

LINDSAY LENNIE
Historic Shop Conservation

Historic Shop Appraisal for Dalmellington Partnership

June 2012



Dalmellington Industrial Co-operative Society, High Main Street
Late 19th century

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Dr Lindsay Lennie
Historic Shop Conservation

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Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

Report Conditions of Use

This report has been commissioned by the Dalmellington Partnership to assess the shops in the village centre as a starting point for a proposed enhancement of the shopfronts here.

This report is for the sole use of the Dalmellington Partnership as a general appraisal of the shops in the city centre. It should not be used by, or relied upon, by a third party.

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12 July 2012

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by the Dalmellington Partnership as an appraisal of the centre of Dalmellington. This followed the publication of the Dalmellington Community Action Plan 2012-2017 which identified town centre improvements as a priority. The aims of this report are:

- To research the history of shops in Dalmellington including their signage, colours and design;
- To research the history of the centre of Dalmellington;
- To undertake a photographic survey of buildings in the centre;
- To provide drawings of how the shopfronts could be improved;
- To provide indicative costings for suggested improvements.

Dalmellington, set in the Doon Valley is an attractive town with an impressive historical context. The centre is designated as a Conservation Area and there are a small number of listed buildings. The historic Motte dating to around 1200 is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The predominant architecture is modest, single or two storey buildings, largely dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Red sandstone is a dominant element.

The town has over twenty shops, including a supermarket, two mini-markets, a butchers, green grocers and various service shops. There are a small number of vacant shops. The shops were surveyed by Dr Lindsay Lennie and architect Sonya Linskaill in May 2012. Buildings were photographed and measurements taken in order to provide sketch drawings. Informal discussions were also held with some of the shop owners.

A number of issues were identified as suitable for enhancement and improvement:

- Lack of fascia signage making it difficult to identify shops and know their trade;
- Security screens and shutters which affect visibility into shops;
- Blocked up windows and limited use of windows for display opportunities;
- Repairs required to some shopfronts and their parent buildings;
- Vacant shops which are deteriorating and unattractive;
- Poor signage and interpretation for visitors in the town generally;
- Lack of coherence, particularly in the Square which is a space with great potential.

Specific suggestions have been made for each shop in the town and drawings indicate the possible approaches which could be taken. These are merely indicative and it would be necessary to discuss in detail any proposals with both the retailers and the local planning authority.

In general terms it is advisable to develop a strategy for the shops notably tackling the following:

- **Signage:** Improving signage in a creative and distinctive way to help identify and promote individual businesses and to encourage trade;
- **Paint colours:** Consider a palette of colours for shopfronts and apply some creative approaches to paint colours;
- **Security:** Adopt security measures which are more sympathetic to historic buildings;

- **Sun blinds:** Renovate any existing traditional blinds and consider sympathetic options for buildings which require blinds but where no blind box exists;
- **Window displays:** Improve visibility and displays in shop windows;
- **External fittings:** Minimise clutter on shopfronts and the wider streetscape;
- **Repairs:** Carry out necessary repairs and maintenance using appropriate materials and techniques;

For the wider townscape the following recommendations are made:

- **Vacant buildings:** Improve the appearance, including window visibility/ displays of vacant buildings where possible;
- **Interpretation and Signage:** Improve the signage for visitors including interpretation panels such as at the Motte;
- **Fabric repairs:** Encourage a good maintenance regime for buildings and repair buildings using traditional methods where required.

Identifying suitable grant funding opportunities would help to take the project forward. Possible sources include Heritage Lottery (Your Heritage or Townscape Heritage Initiative), Historic Scotland (Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme) and LEADER. If possible it would be advisable to employ the services of a project officer who could manage the project.

Overall, Dalmellington has tremendous opportunities to take advantage of new tourist possibilities in the locality including the Dark Skies Observatory. It is an attractive town and the funding of building improvements and conservation of historic buildings could transform it. A wider townscape project such as a CARS or THI could have significant conservation and economic benefits for the town helping to capture Dalmellington's Sense of Place. This would not only improve the shopfronts but could potentially bring derelict buildings back into economic use, improve the standard of repair in the town and make Dalmellington a vibrant and sustainable place for visitors and tourists alike.

Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

Acknowledgements

The compilation of this report was assisted by a number of people including Dave Donaldson and Elaine Stewart.

Thanks go to Doon Valley Museum for allowing access to their photographic collection and to Elaine Mackie and volunteers from the Local History Society for their assistance with the background research.

This report was kindly funded by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust Community Futures grants scheme and East Ayrshire Council.



Little Village - Big Personality

1. Historic Shop Appraisal: Legislation, Policy and Methodology

a. Introduction

This report was commissioned by the Dalmellington Partnership as an appraisal of 23 shops in the village centre. This followed the publication of the Dalmellington Parish Community Action Plan 2012-2017. As a community organisation it has an interest in the vitality and viability of the town centre. The aims of this report are:

- To research the history of shops in Dalmellington including their signage, colours and design;
- To research the history of the centre of Dalmellington;
- To undertake a photographic survey of buildings in the centre;
- To provide drawings of how the shopfronts could be improved;
- To provide indicative costings for suggested improvements.

This section considers the background policy, procedures and methodology.

b. Planning Policies and Protection of the Historic Environment

Dalmellington falls within the jurisdiction of East Ayrshire Council. For planning and heritage matters a hierarchy of local development plans, guidance and policy exists supported by national legislation, guidance and policy. Together these aim to permit and enable development while protecting the historic environment from inappropriate alterations.

East Ayrshire Council published a Local Plan in 2010 which outlines the authority's policies in relation to development both generally and for specific geographical areas. The Local Plan contains specific policies in relation to retail development and also in respect of the historic environment.

As the main centre in East Ayrshire, Kilmarnock is identified as the prime location for major retailing. However, "Retail and Town Centre Activity Uses" (Vol 2, Chapter 7) details the additional policies in relation to retail development. Policy RTC 12 states that "*The Council will actively promote and support the upgrading and improvement of existing town centre environments and of other recognised local shopping centres.*" As an existing town centre, Dalmellington should therefore be identified as a shopping location which will be supported by the Council within this policy.

The Local Plan also indicates the commitment of the local authority to the historic environment stating that they are "*committed to protecting, conserving and enhancing the character, appearance and amenity of the natural and built environment of East Ayrshire for future generations.*"

More specifically in relation to historic buildings, Policy ENV4 (Vol 2) states that the council will:

"Actively encourage the retention, restoration, renovation and re-use of listed buildings, unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas and other locally important, especially traditional older properties throughout the area."

In addition to local planning policy, wider legislation exists to protect all aspects of the historic built environment. A listed building is a building or structure considered to be of special architectural and/or historic interest which is protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)

(Scotland) Act 1997. If the parent building is listed then listed building consent will be required for any alterations to the interior or exterior. Buildings may be listed as Category A (of national importance), Category B (of regional importance) or Category C(S) (of local importance). Shops may form part of listed buildings which have statutory protection and may also be located within a Conservation Area which local authorities have a duty to protect and enhance.

Designation as a Conservation Area offers an additional level of protection for the character of a historic location. A Conservation Area is defined under Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 as “*an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”. Within a Conservation Area planning permission may be required before certain works are undertaken in order to preserve the historic character of the area.

In addition to statutory measures there may be more specific planning guidance, local and national which encourage the retention and enhancement of shopfronts. At national level, Historic Scotland publishes the ‘*Managing Change, Good Practice Guidance: Shops*’ (2010) and ‘*Traditional Shopfronts: A Short Guide for Shop Owners*’ (2009) to help owners understand their shop.

East Ayrshire Council also publishes Design Guidance including ‘*Shopfront Development*’, (Appendix 1) ‘*The Display of Advertisements*’ and ‘*Listed Buildings and Buildings within Conservation Areas*’. These explain the local authority’s approach to shopfronts and provide advice on particular issues such as design principles, advertising and signage.

Together this framework of statute and guidance should offer protection to historic shops. However, understanding what is there is a vital element of this together with education which plays a key role in ensuring the conservation and protection of all historic buildings.

c. Dalmellington Conservation Area and Listed Buildings (See Appendix 2)

The Dalmellington Conservation Area was designated in January 1979. In accordance with Conservation Area legislation, East Ayrshire Council should formulate and publish a set of proposals for the preservation and enhancement Conservation Areas within their local authority area. This is typically undertaken through a character appraisal which provides the necessary framework for assessing development proposals. At present there is no current Conservation Area Appraisal in place for Dalmellington but wider policies and guidance apply in order to protect the character of the Conservation Area. The 2010 Local Plan notes that Conservation Area Appraisals continue to be carried out as appropriate (Vol 1 Para 7.7).

Some Conservation Areas have additional protection through the use of Article 4 Directions. In these cases additional permission may be required, for example in relation to the replacement of windows and doors. However, no Article 4 Directions are in place in Dalmellington.

Policy ENV7 notes that East Ayrshire Council will “*seek to ensure that all development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area or affecting the appearance or setting of a listed building complies with the Council’s appropriate Design Guidance.*” It goes on to say that “*Wherever possible, all proposals should seek to preserve, enhance or incorporate features which contribute positively to the character or appearance of the area and have due regard to the architectural or historic qualities*

d. Survey Methodology

The appraisal involved a walk-round survey of all of the shops in the centre. Photographs were taken of each shop including interiors where relevant, and in the process of undertaking the survey informal discussions were held with some of the retailers.

In addition, background research was undertaken including from Doon Valley Museum and other sources such as RCAHMS, SCRAN websites and local books, texts, newspaper articles and maps.

The combination of the survey and background research allowed an assessment of each shop to be undertaken and recommendations to be made in relation to future conservation and the potential for grant assistance.

