

East Dunbartonshire Council

Conservation Area Appraisals Central Kirkintilloch

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2021



sustainable thriving achieving

East Dunbartonshire Council

www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk





East Dunbartonshire Council

Conservation Area Appraisals Central Kirkintilloch

Project Number
11049

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1.	First draft	R. Brady R. Haworth R. Nicholson	R. Brady	S. Orr	06.11.2020
2.	Second draft – addressing clients comments	R. Nicholson	R. Brady	S. Orr	13.01.2021

Bristol
Edinburgh
Glasgow
London
Manchester

landuse.co.uk

Land Use Consultants Ltd
Registered in England
Registered number 2549296
Registered office:
250 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8RD

100% recycled paper

Landscape Design
Strategic Planning & Assessment
Development Planning
Urban Design & Masterplanning
Environmental Impact Assessment
Landscape Planning & Assessment
Landscape Management
Ecology
Historic Environment
GIS & Visualisation



Contents

Chapter 1

Executive Summary 1

Introduction	1
Location and context	1
Historical development	2
Summary of defining characteristics of Central Kirkintilloch Conservation Area	2

Chapter 2

Location and Context 4

Location	4
Geology & Topography	5
The Conservation Area Boundary	7

Chapter 3

The Historical Development of Central Kirkintilloch 10

Roman origins	10
Medieval developments	11
Boom in industry	12
19 th century	14
20 th century	15

Chapter 4

Conservation Area Character Analysis 18

Function and Form	18
Activity and movement	18
Scale and hierarchy	19
Spatial Qualities	20
Development pattern, layout and density	20
Public and private space	22
Setting	23
Built Form and Detailing	24
Building types	24
Distinctive architectural style and detailing	25
Use of materials	27
Views	28
Types of views	28
Examples of views in Kirkintilloch Conservation Area	28

Table of Figures

Figure 2.1: Views of the Campsie Fells	6
Figure 2.2: Map of CA boundary	8
Figure 2.3: Conservation area – character sub-areas	9
Figure 3.1: The line of the Antonine Wall	11
Figure 3.2: The earthworks of the castle motte in Peel Park	12

Contents

Central Kirkintilloch Conservation Area Appraisal
January 2021

Figure 3.3: Weavers' cottages at the far end of Union Street	13	Figure 4.14: Building materials and finishes	27
Figure 3.4: Townhead Bridge over the canal	13	Figure 4.15: Static view – the war memorial	29
Figure 3.5: The Forth and Clyde Canal	14	Figure 4.16: Glimpsed views along Cowgate and High Street	29
Figure 3.6: Victorian development	15	Figure 4.17: Dynamic view of St Mary's Church along Townhead	30
Figure 3.7: 20th century development in a view from Townhead	16		
Figure 3.8: The historical development of Kirkintilloch	17		
Figure 4.1: Scale and hierarchy around High Street	19		
Figure 4.2: The scale and hierarchy of residential streets	19		
Figure 4.3: Public buildings	20		
Figure 4.4: Development pattern around the historic core and Cowgate	20		
Figure 4.5: Development pattern of residential suburbs	21		
Figure 4.6: Public spaces	22		
Figure 4.7: Private spaces	22		
Figure 4.8: Peel Park and its bandstand	23		
Figure 4.9: Peel Park gates and fountain	23		
Figure 4.10: 18th and 19th century building types	24		
Figure 4.11: Post-war additions	25		
Figure 4.12: Tenement types	26		
Figure 4.13: Public art and historical interpretation	26		

Chapter 1

Executive Summary

Introduction

1.1 The special interest of Kirkintilloch and the desire to celebrate and preserve its historical importance was recognised by its designation in the 1980s as an area of special interest. The previous Conservation Area Appraisal was reviewed and this one was produced in October 2020 to document the reasons for the area's designation, considering the character and appearance of the area as it stands today.

1.2 This appraisal is one of a suite of appraisals and documents that consider the importance of conservation areas in East Dunbartonshire and how their special interest should be managed.

- Each conservation area has its own appraisal that considers the historical development of that specific area, along with an analysis of its character based on an assessment of its function and form, spatial qualities, architectural detailing, trees and landscaping and views.
- Further information on why and how an area is designated as a conservation can be found in the accompanying document 'An Introduction to Conservation Areas' which can be found.
- For advice on how to retain, restore and reinforce the character of conservation areas, along with specific management issues, opportunities and recommendations identified for the Kirkintilloch Conservation Area, please refer to the separate 'Conservation Areas: Managing Change' document.

Location and context

1.3 Kirkintilloch is a historic burgh and town of industry in the south east of East Dunbartonshire, 12 kilometres north-east of Glasgow and some 58 kilometres due west of Edinburgh. The historic core of the town stands on a hill ridge, created by the erosion of the

Chapter 1

Executive Summary

Central Kirkintilloch Conservation Area Appraisal
January 2021

land to the west by the Park Burn, to the east by the Luggie Water and to the north by the River Kelvin, into which the two smaller waterbodies flow, just north of the town. Whilst located firmly within the sandstone belt, the rugged hills of the Campsie Fells exert their influence even here, rising above the town some 10 kilometres to the north and forming a striking backdrop to views from the town centre.

1.4 Over the centuries, the town has worked its location to its advantage, deriving authoritative standing and economic advantage from its proximity to the Glasgow/Lanarkshire coal and iron field and its position on historic and strategically significant east-west routes through Central Scotland, of which there are many – the Antonine Wall, the Forth and Clyde Canal and, from mid-19th century, the regional rail network.

Historical development

1.5 The story of Kirkintilloch as the settlement we see today begins with the Romans and the construction around AD142 of one of the frontiers of the Roman Empire, the Antonine Wall. To what is now the north end of the town, overlooking the Kelvin valley. Although their presence here was short-lived, the strategic importance of the area was not lost on later inhabitants. In the 12th century, a castle was constructed alongside the Roman wall – sited for dramatic effect as much as for strategic control. A town naturally grew up around the foot of the castle which, in the 13th century, received the grant of Burgh of Barony, and so had royal approval to become a defensible settlement. Importantly, the grant also brought with it liberty to hold weekly markets, and the town developed an agricultural economy that ensured its posterity. The castle was then destroyed and abandoned in the 14th century.

1.6 The town continued much as it had always been until the construction of the Forth and Clyde Canal in 1773, which revolutionised the transport of goods and people within Scotland and overseas. With it came the establishment of important new industries in Kirkintilloch, including cotton, weaving, iron founding and boat building, that shifted the focus of the town south from around the castle to the newly established route of Cowgate, which connected the Kirkintilloch Cross to the new industry. The increase in trade and industrial activity fuelled a population growth to support it and, beyond the historic core and commercial centre, suburbs began to be built to accommodate both the workers and the newly rich.

1.7 These traditional industries started to decline into the 20th century, to be overtaken by the commercial and services industry; however, the town has remained an important residential and administrative centre in the region. The 2001 restoration and re-opening of the Forth and

Clyde Canal as a local amenity and tourist attraction has made a significant contribution to local economic regeneration, and highlights the importance of the historic environment to the town's future, as well as its past. The canal was reopened as part of the Millennium Link, connecting Edinburgh and Glasgow with navigable canals: the Union and Forth and Clyde.

Summary of defining characteristics of Central Kirkintilloch Conservation Area

1.8 The context and historical development of Kirkintilloch are unique to the town, and it is from this that it draws its individual character. This strong sense of place comes from many facets and the way these elements combine to create a special place of architectural or historic interest – that is, the foremost criteria for conservation area designation. The following features are of particular importance to the character and appearance of Kirkintilloch:

- The development of the town as evidenced in its layout, with the more organic form of the historic core focused around the Kirkintilloch Cross/West High Street at the north end of the town giving way to the linear, planned layout of industrialisation centred on the Cowgate and Townhead and Victorian suburban expansion. The town's relationship with the Forth and Clyde canal is absolutely fundamental to understanding its evolution and form, and also provides important amenity space.
- The gradual evolution of streets has furnished the town with an array of building types and styles that together document its development and define its appearance. Of particular note within the commercial centre are the contribution that public buildings play in the streetscape, as local landmarks and reminders of the importance of the town as an administrative, community and urban centre. Out into the suburbs, the quality and range of architectural stylings document changing fashions and the prosperity of the town's citizens.
- The harmonious, but not homogenous, appearance of streetscapes. Across the conservation area the height, size and density of development changes depending on date and status; however, there is an overarching conformity along individual streetscapes in terms of scale (mainly two and three storey), proportions, orientation, positioning and materiality (for instance, traditional buildings mainly sandstone walls and slate roofs), with the subtle transition from one to the next tying the whole area together. Taller buildings are few and tend to be merely accents that punctuate the skyline – and are exclusively religious or civic in function. This arrangement means

Chapter 1

Executive Summary

Central Kirkintilloch Conservation Area Appraisal
January 2021

that glimpsed views of assets and dynamic views of streetscapes are particularly important in conveying the character of the town.

