



Rutherglen Conservation Area
Character Appraisal

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Introduction

Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act in 1967. A Conservation Area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of any building or structure within the area and to the lopping or felling of trees above a certain size.

Designation also imposes on local authorities the requirement to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas within the context of a thorough appraisal of their character and appearance. This appraisal also provides a framework for assessing development proposals within the Rutherglen Conservation Area and is therefore supplementary to the Council’s local plan for the area.

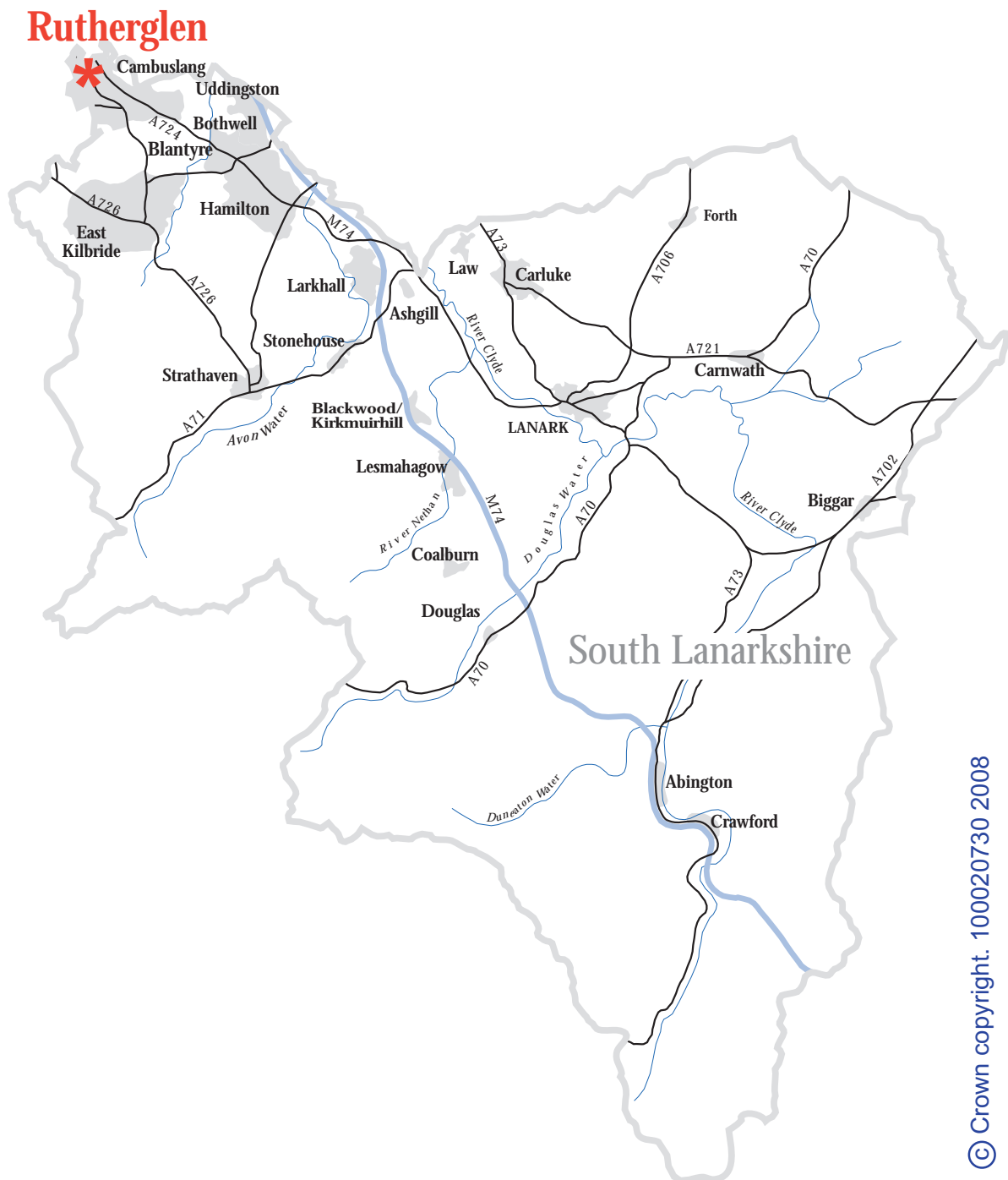


Location

Rutherglen is located on the south bank of the River Clyde about 3 miles South-East of the city centre of Glasgow and 8 miles West of Hamilton. The conservation area is centred on the historic core of the burgh including Main Street, the principal shopping street, King Street to the North, the historic areas to the South and the connecting lanes in between.