This survey and the background research were carried out in May and June 2012.

e. Survey Restrictions

This survey was a visual streetscape survey of the shopfronts in Dalmellington centre. It did not involve a detailed investigation of fabric or any structural investigation although issues with condition were noted where obvious. Measurements were taken to allow sketch drawings to be produced but a detailed measured survey was not undertaken.

It is advisable that the services of a conservation accredited architect or appropriately qualified tradesmen are employed prior to undertaking any alterations or repairs. Where specialist materials such as tiles, stonework or metals are involved, appropriately qualified expertise should be sought prior to undertaking any interventions.

Conservation Area and listed building consents may be required and building owners should seek advice from the local planning authority regarding which consents are needed. Building Control permissions may also be required for some works and appropriate advice should always be sought prior to undertaking any works.

2. Traditional Shopfronts: Value and Significance

a. Introduction

Traditional shopfronts can make a significant contribution to the aesthetic value of a townscape. They generally use higher quality materials and standards of design than those used in more recently constructed retail properties. They also contribute to the cultural and social history of a place. Shops have ingrained in their design and materials many layers of social history associated with local businesses, people and trades. They form an integral part of a town and conserving them is a vital aspect of town centre regeneration.

The important contribution of historic town centres is recognised in the British Retail Consortium's report (2009:3) *21st Century High Streets* which identifies a Unique Sense of Place as a theme which town centres can exploit. One of the twenty recommendations made in the report states:

"Town centres are vital to local communities so we must work together to maximise the inherent advantages of each High Street's local heritage or natural surroundings whilst still providing facilities suitable for modern retailing."

However, it can be particularly difficult for smaller retailers who have limited financial resources to access high quality materials and suitable conservation advice. This can narrow the options they have in terms of signage, security and repairs. Despite this, many have enthusiasm for their traditional shops and value the history associated with them and if offered the appropriate support and advice will be encouraged to retain and enhance their historic shops and make the most of their local heritage.

b. Conservation Principles

When undertaking the conservation of a historic building it is vital to understand its history, periods of development and change and the materials which constitute its fabric. This detailed background allows informed decisions to be made regarding the building. Conservation is not about preventing a building from being used, it is about managing change. Shops are places of work and must be practical and work for the retailer or they will become vacant and redundant. It is therefore important that the retailers are closely involved in any decision making.

The principles of conservation are:

- Minimal intervention
- Minimal loss of fabric
- Minimal loss of authenticity
- Absence of deception
- Reversibility

In essence this means that any repairs must be 'honest', that is not made to look old, and that only the amount required to make the building sound is undertaken. There should be respect for the existing fabric with as little intervention as possible.

Where architectural elements have been lost, it may be possible to reinstate them where evidence exists to confirm the nature of these. However, conjectural reinstatement should be avoided. The authenticity of a historic building cannot be created. It is therefore important to protect historic fabric by ensuring a good maintenance regime which prevents unnecessary repairs.



An example of minimal intervention and honest repairs to an eighteenth century shop window. The minimum amount of material has been replaced with timber of a suitable match. The new timber is not aged in any way but will blend in successfully once painted.

c. Materials

The materials used on a shopfront will directly relate to its period of construction. It is vital that any alterations or repairs respect the existing fabric. Difficulties may arise where materials are expensive or difficult to obtain and this may deter shop owners from pursuing more suitable products. Some materials are difficult to source or may require specialist advice, particularly for matching and restoration.

Modern materials are often of poorer quality and unsuitable for historic buildings. Care therefore needs to be taken in the specification of materials for conservation work and for new designs. It is vital to identify suitable materials and appropriately qualified contractors to carry out work.

d. Design and Practicality

Shops are places of work and they must meet the needs of retailers or they will inevitably become vacant. Historically, shops were specifically designed for certain retailers and features which survive today reflect this. For example, a higher stallriser is often associated with a butcher or fishmonger. It is important that the design reflects these needs and that the shop works as a place to sell. Shopkeepers may have certain requirements depending on their particular business and the shop may have to be adapted to accommodate these requirements. This may be in terms of the entrance, interior layout or display. Other features such as sun protection may also be of importance to certain retailers or in particular locations.

Where alterations or new designs are undertaken they should respect the parent building. This should not be a slavish pastiche of earlier designs. 'Victoriana' styles are rarely executed successfully and while certain principles of proportion should be borne in mind, sometimes it is the more daring modern designs, where executed in high quality materials, that are successful rather than those which try to mimic the past and fail. The decision as to the most appropriate design will depend on the parent building and the surrounding townscape. For pairs of shops or a row of shops if the original design intention was that they should have common architectural features a sympathetic reinstatement may be appropriate.



Where shops are in a matching pair or row it is important to make the most of the architectural unity as this is a powerful element in the townscape

e. Sustainability

It is widely recognised that the retention and renovation of existing historic fabric is a sustainable approach. There is embodied energy in these properties and their unnecessary removal and replacement with modern materials, some of which have a relatively short life-span should be avoided if possible. Products like Upvc windows are very difficult to repair whereas a good quality timber window can be cheaply maintained and repaired when required.

It is often possible to carry out simple repairs to timber and stonework which mean that the building has a continued life without undertaking expensive and excessive interventions. As shops can change hands frequently there is often a turnover of signs and interiors in particular. A sustainable approach using the existing historic fabric can often minimise the need for costly replacement while still meeting the needs of retailers.

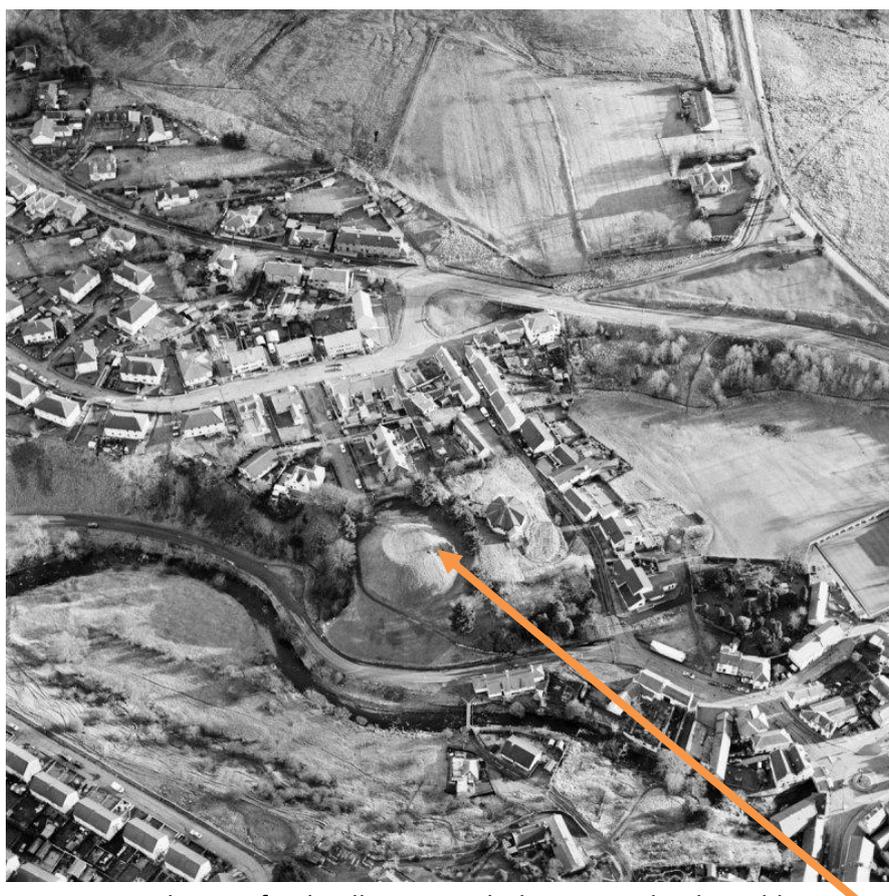
3. Dalmellington: Historical Background

Understanding the history and context of a site is a vital part of any conservation project. This section examines the historical development of Dalmellington and how the local economy influenced the pattern of retail development.

a. Early history

The locality has evidence of occupation dating back to the Neolithic period. However, the earliest structure in the present village is the Motte, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which dates to around 1200. A defensive structure it is a typical Motte and Bailey arrangement, a structure which gained favour in the post Norman Conquest period. There are over 200 motte structures in Scotland with a significant concentration in Dumfriesshire and Kirkcudbright, reflecting a district with a tradition of feuding and hostility in the early medieval period. Duncan (1989: 435) defines a motte as

“an earthen mound, round or oval, with timber palisaded defences at its upper or lower circumference; the bailey is a lower enclosure of ditch and palisaded bank at one side of the motte, but sometimes wholly enclosing it, so that the motte sits asymmetrically close to one end of an oval bailey.”