- The use of buildings in the town for a range of functions brings variety and activity to the streets and illustrates its historical development. There are several distinct areas, but their characters are broadly split between into the busier, commercial and community activity around Cowgate to the east, and the quieter, leafier, more tranquil residential suburbs to the west. The proximity of the two areas and the rapid transition from one to the other – whilst retaining quite distinct characters – is a defining feature of the area.
- Pockets of public green spaces, planting and trees within the conservation area, in particular alongside the Canal and at Regent Gardens, give respite from the bustle of activity and harder urban townscape of the main streets. Similarly, the generous gardens and mature planting along residential streets and within Peel Park provide an experience of the town that is much quieter and more intimate.
- The appearance of the Campsie Fells and parts of the Kelvin valley in views throughout all parts of the area provides a beautiful – and at times unexpected – backdrop to the built form of the town. These views undoubtedly add another layer to the town's aesthetic qualities along with the Canal, but also act as a reminder of the strategic importance of its location.

Chapter 2

Location and Context

The character of an area starts to form long before the human interventions of buildings, streets, fields and towns are established: it starts with the geology and topography of a place. These literal foundations are what makes some places suitable for human habitation and others not, what makes some settlements flourish whilst others fade. This section considers what it is about the location and context of Kirkintilloch that made it ripe for successful occupation.

Location

2.1 The area of East Dunbartonshire lies to the north of the city of Glasgow in central Scotland. Bordered by Stirling to the north, West Dunbartonshire to the west and North Lanarkshire to the east, it covers an area of approximately 175 square kilometres and incorporates parts of the historic counties of Dunbartonshire, Stirlingshire and Lanarkshire.¹

2.2 Kirkintilloch is a historic burgh and town of industry in the south east of East Dunbartonshire, north-east of the Clydeside conurbation. Situated on the Forth and Clyde canal on the southern edge of the valley of the River Kelvin, it is 12 kilometres north-east of Glasgow and some 58 kilometres due west of Edinburgh. As of the 2011 census it had a population of

¹ <https://www.qeni.com/projects/Dunbartonshire-Main-Page/16029> [accessed 7th July 2020]

Chapter 2

Location and Context

Central Kirkintilloch Conservation Area Appraisal
January 2021

just under 20,000, making it the third largest settlement in East Dunbartonshire.² Its longer names is often shortened by local to the colloquial *Kirkie* or *Kirky*. It is also home to the principal offices of East Dunbartonshire Council.

Geology & Topography

2.3 The landscape of the region varies in character, descending from the sparsely populated, rugged uplands of the Campsie Fells in the north-west, through smooth, undulating foothills into the broad, deep lowlands of the Kelvin Valley and on to the rolling, pastoral farmland of the south-east of the region. Punctuating this landscape are small towns and villages, with the largest settlements congregating along the corridor created by the valley lowlands that extend on a gentle incline from south west to west, allowing easy passage across the region. The further south and south-west you travel the more densely populated the region gets as it transitions from its rural hinterlands to become the urban fringes and overspill of the City of Glasgow.

2.4 The change in landscape character can largely be attributed to the geology that underlies this area. For the most part, this comprises sedimentary bedrock formed between 350 and 300 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period. Known as the Clackmannan Group, this layer of rock is made up of a sequence of sandstones, siltstone, mudstones, ironstones and coals overlaid by seams of clays, silts, sand and gravel that were deposited on top of them during the last Ice Age. Over millions of years this rock has eroded, and it is this action that has formed the gentle hills and lowland of the majority of the region.

2.5 This wide band of sedimentary rock that underlies most of the region sits alongside harder volcanic rocks in the north, and it is the nature of these different types of rock formation that directly accounts for the area's topography. Volcanic rock is more resistant to erosion and wears away at a much slower rate than sandstone. The transition between the two – along a line known as the Campsie Fault – has endowed East Dunbartonshire with a beautiful, contrasting and at times dramatic landscape, a defining feature that makes for a strong identity and sense of place.

2.6 This fortune extends much further than just visual appeal, however, and has also gifted the region with a plentiful supply of tough and durable sandstones that make excellent building

stone, as well as rich deposits of coal that brought landowners in the region much wealth. It is this comparatively easy access to quality stone that makes East Dunbartonshire a region of predominantly sandstone and slate buildings. By no means has this resulted in homogeneity, however: stones ranging in colour from brown, red and pink through to grey, cream and buffs recall the locality from which they were quarried, tying the buildings back to the landscape that they stand on and, indeed, are hewn from.

2.7 Kirkintilloch is situated in the middle of the band of Clackmannan Group sandstones. The historic core of the town stands on a hill, created by the erosion of the land to the west by the Park Burn, to the east by the Luggie Water and to the north by the River Kelvin, into which the two smaller waterbodies flow, just north of the town. Whilst located firmly within the sandstone belt, the rugged hills of the Campsie Fells exert their influence even here, rising above the town some 10 kilometres to the north and forming a striking backdrop to views from the town centre.

2.8 Over the centuries, the town has worked its location to its advantage, deriving authoritative standing and economic advantage from its proximity to the Glasgow/Lanarkshire coal and iron field and its position on historic and strategically significant east-west routes through Central Scotland, of which there are many – the Antonine Wall, the Forth and Clyde Canal and, from mid-19th century, the regional rail network.

² <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/uk-scotland.php?cityid=S19000992> [accessed 02.07.2020]

Chapter 2

Location and Context

Central Kirkintilloch Conservation Area Appraisal
January 2021

Figure 2.1: Views of the Campsie Fells



The Campsie form the backdrop in many views throughout the conservation area, here in a view down Washington Road...



...And here from Peel Park. See also Figure 3.7.

The Conservation Area Boundary

2.9 The conservation area boundary (Figure 2.1) is tightly centred around the historic commercial core and 19th to 20th century residential development. It is bounded on its eastern side by the modern A806, taking in the West High Street and the Cowgate heading south towards the Forth and Clyde canal, where a small section on the Townhead area on its southern bank is incorporated into the conservation area. The canal and mid-19th century Alexandra Street forms the southern edge, with the boundary moving westwards to include the early 20th century Bellevue Road, avoiding the modern high school development. The north of the conservation area incorporates the major A803 Glasgow Road. Within the centre of the conservation area is Peel Park and the Regent Street/Victoria Street area.

2.10 Although covering a large area of the main centre of the town, the boundary reflects the expansion of the centre over a long timescale. This incorporates five areas of varying character (shown in Figure 2.3):

1. Kirkintilloch Cross/West High Street
2. Cowgate/Townhead
3. Regent/Victoria Street
4. Peel Park
5. Bellevue Road/Alexandra Street.

2.11 The boundaries of these areas are illustrative and broadly used to help divide the character assessment into a more easily accessible format. By adopting this approach, it is possible to consider each sub-area separately to gain a clearer understanding of the development of the town and how this is illustrated through its historic built form. However, it is the collective character of these sub-areas that makes the area worthy of designation, the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.