Designation

Rutherglen town centre was proposed for designation as a conservation area in the Cambuslang/Rutherglen Local Plan formally adopted in October 2002. This appraisal formed part of the consultation process prior to designation of the conservation area on 1st February 2008.



Part 1 Historical Development

Medieval and Post Reformation

Rutherglen was granted burgh status during the reign of King David I (1124-1153) and is thought to be one of the earliest Scottish Royal Burghs. It was likely an important settlement even before then due to the presence of Rutherglen Castle which was rebuilt in the C12 on the site of a former motted castle.

Sadly the town's status as Royal Burgh did not ensure its prosperity. After Glasgow became a burgh of barony in the late C12 it soon eclipsed its royal neighbour. The commercial success of Glasgow meant that Rutherglen's trade remained solely local throughout the medieval and early modern periods. By the mid-C17 trade was so poor in Rutherglen that magistrates made attendance at the Tuesday market compulsory for every inhabitant and tradesman.

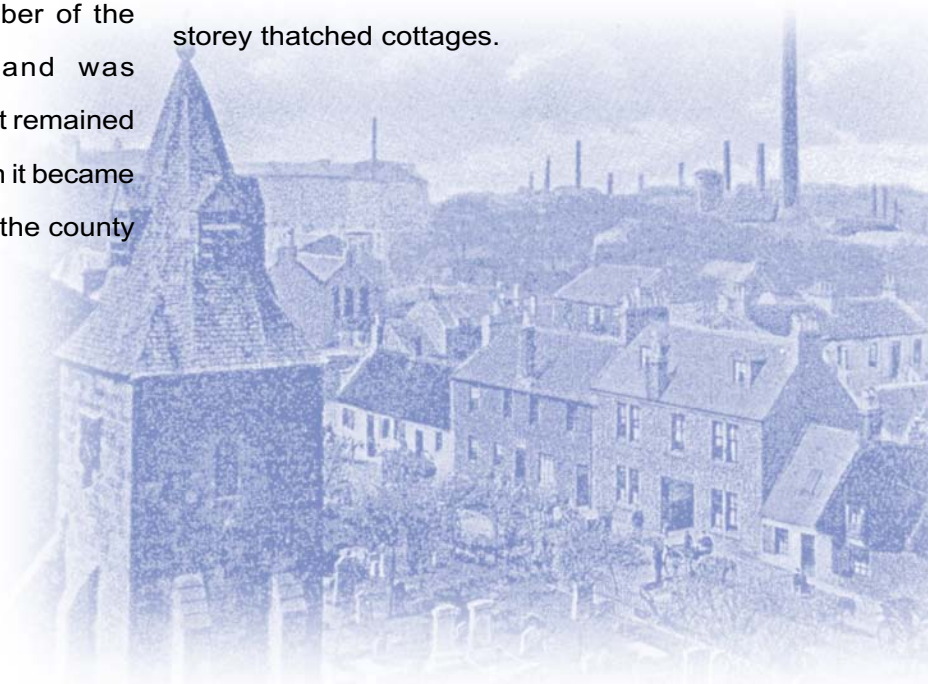
Despite its dwindling fortunes Rutherglen still exerted considerable influence and participated in national affairs. Parliament sat there in 1300 and the Burgh was always a member of the Convention of Royal Burghs and was represented regularly at parliament. It remained a separate sheriffdom until 1402 when it became the head burgh of the lower ward of the county of Lanark.

Eighteenth Century

The C18 was a period of limited expansion and population growth despite the unprecedented growth of cities elsewhere in the UK as farm workers migrated to cities in search of employment following the agricultural revolution. Rutherglen's population in 1755 was 988 compared with 23,546 in Glasgow. It rose to 1,631 in 1793 and 2,437 in 1801.

Much of the problem was the town's close proximity to Glasgow. An 1831 Commentator observed that while Rutherglen lay in fertile soil near the River Clyde 'it hath had little trade for some ages past, because Glasgow lies between it and the sea and that all merchandising men of any metal go to dwell there'.

During this period the local economy was kept alive by limited trades of handloom weaving and the emerging coal industry. Horses, wool and woollen clothes were main staples at Rutherglen fairs at this time and the town was often likened to a quiet country village. Pictures and illustrations of the town at this time show single storey thatched cottages.



Nineteenth Century

Rutherglen underwent a dramatic transformation during the second half of the C19 due to population expansion and the effects of the industrial revolution.

