Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Ashfield
Ashfield, the name of Pullar’s late 19th century textile works and model village derives from earlier names of Mill of Ash and Millash on this location.

Cover: view across The Square, the former factory workers’ housing enclosing the communal green.
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The purpose of this document is to provide an illustrated appraisal of the Ashfield Conservation Area following national legislation and governmental guidelines (refer bibliography).

First introduced in 1967, conservation areas are defined in Section 61(1) (a) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 as:

“…areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”

More specifically, Historic Scotland’s Scottish Historic Environment Policy Annex 3 (2009) stipulates that:

“It is the character or historic interest of an area created by individual buildings and open spaces and their relationship one with the other which the legislation covering conservation areas seeks to preserve.”

Under Section 63 (1) of the 1997 Act, local authorities are required to “formulate and publish from time to time proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their district which are conservation areas.” Furthermore, the Scottish Government’s policy Scottish Planning Policy (SSP, Para. 144, 2014) states that “Conservation Area Appraisals should inform development management decisions.”

In order to carry out the proper preservation and enhancement of the conservation area it is necessary to first have a full and detailed understanding of all the factors which contribute to the special character and interest of the area. This is the objective of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

In accordance with Planning Advice Note: Conservation Area Management (PAN 71, 2005), the appraisal is a vital tool to enable the active management of the conservation area and aims to:

- Identify factors and features which create the special interest of the conservation area;
- Review and justify the boundaries of the conservation area;
- Provide a basis for developing & implementing a conservation area management strategy;
- Identify opportunities and priorities for enhancement;
• Assist policy formulation and inform development plans;
• Inform Development Control to ensure consistent decision making;
• Form supplementary guidance in the protection and enhancement of the conservation area.

In turn this will:

• Enable Stirling Council to fulfil its statutory duty to preserve and enhance its conservation areas;
• Increase public awareness on the special needs and characteristics of their area;
• Assist owners and developers identify and formulate their development proposals;
• Form supporting documentation for any future funding bids.

1.2 Methodology

This report draws on a number of academic and practical guidelines. As a result, the appraisal relies upon both field and desk study and it should be recognised that the appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive; the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not imply that it is of no interest.

The appraisal has been prepared by Sonya Linskaill RIAS RIBA on behalf of Stirling Council’s Planning Department. Initial research was undertaken in March 2011, updated by Stirling Council in September 2012 and August 2014 to produce a Conservation Area Character Statement (Supplementary Planning Guidance SG07).

This initial Statement was reviewed and extended in December 2014 by Sonya Linskaill RIAS RIBA on behalf of Stirling Council’s Planning Department to produce a full Conservation Area Appraisal which will replace the Statement as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

1.3 Copyright

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Fig 1A: Former workers’ housing on The Square (c.1866); B: 2-storey row enclosing the south side of The Square with attractive curved external stairs; C: The Steading, in the southern part of the village; D: Allan View, a late 19th century row retaining the scale and style of earlier housing; E: masonry sheds which were part of the former Ashfield dyeworks; F: the Allan Water.
2.0 Summary of Significance

Ashfield Conservation Area is located to the north of Stirling on an isolated loop of the Allan Water two miles upstream from Dunblane. The small settlement consists of a late nineteenth century planned factory village designed for J & J Pullar & Company. The village is characterised by the formal layout of former workers’ cottages around a communal green. This is juxtaposed with the industrial complex of the former textile factory by the riverside and its water power infrastructure. The conservation area has historic significance for a number of interrelated reasons, all of which contribute to its character and appearance:

- An excellent example of a modest factory village of the later nineteenth century which created a new community during the industrialisation of this area of central Scotland. The village remained a working community for over a hundred years (1865-1976). It was the last textile-printing works in Scotland.

- In the context of planned industrial villages or company towns in Scotland, Ashfield retains the key components of its model industrial settlement including former factory buildings, water power infrastructure, manager’s house, and workers’ housing.

- Buildings of the former factory survive including the gatehouse and former water tower as well as the water power infrastructure including Pullar’s original weir, still in use today to generate hydro power.

- Due to the restricted site, the village layout remains largely as it was at the turn of the twentieth century. The original workers’ houses set out around a communal village green, additional rows of housing for the expanding workforce, the former manager’s home (Ash Cottage), the village hall and former farm steading.

Ashfield is one of 24 conservation areas designated in the Stirling Council area to safeguard the settlement’s distinctive historical form (fig 2).

“The designation of a conservation area is a means to safeguard and enhance the sense of place, character and appearance of our most valued historic places.”

(PAN 71: Conservation Area Management, 2005, 1)
Fig 2: Ashfield indicating the conservation area (shaded in orange). © Crown
Ashfield Conservation Area is characterised by:

Its setting:
- A small former factory village set on an isolated loop of the south bank of the Allan Water.
- The site is further restricted by the main central railway line to Perth creating the village enclosure.
- The low lying riverside site affords distant views east to the peaks of the Ochils, and across the Allan Water and agricultural land towards Comrie Moor and Slymaback.

Its landmarks:
- The Allan Water forms a major natural landmark.
- The railway cutting / line and its two bridges.
- The Square is a local landmark, its mown lawn enclosed by the former factory workers’ housing.
- The village hall is a local landmark.

Its buildings:
- 1 and 2-storey cottages in terraced rows; generally 2-storey blocks are flatted with external rear access stairs to upper flats. Constructed in the second half of the 19th century.
- Scots slate pitched roofs laid in diminishing courses with continuous slate finish (no dormers). Strong projection of roof at gable ends and pronounced eaves or longer overhanging eaves. Short prominent chimney stacks.
- Stone wall construction, earlier buildings in pink/red sandstone coursed rubble often with contrasting ochre sandstone margins and segmental lintels over doors and windows; later buildings in ochre/blond sandstones; red brick for outbuildings.
- Windows traditionally timber sash and case originally in 6 over 6 lying pane style curved to match segmental arched lintel. Some 2 over 2 panes, presumably later replacement. Now predominately painted white.
- Traditional doors vertically boarded with lay light formed in 2 panes, curved to match segmental arched lintel.
- Outbuildings associated with housing.
- Small plots some with small gardens, planting strips, hedging and stone boundary walls.

Its vulnerability:
- Wholly unlisted fabric.
- Already altered fabric (should not be regarded as a precedent).
- Buildings in multiple ownership; changes to one property affect the group and conservation area context.
- Erosion of original fabric with inappropriate replacement and repair affecting individual properties, their grouping and the wider conservation area context.
- Erosion of roofscape erosion, a key component in the character of the individual houses, particularly of the groups of single storey cottages.
- Erosion of the setting, planned layout and open spaces by new development.

Table 1: Ashfield Conservation Area: Key Characteristics
3.0 Location and Population
This chapter places the conservation area in its geographical and regional context.