Figure 2.2: Map of CA boundary

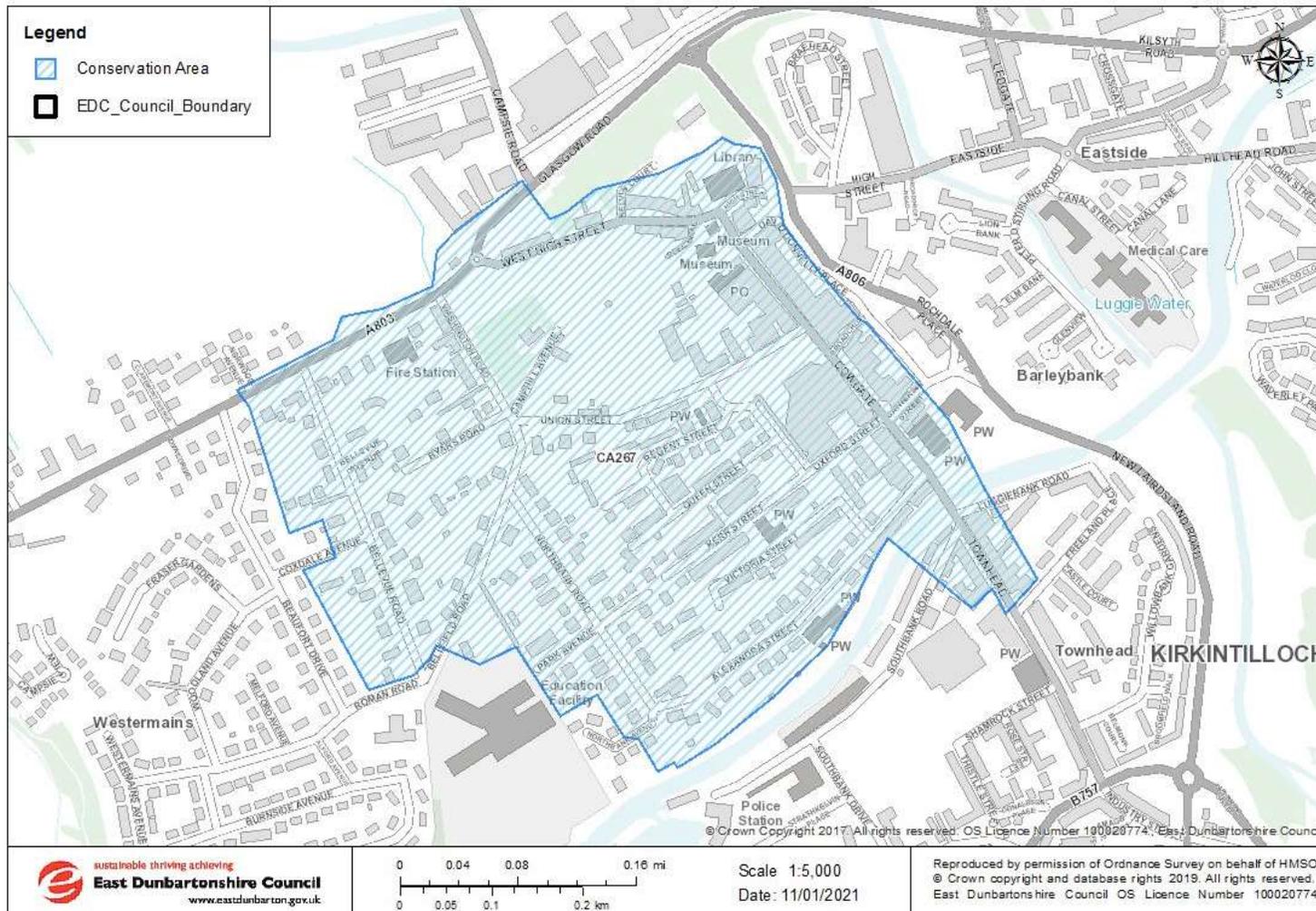
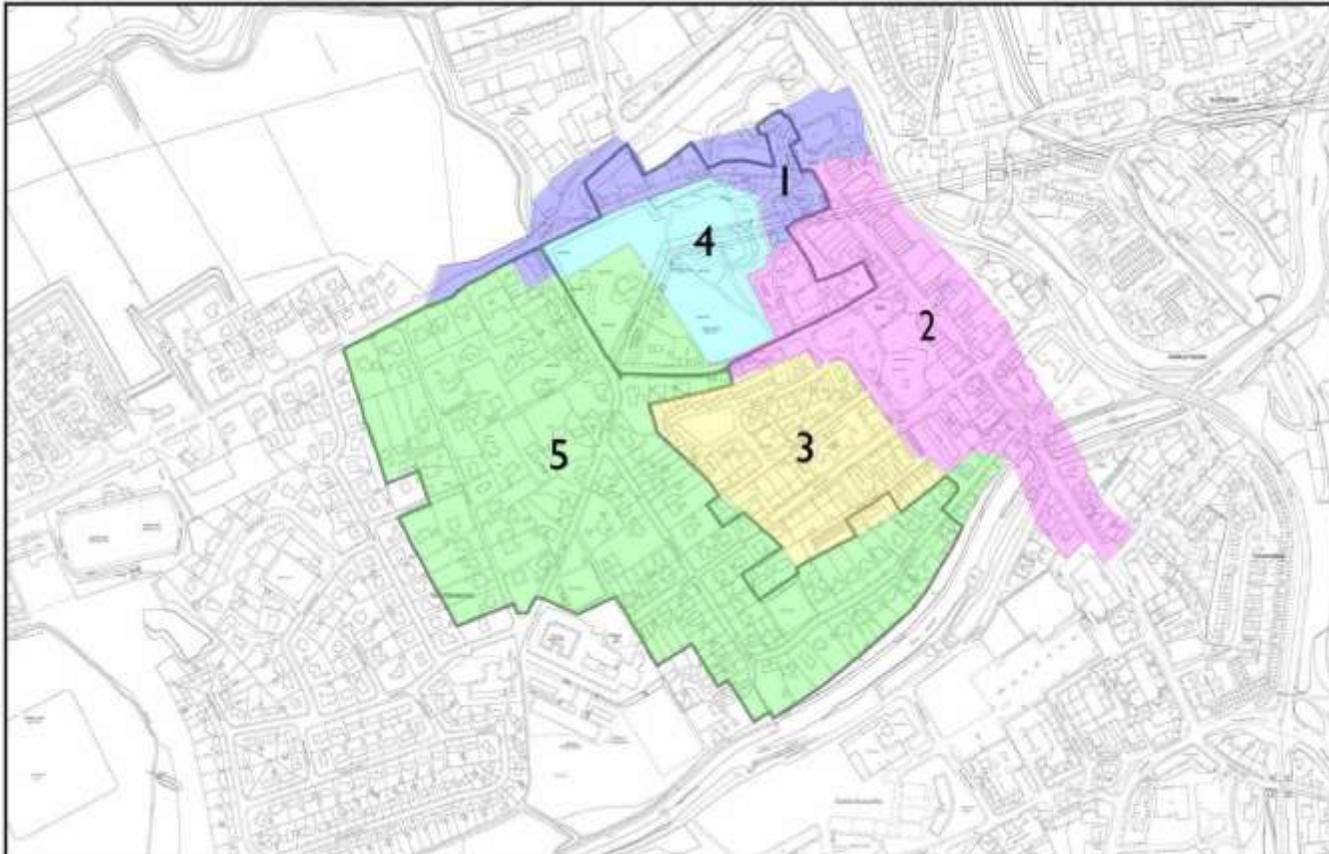


Figure 2.3: Conservation area – character sub-areas



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office ©Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved. East Dunbartonshire Council Copyright Licence no 100020774. Robin Kent Ltd Licence no AR100031346

Chapter 3

The Historical Development of Central Kirkintilloch

Conservation areas did not develop in isolation, and in order to understand what is included within the boundary and why, we must look beyond to give the area context. This section considers how Central Kirkintilloch developed from its earliest origins into the settlement we see today.

Roman origins

3.1 In AD 142, the Antonine Wall was constructed on the orders of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius, stretching 60km from Old Kirkpatrick on the Clyde to Bo'ness on the Forth. Built by members of three Roman legions, it was constructed of a stone foundation with a banked rampart of turf to a height of 3m. The wall was flanked on the north by a large defensive ditch and outer mound. To the south lay the 'military way', a road linking the various forts and fortlets along the length of the wall providing easy movement of troops and supplies.

3.2 The wall was occupied for around 16 years before it was abandoned, with its fort buildings dismantled or burnt but the earthworks and rampart remaining intact. The wall represented the most northern extent of both the Roman occupation in Britain and frontier of the Roman Empire. It was a component part of a European-wide network of defensive features marking the northern limits of the Roman Empire, also comprising Hadrian's Wall and the German Limes. The wall was inscribed onto UNESCO's World Heritage Site list in 2008.

3.3 A section of the wall runs through the historic centre of Kirkintilloch, built along a low ridge overlooking the Kelvin valley to the north, crossing from the area of Camphill Avenue to the

northeast gate of Peel Park and Peel Brae. It consists of the rampart, ditch, berm and up cast mound which have largely been flattened through development but some sections remain visible. A small section of the foundations of the wall were uncovered during an excavation, which are now preserved and on display in the northwest of Peel Park. The position of where the wall crossed the current line of the Cowgate was marked with stone markers, benches and paving in 2017.

3.4 One of the 17 principal forts of the wall is located in Peel Park, although its exact layout is still obscure, with the fort sitting on a slightly higher area of glacial till commanding the Luggie crossing. It has undergone limited archaeological investigations but its presence has been confirmed through the discovery of post-holes of timber buildings, road surfaces and drains dated to the 2nd century AD using artefacts including coins, pottery and dressed building stone.

Figure 3.1: The line of the Antonine Wall



A stone marking the line of the wall as it passes by the Auld Kirk Museum and into Peel Park.