In the first half of the century Rutherglen remained a rural town predominantly surrounded by rich arable land, and the farming industry was of considerable importance in the area. As the century progressed the fairs for the sale of horses which were held several times a year diminished in number and in size and were finally abolished in 1900. Handloom weaving and small scale mining of the early C19 were replaced by powerloom weaving, large scale ship building, steel manufacture, soap making and other heavy industries. The population expanded to 1851 to 7,954 and by 1901 was 21, 011.

Such changes were mirrored in the redevelopment of the town's buildings. Rows of single storey thatched cottages along Main Street were replaced by tenements and grand scale civic buildings. Derelict or condemned property was demolished in the pursuance of the street improvement scheme. Two new streets, Regent Street and Kirkwood Street formed to connect Main Street with Greenhill

Road. Between 1873 and 1900 the predominant building material was a local grey sandstone. It became scarce after 1900 and red sandstone from Craignethan and Stewarty were used instead.

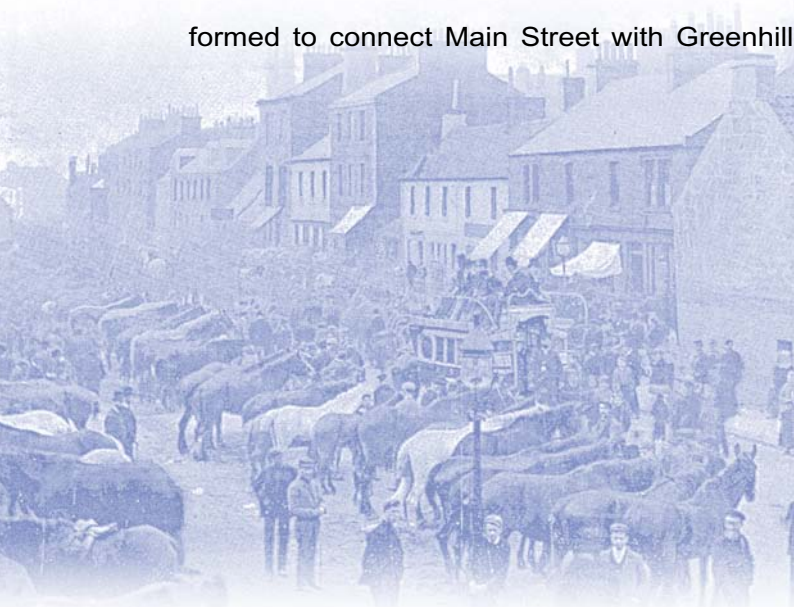
Twentieth Century

The C20 saw both the peak of Rutherglen's expansion followed by its steady decline. The population expanded from 21,011 in 1901 to 41,788 in 1971. It declined to 33,000 at the close of the century. Much of the decline was due to the reduction and closure of C19 industries in the second half of century.

In terms of development the century started with a flourish of civic building on a grand scale to mirror the town's new self confidence. To meet the growing administrative needs of the increased population, the old town hall had been demolished and replaced with a new town hall on a hitherto unknown scale finished in 1862. This was followed by the public library and post office in 1905-7 and Burgh Primary School and a new board school by William Ferguson opened in 1902. In addition the tram arrived in Rutherglen 1902.

Towards the end of the century however the town went into decline with the closure of its heavy industries. Significant political changes brought Rutherglen's independence to an end in 1975 when it became incorporated into Glasgow City Council. It was transferred to South Lanarkshire Council in 1996 after local government re-organisation.

In building terms the south side of Main Street



Part 2 Townscape Appraisal

Topography

saw the most significant change as the century progressed. Except for the very notable St. Columbille Church 1934-40 by Gillespie Kidd and Coia and Vogue Cinema by John McKissack & Son 1935-6 little of this later development adds to the character of the area including the Mitchell Arcade, a commonplace shopping arcade by Keppie Henderson and Partners of 1976 and the social housing development west of St. Columbille which breaks the original street line.

Rutherglen burgh straddles a ridge overlooking the River Clyde at a point where in the middle ages that waterway became tidal. The nucleus of the old burgh, Main Street, King Street and Greenhill Road lie on a terrace about 50ft above the river. North of King Street the land drops away to the river. Southwards the land rises in a series of ridges and terraces to the Cathkin Braes.

Sadly road widening schemes at the end of Main Street have resulted in the loss of the sense of enclosure of Main street and isolated Rutherglen West Church and the 1924 War Memorial by Robert Gray with its bronze figure of courage by G.H. Paulin.

Open Space

The proposed conservation area is by its nature as a town centre, dense and urban in form. Open space is very limited and includes St. Mary's Churchyard, and the area around St. Columbkille Church. In addition there are areas of vacant land along King Street some of which is being used as informal car parking.

