and Edwardian properties, particularly where set back in gardens have often had upper panels replaced by frosted and/or decorated glass. The ironmongery is also important and external lever type handles should be avoided.

Fanlights, door cases and other features ancillary to entrance doors (often present on listed buildings) should be maintained if possible.



Non traditional plastic front door



Non traditional integral fanlight. Fanlights are traditionally above the door.

Two types of traditional door (glazed panels typical of later Victorian or Edwardian doors)



02

Guidance



Surviving wrought iron railings



Evidence of lost original railings

2.3.8 Railings, gates and boundary walls

Few complete railings survive but evidence of old railings and gates can be seen. Where original ironwork does survive it should ideally be maintained and if necessary repaired. The remnants of old stone copings and walls also contribute to the local character.

The reinstatement of original railings and gates is to be encouraged, provided that there is evidence for the original design of the railings and gates.

Ideally, new railings and gates should be of traditional wrought or cast iron, particularly on listed buildings. However, availability of the former is very limited and the use of steel would be appropriate substitute as long as traditional techniques of fabrication are used, including forge welding and upending. Successful metalwork is often about fine detailing that reflects the nature of the material i.e. what can be achieved with cast iron cannot be with wrought iron and vice versa. The Georgian Group and the Victorian Society publish guidance on ironwork.

Boundary walls in the Conservation Area are mostly of rubble stone, some random and some coursed. Many walls in the outer areas are remnants of old field boundaries and therefore historically important. Such walls can generally be identified from the study of large scale old maps. The removal of old walls to permit off street parking is generally unacceptable.

2.3.9 Pavements

The preservation of the following types of pedestrian or vehicular surfaces is encouraged:

- Natural stone flags, often seen in passageways and yards.
- Stone cobbles, some of which are listed in their own right e.g. Kirkgate.
- Clay pavers with an impressed diamond pattern.
- Encaustic tiles.

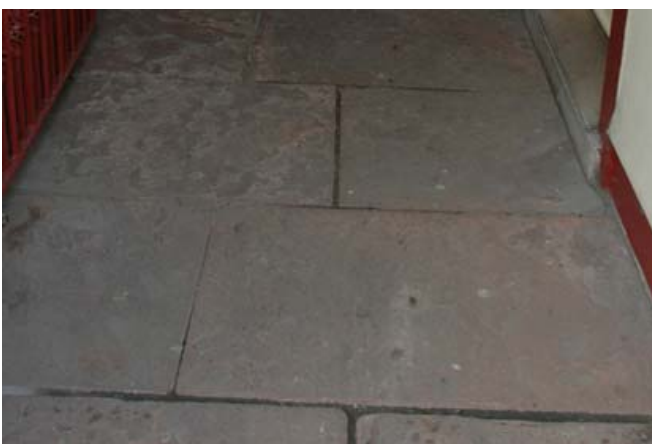
Many pavements within the Conservation Area are of poor quality and their conservation and repair is encouraged. Large areas of tarmac or plain concrete paving does not contribute to the historic character of the area.



Cobbles



Clay pavers



Stone flags



Encaustic tiles

02

Guidance

2.4 Alterations

There are few buildings within the Conservation Area which cannot accommodate some degree of change in response to particular needs, such as:

- More space, in the form of extensions at ground floor or roof level.
- Improved/new shopfronts.
- Improved Access.
- Improvements in energy efficiency and environmental impact.
- Flood prevention.

It is desirable that alterations to buildings do not result in the loss of any attributes which contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area. Buildings of neutral or negative value are likely to have the greatest capacity for change, especially if this results in improvements to the character and appearance of the area and to the wider environment.

2.4.1 Extensions

Well designed extensions do not dominate the existing building in scale, material or location. Success in this area requires understanding of the building type that is being extended together with an understanding of how it has developed over time.

Although each building must be looked at individually, there are certain principles that can be applied to buildings throughout the Conservation Area:

01 Front extensions, including porches, entrance canopies and balconies are not traditional features of the area, and there are few examples.