Medieval developments

3.5 Little is known of the history of the settlement for the next thousand years; however, the name “Kirkintilloch” derives from the early Christian period, around the 6th – 8th centuries. In its original form *Caerpentaloch*, “The Fort at the head of the ridge”, is named after the Roman fort. Alternatively, the name means ‘Fort at the head of the hill’, derived from the Brythonic word *caer* meaning ‘fort’ alongside the Scottish Gaelic words *cinn* meaning ‘at the head of’ and *tulaich* meaning ‘hill’.

3.6 During the 12th century, the strategic fort site in Peel Park was used by the Comyns as a motte and bailey castle (possibly with re-used Roman masonry). It consisted of a rectangular mound with a broad ditch, with much of the earthworks now visible in Peel Park connected with the castle. The focus of a settlement near the castle was further encouraged by the grant of Burgh of Barony in 1211 from King William the Lion to William Comyn. Kirkintilloch became only the second barony of its type at the time (after Prestwick) with around 30 royal burghs in existence by this date.

3.7 Kirkintilloch was situated on an important highway between Glasgow and the east, with the town’s axis lying on an east-west alignment during the medieval period. This included West High Street and High Street with the town growing eastwards to Eastside. The bridge over the Luggie Water was of vital importance for keeping the road open in bad weather. The township is likely to have run from the castle gates down Peel Brae to meet the Cross, the junction with the pre-existing east-west route. The barony status importantly gave liberty for weekly markets to be held at the Cross.

3.8 The castle itself had a short life. During the Wars of Independence, the site was re fortified and functioned as a militarised borderland. Occupation of the castle switched hands between Scottish and English forces before the castle was finally destroyed in 1314 by Robert the Bruce after his victory at Bannockburn. After its abandonment and ruin in the 15th century, Peel Brae declined in importance and the focus of the town shifted towards the marketplace and main road.

3.9 A parish church was erected during the 12th century, at what is now known as the Old Aisle Cemetery in the south-east of the town, that was dedicated to St Ninian. Cowgate, earlier

known as Churchgate, represents the historic route to the church as well as to the ford at Oxgangs. Being some 2km from the town centre, the parish church was inconvenient for the inhabitants of the growing settlement so in the early 15th century a chapel was constructed on the site of the current Auld Kirk Museum.

Figure 3.2: The earthworks of the castle motte in Peel Park



Boom in industry

3.10 Until the late 18th century, Kirkintilloch remained a small, rural market town, with Roy's mid-18th century map showing the town remained on its east-west orientation. The parish was divided and a new parish church dedicated to St Mary was built in 1644 on the earlier foundations of the Auld Kirk; the church survives today as the town museum and is one of the town's oldest buildings. The bridge over the Luggie, an important link on the transport route, was rebuilt in 1672 and regularly repaired and rebuilt thereafter, often with encouragement from Glasgow – an indication of its national importance as part of the principal east-to-west route across the country. In the 18th century, Cowgate was still enclosed by fields, interspersed with just a few houses, leading to the small settlement at Townhead.

3.11 Kirkintilloch was, at this time, an agricultural hub and centre for the handloom weaving industry. Weaving communities were established in many parts of the conservation area during the early 1800s, including Townhead and the eastern part of Queen Street, Kerr Street and Victoria Street leading off Cowgate. These communities thrived in the town until the late 19th century, but started to wane after this point as flax was replaced by imported cotton. This cottage industry required a specialised domestic building form with a weaving shop below and living accommodation above. Most purpose-built weavers' houses in Kirkintilloch have been demolished, but a few important examples do survive, including 55-59 Union Street and 23-27 Townhead. Across the river, Eastside grew in size due to its weavers and linseed market. The buildings of Westermains Farm and 18 West High Street survive from the late 17th and early 18th centuries, giving an idea of the scale of the town at this time.

Figure 3.3: Weavers' cottages at the far end of Union Street



3.12 The opening of the Forth & Clyde Canal in Kirkintilloch in 1773 revolutionised the transport of goods and people within Scotland and overseas. There was an establishment of important new industries including cotton, weaving, iron founding and boat building. Goods were loaded to the east of the town centre, at Hillhead, but facilities for the 60-70 passengers each day were constructed at the Townhead bridge embarkation point, and there is evidence for buildings on both sides of the canal being constructed soon after its opening, including the former Eagle Inn at 126 Cowgate, a public house for travellers for refreshment, accommodation

and the purchasing of tickets. Consequently, Cowgate very quickly became important as the link between the canal and the historic centre.

Figure 3.4: Townhead Bridge over the canal



View south across the bridge towards Townhead



View north across the bridge towards 126 Cowgate

3.13 Iron foundries played an important part in the economy of the town, and decorative work from the Lion Foundry can still be seen in various locations. Boatbuilding was also significant; the yard on the south bank of the canal at Townhead Bridge, begun in the mid-1800s as a co-operative venture to provide local employment but soon taken over by the Hay brothers, produced and repaired horse-drawn 'scows' as well as the iconic 'Puffers'. During the early 20th century, McGregor & Sons had a yard at the two canal basins connecting to the Monkland & Kirkintilloch Railway, which produced a variety of boats including larger seagoing vessels to be transported to the coast by rail in sections

3.14 The result of the all the town's industrious activity and its fortunate, prime location on the canal was that it became Scotland's first inland port and a thriving centre for the export of many goods including coal and fine cottons.

Figure 3.5: The Forth and Clyde Canal



In the distance, 126 Cowgate and the tower of the parish Church of St. Mary

19th century

3.15 During the 19th century the population of Kirkintilloch rose fivefold, and the town's infrastructure was gradually improved. A relatively level 'bypass' to the north of the High Street was constructed in 1805, with a tollhouse at the junction with the Glasgow Road; Coal Road is said to be the route taken by hauliers to bypass the toll. Older buildings at the north end of Cowgate were demolished in the late 19th century to allow for road widening. The 19th century was the period when purpose-built shops began to be built, and Cowgate has been the principal shopping street since this time.

3.16 The opening of the Edinburgh & Glasgow railway station at Eastside in 1848 increased the possibility of commuting to work. Several schools and churches were built during the century, including the 1893 Holy Family & St Ninian's in Union Street by Peter Paul Pugin (the son of A W N Pugin), whose firm was responsible for many Roman Catholic churches in Scotland. The importance and prosperity of the town as a centre for industry, trade and commerce throughout the 19th century is also reflected in the number of public buildings dating from this time: the Barony Chambers at the head of Cowgate (1814-15)³; the Broomhill and Lanfine hospitals off Kilsyth Road (founded 1875 and 1904); the Town Hall (1904-6); a gas works (in Canal Street) and street lighting, introduced in the 1830s.

3.17 The late 19th century was a time of slum clearances and redevelopment generally across the country and Kirkintilloch was no exception, with demolition of properties in all the older parts of the town. Along with it, in 1885, came a requirement that all new roofs and any roof repairs should be in slate. Many weaving shops were converted to housing, and decorative datestones in the Regent Street/Kerr Street area hint at the extent of new building.

3.18 At the end of the century, a villa suburb for middle class residents was built in the Westermaines and Bellfield areas of the town, the field pattern still legible today in road layout and property boundaries. The development was completed within a fairly short period, being almost completely built up in two main stages between 1894 and 1896 then 1900 to 1914. Many of the roads here were originally private and only adopted by the local authority in the 20th century.

³ This replaced the old tolbooth, whose small scale had shown no premonition of the population growth and the town's expansion that was to follow, and formerly served as the town hall, council chambers, courthouse, school and jail. Today it serves as offices for East Dunbartonshire Leisure & Culture Trust's Museum Service.

3.19 Remarkably, throughout this period of intense growth and industrialisation, the Peel area had remained in agricultural use; however, in 1897 it was purchased and converted to a public park with a bandstand and drinking fountain. Although originally known as Victoria Park, its name soon reverted to the Peel, reflecting the strength of its historic identity amongst the local population.

Figure 3.6: Victorian development



Middle class suburban housing along Bellfield Road



Peel Park and its bandstand.

20th century

3.20 The early 20th century remained a prosperous period for the town. St Mary's Church opened in 1914 at the foot of Cowgate and the bridge over the canal, succeeding the 15th century Auld Kirk (at the head of Cowgate) as the parish church,⁴ with the pink sandstone neo-Gothic church and its square tower a prominent landmark. The 1906 Town Hall took over the civic functions of the Barony Chambers. The town's strict teetotal laws mean that no public houses survive from this date, unusual for a town of this size.