Street Pattern

The street pattern derives from the medieval burgh layout, which consisted of a single market street, Main Street, which at 112ft wide is an exceptional example of its kind and should be preserved.

Burgage plots likely formed only on the south side of Main Street as the distance between Main Street and the former medieval Back Row on the northern side (improved in the C19 to form King Street) is too small to allow long burgage plots to be laid out. Due to C20 redevelopment none survive.



The remains of several medieval wynds leading off the south side of Main street still survive. Other survivals of the medieval burgh plan include fragments of the medieval parish church and the market cross which was demolished in 1777 and rebuilt near the site of the original in 1926. The irregular curve of the building line on the north side of Main Street near the Cross recalls the site of the former Tollbooth which was demolished in 1900. These are important reminders of the town's historic origins and should be preserved.

Plot Pattern

The proposed conservation area displays a range of plot patterns typical of a settlement which has undergone many phases of development and redevelopment. The medieval plot pattern is only discernible on the north side of Main street with its narrow plots and buildings placed at pavement edge with access at the rear. Late Victorian development is characterised by larger plot sizes and more regular tenemental layouts.

Buildings

The oldest surviving building is St. Mary's tower. The tower dates from the late medieval period although incorporating earlier fabric from the former parish church, which originated from the C12. The Church yard including the Kirk port of 1663 are also late medieval in origin.

Before the late C19 the only buildings of any significance were the former town hall built in 1861-2 by Charles Wilson and Narplan House at 63-65 Main Street dating from mid-late C19.

Many of the late C18/early C19 2 storey houses which once lined Main Street survive although much altered along with their former stables to the rear.

Most of the significant buildings in the conservation area date from the late C19 early C20 and are either civic buildings or churches.

They include:

- Town Hall of 1861-2 by Charles Wilson
- Library & Post Office of 1905-7 by Sinclair and Balintine
- Former Rutherglen East Church of 1871-2 by Kennedy and Dagleish
- Rutherglen Old Parish Church of 1900-2 by John James Burnet
- West Parish Church of 1848 by Charles Wilson
- Burgh Primary, a board school by William Ferguson opened in 1902

Although not of individual merit the sandstone tenements as a group form the backbone of the present character of Rutherglen town centre and as such should be preserved and enhanced.

Trees

There are several mature broadleaf trees such as ornamental Cherry in St. Mary's Church yard which provide welcome green-space within the



urban core of the town centre. There are also semi-mature Limes along the Main street screening the C20 housing development and lining the highway. Although not original to the area they provide a welcome softening of the urban area and should be preserved.

Views and Vistas

There are no formal planned views in the conservation area although Main Street being dramatically wide allows for important views up and down its length with important civic buildings such as the Town Hall framing the scene. The surviving wynds also provide visual interest as one processes along Main Street.

Materials

The range of building styles, types and periods affords the area a particular richness in the use of materials. However the unifying theme is the use of stone together with originally slate roofing and timber windows, doors and shopfronts. The surviving buildings which pre-date the late

Victorian period of development would have been constructed in rubblework with a lime harl render. Today most have been recovered in damaging cement render.

Of the tenement blocks the earlier ones are constructed in a local grey sandstone which became scarce after 1900 when building continued in a red sandstone from Craignethan and Stewarty. Most of the large scale civic buildings were constructed in this material.

Pre-cast concrete and man made bricks have been used on the majority of infill sites along Main Street and for the flatted developments replacing the previous tenement blocks to the north of Main Street. These materials are uncharacteristic and should be avoided in the conservation area in future to preserve its distinct character.

Roofing materials

From surviving photographs and the steep pitches it is known that the older properties were originally thatched. Thatch likely gave way to Scottish natural slate which became widespread for all building in the area. Sadly many of the buildings have been re-roofed in concrete tiles or artificial slate which has led to an erosion in the areas character. Every opportunity should be taken in the future to re-instate natural slate roofing.



Windows and Doors

Originally the windows and doors would have been in timber. Sadly very few original timber doors and sash in case windows survive. Where they do they should be preserved. In future every opportunity should be taken to re-instate the original windows and doors in timber to the correct design and detail.

Shopfronts

Main Street and the principal streets leading off it have suffered greatly from the loss of the original Victorian timber shopfronts. Surviving fragments of stone architraves, fascias, console brackets and pilasters can be occasionally glimpsed hinting at the former quality and richness of the retail units. Where such elements survive they should be retained and used as the basis for any new shopfront design. Recessed entrance doors often with decorative floor tiles should be retained where they survive and the loss of separate entrances to upper floors should be resisted.