Aerial view of Dalmellington with the Motte clearly visible
©RCAHMS (SC1004882) photo dated 2002

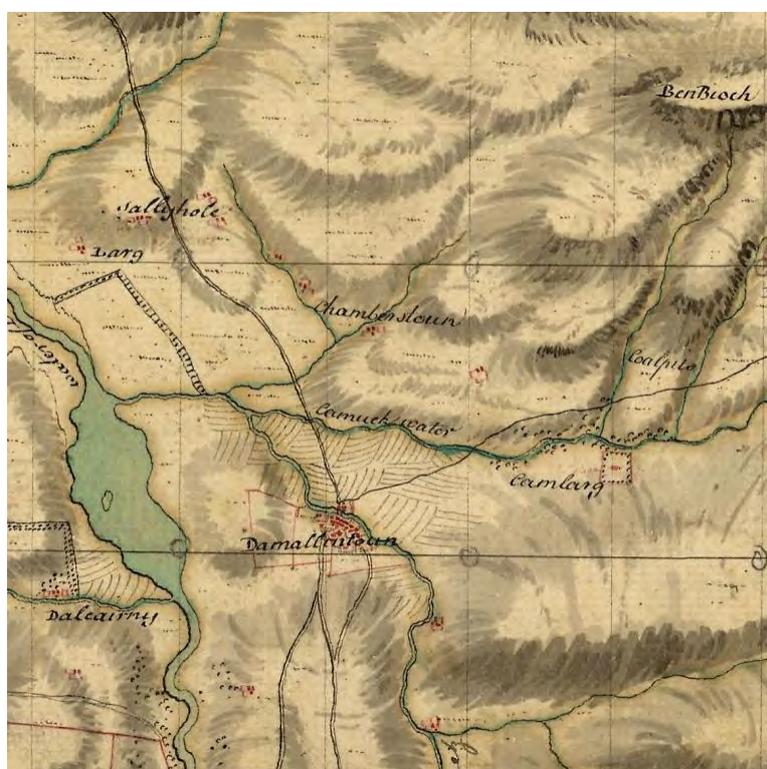
The Dalmellington Motte was described by Christison in 1893 (www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore.html) as follows:

“Dalmellington Mote is nearly circular, 60ft in diameter on the level top, and slopes steeply to a trench which cuts it off from the Castle Crofts plateau on the E and S, and from the slope to the village westward. To the N, a narrow terrace completes the circuit. The trench is 6 to 9ft wide at the bottom, and has an outer, flat-topped low rampart on the W side. The mound rises about 30ft above the terrace and some 60 to 70ft above the village. The mound was superficially restored about 40 years ago.”

Dalmellington was granted the status of Burgh of Barony. Royal burghs, such as Perth and Stirling were given the special position by King David I which allowed them to hold markets and fairs. The Crown also allowed barons to establish burghs on their granted lands so that they too could hold markets and fairs and benefit from the revenue they raised (McWilliam, 1975:32). Early charters indicate that Dalmellington was held as a barony held by Sir Duncan Wallace in 1373 and King James VI granted Alan, Lord Cathcart *“the lands and barony of Dalmellington with its castle, mills, fishing rights, woods, coal mines, tenants, etc”* in 1607 (Dalmellington Community Council, 2004).

b. Economy

Located within a rural area, the economy of Dalmellington from medieval times would have been dependant on agriculture. General Roy’s Military Map of the area in 1745 shows it as *Damallatoun* but the village can be seen as being of a reasonable size with the runrig field system on the slopes above the houses.



General Roy’s Military Map 1745

©National Map Library of Scotland www.maps.nls.uk

However, during the eighteenth century handloom weaving supplemented the agricultural trade. From the 1780s onwards the trade nationally increased rapidly with around 39,000 Scottish weavers working by 1795 (Smout, 1987:394). Despite this early prosperity, during the early nineteenth century it began to decline as wages dropped due to an over-supply of labour. By the 1830s the trade was one of poverty and decline. Smout (1987:402) states that the situation did not improve for people until the 1840s when *“the pool of immigrating labour began to be mopped up by new activity, especially by railway construction, and the boom in iron and coal”*.

The situation in Dalmellington mirrored that in many other parts of Scotland. There was initial success with the handloom weaving, then the subsequent development of larger mills as the markets grew. The New Statistical Account of the 1830s notes that there are two woollen mills which weave plaid, tartan and carpets with around forty handloom weavers, mostly weaving tartan.



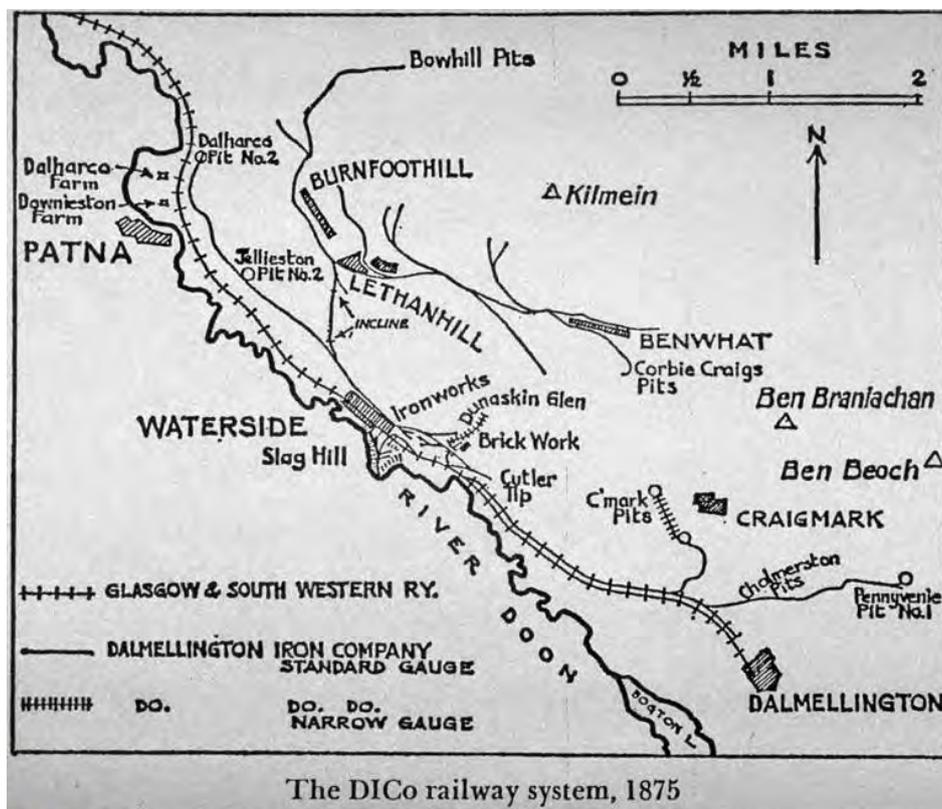
Weaver's cottages, Cathcartson erected in 1744. These are typical of the style which would have been erected during the eighteenth century. They now form the Doon Valley Museum

The presence of minerals offered major new opportunities providing an alternative to weaving and agriculture. The discovery of blackband ironstone, suitable for making iron, offered significant development opportunities along the Doon Valley. The associated ironworks and railways resulted in an industrialising of the formerly agricultural landscape. By the late eighteenth century the Statistical Account for Scotland (1791) noted the abundance of minerals in the area stating:

“The parish is full of fine coal, and freestone, in almost every corner of it. These two useful articles terminate here, there being none to the southward beyond the parish. Coal is carried from hence, to the distance of 30 miles, into Galloway. There is also iron-stone to be found in the parish, and lead in some of the hills. Near the village of Dalmellington is the cheapest and best coal to be found in the west of Scotland.”

These rich mineral sources offered the opportunity for development with the founding in 1845 of The Dalmellington Iron Company by Henry Houldsworth at Dunaskin near Dalmellington. The Glasgow Herald reported the opening of this in 25 September 1848:

“Dalmellington Iron Works- These works, belonging to the Messrs Houldsworth, Glasgow, were blown for the first time on Monday week, and the first casting took place on Wednesday. The machinery was found to work smoothly, and everything went off well. Ayrshire is now girdled with iron works; and should trade improve, many more will be set agoing, as minerals and coals are found in abundance in almost every corner of the county. An English company has been exploring the hills around Dalmellington for the last few weeks, and have found lead, black-band ironstone &c. in great abundance.”



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000-000-481-437-R | 02310277.jpg | 22-May-2012

Dalmellington 1875 showing the railway network

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The railway was brought to the town in 1853. Essential for the development of the iron industry, it was funded by the Houldsworth family in order to provide a vital transport link for the moving of the heavy materials. However, an added benefit was that this new transport network offered significant tourist opportunities. These are typified by an article in the Glasgow Herald in 1873 titled *New Saturday Excursions to the Land of Burns*. The article notes that the Glasgow and South Western Company have added a new excursion route from Glasgow to Dalmellington “at extremely low fares”. Dalmellington is described as “a prosperous little place” and visitors are encouraged to visit the beauties of nearby Glen Ness.

The presence of mining, the transport system and the improved employment prospects would have influenced the shops which could be sustained in Dalmellington. According to information held in the Doon Valley Museum, in 1837 there were many shops including three bootmakers, two fleshers, four grocers, one watchmaker, one ironmonger and six shopkeepers. By 1902, the number of shops had expanded with additional trades such as stationers and tobacconists and two bakers as well as three jewellers. Undoubtedly, the presence of visitors travelling to the area by train would have influenced both the number of shops and the goods they sold.



Crystal Palace, New Street c1900

The large paned windows probably date to 1840s-1850s. The shop is selling lemonade and ginger beer. The building has been demolished.

©Doon Valley Museum

Into the twentieth century mine working continued to be the main industry in the area. However, pits began to close from the late 1950s with Pennyvenie closing in 1978. The opening of a large opencast mine at Chalmerston in 1988 continues the tradition albeit on a smaller scale. The Ironworks ceased production in 1921 when it was taken over by William Baird & Co Ltd. They built a brickworks at the site which operated until 1976. The railway closed in 1963 and the station was subsequently demolished.

c. Topography and layout

The village lies in the Doon valley but it is the Muck Burn which runs through the centre of Dalmellington. The location in the valley floor together with the steep sided hills surrounding means that flash floods have been an ongoing problem for centuries. The first recorded flood was in 1855. The twentieth century witnessed two major floods in July 1927 and then again in July 1936.

A flood in 1875 was reported in the *The Glasgow Herald* (28 September 1875) following a major storm. The articles describes the devastation stating:

“Rain fell in torrents for several hours, and came rushing down the sides of the hills by which the village is surrounded. The Water of Muick, which runs through the village, overflowed its banks and a great number of the low-lying houses were flooded, some of them with several feet of water, the furniture being knocked about in all directions. The kitchen at the Black Bull Inn had about 4 foot of water in it, and in the stables the water rose to the horses bellies.”