3.21 Heavy industry had been in decline throughout the 20th century, with traditional industries being overtaken by light engineering, culminating in the closure of the canal in 1963 and the last

remaining foundry in the 1970s (although a brass foundry, set up in the 1950s, is still in operation). There was an attempt to replace the lost industries during the 1960s when Kirkintilloch formed part of the Glasgow Overspill project. This met with only limited success, but the Overspill project resulted in the construction of many new homes throughout the town, both in the rented and private sectors, which resulted in yet another burst in population for the ancient burgh. The project instigated a range of 'modernisations' and rebuilding of shops in Cowgate, continuing into the 1990s with the large Regent Centre development and the William Patrick library at the Cross. Regent Centre Gardens contains one of the four permanent memorials to Diana Princess of Wales in the UK, the only one outside London to commemorate her officially opening the centre in 1992.

3.22 Attempts to relieve traffic pressure in Cowgate during the 1960s led to a proposal for road widening. Although never carried out, it resulted in the pre-emptive setting-back of the bank buildings at the Townhead bridge and, in the early 1990s, to the construction of the town centre by-pass, New Lairdsland Road, joining Glasgow Road to Lenzie Road. Unfortunately, this route required cutting across the historic line of East High Street and resulted in the loss of historic townscape to the northeast of Cowgate, whilst at the other end buildings were also demolished to widen the junction at Catherine Street. Pedestrianisation of Cowgate was proposed in the 1990s, but not carried out; however, numerous pedestrian and cycle routes, based on the canal towpath, converge on Townhead Bridge.

3.23 The designation of the conservation area in the 1980s reflected increasing interest in the town's built heritage. The restoration and re-opening of the Forth and Clyde Canal as a local amenity and tourist attraction is making a significant contribution to local economic regeneration and a deeper appreciation of the heritage value of this long-neglected asset.

3.24 The regeneration of Kirkintilloch town centre had been progress by the Council and Kirkintilloch Community Council since 2011 when the Kirkintilloch Town Centre Masterplan process was started. Kirkintilloch's rich heritage has been recognised and regeneration projects in the town centre which have enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area have included:

- The Barleybank Square created beside the canal and St Mary's Church in 2014

⁴ The Auld Kirk was then used as a Sunday School and, since 1961, it has been the town museum.

Chapter 3

The Historical Development of Central Kirkintilloch

Central Kirkintilloch Conservation Area Appraisal
January 2021

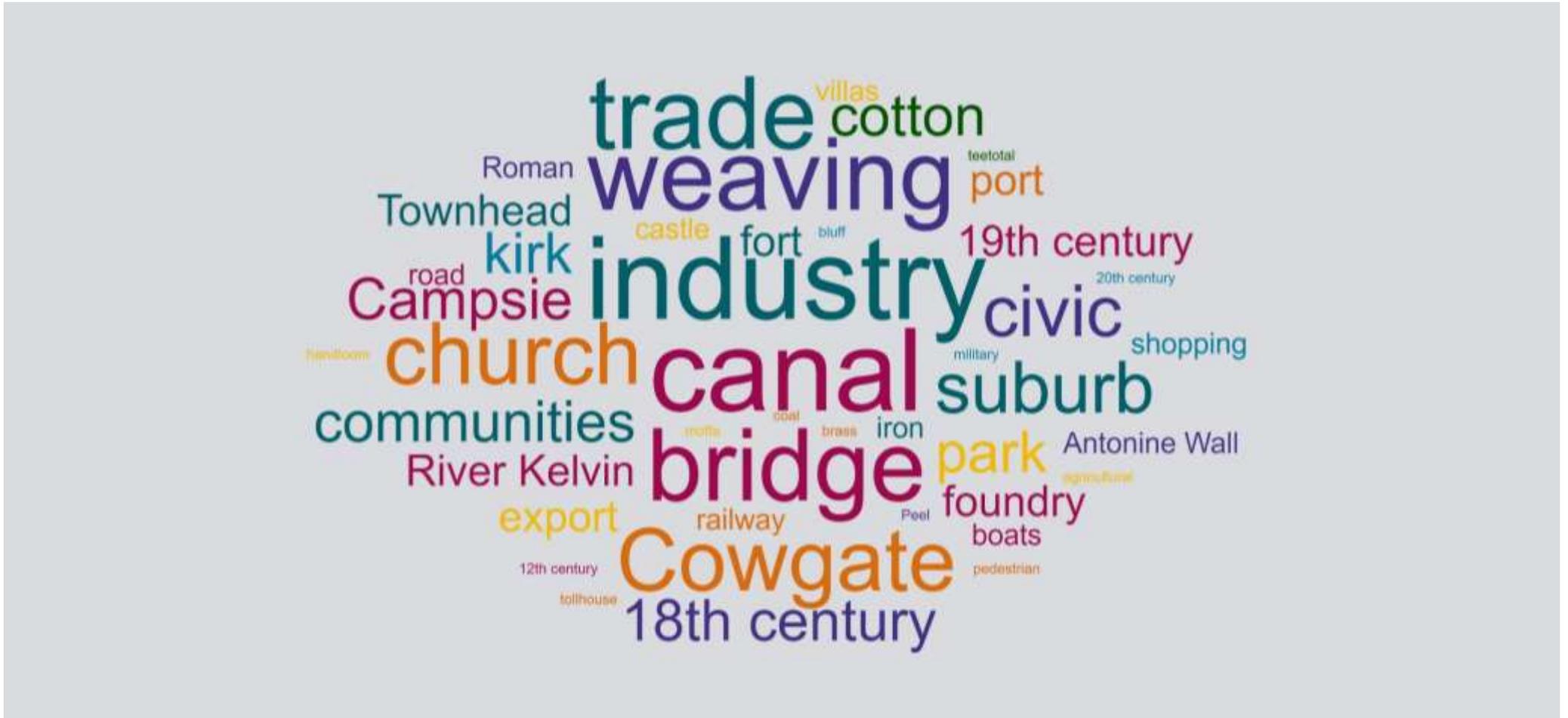
- West High Street steps refurbishment and landscaping, with the original town name 'Carpentalloch' displayed on the railings
- Public realm improvements to the streets and pavement of the Cowgate, Broadcroft and Townhead, which prioritise movement by walking, cycling and public transport in 2017
- Restoration and extension of the 1906 Kirkintilloch Town Hall as a centre for heritage, arts, culture and community use and events space, reopened in 2018
- Repair, repointing and repainting of Kirkintilloch War Memorial, in time for the centenary of the end of WW1 in 2018

Figure 3.7: 20th century development in a view from Townhead



From left to right: late-20th century flats; St Mary's Church (1912-14) and behind it St Mary's Nursery (c.1960, originally a church hall, it replaced the church's associate manse or vicarage that previously stood on the site); the former police station (1934, now a pub); three-storey, red sandstone block with retail units to the ground floor (1986-1900). And beyond all that, the Campsie Fells in the background.

Figure 3.8: The historical development of Kirkintilloch



A word cloud created using the above text to illustrate the key factors and defining influences on the development of Kirkintilloch.

Chapter 4

Conservation Area Character Analysis

This section considers how the historical development of the area, as outlined above, is evidenced in and forms the present character of the conservation area.

Function and Form

Activity and movement

4.1 The conservation area is composed of distinct areas representing the historical development of the town. Each has a different focus that brings with it a range of activity, but they are broadly split between into the busier, commercial and civic activity around Cowgate to the east, and the quieter, leafier, more tranquil residential suburbs to the west.

4.2 Although the history of the town as a key destination on historic trade routes is represented by a range of buildings along the east-west alignment of the historic high street, its role as the commercial hub of the settlement waned with the arrival of the canal. Today, it has a quieter, leisurely atmosphere, more in-keeping with the residential areas to the west of it than its commercial successor Cowgate. The mix of residential and small businesses keeps it moderately busy though, with the presence of the park, museum and library attracting a steady stream of visitors.

4.3 Just round the corner lies the other principal historic thoroughfare of the settlement, Cowgate. Linked to the opening of the canal, Cowgate very quickly became important as the link between the canal and the historic High Street. The 19th century was the period when purpose-built shops began to be built alongside much investment in civic buildings – a reminder of the important role that the town has also played over the centuries as an administrative centre for the region. Cowgate and its close environs retains its role as the shopping and

service hub of the town. It shares the common, contemporary problems of many high streets, including vacancy and a need to reinvent and recapture its vibrancy; however, it remains an important and active local amenity and its role as the main shopping street of the town ensures it is well used by tourists and locals alike.

Scale and hierarchy

4.4 The north-west entrance to the historic town begins at single-storey height, marked by the detached former toll house, then Westermains Farm forming a transition to the built-up street. This leads to blocks of three-storey tenements on the north side, rising and curving up to the high point of The Cross. On the south side, the wall of Peel Park with its mature trees and chunky railings, is followed by a group of stone two and three-storey flats with mixed ground floor commercial uses, leading past Peel Brae to the bulk of Barony Chambers.