Townscape Detail

Originally the Main Street had a distinct area for pedestrians and the loanings where horse and cattle fairs were held until the early 1900's. The pedestrian area was paved in the 1890's and the loaning area cobbled in 1902 for trams. The street has been resurfaced recently in Chinese granite with modern style stainless steel street furniture which is robust and utilitarian rather than being designed to take account of the areas special architectural or historic character.

There are a number of monuments and statues which adds to the townscape detail including

- War memorial in granite unveiled in 1924. Designed by Paul Gray with the bronze figure of 'Courage' by G.H. Paulin.
- The Market Cross rebuilt in 1926 close to the site of the former cross demolished in 1777.
- St. Mary's Tower.
- Statue to Dr. Gorman set in the Kirkyard wall designed by Joyann Kellor in 1901.
- The Kirk port of 1663 with sundial above dated 1679 by James Thompson.
- Within the Kirk port are an unusual pair of offertory stone shelters dated 1761 which are obscured by a temporary access ramp and currently acting as a bin store.



Key Features

The following is a summary of the key features which make up the special architectural and historic interest of the proposed Rutherglen Conservation area

- Medieval Street Pattern with surviving wynds
- Wide Main Street
- Surviving late medieval two storey houses
- Surviving medieval church yard and tower
- Large civic buildings on a grand scale
- Large scale Victorian tenemental development in sandstone
- Good quality ecclesiastical architecture of various dates
- Surviving fragments of high quality Victorian shopfronts

Part 3 Preservation and Enhancement

The Council, as local planning authority has a statutory duty to prepare schemes for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation areas within its boundary. Much of the day to day work in development control provides the core element of this based as it is on a set of clear policies within the local plan and supplementary guidance.

However it is considered important that the Council also adopts a proactive approach to enhancement. This can ensure that the management of conservation areas ties in with the wider objectives of regeneration, social inclusion and building sustainable communities. The Council has therefore identified a number of initiatives that may be appropriate within this context.

New Development

There is limited scope for new development within the boundaries of the conservation area. These are confined to the areas which contribute negatively or neutrally to the townscape and may have capacity for improvement as shown in the appendix 4.

All new development needs to be treated with sensitivity to ensure that it preserves or enhances the conservation area. New development should be restricted in height and scale to protect the views in and around the conservation area. It must also respect the existing medieval street pattern and plot layout and the use and variety of traditional building



materials and elements. Open space should be preserved where appropriate and existing buildings of value should be retained.

As part of the development process the Council will encourage, where appropriate, the re-introduction of lost key features such as traditional timber windows and doors, original roof coverings and detailing such as chimneys and pots and traditionally detailed shopfronts where appropriate.

Guidelines for the Alteration and Extension of Buildings in the Conservation Area.

The following sets out the approach the Council will normally take to more commonplace development within the Rutherglen Conservation Area.

Extensions and Additions

- Extensions will not normally be permitted on public or principle elevations.
- Extensions and additions will be subservient to the building on which they are to be placed and will not detract from the original architectural composition.
- New extensions and additions will match the building on to which they are to be placed in terms of matching materials, scale and detailed design.
- Roof extensions are not normally permissible on tenement buildings

Windows and Doors including Dormers and Rooflights

- There will be a general presumption against the removal and replacement of original timber sash and case or other original windows and doors. In the first instance windows and doors should be retained, repaired and overhauled as necessary to improve their performance. A draught-proofing system or secondary glazing may be appropriate.
- Where new windows and doors are necessary replacements should be in a style and configuration appropriate to the age and character of the building. All new windows should match the originals in terms of their materials, proportions, design and method of opening. UPVC windows are not acceptable. Traditional timber windows will normally have a painted finish. Staining is not a traditional finish and should not normally be used.
- New rooflights should generally be placed on the non public elevations only. They should have a low profile to replicate the design of



traditional cast iron rooflights. Rooflights which sit proud of the existing roof profile will not be acceptable.

- Traditionally designed timber dormers with lead and slate detailing may be acceptable on the older two storey properties.

Shopfronts & Signage

- There will be a general presumption against the removal and replacement of original shopfronts or surviving features of interest.
- New shopfronts or alterations to frontages should be individually designed to take account of the age and style of the building on which they sit. In most cases shopfronts will be painted timber with a timber panelled, stone, marble or tiled stall-riser and timber painted fascia often in a carved stone surround. Shop frames including decorative pilasters and corbels and any surviving features such as blind boxes and decorative brackets and hanging signs should be retained or replicated if beyond repair. Recessed entrances often with decorative floor tiles should be retained where they survive. For more detailed design guidance on shopfront and signage see The Shopfront Design Guide published separately by South Lanarkshire Council.