High Main Street, Dalmellington during the 1926 flood

©Dalmellington & District Conservation Trust. Licensor www.scran.ac.uk



The two bridges in the centre of Dalmellington prior to the construction of the Square

© Doon Valley Museum

The Square at the centre of Dalmellington forms the hub of the town today and is where the Muck Burn is bridged. Originally a single bridge stood here but this was improved in the early twentieth century with the construction of an iron bridge. Further improvements were made in 1936 with the formation of the Square, providing a larger space with less constrictions.

d. Role of the Dalmellington Industrial Co-operative Society

The Co-operative played a significant role in the architectural and economic history of Dalmellington. This is typical of the pattern in many Scottish mining communities where the role of co-operation was considerable and this was reflected in the popularity and success of many Co-operative Societies. Some of these grew to be of very significant size, such as the Edinburgh based St Cuthbert's Society, but others remained small although played a vital part in local retail economies.

The Co-operative Movement originated in Rochdale, Lancashire in 1844 when the Rochdale Pioneers set up a co-operative buying system. The idea of co-operative purchasing grew and was particularly popular in industrial working class areas. Strongholds in Scotland were in the coalfield areas of Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and the Lothian's where members shared in the profits through their dividend. Co-operative societies established shops, provided delivery services to outlying areas and set up their own purpose-built bakeries, dairies and clothing factories.

The Dalmellington Industrial Co-operative Society Limited was established in 1879. Like many co-operative societies, the Society had a number of shops serving different purposes from shoes to groceries. These shops were located on High Main Street and Church Street. The business grew successfully resulting in the steady expansion over the decades of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



Dalmellington Co-operative Society, High Main Street

©Doon Valley Museum

The local newspaper, *The Ayr Advertiser* reported in 25 June 1896 on the extension of the Co-operative in Dalmellington. It noted that the building in Church Street erected in 1883 was now too small to accommodate the grocery and drapery trades. The building was therefore extended at a cost of £474 giving an additional 30 foot of shop frontage providing “two commodious shops for the bakery and drapery departments”. Above the shops Committee and meeting rooms were created.

In the 1930s the Society continued to thrive and a new building was erected in Church Street. The official opening was reported in the *Ayrshire Advertiser* on 4 June 1931 noting the large gathering of local dignitaries, Society members and the general public who came to witness the celebrations.



The official opening of the new Dalmellington Co-operative Store in June 1931

©Doon Valley Museum

Around the same time, the existing shops in High Main Street were re-fronted in a Moderne style with etched glass and black polished marble cladding and a terrazzo floor. It is interesting that the new-built shop retained a very traditional style with a building very much in keeping with the rest of Dalmellington and even the sign was of a traditional cut and gilded design. However, their existing premises were re-fronted in a style more typical of the 1930s period.

By the post-war period there were four shops in this row with a bakery, butcher, drapery and boot and shoe shop with offices on the first floor. The shops remained in Co-operative use until the 1970s but the Church Street premises remains a Co-operative store today under the ownership of CWS.



The former Co-op in High Main Street (now CJs Discount & Pound Store)
The wavy lines in the etched glass are typical of the inter-war period.

In the 1960s, the Dalmellington Co-operative expanded further with the acquisition of what was described as a *“building which a year or two ago was looked upon as derelict and dying property”* (Ayrshire Advertiser May 19, 1960). The article goes on to describe how it has been transformed into a *“bright and smart shopping centre”* stating that with a *“huge CO-OP sign on a background of mosaic tiling in gay colours it is undoubtedly the most prominent building at the Cross, and a splendid addition to the Society’s other premises in the Main Street.”*

The article notes that the building was *“reconstructed from dwelling houses to a design prepared by the SCWS Architectural department”*. The ground floor was a grocery store with hardware and furniture on the upper floors. Notably, this appears to have been the first shop in Dalmellington to introduce self-service. The Co-operative Societies played a pivotal role in promoting new approaches to retailing including the use of self-service.

For a small settlement like Dalmellington the contribution made by the Dalmellington Industrial Co-operative Society was therefore of significance. The building and refurbishment of shops which aimed to serve the local community had a permanent impact on the architectural appearance of the town. Although only the shop at 2 Church Hill remains in Co-operative occupation, the wider legacy of their role remains evident.

e. Architecture of Dalmellington

The overall architecture of the town is modest and small scale with vernacular buildings primarily single or two storey. Some of the buildings are later eighteenth century but the majority are nineteenth century. The loss of buildings over recent years has resulted in twentieth century replacements.



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View of Dalmellington in 1880s showing the low rise buildings
©Dalmellington & District Conservation Trust. Licensor www.scran.ac.uk

Early photographs indicate that thatch was used for some of the cottages and many of them had whitewashed walls. Although slate gradually replaced thatch, it certainly remained a roofing material into the nineteenth and even twentieth century, especially in rural areas.

While the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century buildings are of ashlar and therefore not rendered, earlier, rubble-built buildings are likely to have been harled and lime-washed. Some buildings now have a modern cement render finish.

For retail use, earlier buildings tend to be domestic residences converted for shop use whereas those from 1850 onwards are more likely to be purpose-built specifically for retailing, usually with living accommodation above. Historically, the town centre had a mixture of buildings used or adapted for use as shops, buildings used as public houses and inns and domestic properties. The mix today is similar with the majority of shops of simple design and mostly purpose-built rather than converted.



Centre of Dalmellington in late nineteenth century showing a mixture of vernacular buildings, some with steep pitched roofs. The buildings are mostly lime-washed, a traditional finish for rubble masonry walls which protected it from the weather.

©Doon Valley Museum

Generally, the buildings in Dalmellington are modest in their architecture with little embellishment. There is however great variety in the styles giving the town centre a cohesive scale yet architectural variation within that.

f. Dalmellington in 21st century

Dalmellington has been at the mercy of changes in the industrial economy of Scotland where the focus has moved away from traditional industries such as coal-mining. However, there are now other opportunities within the area particularly in the tourist industry. The development of the Dark Skies Observatory nearby offers considerable tourist opportunities. This project costing £700,000 is likely to attract significant tourists to the area and businesses can therefore capitalise on this market. This opens in Autumn 2012 and presents considerable opportunities for the town.

Other opportunities are within the natural environment surrounding Dalmellington including the proposal for a designated biosphere at Loch Doon. There is also development of the paths network, a growing tourist sector.

In terms of art and culture, the Doon Valley Museum forms part of the Future Museum project, a partnership promoting museums in South-west Scotland. Locally, school children are involved in the development of an art and sculpture trail.

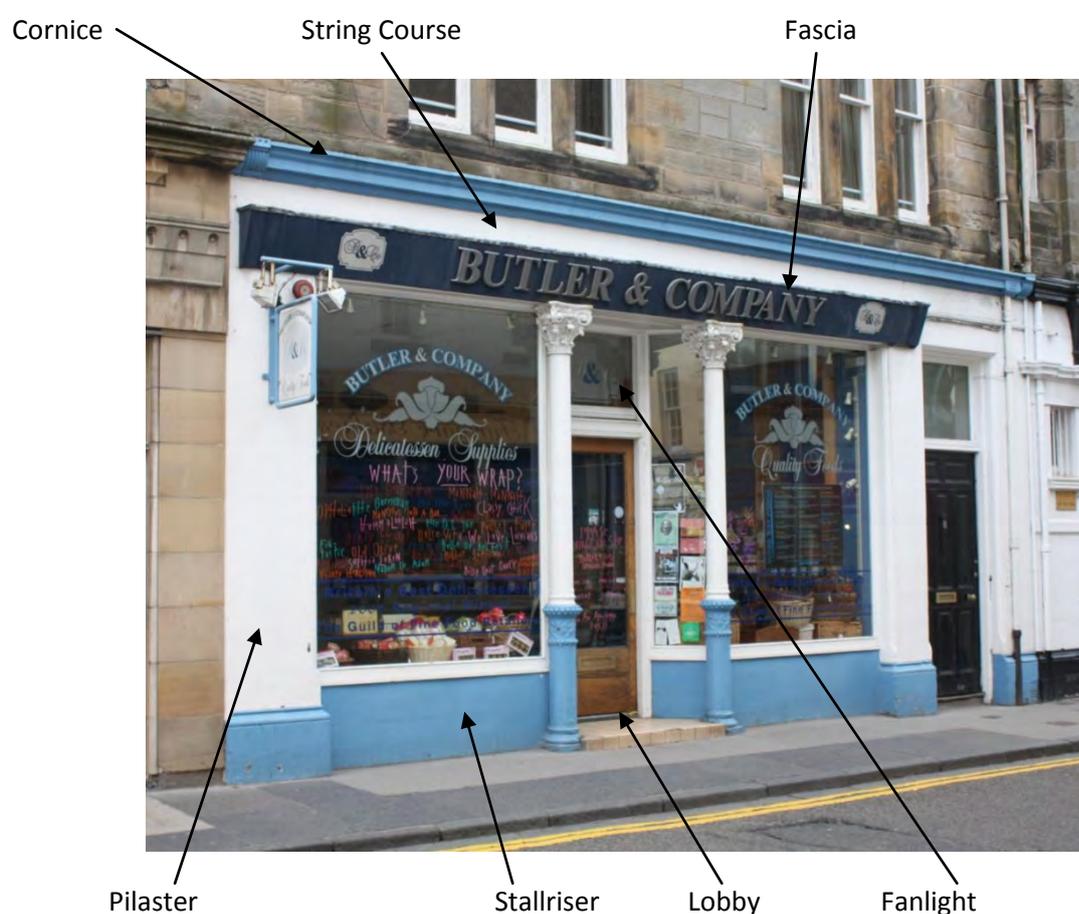
The development and promotion of tourism in the East Ayrshire area and in the wider South-west Scotland region means that Dalmellington can take advantage of the substantial economic benefits that this brings.

4. Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

a. Shop survey

This section considers the wider strategic approaches to the shops in Dalmellington. The individual surveys (Appendix 5) together with the architectural drawings complement this by making specific recommendations for each shop. This section of the report considers the context of the town centre and then details with specific elements of shop design including signage, blinds and security.

Many of the shops in Dalmellington are simple shopfronts with single or paired windows. There is little architectural elaboration but many are attractive late nineteenth or early twentieth century buildings. Shops, regardless of age, have common features and elements as indicated in the image below.



Architectural elements of a typical shopfront

In total, twenty-three shops were visited and assessed:

Main Street:	1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 30
High Main Street:	3, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 18
High Street:	5, 14
Church Hill:	2

b. Dalmellington centre

The centre of Dalmellington has four distinct areas. Main Street, The Square, High Main Street/ Church Street and High Street.

Main Street is the route that people will tend to take if coming into the centre as they travel on the A713 road between Ayr and Castle Douglas. It is therefore vital that this area is well sign-posted, including for parking, and that the shops here are inviting and visibly open for business. Parking is available on one side of the street which narrows the road. The shops here are a mixture of service type retailers including a coffee shop, hairdressers, two taxi offices and a pet shop. There is also a mini-market, the Eglinton Hotel and the Royal Bank of Scotland.

The Square is an important townscape setting for Dalmellington. It is a place for people to congregate, has the bridge over the Muck Burn and has a number of attractive buildings. At the present time the Square lacks coherence and is dominated by a traffic roundabout which has no soft landscaping and is used for the siting of a CCTV camera.

The shops include a mini-market, a butchers shop and a charity shop. There are also two hotels at the entrance to High Street, the Dalmellington Inn and the Loch Doon Hotel.



The centre of Dalmellington is dominated by a traffic roundabout with a CCTV camera. The townscape could be significantly enhanced by improving the streetscape and hard landscaping.

High Street leads to the Motte although there is no signage which directs a visitor to this important historic monument and no interpretation panels once reached. This section of the town centre has a number of vacant shops, some of which are in a poor state of repair including Ye Olde House which is on the Buildings at Risk Register. David Dale's, formerly a butchers shop is vacant and there is a gap site. This does not draw the visitor and indeed this area feels uninviting despite the presence of historic buildings and the Motte nearby. There is considerable potential here to improve the townscape.



View of Dalmellington centre from The Motte

High Main Street is a steep hill leading up to the Co-operative supermarket on Church Street. The shops here are all occupied, some with long-established businesses including a fruit shop, the Merrick Cafe, Post Office, barbers and a hardware/ discount store. This section of the town feels quite vibrant and busy. Parking is available on one side of the street. Signage is a problem here as many of the shops do not have signs which indicate the nature of the business.



High Main Street looking towards The Square
The street has many well-used shops

c. Business Types

Dalmellington has a supermarket (Co-operative), two mini-markets, a bakers, butchers and green grocers. It has therefore retained a good number of fresh food stores. The nearest large supermarket is in Ayr which is 14 miles away. Although there will inevitably be leakage to larger towns nearby, there is clearly support locally for the food shops.

In addition there are services such as a barbers, hairdressers and two taxi offices. There is also a pet shop, fishing tackle shop and gift shops. In terms of food and catering businesses, there are two cafes, two hot food takeaways and three hotels.

The non retail types include the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Zone Youth Project and the hotels/ public houses. The three hotels are the Eglinton Hotel on Main Street and the Dalmellington Hotel and Doon Hotel at The Square/ High Street. Although not shops, many of the principles in terms of signage, repairs and conservation detailed in this report apply to these buildings.



Eglinton Hotel, Main Street



Dalmellington Inn, The Square



Royal Bank of Scotland, Main Street

There are a number of vacant units notably two at the junction of Main Street and the Square and two in High Street. Vacancy rates have increased generally in Scotland in recent years due to the economic downturn making viability of retail premises challenging, even for national retailers. Dealing with vacant units can be difficult for a number of reasons including absentee landlords, lack of funds to bring up to a lettable standard and lack of demand. Maintaining such properties so that they do not detract from the townscape is important. This may be through the use of window displays and by ensuring that buildings are maintained by regular painting. Vacant and deteriorating buildings present a poor image to visitors.



Vacant buildings can quickly deteriorate

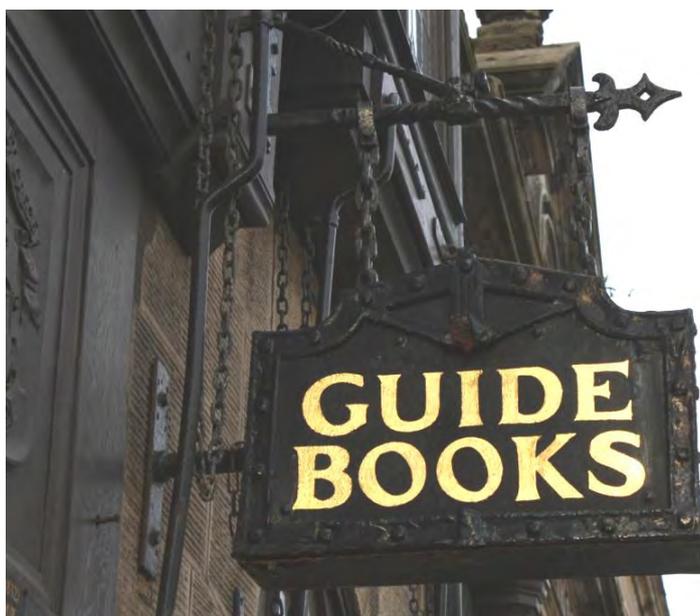
d. Signage

Advertising the business is of prime importance to any retailer. The type of sign chosen will vary depending on the shop itself, the business being operated and perhaps historic use of signs on the building. As the type of sign can have a significant impact on the overall appearance of a shop it is important that the business owners desire for visibility is not over-ridden by signs which are inappropriate and may even be off-putting for potential customers.

A shop sign can take a number of forms. Many shops have a fascia board where lettering is painted or applied. Alternatively there may be a string course which is painted or a timber board attached to a wall. Shops may also use hanging signs or traditional 3-D signs such as a chemist's mortar and pestle.



Mortar and Pestle sign, Crail



Interesting hanging sign for book shop, St Andrews

Advertising is controlled by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984 and The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. East Ayrshire's guidance on advertisements, *The Display of Advertisements*, states the following in relation to the display of adverts in Conservation Areas and on listed buildings (page 9):

"Signs in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings should be sensitive to the character of the area or building in respect of their size, scale, location, materials, design and finish. All signs should be of timber construction or of other materials of traditional appearance, hand-painted in matching, compatible and toning colours. The use of projecting individual letters of an appropriate design and finish may also be considered acceptable."

The Design Guidance goes on to list the types of signs which will not be permitted:

1. Internally illuminated projecting, fascia or pole signs
2. Signs above ground floor level and on the gables of buildings
3. Signs with plastic lettering or reflective acrylic sheeting
4. Any more than two signs per frontage of a building
5. Badly arranged signs or an over proliferation of signs resulting in clutter
6. Advertisement hoardings

The guidance also indicates that only one illuminated fascia sign and one illuminated projecting or hanging sign will be permitted per building. Illumination should be by external directional lighting.



Unusual, individual shop sign in Girvan

At the time of the survey, many of the shops lacked signs which indicated the nature of the retail use or the name of the business. This may be because some had been recently painted and the signage had not been reinstated. However, a visitor to the town would not necessarily know what was on offer and improved signage is therefore an important aspect of creating a more attractive town centre and thereby encouraging trade.



Simple script lettering on a 1960 shopfront in Aberlour is very effective

The type of sign used should reflect the architecture of the shopfront and its period of construction. Within the framework of respecting the architectural history of a shop, the owner must also be allowed to express their own brand identity. Appropriate signage is a retailer's greatest opportunity to advertise his business. This does not have to be overly large or garish, often subtler signage is more successful. The choice of fonts, size and colour can all have a major impact. All retailers should be encouraged to consider their shop, the parent building and the wider townscape when designing their signage. This choice will depend on:

- The parent building
- The age and style of the shopfront
- The location and depth of the fascia or sign board
- The type of retail use

For example, an antique shop with a Victorian shopfront will have a different letter choice from a designer clothes outlet in a modern shop.



Second hand books forming an unusual and distinctive entrance to one of the many book shops in Wigtown, Scotland's Book Town



Advertising can take many forms

Historically, shop owners would have had a signboard or fascia painted by a local signwriter. As a result, many towns had distinct styles evident in their locality due to the expertise and preferences of that particular signwriter. The benefit of painted signage is that if a shop changes hands it is relatively cheap and easy to change the sign. It also offers shop owners individuality and distinctiveness whilst maintaining an approach suitable for historic buildings. Public houses may also benefit from using traditional style pub signs.



Old lettering uncovered above the entrance during work to the Eglinton Hotel in 1979
©Doon Valley Museum



Professionally executed gilded lettering on a glazed entrance door gives a high class image



Modern terrazzo entrance adding interest to an shop lobby

Signage Recommendations

A strategy is required for addressing the lack of signage on the shops to ensure that visitors are aware of the variety of businesses on offer. Working with the local retailers the following approaches may be suitable:

- Employ a signwriter to paint signs where shops have a string course or timber fascia board;
- Consider interesting signage options for shops where the above does not apply;
- Certain shops may benefit from hanging signs to promote the location of their business;
- Specialist techniques such as gilded lettering may be suitable for some shops, such as lettering or numbering on fanlights or glazed doors;
- There may be opportunities to consider tasteful but alternative approaches to signage and advertising. These need to be carefully considered but can be successful and distinctive if carefully executed;
- Consider traditional signboards for public houses.