4.5 The early 19th century Barony Chambers or Steeple (listed category B) is located on the key intersection between the historic High Street and Cowgate, where it acted as the main municipal building of the town. Beyond, the late-20th century William Patrick Library with its landscaped surroundings creates a small municipal space, giving a feeling of 'arrival' alongside the growing elevation of the buildings.

Figure 4.1: Scale and hierarchy around High Street



The approach to the Steeple



Contrasting early and late 19th century buildings, West High Street

4.6 The well-defined urban qualities of Cowgate and Townhead stem from the generally small-scale two (occasionally three) storey terraces and tenements lining each side, with individual shop fronts below and vertical-format domestic scale windows above. This character continues for a short distance south of the canal along Townhead.

4.7 To the west of Cowgate, buildings are also in rows and terraces, sited close to the pavement edge of short, straight cul-de-sacs, giving a densely built up, unified feel to the roads. Post-war development has disrupted this pattern east of Oxford Street but a sense of the historic scale of the streets is retained by surviving rows of colony flats in Victoria Street and Queen Street – usually two-storey blocks formed of stacked flats, each with its own external access, the upper one reached by a pend through to the rear and a forestair. Further west and south, the area around Bellevue Road and Alexandra Street has the expansive character of a classic Victorian villa suburb with generously-scaled individual houses, well-spaced out in generous garden plots.

Figure 4.2: The scale and hierarchy of residential streets



The taller and denser, but regular, form of terraces, here on Kerr Street.



The more spacious feel of the villa suburb, but still with a regularity of scale that unifies the area, here on Park Avenue.

4.8 Former public buildings through the town, such as the now restored and reopened Town Hall or former Lairdland Primary School, and a number of chapels and churches now converted to dwellings, occupy larger Medieval plots encouraged the formation of built-up 'closes' running off the main street. Many examples survived into the 19th century, and are

shown on the 1850's Ordnance Survey map, though the only one now remaining in anything like its original form is at 18 West High Street, where the historic Buck's Head Close survives behind an early-20th century replacement street-front tenement. It gives an isolated example of the historic contrast in scale and character between street-front blocks and hinterland closes.

4.9 plots but in general do not rise above the surrounding scale of buildings. Having said that, there are a few accents that do punctuate the skyline. Again, these are usually civic or religious buildings – public buildings intended as landmarks – most notably St David's Memorial Church and St Mary's Parish Church.

Figure 4.3: Public buildings



Town Hall, Union Street. Although a public building, it is in-keeping with the scale of surrounding commercial and residential buildings.



St David's Memorial Church – a tall accent amongst the more uniform, domestic scale of surrounding houses.

Spatial Qualities

Development pattern, layout and density

The Cross/West High Street, Cowgate and Townhead

4.10 The principal thoroughfares forming the main structure of the town centre demonstrate their historical evolution, with the older, more sinuous east-west alignment of West High Street

and High Street – leading to the Luggie Bridge – meeting the north-south Cowgate route leading to the canal and Townhead. Cowgate/Townhead is fairly straight and generally consistent in width, but subtle variations in the building line lead to changes in pavement width, which together with open, landscaped areas provide interest and breathing spaces along the route.

4.11 Cowgate has a strongly linear character, emphasising its function as the link between two important areas of historic interest in Kirkintilloch - the museum, library and Peel Park/Antonine Wall to the north, forming the historic core, and the canal and Townhead Bridge to the south as the canal side focus. Although extensive demolition and redevelopment of this historic route has taken place, it retains a range of buildings demonstrating the town's past as a centre of production and trade. The central and northern stretch of the street is the most altered with the insertion of post-war low-rise deck-access flats with ground floor shops, as well as the Regent Centre and large car parking area behind. The essential historic street form remains in place and many buildings, particularly those lining the southern stretch of the street, retain their historic form and commercial character.

Figure 4.4: Development pattern around the historic core and Cowgate



Close behind 18 West High Street



Street enclosure, Cowgate

Regent Street/Victoria Street

4.12 The Kerr Street/Victoria Street suburb is only accessible from the east, where it is open to the area of later redevelopment beyond Oxford Street. Victoria Street, Kerr Street and Queen Street were extensions of pre-existing roads leading off Cowgate, now vanished. Their layout broadly corresponds to field boundaries on the 1859 Ordnance Survey map, although their extremely straight, grid-like form is an unmistakably characteristic of Victorian planning. The western boundary, where the streets meet the later development of Northbank Road at an obtuse angle, is probably the limit of the 'improved' fields marked on Roy's map a century earlier. Regent Street, created as a new road during the late 19th century, has a slightly different character again, its more relaxed form a result of having been squeezed between the existing forms of Union and Queen Streets.

Bellevue Road/Alexandra Street

4.13 The street pattern of this area is noticeably different from the remainder of the town centre, reflecting the historic field boundaries over which it was built. Although it shares a boundary with the earlier suburb to the east, the only access between the two is a gated pedestrian path between Park Avenue and Kerr Street, a reminder of this area's historically private and separate character. The course of the Antonine Wall passes through the area; its course is not evident on the ground, although Camphill Avenue and Byars Road echo its line, leading ultimately to the scheduled site of a Roman camp and fortlet at the west edge of the town (SM7556).

4.14 Short, straight cul-de-sacs are a feature of the area, leading off the principal roads. They generally have no building at their end, giving an open feel and outlook toward fields very characteristic of the suburb. Between Glasgow Road and Bellfield Road plot sizes are generous, with detached houses set well back from the road behind boundary walls and hedges. Along Northbank Road and Alexandra Street, towards the canal, plots become slightly smaller, with examples of semi-detached houses, although the general character of the streets remains similar.

Figure 4.5: Development pattern of residential suburbs



Sizeable detached and semi-detached villas set back from the pavement edge along straight, broad Victorian streets are a common feature of the area, these example along Alexandra Street.



Further north and west toward Bellfield Road the form and appearance of the roads is similar, but with a greater occurrence of larger houses and plots.

Public and private space

4.15 West High Street is mainly used for vehicular access to Cowgate, although Peel Brae and the Library are well used by pedestrians. Cowgate is a busy vehicular and bus route, but recent streetscaping works have improved pavements for pedestrians. Public open spaces are provided at the museum garden, Regent Gardens, St Mary's churchyard and around the larger space of the square at Barleybank and canal banks, which create a green corridor through the south side of the town. Regent Gardens, sited between the Town Hall and Regent Centre, is also important as a space for formal and informal public gatherings.

Figure 4.6: Public spaces



Space at St Mary's Church/canalside



Forth and Clyde Canal walkway

4.16 The canal itself is a Scheduled Monument (SM6769). Following the re-building of the Townhead Bridge (part of the wider Millennium Link project to once again allow the canal to be used for coast to coast navigation), complementary landscaping, including bespoke metal work railings and benches, now forms an attractive informal public meeting place and centre for leisure activities. Townhead Bridge is the meeting place of several pedestrian and cycle routes and the canal has a towpath.

4.17 The Bellevue Road/Alexandra Street area contains two surviving historic bowling greens; one in Alexander Street and the other on Bellfield Road. The latter is an enlargement of an earlier green in the grounds of Wester Mains House (now the site of St Ninian's High School).

4.18 Private open space in the conservation area is generally in the form of modest rear gardens, yards or drying greens in the fairly tight plots of the historic core and Regent/Victoria Street, sometimes shared or with minimal subdivision in the tenements and colonies. The Bellevue Road/Alexandra Street area contrasts with the rest of the conservation area in the provision of generous private open space, giving this area its spacious and green qualities. Dwellings are generally placed towards the front of their plots, giving both a generous rear garden and a front garden area to allow a buffer zone from the street and an area for formal display.

Figure 4.7: Private spaces



The more modest rear gardens of terraces along Victoria Street



The generous, private grounds of larger houses around Bellevue, this example on the quiet, leafy lane of Byars Road.

Peel Park

4.19 The largest public space in the conservation area is Peel Park which has high historical and archaeological value due to the remains of the one of the seventeen Antonine Wall forts and a mediaeval castle which survive within it; later rigs and furrows – earthworks formed as a result of ploughing – are also visible.