- Internally illuminated plastic box signs will not be permitted. Fascia signage should be contained within the original fascia panel. Overly deep fascias will not be permitted. Where there is a need to screen a suspended ceiling this can be carried out through the use of black or coloured glass, decorative grilles or similar.

- Consent will not be granted for schemes which involve the removal of separate access to upper floor accommodation or the removal of recessed doorways .

Roof Alterations

- Where roofs require to be re-covered permission will only be given for recovering in the original materials that is natural slate with lead weathering detail at the appropriate code, normally code 5 or less. Due to the scarcity of Scottish slate, every effort should be made to salvage and re-use sound Scottish slates when a roof is being recovered.
- The original roof form and pitch should be maintained, even in cases where the whole roof needs to be re-built.
- Associated masonry details such as crowsteps, skews, skewputts, scrolled skew ends etc should never be removed. Traditional timber eaves and bargeboards should also be maintained and where necessary replaced on a 'like for like' basis.
- Chimney heads and chimney stacks contribute greatly to the profile of the building and should be maintained. Chimney pots should also be retained and if not in use should be capped with a flue vent. Flues should never be totally sealed.

Wall Materials and Painting

- Permission will only be given for the use of characteristic wall materials within the conservation area.
- In considering the appropriate choice of material consideration will be given to maintaining the variety of materials within the area to ensure that one material such as render or man made brick or concrete does not become over dominant as a result of new development.
- Painting of previously unpainted materials will not normally be permitted.
- Paint applied to natural materials should be porous to avoid moisture entrapment in the fabric of the building and long term deterioration.
- Victorian timber was originally painted in a matt finish. A modern gloss finish is not considered appropriate for traditional buildings.

Colour

- The use of overly bright, modern or day-glo colours should be avoided.
- Downpipes and other rainwater goods should be painted in unobtrusive colours such as black or slate grey.
- Late C18 and C19 timber doors, windows and shopfronts were traditionally painted in richer colours such as red, green, dark blue and brown. The use of white became popular in the C20 as it was thought to prolong the life of timber by deflecting damaging sunlight.

Grants

At present South Lanarkshire Council does not have an historic buildings grant budget.

Regeneration

South Lanarkshire Council acknowledges the importance of its town centres as a priority for action in its economic and social strategy “Access and Opportunity” Rutherglen was defined as a main location for retail/commercial development in the South Lanarkshire Local Plan (Finalised Plan) August 2006.

To re-inforce the existing status of Rutherglen as a tier 4 centre and to encourage a diversity of usage to help maintain and support the vitality and viability of the centre The Council identified an number of objectives for the area including

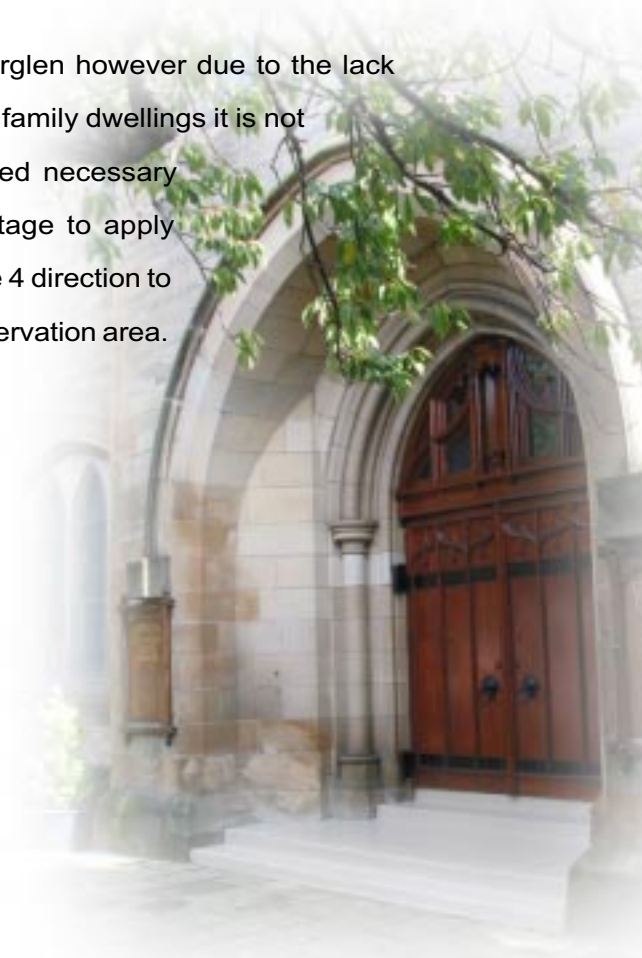
- To protect and promote the retail business functions of the town centre.
- To assist in encouraging the diversification of usage of the town centre
- To promote the centre as a conservation area
- To bring forward packages of physical and operational improvements for the town centre and to maintain them thereafter
- To work in partnership with retailers, businesses, residents, and other key agencies to achieve these objectives.