Examples of rear extensions that successfully defer to their parent building



02 Well designed rear extensions would normally:

- Not result in the loss of historic yards.
- not project further than the rear line of the terrace as a whole (if it is in one) and not disrupt the rhythm of any existing extensions.
- Not extend the full width of the original building.
- Respect the architectural unity of rear facades.
- Be lower than the original building, and often no higher than single storey.

03 New dormers to existing roofs are not encouraged other than in later Victorian or Edwardian developments where they are a distinctive feature of the architecture. In these cases they would ideally:

- Not be added to the front of a building or any prominent rear elevation, unless the reinstatement of an original dormer shown as necessary will recover the architecture of the original design.
- Be taller than they are wide. Separate dormers related to the pattern of openings and the architecture of the façade below should be used.

Design and Access statements which accompany planning and listed building applications are a very good opportunity to explain all that the proposal is designed to achieve in respect of its function and appearance.



Rear extension which dominates (and obscures) original building

02

Guidance



Late Victorian dormer



Inappropriate full-width dormer



Conservation rooflight

04 The acceptability of rooflights will depend upon:

- the extent to which they can be seen from key viewpoints,
- their siting in respect of the windows and doors below.
- The amount of projection above the plane of the roof (reliance must not automatically be placed on the term 'conservation rooflight').

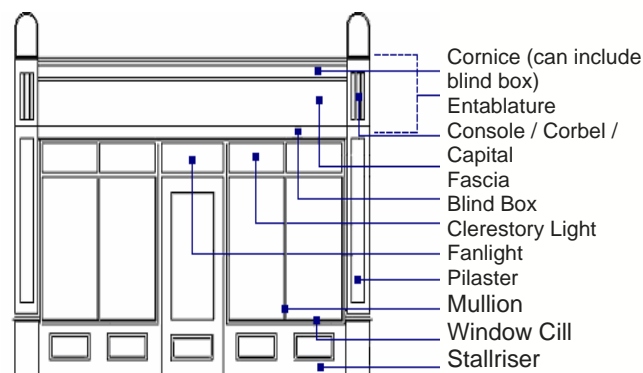
2.4.2 Shopfronts

Cockermouth's Market Place and Main Street have been used for the selling of goods and services for many centuries. Originally, goods were sold from stalls or from properties without shopfronts as we would recognize them today.

In the C18, shop windows started to appear, such as the Georgian bowed oriel window, often seen in pairs either side of a doorway. Very few of these survive although the bowed windows of 5 Castlegate are an example.



From the C18 and particularly in the C19 most shops were designed or remodelled with an integral shopfront at ground floor level, based on classical (Greek) lines. Great importance was placed on the design and the vertical proportions of the building as a whole as well as the shopfront.



Later Georgian and Regency shopfronts were a more formal version of the paired bowed windows with bay windows above stallrisers with an entablature (cornice,

frieze and architrave) above and pilasters (columns projecting from the wall) at the sides. The windows often had small panes with timber glazing bars, but unlike domestic windows, shops traditionally had the mouldings of the glazing bars to the external face and the putty fixing on the inside.

Shopfronts often had a fairly uniform appearance because plot widths were traditionally fairly regular and narrow, openings were restricted in width for structural reasons and glass manufacturing technology restricted pane size.



Although still based on classical lines, Victorian shopfronts showed greater variations, particularly in their materials. Advances in glass technology and the introduction of plate glass in the 1820's allowed larger window panes and from about 1840 horizontal glazing bars (transoms) tended to disappear.



Heavier mullions were required to hold the larger and heavier sheets of glass. Windows were divided into two, three or four lights. A large number of shopfronts of this period have also been lost, although some have simply been re-glazed without their mullions

02 Guidance

In the Edwardian period and up to the 1920's, taller shopfronts appeared with lower stallrisers. These often featured dipped or angled fascias, thinner pilasters, curved glass, decorative clerestory lights and deeply recessed doorways with mosaic tiles displaying the shop name. Mullions tended to disappear and larger shop windows with a reduced vertical emphasis resulted. A significant number of these shopfronts survive and are very popular still.



Many attractive traditional shopfronts were lost in the second half of the C20, however there are still many good examples surviving. These are often the premises of local firms with a long-standing presence in the town and contribute very positively to the character of the conservation area.