3.1 Location

“An industrial hamlet on the Allan Water. Founded in the 1880s as a model village to serve a new bleachworks.”

(Gifford & Walker, 2002, 184)

Ashfield is situated 7 miles north of the City of Stirling and 2 miles north of Dunblane. The City of Stirling is the major civic centre of the region approximately 30 miles from Glasgow and 35 miles from Edinburgh on the M90; grid reference NS 795935 (fig 3).

Fig 3: Map of Stirling Council area showing Dunblane (Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park is shaded).
The village is sited on the open farmland of Sheriff Muir (NS 784038). It is situated on the banks of the Allan Water and enclosed to the east by the Stirling-Perth railway line. It is accessed by a single approach road branching off the B8033 (fig 4).

![Map of Ashfield, Dunblane, and Sheriff Muir](image)

**Fig 4:** Ashfield, showing Dunblane and Sheriff Muir. © Crown

### 3.2 Population

Ashfield is a small settlement with a population of about 110 (2014). Various figures ranging from between 100 and 200 have been stated for the historic workforce of Ashfield, with a figure of around 130 suggested by research (Williams, 1980).

The City of Stirling is the largest settlement in the Stirling Council area, its population is around 33,700 with almost 46,000 living the greater urban area (2008).

Similarly to Scotland as a whole, the population of the Stirling Council area is predicted to increase by 7% by 2033. Development pressures may therefore increase.
4.0 Historic Context

This chapter outlines the reasons behind the origin of the settlement and makes reference to key periods of political or economic change, former uses and phases of development and their effects on shaping the physical form of the settlement. The emphasis is on the survival of those elements which have determined the form of the conservation area today.

4.1 Origins and Development

Origins
Roy’s Military Map of Scotland (1747-1755) does not indicate any buildings or settlements on the south bank of the River Allan between Glassingal and Dunblane. Later cartographic records from the eighteenth century however do illustrate a water mill at Ashfield with an L-plan building close by (Millask, Stobie, 1783; fig 5). These early buildings appear in more detail in the First Edition Ordnance Survey (1862; Mill of Ash and Millash; fig 6); the site was also referred to as Wester Ashfold (Williams, 1980).

A poem read at the opening of the new village hall in 1881 may give some clue as to the condition of the earlier buildings before the factory was built (although this is conjecture):

“… An auld Mill stood where drippin’ wheel
was green wi’ moss an’ maiden hair,
wi’ hoose hard by, a cosy biel,
that reared braw lads and lassies fair.”

Fig 5: Stobie’s map (1783): a mill ‘Millask’ is recorded on the site of the later Ashfield village with an L-plan building adjacent. © National Library of Scotland
The "mills of Ash", its ancient name,
But years flew by, the ruins grey
were clad wi' mantling ivy green;
The lade ran dry or lost its way,
to turn the wheel frae morn till e'en.

The waterfa' to waste ran by,
nor man nor maid cam' near the mill,
Save when some artist wandering nigh
the scene with joy his heart would fill."

Nineteenth century

In 1848 the Stirling-Perth section of the Scottish Central Railway opened, with the railway cutting running across the site from south-west to north-east, which with the Allan Water, created a definitive site. Part of the railway was tunnelled to maintain the route of the track south from Millash (fig 6).

It was in the second half of the century that the full potential of this location on the Allan Water was harnessed. The geological changes running across the site creates a high natural fall in the river level ideal to create hydro power. No doubt in recognition of this, in 1865 manufacturers J & J Pullar & Company bought the lands of Millash from John Stirling of Kippendavie.

J & J Pullar & Company (related to John Pullar & Sons of Perth but commercially separate) purchased the Ashfield site to supplement their existing operations at the Keirfield textile works at Bridge of Allan (Dixon, 1988). The steep, narrow fall of the river at this point was ideal to harness water power for their industrial process which involved printing and beetling cotton cloth. Furthermore, Ashfield’s location upstream on the Allan Water was an advantage in accessing the purity of water for the bleaching and dyeing processes required to produce Pullar’s high quality lining cloths; Keirfield in contrast was the furthest mill downstream of some twenty other mills (Dixon, 1988).

The 1865 feu disposition specifically included land and “…the water power of the River Allan connected to the piece of land” and gave further detail of the timescale and expected cost of developing the factory and village:

“…within the space of eighteen months…to erect and build upon the ground hereby dispossed Dwellinghouses or Manufactories, Factories or workshops or other buildings of the value of not less than One thousand two hundred and fifty pounds Sterling…”

(cited in Williams, 1980, 88).

The buildings were to follow an approved feu plan with other areas reserved for gardens, agriculture or bleaching and dyeing. Pullar’s Ashfield factory was constructed at the southern end of the site close to the earlier mill and sluice with workers’ housing at the northern end of the site (figs 6 & 7). Interestingly the approved feu plan for five rows of housing, three roughly parallel with the railway line, was not followed and a more sophisticated and formal layout including a village square was constructed (Williams, 1980,
Constructing homes for its workforce was an essential but new endeavour for Pullar’s, who went on to construct similar housing on Allanvale Road in Bridge of Allan in support of its Keirfield workforce (Williams, 1980, 90-91).

Pullar’s Ashfield Mill (Bleaching, Dyeing & Printing) and the original factory village was recorded on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey (c.1899; fig 7). The village was formally laid out around a long rectangular communal ‘square’ (fig 10). Two blocks of three houses along the east and west sides of the square, with one block of three houses enclosing the north side, all single storey. The southern end was enclosed by a 2-storey block with lower houses accessed from the square and the upper ones from curving external stairs to the rear of the block (fig 12). Small blocks containing water closets, coal sheds and wash houses were sited between each block (fig 10).

The most southerly of the single storey terraces on the square was of a different construction built by the railway company to house temporary workers. This was demolished in 1976 and said to be of an inferior ‘poured concrete’ construction and referred to as ‘The Concrete’ by villagers. It is thought to have been constructed before the factory village to house workers forming the new cutting and railway bridge after the earlier railway tunnel partially collapsed (figs 6 & 7; Williams, 1980, 91).

The workers’ housing was distinct from the factory, housing for senior staff and farm buildings at the southern end of the site, and separated by a large open space. A factory manager’s house Ash Cottage (fig 18S) was built close to the site of the earlier Millash (figs 6 & 7; approximately on the site of the south garden of the new cottage; it does not appear to have survived the development). On approach to Ash Cottage, a row of houses for senior staff was constructed called ‘The Avenue’ (and colloquially known as ‘piano row’). To the south of The Avenue a farm was established to supply dairy produce for the village and accommodate the horses used to transport the cloth to and from Keirfield. The halt on the Scottish Central Railway being used for the transport of coal and chemicals only (the siding to the north-east of the road bridge; fig 7). The farm comprised a steading (The Steading, figs 1C & 15; converted to residential use after the closure of the textile factory), a dairy (demolished; some materials may have been reused in The Steading conversion), and housing (The Cottages, fig 15). The Cottages were built close to the site of the earlier buildings (figs 6 & 7).