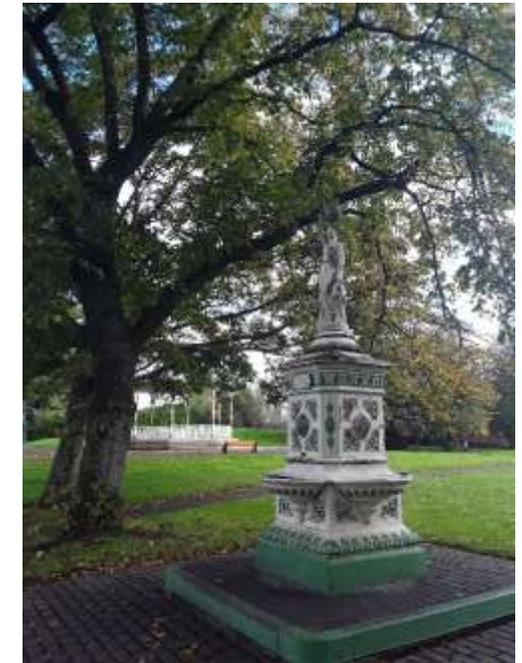
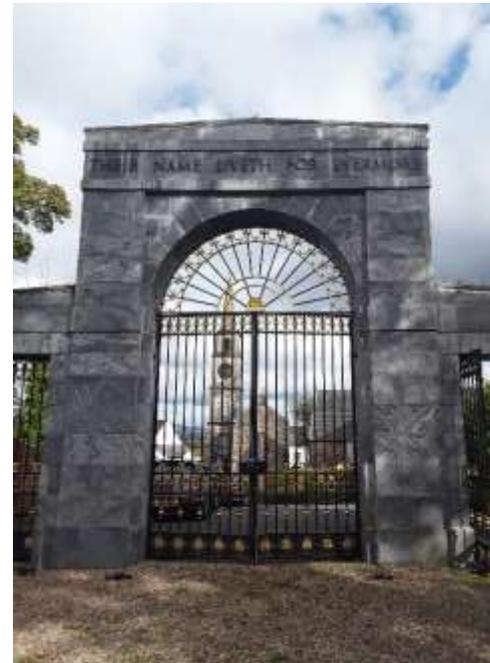
4.20 Apart from the imposing war memorial gates, the only built structures in the park are the ornate bandstand and drinking fountain (LB36664 and LB36665 respectively). These all have strong local links, the ironwork being made at the Lion Foundry and the New Zealand marble of

the memorial donated by the Fletcher Construction Company of New Zealand; Mr James Fletcher was originally from Kirkintilloch. The cast iron railings and gates surrounding the park were replaced to their former Lion Foundry patterns and the war memorial was repaired and repainted in 2018, in time for the centenary of the end of WW1. The park is mainly mown grassland with tarmac paths, and is well used as a pedestrian route and amenity space.

Figure 4.8: Peel Park and its bandstand



Figure 4.9: Peel Park gates and fountain



Setting

4.21 The landscape setting and principal reasons for Kirkintilloch's location and success can still largely be appreciated as its modern setting. In particular, the dramatic Campsie Fells and impressive network of waterways still contain the historic core of the town (see Figures 2.1, 3.5 and 3.7). Views of them from within the conservation area contribute greatly to its character and appearance. Former industrial areas flanking the canal to the south, the Luggie Water and the railway lines along the east side of the town have been redeveloped variously as residential, office and light industrial areas, while the former railway route flanking the Luggie Water has become Luggie Park, important as a valued open space in the community.

Built Form and Detailing

Building types

4.22 The vast majority of buildings in the conservation area are (or were originally built as) dwellings, interspersed with purpose-built or adapted public or commercial buildings. Their variations in type, scale and architectural detailing create the distinctions between different character areas.

The Cross/West High Street, Peel Park and Cowgate/Townhead

4.23 Buildings vary in date, the earliest dating to the late 18th to early 19th century, bar the 17th century Auld Kirk. Types range in scale and form, but broadly speaking the smaller and more modest the building the earlier the date. Earlier buildings also tend to be found in discrete locations and small groups, such as the collection of single- and two-storey cottages behind 18 West High Street and at Westermains Farm. Vestiges remain of Kirkintilloch's handloom weaving industry in the two-storey weavers' cottages, with examples at 55-59 Union Street and 23-27 Townhead (LB51592), which makes a significant addition to the streetscape with a rare surviving single shop window opening. Later two- and three-storey terraces and tenements line the more urban Cowgate route, many of which have purpose-built or later additions of shopfronts at the ground floor, such as at 93 to 129 Cowgate.

4.24 South of the canal, Townhead's buildings are similar in type but overall it has a more dense character, with a greater sense of enclosure owing to a slightly narrower street and the larger proportions and scale of purpose-built three-storey tenement or mixed-use blocks, such as the Cooperative building on the west side. Earlier tenements also survive in this area, such as 23-27 Townhead [LB51592].

Figure 4.10: 18th and 19th century building types



Westermains Farm, West High Street



23-27 Townhead

4.25 Later 20th century additions to the street generally follow a similar pattern, with residential units above ground floor shops, often with rear open-deck access typical of the 1960s. The Regent Centre was designed to mimic the traditional street pattern, with traditionally-proportioned windows to its upper floor commercial and storage areas; however, its unsympathetically large-footprint and monolithic character is more evident from the rear.

4.26 The Cross, at the junction of Peel Brae, High Street and Cowgate, contains an important collection of historic public buildings: the early-19th century Steeple and 17th century Auld Kirk Museum, which act as a focus at the head of the street. The Townhead Bridge area also contains a cluster of important structures. St Mary's Church (LB36662) in Perpendicular style with a prominent pinnacled tower, is as important for its contribution to the wider townscape of Kirkintilloch as its individual architectural qualities and is the town's most prominent landmark. Beside the bridge, the old Eagle Inn (LB49196) is an elegant, symmetrical early-19th century building with 12 pane timber sash and case windows on its Cowgate and Alexandra Street elevations. It is important for its well-documented connection with the history of the canal and its Doric pilastered main door surround, visible from the canal, shows this connection.

4.27 Adjacent to the former inn is a pair of K6 telephone kiosks (LB36667), probably made across the road in the Lion Foundry during the thirty years or so of production following their

design in 1935. On the south side of the canal bridge, the former police station (LB44624) is an earlier 20th century irregular plan Arts and Crafts design, prominently marking the corner with a chamfered angle bay in an unusual architectural style for a public building.

Regent Street/Victoria Street

4.28 This area has a fairly dense, unassuming character, most buildings being 2 or 2½ storey tenements or 'colonies' (the upper floors accessed from the rear) and a few detached or semi-detached houses, 1 or 2 storey, often with piended dormers. The rows of dwellings are interspersed with a number of former chapels, meeting halls and a school, some of which have been converted to residential use. Regardless of use now, they give the area some visual variety and convey the spirit of the area as an animated, active, residential community.

4.29 The historic development pattern of parallel east-west streets in this area is disrupted east of Oxford Street by post-war redevelopment which has introduced some interesting examples of building types of the period, including mid-rise deck-access flats, banks and offices. A development of single-storey 'Homes for Heroes' cottages around a central green space at the west end of Regent Street forms an interesting, quiet 20th century enclave, providing a refreshing contrast to the adjacent urban core.

Figure 4.11: Post-war additions



Bank and offices, Alexandra Street/Cowgate



Post-war cottage dwellings, Regent Street

Bellevue Road/Alexandra Road

4.30 This area still reflects its original intentions of layout and character and the short development period between 1894 and 1914. Houses vary considerably in plan type and style but are given uniformity through their placement and orientation on individual large plots, common 1½ or two-storey height, and a shared palette of materials and details. A few older houses survive between the later 19th century development, at 49 Alexander Street (North Bank House) and Hillcroft on the corner of Northbank Road and Bellfield Road, which retain their earlier 19th century character.

Distinctive architectural style and detailing

The Cross/West High Street, Cowgate & Townhead, and Regent Street/Victoria Street

4.31 Dwellings in the eastern parts of the conservation area demonstrate an evolution from modest individual cottages and smaller-scale tenements to large, multi-dwelling tenements with a unified architectural treatment, including purpose-designed shopfronts, suitable for the growing population density of the core of the town.

4.32 Neplus or tympan gables, rising from the wallhead to create additional habitable attic space, are a typical feature of the earlier tenements (such as 23-27 Townhead, 17/19 West High Street and the south end of Cowgate). Individual cottages such as in Union Street or behind 18 West High Street, and 19th century terraces along Cowgate generally, have a simple, horizontal eaves line to the front and a broadly symmetrical arrangement of vertically-proportioned windows. Some retain projecting curved stair enclosures to the rear.

Figure 4.12: Tenement types



4.33 In the Regent Street/Victoria Street area, detailing is generally plain, but several of the colony and tenement blocks have decorative datestones. The forestairs typical of the colonies retain decorative cast iron handrails and balusters in places.