Despite many lost shopfronts and the continued existence of some poorly designed shopfronts, new shopfront design seems to be improving and quality is again being recognised as a trading asset.

Shopping is becoming more of a leisure activity and the retail sector has expanded and competition is fierce. There has been a rising awareness of design issues nationally and the growth of the conservation movement. In particular the designation of conservation areas and associated grant schemes have been fundamental in changing attitudes.



Although the individual style of the elements varies, almost all traditional shopfronts incorporated the same basic elements:

- Large, often vertically emphasised windows for display
- Pilasters providing framing and a vertical separation between shops, and an opportunity for colour
- A cornice providing framing and weather protection
- A fascia providing advertising space that could be easily changed as occupants move on and with cornices used to hide the structural support beams. However, these should not dominate and the top should normally be well below the sill of the first floor windows.
- A stallriser providing internal and external protection and a solid base at ground level, so that the building above does not appear to 'float'. A stall riser of at least 450mm is recommended.
- Good quality construction materials were normally used in order to last well and to provide the business with an image of quality.
- Design elements were structural rather than applied eg panelled doors had fielded panels with

mouldings, not mouldings applied to flush doors

- The style of the shopfront often reflected or was reflected in the architectural detailing of the remainder of the building eg small panes for a Georgian building, plainer for Victorian

Principles of Good Shopfront design



- Take account of the age, history, scale, style and materials of the whole building and try to align some elements with those above.
- Respect the scale and proportions of the building and its neighbours so that the new shopfront will harmonise with the street scene.
- Consider the entire design, including finishes, colours and signage.
- Use appropriate, sustainable and good quality materials such as painted wood. Upvc or aluminium will not normally be appropriate for listed or traditional buildings in the conservation area. Lead should be used to protect the top of the cornice above the shopfront.
- Consider longevity in physical (maintenance) and style terms

- Consider the design in three dimensional terms eg mullion profiles, and show such details on any plans.
- Consider how the design fulfils the functional requirements of the shop, including ease of access
- Avoid shopfronts and fascias cutting across two different buildings. Two separate but matching shopfronts will look considerably better.
- Consider the number of elements introduced; detailing, signs and features add interest and vitality as long as they have a purpose.



- Large expanses of plate glass should normally be avoided as it will make the building above appear unsupported and floating.
- Design in any necessary security or shading measures from the outset.
- Awnings should be of the traditional straight style (see below).

Shopfront Signs

Many of the inappropriate shopfront signs that damage the character of town centres, are signs associated with national chain stores which have a corporate sign that is applied regardless of the character of the area, the building or the design of the shopfront.

02 Guidance

All new signs should respect the age and character of the building in terms of size, materials and detailing, regardless of any company image. This does not mean that a sign cannot reflect a company image, or must look historic, but it may need to be adapted, particularly in respect of its size and materials. A contemporary image can be created whilst respecting local character. Historically, sign writing and manufacture was a craft / art form and a creative approach to signage will be encouraged.



Signs can be flat boards or individual letters fixed to the existing fascia, or occasionally the wall of the building at ground or upper floor level. The signs should not dominate the building, and the lettering or board should not extend to the edge of the fascia.



Carefully designed individual letters or symbols applied to the glass may be acceptable if they are of the highest quality. Etched glass can be very effective, but etching historic glass with signs will not be acceptable (as the occupant is unlikely to last as long as the building).



A good quality hanging sign carefully placed to avoid interfering with architectural features in addition to, or in place of a fascia sign, will normally be acceptable if it is of an acceptable scale and design, however this will depend upon the surrounding architectural features.

Signs and letters should normally be of painted timber although good quality metalwork can be acceptable. Plastic and plastic-coated signs and letters should be avoided and will not be acceptable on listed buildings or traditional buildings in the conservation area.

Wall-mounted or hanging signs above fascia level will only be allowed where these are of the highest quality and the design of the building above allows space for the sign without interfering with windows and other architectural features.

The number of advertisements should be kept to a minimum ie a fascia sign plus (where appropriate) a small hanging sign. Too much advertising will defeat its purpose and can create a cluttered confusing appearance to the detriment of the character of the Conservation area, the building and the business itself.