The village is said to have been completed by 1866 (Williams, 1980) although The Square (originally called Ashfield Square) now carries a carved stone ‘Gladstone Square 1868’, apparently renamed at the turn of the twentieth century by J & J Pullar who were active supporters of the Liberal Party (fig 18B; Williams, 1980). The original village square layout was augmented by the extension of the 2-storey block on the southern side of the square by two further bays (figs 18H & J), and the construction of Ochil View (figs 14 & 18K; 1909 Disposition plan in Williams, 1980). A notice in the Stirling Journal refers to:

"Extension of Ashfield – In order to provide additional accommodation for their increasing staff of workers, Messers Robert Pullar & Sons, who own the village of Ashfield, are presently erecting light new dwelling-houses there."

(Sterling Journal, 13th May 1898, 4)
Various figures ranging from between one to two hundred have been stated for the workforce of Ashfield, with a figure of around 130 suggested by research (Williams 1980, 91). By 1881 there was also a village hall although there was never a village school (children attending the school in Kinbuck) or church (Dunblane). A shallow weir and lade at the north of the village (upstream of the main weir for the factory) drove a water pump for drinking water from a small riverside pump house (fig 20).

Twentieth century to present day
The first half of the twentieth century saw some further increase in accommodation in the village. The Clachan was constructed just prior to the First World War, on the east side of the railway line primarily for agricultural workers (fig 11; Dixon, 1988) and Allan View of similar architectural style and materials must have been constructed around this time also (Nos 1-4; fig 18L). A reservoir filled from the river was constructed sometime before 1930 for the factory and the adjacent water tower received water from the riverside pump house to supply water to all homes. In 1948 electricity was brought to homes in the village for the first time (Williams, 1980).

After the Second World War, Pullar’s sold the factory and village to the British Silk Dyeing Company and production continued as a textile printing and dyeing works for synthetic fabric until its closure in 1976. It was the last textile-printing works in Scotland (Canmore, 2015). The entire complex and village was sold to a local builder A & L King Ltd of Auchterarder. The factory was sold on and occupied by Ritchies Equipment Ltd, a coring and drilling company which also made equipment for the oil industry, for a period c.1980 – c.1988 (Dickson, 1988) before a short period of disuse.

The factory complex was bought by a private individual in 1988 and the gatehouse was converted to residential use (fig 17). The complex is now used for small business premises and continues to generate hydro power from the Allan Water using the original weir and water channel from Pullar’s time, thus maintaining the historic functional use of the site and river. The houses, many of which were unoccupied in 1976, were sold on to private individuals, title deeds having to be formed from the original single title for the village (Dickson, 1988).

The most significant physical change to the village came in 1979 when the original tall chimney stack used to remove the factory’s combustion products was demolished. However there have been other building losses including the farm's dairy block which stood opposite the The Steading (fig 7). The demolition of the concrete block on The Square led to a loss of enclosure of the space and continuity of the green, and there have been several losses to outbuildings (evident in comparison of 20th century maps) notably service blocks to Ochil View, Allan View and The Clachan. The factory reservoir (built sometime after 1899) has been drained and the water tower adapted and extended to residential use (fig 17). A new 2-storey block was constructed on Allan View and a later recreation hall (post 1930) has been adapted to residential use (now Rosemount; fig 21E). Most recently a detached house has been constructed on the grounds of Ash Cottage (fig 21C).
Fig 6: Ashfield, 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (1862) illustrates the site just before Pullar’s village and factory were constructed. There was already a mill (*Mill of Ash*) on the Allan Water and a group of buildings, perhaps a farm, at *Millash*. The later Ash Cottage and The Cottages being constructed close to these earlier buildings. Note the Scottish Central Railway line enclosing the site with a tunnel to maintain the only access to Millash.

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Fig 7: Ashfield, 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey (c.1899) illustrates Pullar’s Ashfield Mill complex and the original square of workers’ housing detached from this in the north. The SW block of The Square has been extended by 2 bays and Ochil View added next to the village hall. Closer to the factory, is the manager’s house Ash Cottage and houses forming The Avenue; The Cottages, steading and dairy south of that. The railway tunnel has been replaced with a cutting and bridge. At the north of the site there is a railway siding for transport of coal and chemicals for the factory, the letter ‘C’ indicating a ‘crane’; and adjacent on the river, a small weir, lade and pump house which provided the villagers with water. © Crown
4.2 Archaeological Significance and Potential

This section identifies any Scheduled Monuments and information held on the local Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

There are no Scheduled Monuments in the village however the presence of the earlier mill and buildings of Millash should be borne in mind; sites may contain buildings and artefacts relating to previous uses or early industrial processes; any findings or inquiries should be reported to Stirling Council's Archaeology Officer.
5.0 Character and Appearance

This chapter will analyse and illustrate the key features and factors which contribute to the conservation area’s special qualities and local distinctiveness.

The general urban structure of Ashfield Conservation Area is illustrated in figure 8 (Lynch, 1977, Appendix A). This consists of a single character area.

Ashfield occupies an attractive riverside setting on an isolated loop of the Allan Water. A distinctive triangular plot is created by the railway cutting to the south-east and the Allan Water to the north and west; both strong edges and major landmarks. The modest architectural style and low building height mean there are no other major built landmarks. The road bridge and footbridge are minor landmarks as are The Square and the village hall. Green edges, formed by the river, railway cutting and surrounding fields, enclose the village on all sides.

Fig 8: the general structure of Ashfield Conservation Area using Lynch’s methodology. © Crown
The character and appearance of the conservation area will be described through the following sections:

- Setting
- Character Areas
- Buildings and Townscape
- Open Spaces, Trees and Landscaping
- Public Realm

5.1 Setting

*This section addresses the relationship of the conservation area with its surrounding landscape. The sense of space dictated by the interplay of topography and street pattern is described including important landmarks and views.*

The strength of setting of Ashfield comes from several key factors:

**Landmarks and Views**

- The modest architectural style and low height of the buildings mean there are no major built landmarks, the railway being the major manmade landmark, its two bridges forming local landmarks (figs 9 & 16).

- The Allan Water forms a major natural landmark (fig 19).

- The Square remains a distinct feature and local landmark, its mown lawn enclosed by low single storey rows on three sides (fig 10).

- The village hall is a local landmark (fig 24A).

- The closure of the textile factory led to inevitable change to its buildings. The removal the tall chimney stack has taken a landmark from the village and the remaining factory sheds and buildings by the riverside are largely hidden from view from the remainder of the village as the site slopes towards the river, one exception being the prominent water tower (fig 17).