Cost implications

There are many alternatives to the signs and each shop will need to be considered individually. The following are indicative costs. It may be that if several shops are being painted a competitive price could be agreed.

Gilding on glass windows:	£800
Painted numerals on fanlights	£140
Fascia hand-painted with specific typefaces	£450
Fascias with hand-painted with shading, ornament etc	£250-£400
Stainless steel	£1000
Cast resin letters	£750

e. Paint colours

Historically, shops would have been painted in the colours either available or fashionable at the time. Some types of retailers may have favoured particular colours over time but the choices will have varied depending on the type of retail business, the parent building, fashion at the time and what was affordable or available.

During the nineteenth century, gilding, marbling and graining would certainly have been used on some shopfronts. However, this became unfashionable in the early twentieth century due to cost and the expertise in this area declined. Ebonised and varnished exotic hardwoods were also fashionable for high class shops in the late nineteenth century and Edwardian period.

Modern shops follow similar trends and colours will often be chosen because the retailer likes it or it fits with their brand and image. Multiple retailers use brand colouring to promote their identity.



Thoughtful use of contrasting colours can make a significant impact to the attractiveness of shops
Dingleton Road, Melrose

In choosing paint colours for shopfronts the following general points should be considered:

- The choice of colour must be appropriate for the parent building. This will depend on the colour and style of the building;
- The colour should be appropriate for the type of retailer. They may wish to choose a colour associated with their brand or identity;
- Colours and tones should respect the wider townscape. Bright pinks, greens and purples are rarely successful on historic buildings;
- The colour chosen should suit the shopfront. There may be features which will indicate the colours to be chosen, or avoided, such as the colour of the stonework or small features like the finish in lobby entrances;
- Varnished finishes should be reserved for solely high quality hardwoods and are certainly not appropriate for poorer quality timbers. Varnishes tend to require a higher maintenance regime;
- Finishes chosen should always be good quality paint which is on a sound, well prepared surface. Joinery work may be required in some cases prior to painting;
- Specialist finishes such as gilding should always be carried out by an experienced tradesman qualified in that field;
- Planning consents for change of paint colours are usually required for listed buildings and in Conservation Areas. The Local Authority planning department will be able to advise on the need for any consents.

In Dalmellington the shops exhibit a variety of different colours and it is understood that many shops have been recently painted. Part of the vibrancy of town centres is derived from the diversity of colours used on shopfronts and successful places will have a variety of shopfront colours. It is therefore not possible to be prescriptive about the most appropriate colour for each shop. However, establishing a palette of recommended paint colours may be helpful to steer retailers towards choices which are appropriate for their shops.

Paint Colour Recommendations

- Consider, with the assistance of the local planning department, whether a palette of colours would be an appropriate approach;
- Consider each shop individually, but where shops are in pairs colours and tones should complement each other;
- Careful use of gilding can add a quality feel to shopfronts and should be considered;
- Avoid using varnished or stained finishes unless this is what has been used historically and the timber is of high quality;
- Ensure the surfaces are sound and repaired before carrying out work;
- Avoid painting masonry unless it is currently painted.

Cost implications

A local painter and decorator could supply prices for painting of shop frontages. The cost will depend on the quality of the paint and amount of preparation required.

f. Security

The security of a shop is important to protect from vandalism and theft. Depending on the type and locality of a shop, it may be necessary to have additional measures in place. These may take the form of shutters, grilles and gates. Traditionally, shop owners would have used wooden shutters which could be lifted into the shop during opening hours. In Victorian shops, double storm doors are a common way to protect lobby entrances. These timber doors fold back on special 'shop-hung' hinges so that they look like panelling in the entrance. They are an excellent protection for shop entrances and should always be retained where present. Several shops, notably in Main Street have storm doors.

In a Conservation Area or on a listed building, externally mounted steel roller shutters are generally considered to be incompatible with historic buildings. Alternatives may include internal shutters which have an open mesh style. This allows the interior of the shop to be seen and prevents the 'dead frontage' appearance created by metal roller shutters.



Roller shutters in Carlisle. These create a dead frontage making streets feel unwelcoming and uninviting and may even create a perception that an area is unsafe

Informal discussions with shop owners indicated that there was not felt to be a particular problem of theft or vandalism in Dalmellington although five shops have metal roller security shutters installed. Some of these may be felt to be necessary to comply with insurance requirements, or may have been installed on a shopfront by a previous owner.

Nine shops have externally mounted wrought iron/ steel or mesh grilles and gates which are either fixed in place or are removable. These allow visibility into the shop but are problematic in that they

prevent regular cleaning and maintenance of the windows and they can also give the impression that shops are closed even when they are open which is off-putting to visitors.

In Bo'ness, near Falkirk, the Heritage Lottery funded Townscape Heritage Initiative introduced bespoke security screens for shops in the town centre. These are constructed of lightweight aluminium in order to be removable and only partially covered the shopfronts so are suitable to be left in place when the shops were open.



Modern security grilles in Bo'ness

Shop gates are particularly useful where there is a recessed lobby. These prevent people from loitering in the lobby after closing and offer an additional level of security for entrances. They can be well designed and attractive and either open into the lobby or are light enough to be carried into the shop and stored during opening hours. Shop gates can be timber or metal but should be of a design appropriate for the shopfront.

Alternatives to roller shutters or mesh shutters may include security glazing such as laminated which is more difficult to break. Specialist glazing companies could advise on the products available.



Timber 1930s shop gate. These are attractive and an effective way of protecting shop lobbies.

Security Recommendations

The perceived threat from vandalism is low but security measures are still evident on many of the shops in the town. It is vital that any changes to security are discussed closely with retailers who may have issues such as insurance to consider.

- Retain storm doors where they exist and put in good repair if required;
- Consideration should be given to the use of shop gates for shops with recessed lobbies and where storm doors do not exist;
- Where possible, metal roller shutters should be removed. If security measures are essential, replace with a design which is more appropriate for historic buildings such as a totally new type of external grille or an internal mesh shuttering system;
- Alternatives such as laminated glass may be appropriate for some shops;
- Many of the wrought iron or steel security grilles are serviceable but consideration should be given to town centre wide strategy of security for shopfronts.

Cost implications

Bespoke security screens will potentially be expensive, possibly in the region of £3000 to £5000 each. Designing for the whole town may be a cost effective approach but this will involve extensive negotiations with shop owners.

g. Sun blinds and Awnings

Sun blinds were introduced in the nineteenth century for practical reasons, to protect goods from the sun, particularly for fresh food shops such as greengrocers, fishmongers and butchers. They have the added benefit of offering shoppers protection from the weather and may also be used to advertise the business.

Some shops, such as 9 High Main Street, have integral blind boxes which form part of the design of the shopfront, typically shops which date from the late nineteenth century until the 1930s. These have a blind box located within the fascia which is flush with the building so that the blind can be neatly rolled away.

Where no integral blind box exists, sometimes an externally mounted box may be found. These can be tricky to accommodate however, and may be difficult to successfully weather proof. Shops may use internal roller blinds instead.

The East Ayrshire Council Design Guidance, *Planning & Building Control Design Guidance: Shopfront Development*, (page 9) states in relation to canopies:

1. Canopies should be of a size, scale, proportion and design in keeping with the size, scale, proportion and design of the property on which they are proposed and with the appearance of the surrounding area;
2. Canopies shall relate to individual door and window openings and be restricted to ground floors only;
3. Canopies should not obscure important architectural features of the buildings on which they are proposed.

In relation to listed buildings and Conservation Areas it states that canopies should be of a traditional canvas material with colours and tones complementary to the building. However, modern Dutch canopy blinds are not permitted. The Guidance also states that advertising on canopies should be the name of the business only and that product advertising is not permitted.



Awning with blind box above fascia and zig-zag arms. Fresh food shops like butchers often need blinds to protect their goods from the sun

Where integral blinds exist, these should therefore be restored. If there is no blind present and one is required it may be necessary to look at the different options possible. These will depend on the style and age of the shopfront.



Existing blind boxes can be renovated and a new awnings installed

Sun Blind Recommendations

- Where blinds exist ensure they are renovated back into good working order using appropriate materials;
- Consider the requirements or opportunities for traditional style blinds in other shops if sun is a problem for retailers. Installing a blind may not be possible due to the configuration of the shopfront;
- Internal roller blinds may be a suitable alternative where the sun only impacts on the shopfront for a limited period of the day.

Cost implications

Costs for the renovation of a new blind will depend on the size of the blind and material used. There are several companies who can restore blinds including Alba Blinds based in Lanarkshire. The overhaul of the mechanism and replacement of the awning fabric may be in the region of £1500 but will obviously vary considerably depending on the size of the blind. Blind renovation companies could supply estimated costs for the work.

h. Window displays

In addition to signage, the display in shop windows is extremely important. It was noticed during the survey that many of the shops made limited use of their windows for displays and in some cases the windows were covered up with posters, interfering with visibility into the shop or fascias were lowered. The use of window film with designs is typically associated with small supermarkets, partly as they may have internal fittings within the window space which means that window displays are not possible. There may also be security or privacy reasons for windows not being transparent. However, the use of window films prevents visibility into the shop and tends to create dead frontages which are not attractive for a historic townscape.

Vacant shops also create dead frontages if the windows are boarded up. These make a street unattractive and uninviting. It is worth investigating alternatives to boarded windows using displays to create the impression of occupied shops.

It may be worth considering a window display competition, these are often associated with either Christmas or a celebratory week such as a Gala week or local festival. Crieff for example has a competition where each shop includes a sugar mouse within their Christmas window display. Prizes are given to entrants who successfully find all the mice and the competition attracts visitors to the town. The Merchant City THI in Glasgow also introduced a Christmas window display for shops in the area.

Expertise in window displays is available and courses can be held to assist shop owners in making the most of their shop windows.