In order to protect visual amenity, vehicular and pedestrian safety and to reduce and minimize light pollution and energy consumption, unnecessary illumination of signs will be resisted. Internally illuminated signs will not normally be allowed and any external illumination equipment, if required, should normally be as small and unobtrusive as possible.

Shopfront Security

- The extent of security measures should be in proportion to the level of risk in the particular location and should, if needed, form an integral part of the shopfront design.
- Stallrisers, mullions and transoms can contribute greatly to shopfront security and reduce the costs of replacement glazing following any breakages. These can be internally reinforced without visual detriment.

- Where historic glass does not exist, then laminated glass can be used to aid safety and security.
- Any additional security devices, if necessary, should be positioned behind the glazing, minimising any restriction of views into the shop, for example by the use of perforated grilles and shutters.
- External roller shutters and grilles will not be acceptable on historic shopfronts. Roller shutters convey the image that the area is in decline, they can attract graffiti and may also prevent window-shopping.



Shopfront canopies

Sometimes shading from glare and excess heat is required. Canopies are a low energy way of reducing this. However they will only be allowed where the shopfront concerned suffers from solar gain, ie has a southerly aspect. The canopy will only be required in certain weather conditions and certain times of year. For this reason, permanent canopies are not considered acceptable as they obscure the shopfront and architecture above as well as views along the street, adversely affecting the character of the conservation area.

Traditionally, canopies were made of canvas and were fully-retractable into 'blind boxes' which were carefully designed to be integral to the shopfront as can be seen in this example in Penrith.



It is still possible to get traditional blinds and boxes repaired, or new ones manufactured locally. These were traditionally hand operated with winders but can sometimes be made with motor operation if desired. The blind boxes should not extend beyond the width of the fascia.

Modern flat canvas retractable blinds may be an acceptable alternative on some unlisted buildings. However, these often have plastic blind boxes, and although these can be fitted with timber covers, they often have frills which do not fully retract and can look unsightly, particu-

larly as they get dirty. These modern versions are often motor operated and the operating mechanism makes them more bulky than the traditional blinds.

Modern plastic or plastic-coated fixed 'Dutch blinds' (like a pram hood) are not acceptable in the conservation area as they do not look traditional and they permanently obscure the shopfront. The partly retractable versions of these blinds, which do not fold back fully into the shopfront, can also look unsightly when shut and should be avoided.

02

Conclusion

The design and quality of shopfronts contribute fundamentally to the appearance of the shopping streets but they also significantly affect the character and image, and economic confidence of the whole town. As such it is important that shopfront design is recognised as a very important part of the character and prosperity of the whole conservation area.

Recessed entrance serving two shops

2.4.3 Energy and environment

Climate change due largely to carbon dioxide emissions is of increasing concern worldwide, with roughly half of the energy and carbon dioxide emissions in the United Kingdom being accounted for by buildings. The government is therefore attempting to reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions to 80% of 1990 levels by 2010 and to 40% by 2050. Stringent new building regulations have been introduced and there is now much pressure to upgrade the environmental performance of older buildings in order to reduce the amount of energy they use.

However, the retention of existing buildings with existing features is the starting point for energy efficiency. Existing buildings and their components contain a significant amount of 'embodied energy', ie all the energy associated with their original construction, including: the winning and working of materials, the manufacture of all elements, and the cost of transporting materials, workers etc.

The environmental cost of replacing an older building, or even parts such as windows and doors, can be significant, which makes the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area highly sustainable. There are simple and non-intrusive ways in which the energy efficiency of existing buildings can be improved:

- Efficient boilers and heating systems.
- Better controls e.g. for heating and lighting.
- Long life, efficient (low energy) light bulbs.
- Limiting air infiltration by draught stripping (but don't overdo it as historic buildings need to 'breathe' to avoid moisture getting trapped).
- Better management of existing mechanical and electrical systems, and the keeping of proper records.
- Ensuring that services are properly maintained (to promote efficient operation and to guard against premature failure and hence replacement).
- Investigate the use of traditional methods of saving energy and improving comfort, such as the reinstatement of timber shutters (refer below).
- The addition of internal secondary glazing if considered necessary