- The low lying riverside site affords views in all directions: to the east distant views of the peaks of the Ochils (fig 11); to the west and north across the Allan Water and agricultural land towards Comrie Moor uplands and Slymaback.

- On approach to the village across the footbridge, the village can be viewed set against the surrounding landscape, a view little changed since the factory village was constructed (fig 16).

- Within the village, there are many glimpsed views to, from and across The Square for example (fig 12) and across the open spaces in the centre of the village.
Street Pattern and Topography
Ashfield is constructed on the riverside. The site is largely flat dropping slightly towards the riverside. As a result properties on Allan View are reduced in scale (fig 13) and gardens on the north side of The Square fall steeply presumably as a result of levelling the green (fig 21F).

The restrictions on the site (geological: Allan Water; manmade: railway line) mean that the village remains within its nineteenth century bounds with only The Clachan having been built out with this on the east side on the railway bridge (figs 7, 11 & 16). Within the village envelope, the original model planned housing of The Square retains much of its original design intent with its low cottages enclosing a communal green (fig 10). However demolition of the concrete block on The Square (section 4.1) and subsequent reduction of the village green (now part is private gardens and parking) has altered the original design intent of a 4-sided enclosure of a communal village green (fig 7).

The later construction of the village hall, Allan View and Ochil View has created a second less formal ‘square’ (fig 14). The southern part of the village, adjacent to the former factory, is less formally laid out. The Cottages and The Steading set at an angle to the railway cutting and main road with gardens visible from the main road (fig 15).

Activity and Movement
Ashfield is approached by a single vehicle road branching off the B8033 through flat agricultural farm land and across the railway bridge (fig 11). Access roads run to either side of The Square and as far as the former factory but there is no circular vehicle access through the village.

Footpaths link the village to Dunblane (2 miles) and Kinbuck (1 mile) along the river, and there is also a route over the railway footbridge and across fields to the south of the village, following the original access track into the village (fig 6). There are footpaths through the village, for example next to the village hall (figs 21A & B) and behind The Square.

Activity in the village today is chiefly residential with some commercial activity at the former factory complex.
Fig 9: landmarks: view looking south from the road bridge over the railway line. The village sits on the west side of the line. The railway line forms an edge and major landmark; there is a second footbridge in the distance.

Fig 10: views and street pattern: view looking north-east across The Square. The single storey cottages in groups of three 3-bay houses form a U-plan around a communal drying green. Note the small brick building on the right, one of several former wash houses, privies and coal sheds which remain integral parts of the planned village.
Fig 11: views and approach: the singular approach road to the village passes The Clachan, the only building constructed on the east side of the railway line. The village is set amongst flat agricultural land with distant views east to the snow covered Ochils in this image.

Fig 12: views: glimpsed views are afforded throughout the village linking its open spaces and providing anticipation; here from the rear of Allan View there is a glimpsed view past the 2-storey block on the south side of The Square to the low cottages enclosing its northern extent. Note the attractive curving stairs which access the upper flats of this block.
Fig 13: topography: the change in level toward the river means that houses built on Allan View appear single storey when viewed from higher ground; here looking across the former bowling green from the village hall to Nos. 1-4 Allan View. This maintains the important low aspect of the village and its connection to the surrounding countryside. The roofscape is prominent and important but has had inappropriate changes with rooflights in a variety of sizes and positions introduced, and a poorly designed dormer which interrupts the roofscape.

Fig 14: street pattern: view north-east looking across the former bowling green to Ochil View (right) and the rear of The Square. These blocks, with Allan View, create a second informal square.
Fig 1: street pattern: the former steading (now in residential use) with the single storey houses which form The Cottages adjacent. The layout of this southern part of the village has a more informal character in comparison to The Square. Front gardens, enclosing stone boundary walls and hedging soften the street pattern.

Fig 16: views and approach: view from the footbridge on approach from the south; the village set in its enclosing landscape, a view little changed since the factory village was constructed.
5.2 Character Areas

This section introduces each character area before more detailed description in the remainder of this chapter.

As identified in section 5.0 (fig 8) Ashfield Conservation Area consists of a single character area.

Character Area: Ashfield

Ashfield Conservation Area (figs 17 & 18) consists of the entire village including the former textile factory complex (including the river and weir), the planned model housing and former farm buildings, the railway bridges and The Clachan. The singular vehicle approach road to the village passes The Clachan, a 2-storey row of flatted cottages, before crossing the railway line into the village proper (figs 9 & 11). At the northern end of the village, The Square (Gladstone Square) is formally planned and enclosed by the former factory workers' houses set out in short terraced blocks around a long rectangular green. The existing north-east section of The Square comprises three sides of 3-in-a-row, single storey 3-bay houses which form a strong U-plan group addressing a communal drying green (fig 10). Some of the cottage elevations addressing the green have been altered, but there is enough authenticity to maintain a very coherent grouping, strong and attractive in character. The south-west section of The Square is less defined, enclosed on only two sides by a row of single storey cottages on the north-west and a symmetrical 2-storey row on the south-west (fig 18H). The remainder of the south-east section has been demolished (section 4.1) and creates an opening to the main road. The original communal green here is now largely converted to use as private gardens and an area for car parking (fig 24B). A number of small brick buildings (former wash houses, privies and coal sheds) are located between the cottage rows and add important context and character to the housing (figs 10, 18D & E).

The 2-storey scale at the southern end of The Square continues along Ochil View with a terrace of houses with short gardens lining the street opposite the railway cutting (fig 18K). This row, with the adjacent village hall, forms the south-east edge of a second informal 'square' containing the former bowling green (fig 14). On the opposite side, Allan View consists of two 2-storey rows, one of traditional masonry construction (fig 18L), one a newer twentieth century brick building (fig 23). A footpath separates this northern part of the village from the less formal south (figs 21A & B).

Rosemount (fig 21E), a former recreation hall, sits back from the main road next to the village hall. Adjacent The Avenue is set at an oblique angle. Its houses with long gardens create a more rural atmosphere (fig 21D), the character of which is continued with The Cottages (fig 18Q). The strong L-plan corner of The Steading marks the southern extent of the village (fig 18P). The Avenue leads to the former factory general manager's house Ash Cottage which sits within its own large plot (fig 18S). A new stone faced house has been recently constructed within its grounds. The remainder of the village is occupied by the former factory grounds and associated buildings including the water tower and factory gatehouse, now both converted and extended for residential use (fig 17). The former textile works occupies a substantial area on the bend in the river. Pullar's infrastructure, created to harness the power of the river, remains in use with the weir channelling water through a sluice under the riverside buildings. A number of large single-storey rubble masonry sheds and former workshops survive, some let for use by small business (fig 18R).
5.3 Buildings and Townscape

This section describes the significant architectural and historic qualities of the buildings and the contribution made by scheduled monuments, listed buildings and key unlisted buildings of townscape value. Any dominant architectural styles, prevalent types or periods of buildings are identified and their essential characteristics including prevalent and traditional building materials, textures, colours and local details are outlined.