Window Display Recommendations

- If fascia levels have been lowered, reinstate the original height if possible;
- Encourage shop owners to maximise use of their windows for displays;
- Consider introducing a shop window competition;
- Encourage shops which have windows blanked out to remove these, where appropriate and introduce window displays;
- Reinststate fanlights;
- Where shops are vacant try to gain access to include displays so that the shops appear occupied;
- If shop owners lack confidence in maximising their displays there are courses available to assist.

Cost implications

There are small cost implications in improving displays and visibility into shops. Running a course on window design would cost a few hundred pounds but several shopkeepers would be able to attend the session.

i. External fittings

The locating of extractor fans, satellite dishes and light fittings as well as excessive signage can create clutter and may seriously detract from the appearance of a historic building and the wider traditional townscape. Where possible, extraction fan units, satellite dishes and similar elements should be unobtrusive and located at the rear of buildings where they will not impinge on the quality of the townscape.



The signs, wires and satellite dish on the left hand building create street clutter and detract from historic buildings and settings

External Fittings Recommendations

- Keep signage, light fittings and wiring to a minimum;
- Remove any unnecessary fittings;
- Carefully consider the positioning of any extractor units, satellite dishes and wiring in unobtrusive locations;
- Many of these additions will require consent and the local planning authority should be consulted before proceeding with any work.

j. Illumination

The use of certain types of illumination may be permitted on buildings. However, in many cases the available street lighting will be sufficient. Internally illuminated box lighting is generally considered to be inappropriate for historic buildings and Conservation Areas and should be avoided. Installation of lighting fixtures may damage historic fabric and can add to street clutter if not carefully

considered. However, discrete illumination may be appropriate but this should be discussed with the local planning officer prior to installation.

Illumination Recommendations

- Consider whether illumination is really required for a shopfront;
- If lighting is to be applied it should be modest and all wiring carefully concealed;
- Internally illuminated units should not be used;
- If illumination is not essential it should be removed;
- Illumination and signage will require consent and advice should be sought from the local planning authority.

k. Maintaining and enhancing the townscape

Regular maintenance is a vital aspect of property ownership. This helps to prevent major problems in the long term. Painting of woodwork, cleaning out of guttering and re-pointing masonry will all help to prevent damp ingress and resultant issues with wet and dry rot and damage to masonry.

Repairs should always be carried out by suitably qualified tradesmen. For historic buildings it is advisable to use experienced tradesmen who are competent in working on historic buildings. Repairs should be carried out on a like for like basis with the minimal intervention possible. Use of inappropriate materials such as cement renders, can be seriously detrimental to the longevity of traditional buildings and should be avoided.

Where buildings are vacant and not maintained they can quickly deteriorate. A number of buildings within Dalmellington town centre are on the Buildings At Risk Register. Derelict and deteriorating buildings can seriously impact on the wider appearance of a townscape although tackling them can be challenging. A grant scheme such as a Townscape Heritage Initiative or Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme could help to improve not only the shopfronts but the wider townscape and tackle repairs and vacancy of redundant buildings.

Repair Recommendations

- Ensure buildings are repaired and regularly maintained;
- Consider options for vacant and derelict buildings including grant schemes;
- Use appropriate materials which are suitable for historic buildings. Advice is available from Historic Scotland Conservation Group, the local authority and Scottish Lime Centre.

Cost implications

It is much more cost effective to undertake regular maintenance than to have to undertake repairs. Although it may seem more costly to use traditional materials such as lime rather than cement, in the long term these materials are more suitable for historic buildings and less likely to cause damage so are more cost-effective.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

a. Overview

Dalmellington is an important and historic town which has a fascinating history and attractive scenic setting. The town benefits from a variety of different businesses and retailers and retains many interesting historic buildings. The Community Action Plan highlighted the pride in the town and the desire to improve and make the most of Dalmellington's history and location.

The architecture is generally small scale, simply designed buildings which combine retail use and residential accommodation. Many of the buildings date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century but the setting of the town with its Motte, street pattern and Muck Burn are clearly much older. One of the major influences on the town's retail architecture was the local Co-operative Society which constructed a number of shops from the late nineteenth century. This represents an important part of the social and architectural history of Dalmellington.

There are many opportunities ahead for the town notably the construction of the Dark Skies Observatory nearby and the Loch Doon Biosphere. Taking advantage of this economic opportunity and building on the existing Sense of Place is key to the future success and sustainability of businesses in the town.

b. Issues identified

A number of issues were identified as suitable for enhancement and improvement:

- Lack of fascia signage making it difficult to identify shops and know their trade;
- Security screens and shutters which affect visibility into shops;
- Blocked up windows and limited use of windows for display opportunities;
- Repairs required to some shopfronts and their parent buildings;
- Vacant shops which are deteriorating and unattractive;
- Poor signage and interpretation for visitors in the town generally;
- Lack of coherence, particularly in the Square which is a space with great potential.

b. Recommendations

Specific suggestions have been made for each shop in the town and drawings indicate the possible approaches which could be taken (Appendix 5). These are merely indicative and it would be necessary to discuss in detail any proposals with both the retailers and the local planning authority.

In general terms it is advisable to develop a strategy for the shops notably tackling the following:

- **Signage:** Improving signage in a creative and distinctive way to help identify and promote individual businesses and to encourage trade;
- **Paint colours:** Consider a palette of colours for shopfronts and apply some creative approaches to paint colours;
- **Security:** Adopt security measures which are more sympathetic to historic buildings;

- **Sun blinds:** Renovate any existing traditional blinds and consider sympathetic options for buildings which require blinds but where no blind box exists;
- **Window displays:** Improve visibility and displays in shop windows;
- **External fittings:** Minimise clutter on shopfronts and the wider streetscape;
- **Repairs:** Carry out necessary repairs and maintenance using appropriate materials and techniques;

For the wider townscape the following recommendations are made:

- **Vacant buildings:** Improve the appearance, including window visibility/ displays of vacant buildings where possible;
- **Interpretation and Signage:** Improve the signage for visitors including interpretation panels such as at the Motte;
- **Fabric repairs:** Encourage a good maintenance regime for buildings and repair buildings using traditional methods where required.

c. Costings

Without more detailed plans it is difficult to arrive at costs for the proposed works. Some indicative costings have been included to give an idea of typical costs for certain improvements. Many of the suggested improvements will be modest in cost, particularly signwriting, painting and minor joinery repairs. The replacement of shopfronts and security gates will be more costly. However, there may be economies of scale with some of the work so where several shops are being improved it may be possible to negotiate a better deal.

Appendix 4 contains a list of specialist contractors. These could be contacted for indicative prices for some of the repairs and improvements. These are only suggested contacts and there will be others who could undertake similar work. Shopkeepers should always satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the contractor to carry out the work and may wish to see examples of the contractors work before employing their services.

The Local Planning Authority should be involved at an early stage of any proposals to alter buildings, particularly for listed buildings.

d. Taking Forward and Next Steps

Establishing a strategy for improvement will require negotiation with the local retailers and businesses together with securing the support of East Ayrshire Council. In discussions with the shopkeepers there was considerable support for improving the town and hopefully this will be a good basis for taking the project forward.

There are opportunities for developing the social and architectural history of Dalmellington. The Dalmellington Industrial Co-operative Society appears to have played a major role in the town and tied in with the mining history of the area this presents a possible project for people of all ages. The

Co-operative Societies kept very good records and it can therefore be a rewarding and successful area of research.

Identifying grants which can assist with funding of the project would be vital. Some funding streams such as Historic Scotland's Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) and the Heritage Lottery Townscape Heritage Initiative tackle the wider townscape, but shopfront enhancement can form part of the grant application together with other aspects such as training, education and conservation of key buildings. These will usually pay for a project officer to run the project. This is an important consideration as running a shopfront improvement scheme can be time-consuming and may therefore prove to be difficult for volunteers to manage.

There may be grant funding available such as Lottery funding which may be able to assist with the work. The 'Your Heritage' funding stream (<http://www.hlf.org.uk>) which offers grants between £3000 and £100,000 may be a suitable option but a combination of funding streams may be required. As Dalmellington centre is a Conservation Area this may help to access funding designed to improve and enhance Conservation Areas. It would be worth contacting the Lottery to discuss the different options available.

East Ayrshire Council may have a member of staff who can assist with identifying suitable grant options particularly as East Ayrshire Council has a statutory duty to protect and enhance the Conservation Areas in their locality. The Conservation Officer (Colin McKee) may be able to offer additional support and guidance in taking this project forward.

Dalmellington is an attractive place and the funding of building improvements and conservation of historic buildings could transform it. Making the most of historic buildings and identifying a Unique Sense of Place is recognised as crucial in helping to maintain vibrant and interesting High Streets where both local people and tourists want to visit. A wider townscape project such as a CARS or THI could have significant conservation and economic benefits for the town helping to capture that Sense of Place. This would not only improve the shopfronts but could potentially bring derelict buildings back into economic use, improve the overall standard of repair in the town and make Dalmellington a vibrant and sustainable place for visitors and tourists alike.

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Dictionary of Scottish Architects: www.scottisharchitects.org.uk

Historic Scotland: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk (for information on listed buildings)

National Map Library of Scotland: www.nls.uk/maps

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (CANMORE):
www.rcahms.gov.uk

SCRAN: www.scran.ac.uk

Statistical Accounts of Scotland: www.stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1
East Ayrshire Design Guidance: Shopfronts

Appendix 2

Map of Dalmellington Conservation Area

The Conservation Area is outlined in red

Appendix 3

Summary of Shopfront Recommendations

Summary of Shops in Dalmellington

Main Street

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading As	Use	Recommendations	Photo
1 Main Street	Aftab Malik	Nice Days supermarket	Supermarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove roller shutter doors and replace with more sympathetic style of security shutter; Replace plastic fascia sign with timber fascia board with hand-painted lettering; Improve visibility into shop and display opportunities; Repoint stonework with lime-based mortar as required; Consider whether illumination is necessary on signage; Long-term consider more sympathetic style of shopfront in timber with central entrance door. 	
2 Main Street	J&M Paterson & Son	James Paterson Butchers	Butchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small repairs as required to timberwork; Reposition extractor fans to less obtrusive location; Remove modern sign and use signwritten lettering on the existing signboard; Consider whether a hanging sign would be beneficial; Paint timberwork and associated stonework of shopfront Ensure glazed brick interior is retained. 	

Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading As	Use	Recommendations	Photo
7 Main Street	James McKelvie	McKelvies	Gifts?	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain existing signage; • Consider replacement of iron shutters with ones which are more easily removed; • Consider a smaller shop gate which matches number 11; 	
8 Main Street	Khalid Mian	Was Newsplus	Formerly a Newsagents?	<p>As the shop is currently empty any recommendations would depend on the future use of the shop. If remaining vacant its appearance could be improved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the appearance by having an alternative to the boarded up window such as an image; • Remove old signage and replace with a timber board ready for a new occupant; 	
11 Main Street	Martha McConnachie	The Kirk Shop	Charity shop	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain existing signage; • Examine suitability and requirement of window shutters and consider replacement of iron shutters with ones which are more easily removed; • Consider a smaller shop gate which matches number 7; • Consider removal of the roller shutter on the door, if not required and replacement with shop gate of suitable design. 	

Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading As	Use	Recommendations	Photo
14 Main Street	Khalid Mian	Key Store	Supermarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace modern sign with timber fascia board and hand-painted lettering; • Improve visibility into the shop; • Reconsider necessity for illumination on fascia; • Consider requirement for roller shutter and if a more sympathetic alternative is available; • Undertake repairs to pilasters and reinstate console brackets; • Reinstate window height of right-hand shop so it matches left-hand shop; • Consider better design for close gate to right side of shop. 	
19 Main Street	Classic Cuts	Classic Cuts	Hairdressers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop may benefit from having an internal door which is partially glazed; • Consider alternatives to blanked window; • Current signage is sympathetic but if being replaced a hand-painted sign on the fascia board would be appropriate. 	
18 Main Street		Dalmellington Taxi and Minibus Office	Taxi office	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove existing sign and use string course for hand-painted signage; • Long-term consider replacement of upvc window and door with traditional timber alternatives in appropriate style for building. 	

Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading As	Use	Recommendations	Photo
20 Main Street	William Loy	The Bacas Coffee House	Cafe	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove existing sign and use string course for hand-painted lettering; • Consider need for security grilles and possibility of a more sympathetic alternative which can be removed when the shop is open; • Retain storm doors and renovate as required; • Consider more attractive entrance lobby floor such as terrazzo or geometric tiles. 	
21 Main Street	Catherine Allan	?	Fishing tackle	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lowered windows reduce daylight into the premises and are not as aesthetically pleasing as retaining the full height of the window; • Reinstate fanlights; • The dry dash may be compromising the stonework and it would be advisable to check this. • The string course is ideal for the signage of the shopfront, preferably using a hand-painted sign; • Restore and retain storm doors • . 	

Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading As	Use	Recommendations	Photo
25 Main Street	Ray Dunn	Lendal Pet Shop	Pet store	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The string course is ideal for the signage of the shopfront, preferably using a hand-painted sign; • Reinststate fanlights; • Restore and retain storm doors. 	
26 Main Street	Robert Bell	N Bell & Sons	Bakers	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use fascia for hand-painted lettering; • Retain storm doors and renovate as required; • Repaint pair of shopfronts in colours which complement each other. • 	
30 Main Street	T&C Town Taxis	T&C Town Taxis	Taxi office	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use fascia for hand-painted lettering; • Repaint pair of shopfronts in colours which complement each other; • Unblock fanlight and reinststate; • Remove metal security shutters and if security is required replace with more sympathetic design; 	

High Main Street

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading as	Use	Recommendations	Photo
3 High Main Street	James & Ann McHattie	Merrick Cafe	Hot food takeaway	<p>This shopfront is modern having been replaced relatively recently with uPVC windows, door and fascia board. If to be replaced in the future a timber shopfront would be preferable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop currently has no identifying sign so use fascia or windows for signs; • Consider more attractive finish for lobby floor using terrazzo or geometric tiles. 	
7 High Main Street	Mr Ka Fai Shek	Ka Burn	Hot food takeaway	<p>This shop was designed with the adjacent number 9 and any alterations and improvements should take into account the design of the adjacent shopfront.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise fascia level and use applied lettering to cladding; • Paint in an alternative finish rather than varnish; • In the longer term consider a shopfront which is more in keeping with the 1930s surrounding polished stone. 	
9 High Main Street	?	C&J's Discount store	Hardware store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove window signage and use cut and applied lettering on fascia; • Replace projecting sign with more traditional hanging sign; • Investigate stability of stone cladding and repair as required; • Check integrity of etched glazing and repair/replace as required; • Repair terrazzo in lobby entrance; • Renovate existing blinds; • Remove metal security grilles if not needed. 	

Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading As	Use	Recommendations	Photo
11 High Main Street	Eneas & Nellie Tyson	The Barbers	Barber's shop	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure fanlight in good working order; • Remove iron grilles and if security is required replace with removable ones; • Repair terrazzo step; • Consider a shop gate; • Use fascia for cut and applied lettering or incorporate lettering into a window sign. 	
13 High Main Street	Elaine Geddes	The Cafe	Cafe	<p>Any recommendations should be for the building as a whole with approaches considered for this and the adjacent shopfront;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use cut and applied lettering for signage or incorporate lettering into a window sign; • Unblock fanlights; • Replace metal gates with shop gate; • Repoint stonework with lime-based mortar as required; 	
13 High Main Street	Elaine Geddes	Flower Boutique	Flower shop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage either on string course or lettering within window; • Reinstate fanlight and if possible recess entrance door into a lobby; • Repoint stonework in lime mortar as required. 	

Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading As	Use	Recommendations	Photo
15 High Main Street	Mary Ireland	Dalmellington Post Office	Post office and cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair stonework as required; • In longer term consider replacing metal roller shutter with gates • When due for replacement, replace plastic fascia signs with timber signs with painted lettering or applied lettering. 	
18 High Main Street	William & Sandra Bristow	The Fruit Shop	Fruiterer/ green grocer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve signage using decorative painted lettering on the fascia board; • Fruit and vegetable shops tend to benefit from having displays outside the front of the shop to attract customers. Consider if there is space to accommodate this; • Enhance the entrance and lobby floor by introducing a more attractive finish such as terrazzo or geometric tiles; • Improve lighting to interior of shop; • Use creative designs to identify the business such as painting of fruit on stallriser and signage. 	

Church Hill and High Street

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading As	Use	Recommendations	Photo
2 Church Hill	CWS Ltd Scottish Retail Group	Co- operative	Supermarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve visibility into shop; • Consider necessity for illumination and remove if not required; • Consider requirement for roller shutter and replace with more sympathetic style if required; • Improve signage with more sympathetic fascia sign; • Relocate fans currently located above entrance door; • In the long term a timber shopfront would be more in keeping with the building. 	
Ye Old House, 5 High Street	?	Vacant	Vacant This building is on the Buildings AT Risk Register	<p>Any improvements to this building will depend on whether it remains vacant. It could be used for displays to prevent it being a dead frontage. With a new owner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple shopfront which would benefit from window signage; • In longer term door could be replaced in more sympathetic materials such as timber; • Finding a viable use and undertaking suitable conservation works to this building would hopefully secure its future. 	

Dalmellington Historic Shop Appraisal

Address	Owner/ Occupier	Trading As	Use	Recommendations	Photo
14 High Street	David Dale & Son	Vacant	Vacant	<p>Any improvements to this building will depend on whether it remains vacant. It could be used for displays to prevent it being a dead frontage. With a new owner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple shopfront which would benefit from a hand-painted signboard; • In longer term window and door could be replaced in more sympathetic materials such as timber; • Replacement of plastic awning with more traditional alternative. 	

Appendix 4

Specialist Contractors

Specialist Contractors

Conservation work on historic buildings should generally be carried out by experienced contractors who are familiar with traditional construction methods. As well as time-served joiners and stonemasons there may be a requirement for other skills when dealing with specialist materials such as tiles or metals.

The following is a list of contacts who could be approached to provide advice or quotations. Before engaging the services of any of these contractors shop owners would be advised to satisfy themselves as to the experience and quality of the contractors and their suitability to undertake the work required.

Useful Contacts

Colin McKee, Conservation Officer, East Ayrshire Council

British Geologic Survey (for advice on stone repairs): <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/home.html>

Scottish Lime Centre (for advice on lime mortars) <http://www.scotlime.org/>

Specialists

Stonemasons

Laing Traditional Masonry: <http://www.traditionalmasonry.co.uk>

Alba Masonry (Stirling): <http://www.albamasonry.co.uk>

Signwriting: Robin Abbey: <http://www.robinabbeywriting.co.uk> (See quote on page 41)

Traditional Awnings and blinds:

Alba Blinds <http://www.albablinds.co.uk>

The Canopy and Awning People: www.thecanopypeople.co.uk/boxblinds.html

Shop Displays

Visobelle Displays <http://www.visobelledisplays.com>

Ironwork

Scottish Iron Foundation: <http://www.scottishironwork.org/index>

Architects

There are many architects who have experience of working in Conservation Areas although not all have detailed knowledge of shopfronts. The RIAS and RIBA may be useful starting points. It is best to use a Conservation Accredited architect for this type of work.

Appendix 5

Appraisal of Shops