Most of these measures can be applied without adversely affecting the fabric or special interest of an historic building. It is very seldom that there is absolutely nothing that can be done. Beyond this alterations might include:

- the addition of insulation
- renewable energy production

Insulation

Improving the sustainability of older buildings by the addition of insulation requires an understanding of the relationship between environmental services (e.g. heating), energy efficiency, air and moisture movement and the performance of traditional building fabric. Mis-understood 'improvements' in insulation can result in damaging condensation and rotting of fabric as well as unfortunate changes to the appearance of the building, such as the alteration of roof profiles. Too much insulation can also alter the 'dynamic' performance of the building, lessening the ability of the fabric (which is often thicker and heavier than in a building of modern construction) to absorb and release heat, which can decrease the efficiency of the heating system while

02 Guidance

at the same time introduce a need for summer cooling.

Renewable Energy Production

There are many discreet locations and ways of incorporating solar panels (for both the heating of water and the production of electricity) into buildings within the conservation area without adversely affecting the character of the area. Many outbuilding and roofs are not publicly visible and would be suitable for solar panels (depending on orientation), and where buildings are being re-roofed they can be set down so as to minimise protrusion above the roofline. Ground-source heatpumps which extract heat from the ground have no visual impact once installed. (although you may need to check with the County archaeologist that important remains will not be destroyed without recording). The siting of micro wind turbines presently needs planning permission and will not normally be acceptable in prominent locations or on listed buildings. The Government is considering extending Permitted Development Rights to include micro turbines, however this is unlikely to apply in Conservation Areas.

Replacing Later Windows

There is rarely an energy efficiency justification for replacing windows particularly if the embodied energy is taken into account. Good draught stripping can eliminate draughts, reduce energy bills and dramatically reduce noise transfer. Making use of traditional shutters or thick curtains should also be considered as a very cost effective way of reducing energy consumption and increasing comfort. If an additional layer of glass is still desired after the above measures have been incorporated, then sec-

ondary glazing is far less costly and environmentally wasteful than the complete removal of all existing window materials.

The question of embodied energy is important in the context of sealed glazing units which may need replacing on a 10-20 year cycle, depending on the type of unit and the way it is fitted (a lot of poorly installed or made units fail earlier). A lot of energy is expended in the manufacture and transportation of glass, and there is currently no easy way of refurbishing or reusing units where edge seals have broken down and condensation has formed between the panes.

2.5 New Buildings

Identified in the Appraisal are the sites that have been assessed as having a negative or neutral affect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These offer opportunities for improvement or redevelopment (subject to wildlife and flooding concerns). Some of these sites have been identified as key to the future enhancement of the area and may be the subject of development briefs prepared by Allerdale Borough Council. However, each site, proposal and client will have different requirements and the employment of an architect who is fully versed in all these needs is likely to be essential to a successful scheme.

The principles and guidance set out in the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) publication *Building in context: New development in historic areas* (available free, see contact details in Further Information) shows how both contemporary and traditional solutions can co-exist in a sensitive historic environment.

All new buildings should respect the principles of appropriate scale, grain, quality of design and materials and should present active frontages to all public or semi public spaces. How new buildings achieve this should be explained in the Design and Access statement and plans should be accompanied by photomontages and any other helpful graphic material. It is desirable that new buildings:

- do not cut across historic plot lines or boundaries,
- maintain the line of the street.
- relate to the height of adjacent buildings,
- pay heed to the hierarchy of streets and spaces and do not try to be too important for where they are and their use,
- respect the vertical rhythm and proportions of the local architecture,
- use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those traditional to the area. Some use of traditional materials and finishes will help the building respect its context.
- have contemporary elements to its design so that the building is 'of its time' and not a copy of past styles.

Fitting in is not about copying traditional styles as is clear from both *Building in Context* and the *Urban Design Compendium* published by English Partnerships.

Development within the grounds of existing buildings (listed and unlisted) should take heed of the guidance contained in the English Heritage publication *Enabling Development and the Conservation of Historic Assets*. Development is

unlikely to be allowed if it detracts from the design or setting of the original building.