"The retention of character of individual buildings in the Conservation Area is essential to retain the variety of detail and visual interest of the area. Each street and every building has its own character and influence on its surroundings. However, it is useful to consider the general character of the area."

(A Character Appraisal for Stirling Town Conservation Area, 1999, 14)

A significant part of the special character and appearance of the conservation area is provided by its buildings and other townscape features. Table 2 and figures 17 and 18 below will detail key characteristics of the character area identified in section 5.0 (fig 8) and described in section 5.2.

Buildings considered to be of special local, regional or national importance are given statutory protection as listed buildings. There are no listed buildings in the conservation area.

The following table indicates ‘key’ buildings. Key buildings are assessed on their contribution to the character of the conservation area and therefore not necessarily on their individual merit as historic buildings. Omission from the table does not mean a building is not important, or that an unlisted building makes no contribution to the conservation area. Key unlisted buildings should be considered in preparation of a local list of buildings by Stirling Council (section 6.5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASHFIELD</th>
<th>BUILDINGS AND TOWNSCAPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments</strong></td>
<td>No listed buildings or Scheduled Monuments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Unlisted Buildings of Townscape Value</strong></td>
<td>All the traditional buildings of the village make a contribution to its character. Those noted here are of particular 'townscape value' and may retain much of their original fabric and/or intended building plan / street layout. <strong>The Square</strong> the original planned workers' housing of the factory village around a communal green; including the single storey rows (figs 18A-C), original outbuildings (figs 18D &amp; E), and the 2-storey south row with external curving access stairs to the rear (figs 18F-J). <strong>Ochil View</strong> (fig 18K) and <strong>Allan View</strong> (Nos. 1-4; fig 13 &amp; 18L) form two sides on a second informal square. The building group in the south end of the village including <strong>The Steading</strong> (fig 18P) a distinctive L-plan building, part of the former farm steading and now converted to residential use; <strong>The Cottages</strong> (fig 18Q) and <strong>The Avenue</strong>. Former <strong>Water Tower</strong> (fig 17): distinctive conversion retaining metal tank detail at its upper storey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Views</strong></td>
<td>Distant views east of the ridge of the Ochils (fig 11). Distant views north of Comrie Moor uplands and Slymaback (fig 16). In the village, glimpsed views throughout including into <strong>The Square</strong> (fig 12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landmarks Major</strong></td>
<td>The Allan Water The railway line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landmarks Minor</strong></td>
<td>The Square and village green The village hall The footbridge and road bridge over the railway line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predominant Buildings</strong></td>
<td>Residential (and former industrial) 1 and 2-storey terraced rows; 2-storey blocks are flatted with external rear access stairs to upper flats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dominant Architectural Styles or Periods</strong></td>
<td>Plain symmetrical traditional style of late 19th century. Chiefly 1865-68; additional housing: c.1898 (2 southernmost bays of <strong>The Square</strong>; figs 18H &amp;J, Ochil View); early 1900s: The Clachan &amp; Allan View (Nos. 1-4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Ashfield Conservation Area: Character & Appearance

Fig 17: buildings associated with the former factory: (left) the water tower adapted and extended to residential use; (right) the former factory gatehouse, also converted and extended for residential use.
### ASHFIELD

#### Key Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building plot size</th>
<th>Small plots; garden ground varies. There has been some extension to buildings in garden ground.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevalent Building Height</td>
<td>Single and 2-storey (no original attic occupation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyline and Roofscape</td>
<td>Pitched roofs with continuous slate finish (originally no dormers), prominent gable end chimneys.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Prevalent Building Materials, Textures and Colours

- **Walls: The Square NE range**: cottages in dark pink/red sandstone coursed rubble wall construction with segmental lintels to doors and windows and quoins in a contrasting ochre sandstone (fig 18A). Outbuildings in red brick (fig 18D & E).
- **The Square SW range** (original 3 houses; fig 18F & G): paler pink sandstone coursed rubble with segmental lintels to doors and windows and quoins in a contrasting ochre sandstone.
- **The Square SW range** (extended part; figs 18H & J), **Ochil View** (fig 18K), **Allan View** (Nos. 1-4; fig 18L) & **The Clachan** (fig 11): ochre sandstone coursed rubble with segmental lintels to doors and windows on The Square only.
- **Windows & Doors: The Square** (fig 18B): timber sash & case windows in 6 over 6 lying pane pattern; upper sash curved to match segmental arched lintel. Doors vertically boarded with lay light formed in 2 panes, curved to match segmental arched lintel. Now predominately painted white.
- **Allan View**: some 6 over 6 lying panes remaining (fig 18L). 2 over 2 timber sash & case windows also commonplace, presumably later replacement.
- **Roofs**: predominately Scots slate laid in diminishing courses; roof finishes are continuous over a row of properties (i.e. no joint between properties). Generally strong projection of the roof at gable ends with plain bargeboards and pronounced eaves. **Ochil View, Allan View & The Cottages** (figs 18K, L & M) with longer overhanging eaves.
- **Outbuildings**: predominantly Scots slate laid in diminishing courses with low slated sweeping roof ventilators, cast iron skylights and single central chimney stacks. Timber boarded doors some with ventilation holes. Fixed timber windows with segmental heads, upper 4 pane hopper over single pane (fig 10).

#### Architectural Features and Local Details

- **Former textile factory**: a significant number of the original buildings and structures survive including 3 prominent rubble masonry sheds (fig 18R) at the former factory entrance, the gatehouse (fig 17), 2-storey office building, and several large sheds within the former production area of the complex including original timber roof structures and supporting iron column details; there are also interesting remnants of the machinery for example the tall iron standards though to be ‘Beeting’ stacks.
- **Allan Water weir** (fig 19): original masonry weir construction for Pullar’s water power infrastructure including sluice stone walls downstream.
- **The Square SW range**: curved stone forestairs with decorative ironwork railings giving access to upper flats (fig 18G).
- **Ochil View** and **Allan View**: external metal access stairs, those to Ochil View with large curved support brackets (fig 18N); industrial influence.
- **The Cottages**: pointed-arched entrances under gablets (fig 18Q).
- **The Steading**: half dormers projecting above the eaves with ashtar surrounds and pierced slate roofs; entrance doors are defined by a large ashlar surround incorporating small window and central moulded pediment (fig 18P).
- **Ash Cottage** (fig 18S): boundary wall, gate piers, pitched entrance porch.
- **Former pump house** (fig 20): corrugated iron building on the riverbank.