To achieve these objectives the Rutherglen Town Forum was established in 2000 to bring forward a Rutherglen project programme which included a range of projects such as Rutherglen Town Hall refurbishment, the redevelopment of East Parish Church, Streetscape improvements and so on. The designation and promotion of the area as an area of special architectural and historic interest is included in this programme.

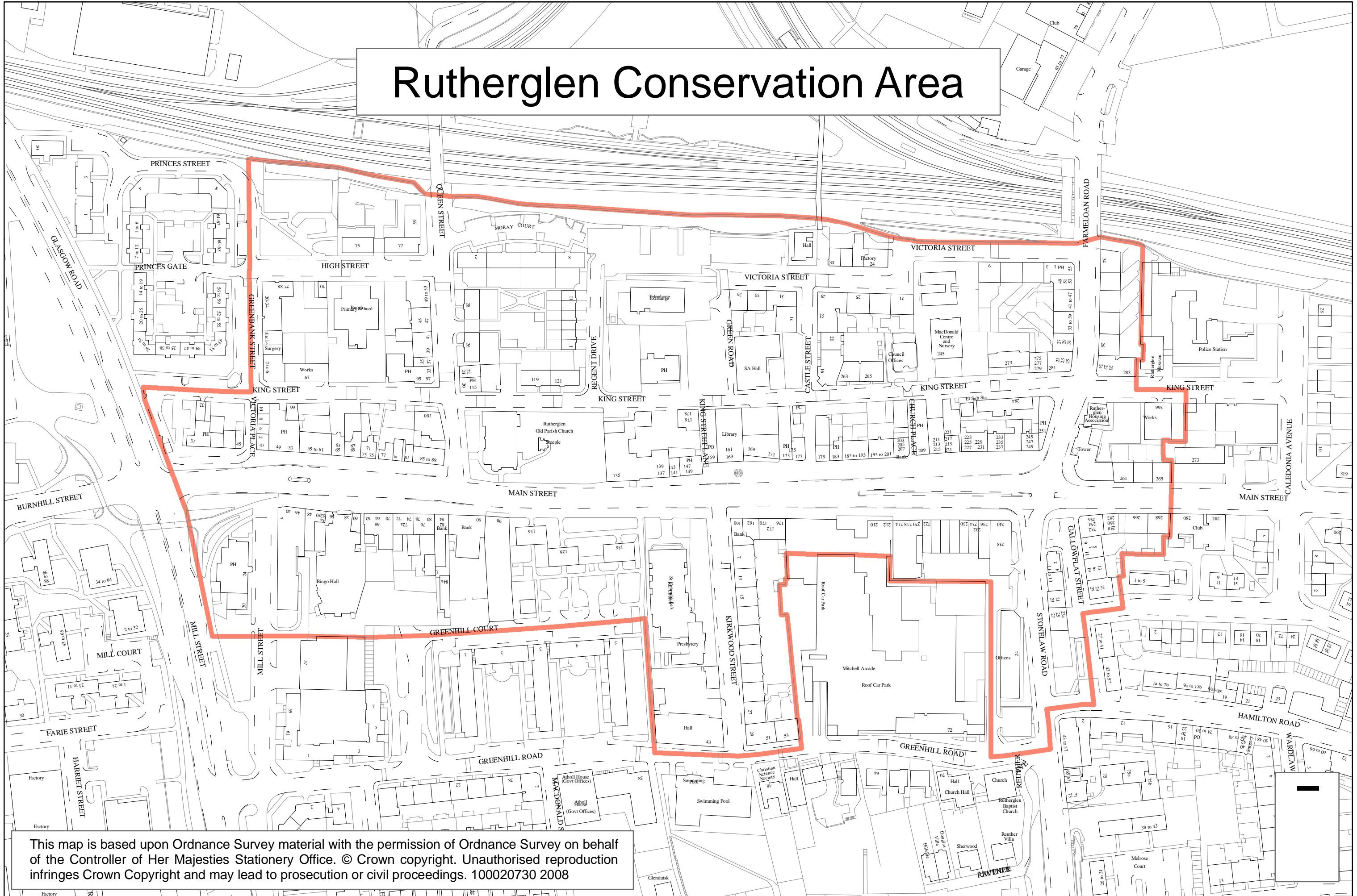
Use of Article 4 Directions

Article 4 directions provide additional controls to local authorities particularly in relation to single dwelling houses which enjoy generous permitted development rights. To be effective however, such directions must be enforced correctly. Proposals are considered in the same way as any other application to ensure that the special interest of an area is not eroded gradually by, for example, the loss of timber sash windows or original boundary walls.