There is rarely a good substitute for employing a qualified and experienced conservation architect (and surveyor if necessary). Whilst their fees might seem high initially, a good architect is very likely to save more money throughout the project (due to speedier planning approvals, less requirement for amendments, more clarity for builders and possibly greater energy efficiency) than the cost of their fees.

2.6 Public Realm

An important aim of design in the urban environment is to create positive definition to outdoor space which may encourage a range of appropriate activities to take place. The design of space requires attention to movement patterns, the building line, the size, shape & dominance of buildings and other objects such as planting, street furniture, public art, highway signs etc.

To improve the quality of the user's and visitor's experience, thought and coordination needs to go into the design of all elements affecting open spaces. Important elements include:

- openness & enclosure
- Encouraging appropriate activity in the commercial centre
- sense of local identity through historic features , street furniture etc

2.6.1 Openness & enclosure

The feeling of a space depends upon the heights and shapes of buildings and structures relative to the size and shape of the space. This will affect

02

Guidance

light and shade, views, and feelings of openness and security. Other factors affecting the character of the space include noise, speed/amount of traffic and the amounts of activity and overlooking.

2.6.2 Encouraging activity

In the town centre's retail streets, active frontages that allow interaction between the space and buildings contribute positively to activity. Amount of publicly accessible uses, amount of glazing, open doors, pavement cafés etc can all assist in creating an attractive environment for visitors and other users and will be encouraged if there are no adverse impacts on the architectural, or other, character of the surroundings.

2.6.3 Sense of local identity

A sense of local identity can be achieved through the quality and distinctiveness of the materials and design of the architecture, surfaces and street furniture. Surfaces should be of durable local materials that complement those of the buildings. Any surface with pedestrian priority should ideally not be of tarmac, both because it is not traditional or distinctive, but also because it may encourage cars and bikes to travel faster than otherwise. Local identity will also depend upon the design, materials and colours of street furniture (signs, lampposts, bins, seats etc). In a historic area these should ideally relate in some way (e.g. robust, vertical emphasis, amount of decoration) to the design of the surrounding buildings and history of the town.

03

Further Information

3.1.1 Allerdale Borough Council

Repair and Maintenance of Traditional Buildings: Design Guidance, July 1993.

3.1.2 Cumbria County Council

Extensive Urban Survey—Arcaeological Assessment Report, Cockermouth and Papcastle (Cumbria County Council and English Heritage)

3.1.3 British Standards Institution (BSI)

BS 7913 *Guide to the principles of the conservation of historic buildings*. BSI, 1998.

BS 8221-2 *Code of practice for cleaning and surface repair of buildings*
– *Part: Surface repair of natural stones, brick and terracotta*. BSI, 2000.

Available to purchase from BSI (half price to members). Expensive but essential reading for building professionals and contractors.

3.1.4 Building Research Establishment (BRE)

GOOD BUILDING GUIDES (GBG)

23 *Assessing external rendering for replacement or repair*, 1995.

GOOD REPAIR GUIDES (GG)

09 *Repairing and replacing rainwater goods*, 1997
(mainly concerned with plastic, but generally applicable).

10 *Repairing timber windows*, 1997 (2 parts).

11 *Repairing flood damage*, 1997 (4 parts)

15 *Repairing chimneys and parapets*, 1998.

Available to purchase from BRE Bookshop at www.brebookshop.com,

3.1.5 Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE)

Guide to building services for historic buildings, November 2002

Provides useful guidance on the environmental performance of traditional buildings, and is endorsed by (among others) English Heritage and the Carbon Trust. Available from CIBSE, though unfortunately quite expensive.

3.1.6 English Heritage

Building in context: New development in historic areas, 2001
published with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

Building Regulations and Historic Buildings, May 2002.

Climate Change and the Historic Environment, January 2006.

Design and Access Statements, how to write, read and use them (CABE 2006)

Door and window furniture, February 1997.

Draughtproofing and secondary glazing, June 1994.

Easy Access to Historic Buildings, July 2004.

Easy Access to Historic Landscapes, October 2005.

Enabling Development and the Conservation of Historic Assets, June 1999.