Table 2: Ashfield Conservation Area: Character & Appearance (cont.)
Buildings and Townscape: Ashfield

Fig 18A - C: The Square: single storey rows. A: This unaltered cottage illustrates all the characteristics of the original houses with contrasting red/pink and ochre sandstone, segmental window and door lintels, 6 over 6 lying pane timber sash and case windows (originally painted finish), boarded door with 2 pane lay-light and small planting strip in front of the cottage. Scots slate roof finish laid in diminishing courses which unusually is slightly overhanging at both the eaves and gable end; roof finishes are continuous, the roof line only interrupted by the short chimney stacks. The quality of materials and attention to detail illustrate Pullar’s intention to construct an attractive factory village; B: the carved stone ‘Gladstone Square 1868’; C: cottages where windows have been widened detracting from the original symmetrical design; and changes in roof slate and introduction of roof vents disrupt the original continuous roofscape. Note the surviving standard of a traditional gas lamp post in the foreground.
Buildings and Townscape: Ashfield

Fig 18D & E: The Square outbuildings, originally wash houses, privies or coal sheds, make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and are an integral part of the planned model village. They are constructed in brick, but maintain the architectural detail of the cottages such as segmental arches over openings and Scots slate roofs. The functionality of the outbuildings is indicated in their single chimney stacks, low slated roof ventilators and cast iron skylights. F-J: The Square: 2-storey south-west range. F: part of the row facing into The Square, flatted properties have undergone alterations to windows, but one original window survives; G & H: the ‘rear’ façade. Designed as flatted homes with attractive curved external stairs; there has been considerable detrimental change to this block, including inappropriate replacement window types and widening of the original single arched windows. As on a number of the single storey cottages, some windows have been replaced in 2 over 2 timber sash & case (G) which is more in keeping than more modern replacements. J: the later 19th century extension of this block can be seen in the change in stone type and the double chimney stack.
Buildings and Townscape: Ashfield

Fig 18K & L: Ochil View (K) built c.1898 in a similar sandstone to The Square extension (H); so too Allan View (L), built c.1900. Both maintain the 2-storey-flatted form with rear external stairs, although now in metal; M: rear view of Ochil View one side of an informal square now partially set out with gardens; N: detail of the industrial influenced rear stairs to Ochil View with large curved supports; P: The Steading; designed as part of the farm retains a continuity in materials and interesting architectural detail. Note the eaves dormers and distinctive door surrounds with small pediments over; Q: The Cottages adjoining The Steading continue the more rural, informal feel; a low row of 3 houses with long front gardens enclosed by hedging and stone boundary walls. Two of the original small gablet entrances have been extended with entrance porches which are not part of the original design. R: view of the former factory entrance at the north end of the complex, consisting of large single storey masonry rubble sheds and former offices and workshops; S: Ash Cottage the former factory manager’s house.
5.4 Open Spaces, Trees and Landscaping

The section addresses the role of open space, trees and landscaping on the townscape structure and its effect on the character and relationship of spaces within the conservation area. This includes the contribution made by both public and private green space; natural or cultivated elements; woodlands; individual trees; hedges and other landscaping. Similarly to the built environment, these features may also have historical and cultural significance.

All trees within conservation areas are protected through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997; any lopping or cutting must first be notified to the Planning Authority. In addition, a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) can be placed on any individual tree within or out with the conservation area. Ashfield has no TPO designation; however open space and green space are well represented in the conservation area with a small number of mature trees mainly at the southern end of the village and along the river banks; some of the most significant features include:

- Natural environment enclosing the village including open green space (mainly agricultural land; fig 11). Complimented by the riverside setting with mature trees along the river banks (figs 19 & 20) and natural vegetation along the railway cutting (figs 9 & 16).

- Formal communal green at the centre of The Square (fig 10); and former bowling green and adjacent open space enclosed by The Square, Allan View and Ochil View (figs 13, 14 & 18M).

- Private garden space including: small traditional planting strips to the front of cottages (fig 18A-C); original gardens to the rear of The Square (fig 21F) and later gardens formed at its southern end and behind the south-west block (fig 18M); small front gardens (Ochil View, Allan View; figs 18K & L); larger gardens in the southern part of the village (figs 15 & 18D).

- Low stone boundary walls and hedging (figs 15, 18N&Q, 21C&E, 22A&B).

- Footpath across the village from the village hall with a number of mature trees and hedging (figs 21A & B). The children’s play park on its southern side.

Fig 19: the Allan Water is an essential part of the conservation area and reason for the factory’s establishment here. The river falls over rocky outcrops as the river bends around the former factory complex (left), its power harnessed by means of a weir upstream (right).
The following table identifies the key open spaces, trees and landscaping which contribute to the character of Ashfield:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASHFIELD</th>
<th>OPEN SPACE, TREES AND LANDSCAPING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>Open green space (mainly agricultural land) enclosing the village (fig 11). Riverside setting and mature trees along the river banks (figs 19 &amp; 20). The natural vegetation along the railway cutting (figs 9 &amp; 16). See public green space below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Green Space and Woodlands</td>
<td>The Square, a formal communal village green (fig 10). Former bowling green (figs 13 &amp; 14) and adjacent children’s play park. Open space enclosed by the rear of The Square, Allan View and Ochil View (figs 14 &amp; 18M). Footpath across the village with mature trees and hedging (fig 21A &amp; B).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Green Space</td>
<td>Private garden space including: small traditional planting strips to the front of cottages (figs 18A-C); original rear gardens to The Square (fig 21F); and later private gardens formed in the southern end of The Square and behind SW block (fig 18M); small front gardens (Ochil View, Allan View; figs 18K &amp; L); larger gardens in the southern part of the village (figs 15 &amp; 18D).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landmark Trees</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping Features</td>
<td>Low stone boundary walls and hedging (for example figs 15, 18N&amp;Q, 21C&amp;E, 22&amp;B).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Ashfield Conservation Area: Open Spaces, Trees and Landscaping

Fig 20: a small corrugated iron building sits close to the river edge. This is the former pump house which supplied water to the village. Note the attractive Scots Pine on the opposite river bank.
Open Spaces, Trees and Landscaping

Fig 21A & B: the footpath which crosses the village from the village hall past the former bowling green and children’s play park before descending to the end of Allan View and the former factory gates; A: looking north-west; B: looking south-east; C: the driveway to Ash Cottage (new house in garden ground visible in the distance) with hedging to The Cottages’ gardens on the right; D: gardens to The Avenue; E: entrance to Ash Cottage along The Avenue, a number of semi-mature trees and hedging around Rosemount; F: gardens to the rear north-east corner of The Square making up the level difference as the site descends toward the river.
5.5 Public Realm

This section describes street and road finishes; street furniture; signage; and associated issues such as car parking. Existence of original and traditional surfaces and elements is stated.