4.34 The architecture is generally restrained, but the later 19th century examples have a slightly more elaborate treatment of window margins and eaves cornices, with carved mouldings and other simplified Classical details. The later 19th and early-20th century tenements have detailed flourishes such as the cupola on the corner of the tenement block beside Regent Gardens, the refined window surrounds and stone eaves of 93-129 Cowgate, and the stone window hoods and lettering on the Co-operative Buildings in Townhead. Shopfronts and signage are generally modern and pragmatic in design, but a few early, purpose-built examples survive, particularly in Townhead.

4.35 Several inscriptions relating to the town's history add to the intellectual interest and detailing of Townhead and Cowgate; these include the plaque in Townhead commemorating the birthplace of Archibald Scott Couper, the drinking fountain in Cowgate, and a metal plaque beside the tree planted in Regent Gardens for the 1953 coronation by 'Mrs Hugh Gillies, Wife of Provost'. A plaque was unveiled in Barleybank in 2018 to commemorate Sergeant John Meikle, a 19 year old who was one of just 628 people to be awarded the Victoria Cross during the First World War. He was posthumously awarded the medal in recognition of his bravery during bitter fighting in France during the First World War. A Victoria Cross commemorative paving stone

recognising his heroism and sacrifice was unveiled in July 2018 at the towns Barleybank, close to John's birthplace of Freeland Place. High-quality public art installations of the 21st century, with themes based on local historical features, are located at points along the Townhead-Cowgate route and in the flanking public spaces, adding to their interest.

Figure 4.13: Public art and historical interpretation



Bellevue Road/Alexandra Road

4.36 The quality of the buildings is generally high, with a good variety of detailing in ridges, window and door surrounds and gable treatments. Dormers and bay windows are common, with some survival of multi-pane and stained-glass windows. Some have simple hood mould pedimented doorways while others have more elaborate, classical stone block course with

console. Common among the early-20th century houses are keystone-arched entrance ways with fanlights

4.37 Influences of the Arts and Crafts architectural style are evident through the area. There are exposed timber purlins on roof eaves and timber brackets around fascias and dormers, with Tudor timber detailing. Some have ashlar stone ground floor finishes contrasting with painted timber or stonework with harled infill panels at first floor. There are examples of wooden and cast-iron decorated porches with columns to the front doors.

4.38 Houses are set back from the pavement, with road frontages strongly expressed with stone walling, gateposts and hedges defining the boundaries. Mature trees are an important feature of the area, both in gardens and at the boundary with Peel Park. Bellfield Road has lots of mature trees along narrow pavements.

Use of materials

4.39 In the 18th and earlier 19th century buildings, walling is generally sandstone rubble, either exposed or with painted harling (although often a modern cement replacement) to the front and exposed to the sides and rear. Margins to doors and windows, and skews (the top edge of the gable or party wall, raised above the level of the roof) are usually plain, smooth-finished stone. The sandstone is a warm-toned, light cream/grey locally-quarried material. Roofs are in slate; examples of Scots slate laid in diminishing courses survive, although there are later replacements in Welsh slate or cement tile. Blocks of chimneys on gable ends, including some crowstepped gables on single storey buildings, punctuate the skyline, particularly where houses step up a slope. One or two hints of original thatching survive, such as thackstones (carved detail to the inner edge of the chimney stack to allow the thatch to be tucked beneath) at 63 Union Street. Villas in Bellevue Road/Alexandra Road have a range of roof embellishments including decorative ridges and finials in terracotta or iron, and terracotta chimney cans. These more decorative elements portray the higher status of these dwellings, compared with their plainer counterparts.

4.40 Later 19th century buildings are often in sandstone ashlar (a smooth finish) or dressed rubble (a tooled finish) – more expensive finishing techniques, intended to be seen and convey status. The influence of the railways is evident in the introduction of sandstones available in greater bedding heights from more remote quarries, suitable for impressive large ashlar blocks and detailed carving, and in red sandstones imported from Dumfriesshire.

Figure 4.14: Building materials and finishes



A large dwelling on Bellfield Road. To the left exposed random rubble stonework; to the right a harled (rendered) and painted finish. The buildings also have the slate roofs and timber vertical sliding sashes that are predominant features of the area. Note too the tall gable end chimneys with pots, the moulded door and window surrounds, and the railings and tall, decorative gate piers with pyramidal coping stones demarcating private space.

4.41 Windows throughout the conservation area were almost universally painted timber sash and case originally, often in a six-over-six pane arrangement but with other patterns also in evidence. A multipane-over-single pane pattern is typical of the Arts and Crafts-influenced villas in Bellevue Road/Alexandra Road and tenements of the late 19th/early 20th century elsewhere.

4.42 Cast iron elements make a particular contribution to the character and significance of the conservation area, particularly as many may have been produced by the local foundries. Most cast iron domestic boundaries were removed during the Second World War; the scars of the removed railings remain in boundary copings, and many have been replaced by modern steel railings, masonry or timber fences or hedging. However cast iron railings and gates are in evidence, particularly those recently reinstated on the boundaries of Peel Park; 24 West High Street has a high quality gate to its close. The impressive bandstand and drinking fountain in Peel Park are also productions of the local Lion Foundry. The striking war memorial gates at Peel Brae incorporate cast iron gates and marble especially imported from New Zealand and, as befits their purpose, present a dignified, if somewhat sombre, entrance feature.

Views

Types of views

4.43 Whilst all senses are engaged in our experience of place, human reliance on the visual does mean that views play a major role in our understanding and perception of character, and the Kirkintilloch is no exception – in fact, its character depends on it. Views tend to come in different shapes and forms depending on whether they are designed or fortuitous; framed, contained or open; fleeting or enduring. Broadly, however, they tend to belong to one of three categories:

- **Static views** – these types of views tend to be – although not always – designed or intentional, or at least self-aware. They are a specific, fixed point from which a particular aspect of the area’s character can be best appreciated.
- **Glimpsed views** – these types of views are often enclosed and fleeting, and principally incite intrigue or surprise in those that notice them that add to the experience of an area.
- **Dynamic views** – these are views that steadily reveal different aspects of a place’s character and continually evolve as we experience them. These may be panoramic views from a fixed point or kinetic views that are revealed as the observer moves through the area. These views are influenced by both constant features (not necessarily dominant features but those that remain present throughout) and transient features (accents in the view that come in and pass out of views at different points

Examples of views in Kirkintilloch Conservation Area

4.44 Kirkintilloch has examples of striking and beautiful views, but the seemingly mundane have their role to play too in conveying the character of the place. Below are some examples of the more obvious and noteworthy views in the area – in that they are the ones that clearly embody important characteristics of the conservation area – but it is important to remember that experience is entirely personal and the value placed on views subjective; as such, there will be many more that are not noted here that portray the sense of place equally well.

Static

4.45 Kirkintilloch has few formal, 'set-piece' compositions which would set up a classic static view from a fixed viewpoint, largely because the settlement has developed organically and pragmatically over time. However, there are individual assets within the area that were clearly designed with a specific view in mind, such as the war memorial in Peel Park, the Town Hall and Regent Gardens.

Figure 4.15: Static view – the war memorial



Glimpsed

4.46 Along the length of Cowgate and High Street, gaps between buildings, on the site of historic lanes and closes, allow glimpses eastwards across the Kelvin Valley to the Campsie or into private yards and space.

Figure 4.16: Glimpsed views along Cowgate and High Street



Dynamic

4.47 Kirkintilloch is particularly enriched with dynamic views that reveal the historic of the area and add to its scenic qualities, and they make an invaluable contribution to the town's

individuality, identity, character and appearance. The most obvious of these is in Peel Park, where the elevated setting and separate, enclosed character (surrounded by railings, trees and with only three entrances) allow for spectacular panoramic views north towards the Campsies with the valley floor in the foreground.

4.48 However, there are equally revealing – if not quite so picturesque or scenically dramatic – views throughout the town. The slight variations in width and topography along Cowgate – sloping down towards the canal and with a noticeable change in level where it crosses the line of the Antonine Wall at the north end – creates interest and changing vistas. Views of the tower of St Mary’s Church and the spire of Barony Chambers, both important ‘signposts’ in the townscape, change gradually as one moves through the streets. There is also a dynamic view along the canal towpath, especially between the A-listed triple bridge aqueduct to the west, beside Luggie Park, and Townhead Bridge at Barleybank.

Figure 4.17: Dynamic view of St Mary’s Church along Townhead



The finials of the church tower are just visible above the roofline, a point of interest in the backdrop to the streetscape but easily missed.



As the building line breaks towards the canal end of the street the tower is fully revealed and the building's landmark status becomes more apparent but it is still one part of a dynamic streetscene. By the time the bridge is crossed, the scale of the building dominates the area but it also allows reveals the building's fine architectural detailing, allowing the craftsmanship and aesthetic intent of the work to be fully appreciated.