In Rutherglen however due to the lack of single family dwellings it is not considered necessary at this stage to apply an article 4 direction to the conservation area.



Rutherglen Conservation Area



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Existing Listed Buildings
Rutherglen Conservation Area



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Significant Views

Rutherglen Conservation Area



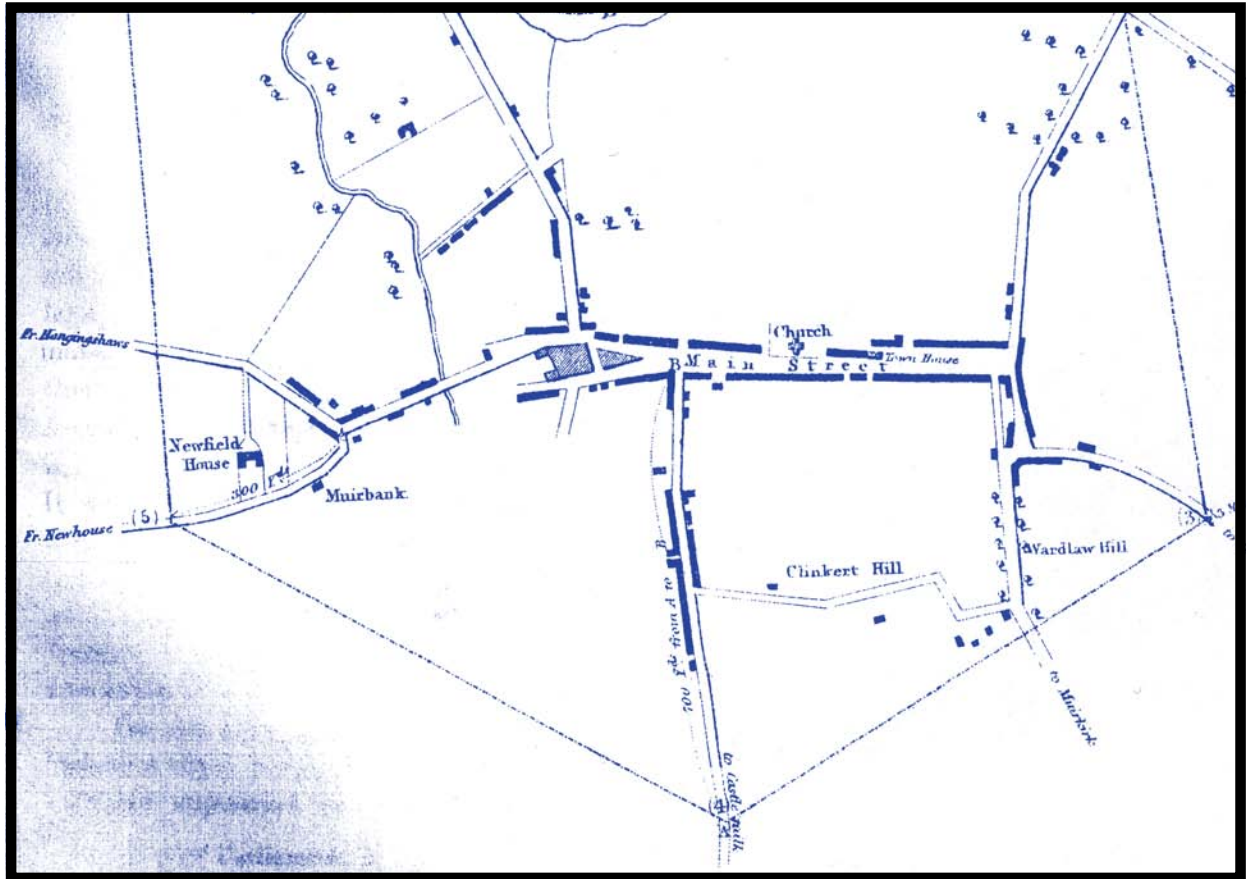
Areas with Capacity for Improvement
Rutherglen Conservation Area



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1832 Historical Map

from Reports upon the Boundaries of Cities, Burghs and Towns (1832)



1894 Historical Map

from Ordnance Survey (1894)



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