Ashfield is a small community with no through road. This provides a quiet and rural settling with little traffic movement within the village. Vehicle access to parts of the village is restricted (having not been designed for traffic) including the majority of The Square. This gives the original communal green and surrounding rows a car-free environment with parking restricted to two common areas on the south-east of The Square and behind Ochil View (both formed from earlier areas of communal green space; fig 7).

Due to the Pullar’s historically ownership, the roads and footpaths remain in individual or communal private ownership and are not adopted by the local authority as is the case in many urban areas. This has some benefits with greater flexibility to maintain original and softer treatments of roads and pathways including grass verges to road sides as on Allan View (fig 22A & B), and gravel footpaths on The Square (fig 18A), both of which make a positive contribution to the setting of the village. However this also means that vehicle roads are maintained privately and these are in places in poor repair with potholes (fig 22F).

It is understood that much of the public green space is maintained by the local authority (The Square, the former bowling green and children’s play park; figs 10 & 14) and this is important to uphold the distinction of tended common green spaces, private gardens and the natural and semi-natural landscape that surrounds the village.

There are several stretches of original stone boundary walls enclosing gardens and plots for example turning into Allan View (figs 22A & B) and to The Cottages (figs 15 & 18Q). There are also surviving ironwork railings along the riverside edge of Allan View and to some properties for example outside Nos. 1-4 Allan View. These traditional forms of boundary enclosure contribute significantly to the public realm although most probably now in some form of private ownership. Boundaries to the village more broadly are simply treated generally in timber post and wire. The most significance features in the public realm are the two bridges. The original structure of the bridges remains however the modern treatment of their protective barriers, and the pavement surfacing of the footbridge, are not sympathetic to the traditional character of these structures or this historic village (figs 24C & D).

There are a number of small structures and features remaining from the former factory use. There is a small corrugated iron building down by the river’s edge; this is the former pump house which supplied water to the village (fig 20). There is a lamp post in The Square (fig 18C) and a small metal structure to the north of the road bridge (figs 22C & D; possibly part of the former crane by the railway siding, refer fig 7).

The village lies on a footpath to Dunblane and Kinbuck and this is signed with modern posts at each end of the village. A bus shelter in poor condition sits next to the road bridge (fig 22E).
Public Realm

Fig 22A & B: original stone boundary walls on Allan View add character and quality to the public realm, note there is no pavement just soft grass edging; C & D: a remnant of the former factory use and railway siding that serviced the village; E: bus stop and signpost for the footpath to Kinbuck; F: none of the roads in the village are adopted and are in poor repair in places.
6.0 Conservation Area Management

The Conservation Area Appraisal is a tool in the future management of the area; it is neither a full ‘conservation area study’ nor ‘management plan’. Further specific studies may be required in some areas dependent on their individual conservation needs. As such this section identifies these and provides a basis for formulating and implementing a conservation area management strategy.

This chapter will address the following issues:

- Identify negative factors and vulnerability of the area
- Identify buildings which may be at risk
- Review of existing conservation area boundaries and suggest refinements
- Identify unlisted buildings which may require statutory protection
- Assess the effects of Permitted Development and identify the requirement for planning action including the implementation of Article 4 directions

6.1 Negative Factors

This section addresses the extent of loss, intrusion or damage in the conservation area. Most conservation areas will contain buildings; gap sites and inappropriate street furniture that have a negative impact on the area detracting from its special character and represent opportunities for change or enhancement.

There are a number of negative factors in the conservation area:

1. Detrimental change

The special character and appearance of the buildings in Ashfield has been eroded to some extent due to alterations, extensions and inappropriate replacement elements.

Windows and doors

There has been significant loss of the original timber sash and case windows, and a substantial number of properties have inappropriately designed replacement windows which detract. Windows are of key importance in the appearance of the former workers’ housing in particular the distinctive segmental arched window design with 6 over 6 lying panes (figs 18A & B). Many of these have been replaced in rectangular frames and different fenestration patterns. For example on the south-west section of The Square (figs 18F & H), the 2-storey row has almost entirely lost its original windows and has a mix of styles and materials to the detriment of the row. This has occurred in other areas. Replacements in uPVC and/or non-traditional fenestration patterns and opening methods are generally unsuccessful and have diminished both the character and quality of individual buildings, the rows of houses and the character of the conservation area as a whole. Similarly replacement doors in non-traditional forms and materials detract.

Guidance should be provided by the Planning Authority to allow appropriate protection of the remaining traditional and original fabric and informed replacement where this is necessary.

In some locations, for example the north-east row of The Square, there has been enlargement of original arched single windows to form double rectilinear windows with flat lintels (fig 18C) and this has altered the simple symmetry of the original 3 bay cottages.
Walls
Cement based mortars have been used to repair masonry. This may have been applied to repair traditional lime pointing at a time when our understanding of the role of permeable traditional materials was not well developed. There is some evidence of stone erosion due to the use of cement mortars. Attention should be drawn to the risk associated with impermeable materials and finishes and opportunities taken to repair in traditional materials when they arise.

Roofscape
The roof finish is predominately Scots slate laid in diminishing courses, and continuous over a row of properties. The design of these low single and 2-storey houses means that the roofscape is an important part of the character and appearance of the conservation area. With individual houses now in private ownership the management of change to roofs is vital to maintain the continuity of design. In some instances the original Scots slate roofs have been replaced in other slate types such as Welsh slate this is not the best match to replace the Scots slate in terms of colour, texture and pattern (fig 18C). It is likely that other roofs will need repair or reslating in the future. Care should be taken in any roof repair or reslating so as to maintain the principle of the original character of the roof finish and its component parts (chimneys, projecting eaves details, original roof ventilators and skylights on outbuildings etc.). This will maintain the character and quality of the roofscape of the rows and village particularly where roofs are continuous over more than one property. Guidance should be provided by the Planning Authority.

The original house roofs did not have dormers or rooflights, however several houses have introduced modern ‘Velux’ style rooflights and a small number have inserted dormers (fig 13), most notably on The Clachan (fig 24D). This interrupts the roofscape, therefore where deemed appropriate, traditional rooflights styles and materials should be used in a design which relates to the symmetry of the original buildings. The introduction of modern roof vents can also be detrimental and if necessary should be considered in traditional styles and materials such as lead.