Flooding and historic buildings, 2004.

Retail Development in Historic Areas (English Heritage, Planning Advisory Service, English Historic Towns Forum, 2005

Streets for All North West (English Heritage, Department of Transport, 2005)

Timber sash windows, February 1997.

Transport and the Historic Environment, March 2006

Window comparisons, October 1994.

All publications available free from English Heritage Customer Services department on 0870 333 1181 or to download via www.helm.org.uk (follow links to EH Guidance)

3.1.7 Georgian Group

Guide No. 1: Windows, August 2004.

Guide No. 8: Metal and Ironwork, August 2005.

Updated guides on Doors, Render, Stucco, Ironwork and Roofs in preparation. All Georgian Group Guides are brought together in *The Georgian Group Book of The Georgian House* as described below under Other Books and Publications.

All available from the Group for a small charge at the address given below.

3.1.8 Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the historic environment, October 2002. (amended by Circulars 01/2001 and 09/2005).

Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and planning, August 2001.

Review of the Sustainability of Existing Buildings. The energy efficiency of dwellings Initial www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1504372

Available to purchase from The Stationary Office (TSO) or to download free via www.odpm.gov.org (follow links to planning policy).

Water Efficiency is addressed at www.breeam.org/eco homes.html

3.1.9 Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

Technical Pamphlet 5: Repointing stone and brick walling, 2002.

Technical Pamphlet 8: The Control of Damp in Old Buildings, 1992.

Technical Pamphlet 13: Repair of Wood Windows, 1998.

Information sheet 4: The Need for Old Buildings to "Breathe", 1986.

A Stitch in Time: Maintaining Your Property Makes Good Sense and Saves Money published 2002 with the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). Free.

03

All available from the Society for a small charge at the address given below.

SPAB also run short courses for homeowners on the care and repair of traditional houses, as well as a range of learning–events for professionals and builders.

A useful source of information covering products, services and advice appropriate to the repair of traditional buildings is *The Building Conservation Directory* published annually by Cathedral Communications Ltd. (Tel: 01747 871717).

3.1.10 Victorian Society

Leaflet Number One: Doors, 1992.

Leaflet Number Six: Cast Iron, 2002.

Leaflet Number Nine: Timber windows, 1999.

All available from the Society for a small charge at the address given below.

3.1.11 Other Books and Publications

Alcock, N. W. *Documenting the History of Houses*. British Records Association, 2003.

Ashurst, John. *Mortars, Plasters and Renders in Conservation*. Ecclesiastical Architects' and Surveyors' Association, 2002.

Brereton, Christopher. *The Repair of Historic Buildings*. English Heritage, 1995.

Llewelyn–Davies. *The Urban Design Compendium*. English Partnerships, 2000. available free via www.englishpartnerships.co.uk.

Parissien, Steven. *The Georgian Group Book of The Georgian House*. Aurum, 1995.

04

Useful Contacts

Allerdale Borough Council

www.allerdale.gov.uk
Allerdale House
Workington
Cumbria CA14 3YJ

Tel: 01900 702702

Building Research Establishment

www.bre.co.uk
Garston
Watford
Hertfordshire WD25 9XX

Tel: 01923 664000

Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE)

www.cibse.org.uk
222 Balham High Road
London SW12 9BS

Tel: 020 8675 5211

Cumbria Record Office and Local Studies Library

www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives
Scotch Street
Whitehaven
Cumbria CA28 7NL

Tel: 01946 852920

English Heritage

www.english-heritage.org.uk
Suites 3.3 & 3.4 Canada House
3 Chepstow Street
Manchester M1 5FW
Tel: 0161 242 1400
Tel: 0161 242 1400

Georgian Group

www.georgiangroup.org.uk
6 Fitzroy Square
London W1T 5DX

Tel: 087 1750 2936

National Monument Record (NMR)

www.english-heritage.org.uk
Kemble Drive
Swindon SN2 2GZ

Tel: 01793 414600

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

www.spab.org.uk
37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY

Tel: 020 7377 1644

Victorian Society

www.victorian-society.org.uk
1 Priory Gardens
Bedford Park
London W4 1TT

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