2. Non-traditional buildings
Ashfield is fairly unique amongst Stirling Council’s conservation areas (excepting Blairlogie) to have witnessed very little development since the First War World meaning the village has an authenticity of both its structures, plan layout and setting. There have been building losses (the farm dairy, the factory chimney, a southern block of The Square), but there has been very little new build. A block of new housing on Allan View (fig 23) is one exception but has had minimal impact due to its scale and the topography of the site, reducing its scale when viewed from higher ground (fig 13). This new block has retained the size and scale of the adjacent block, although its design (flat single colour brickwork and simple single panes windows) does lack detail in comparison to the traditional rows. A new house in the grounds of Ash Cottage is largely hidden from view (fig 21C). The most obvious change is the extension of a number of properties. A number of the houses on The Square have large rear extensions or other modern outbuildings / garages. Similarly a number of large porches have been built on the front of some houses for example to The Cottages (fig 18Q). Extension design is less successful where its scale competes with the modest scale of the original cottages and outbuildings (fig 23). In addition, the use of standard modern materials and opening patterns dilutes the special character of the conservation area.
3. Public Realm and setting

Some gardens retain stone boundary walls which add character, but others have a variety of new fencing types which can distract from the continuity of the village’s character. Roads and car parking areas have a tarmac finish which is in poor condition in places (fig 24B). The open space of the two squares is important, but green space has been eroded here over time and large tarmac car parking areas in poor condition and modern materials detract from the original composition and traditional buildings (fig 24B).

Fig 23: (left): new housing on Allan View has had minimal impact maintaining the scale of the adjacent traditional row, if lacking in detail; (right): a number of large extensions and a double garage have been constructed on garden ground to the rear of The Square; any extensions and new outbuildings require careful management so as not to overpower the traditional cottages and dilute the special character of the conservation area.

Fig 24A: village hall opened in 1881 and later extended with an additional block to the rear; note the poor condition of the road (2011); B: car parking at The Square in poor condition, the tarmac area has replaced part of the original village green, and a housing row enclosing the SE side was demolished in 1976 creating access; C: footbridge over the railway, the surface finish and timber picket fence are out of character with the traditional bridge structure and conservation area; D: railings to the road bridge are equally of standard design and in poor condition; note the introduction of the large box dormer to The Clachan significant effecting the building design and roofscape.
6.2 Summary of Vulnerability

Like similar planned villages, the strength of the character and appearance of Ashfield Conservation Area derives from the coherence of layout, design and materials of the buildings as a group, as well as their individual building details and quality of traditional materials.

Section 6.1 described negative factors which have eroded the special character and appearance of the conservation area. Overall, Ashfield has preserved its character, however there has been significant incremental change leading to the loss of original elements, and replacement has not always been made in appropriate materials or designs. The reason for this is not clear but the lack of listed building status of any the buildings (unlike Deanston) could be significant. Conservation area management should aim to protect the traditional buildings, planned layout, open and green spaces, and encourage enhancement when opportunities arise.

In summary, Ashfield Conservation Area's principal vulnerability is:

- Wholly unlisted fabric. Changes to these properties will not require Listed Building Consent and therefore require careful management through the planning process where applicable, and awareness of appropriate best practice for the property owners.

- Already altered traditional fabric. This should not be regarded as a precedent.

- Buildings in multiple ownership; changes to one property (such as inappropriate replacement or adaptation) affect individual properties, the group and the wider conservation area context.

- Erosion of original fabric with inappropriate replacement and repair affecting individual properties, their grouping and the wider conservation area context.

- Erosion of roofscape (including chimneys), a key component in the character of the individual rows and in particular the single storey cottages. This requires careful management of repair or replacement of roof finishes; any proposed alterations to the roofscape including the introduction of rooflights, dormers or solar panels; any proposal to remove original roof elements such as chimneys, ventilators etc.

- Erosion of the existing planned layout, open spaces and setting by new development or inappropriate extension in the conservation area, or by development adjacent to the conservation area.

Property owners, the Planning Authority and other stakeholders involved in the conservation area need to be aware the vulnerability of Ashfield Conservation Area and manage required changes appropriately.
6.3 Buildings at Risk and Sensitive Areas

This section highlights vulnerable buildings, areas, or issues. Buildings which are vulnerable through vacancy, condition or development threat should be notified to the RCAHMS for consideration on the Buildings at Risk Register.

There are no properties currently on the Buildings at Risk Register in the conservation area. However, one of the outbuildings is in particularly poor repair with a large hole in the roof (fig 25; temporary repair noted March 2015). Such outbuildings are important to the character and setting of the conservation area and represent an important part of the original village design as well as providing usable space without the need to construct new buildings. Several of these outbuildings have been lost in the past making those remaining of added importance.

Some buildings in the former factory complex are in a poor condition, the factory having not been used for manufacturing for at least 25 years. However, the owner is in residence having converted the gatehouse and water tower, and uses the former factory’s infrastructure for hydro power and a number of the former factory sheds as small commercial units.

Fig 25: an original outbuilding on the corner of The Square is at risk with the collapse of a section of the roof (a temporary repair noted in March 2015). Note the saturated gable on the building beyond indicating a possible defect at high level in need of repair.
6.4 Conservation Area Boundaries

This section identifies any changes required to the conservation area boundaries.

The boundary of the conservation area is considered to be an appropriate definition of the area of special architectural and historic interest.

6.5 Potential Listed Buildings

This section identifies any buildings which may merit additional protection through listed building legislation.

There are no listed buildings in Ashfield and it is not known if the village has been surveyed by Historic Scotland. The buildings have considerable importance and may merit statutory listing particularly those which enclose the northern section of The Square and their associated outbuildings.

J & J Pullar & Company also constructed similar housing in Bridge of Allan on the east bank of the River Allan opposite their Keirfield factory (Allanvale Road, refer Bridge of Allan Conservation Area Character Appraisal). The Ashfield example is understood to predate the Bridge of Allan housing (Williams, 1980, 90-91) and is more complete consisting of a planned village rather than an small area within a larger town. However a detailed assessment and comparison of the two areas could be of value. It is recommended that Historic Scotland review Ashfield in its entirety.

Notwithstanding this, buildings identified either through this appraisal, or by other means, as having some architectural or historic interest, but which do not meet Historic Scotland’s criteria for inclusion in the statutory List of listed buildings maybe included in a local list compiled by Stirling Council.

6.6 Opportunities for Development

This section identifies where development could enhance the character of the conservation area.

“Designating a conservation area does not mean a prohibition on development. It does mean carefully managing change to ensure that the character and appearance of these areas are safeguarded and enhanced for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.”

(PAN 71: Conservation Area Management, 2005, 1)

“Physical change in conservation areas does not necessarily need to replicate its surroundings. The challenge is to ensure that all new development respects, enhances and has a positive impact of the area.”

(PAN 71: Conservation Area Management, 2005, 4)

Whilst no development sites have been identified in the Local Development Plan (2014), any proposed new development should be very carefully considered as to its impact on the uniqueness and authenticity of this former factory village and equally its setting. New development outwith the original planned village and factory site could severely affect its
character and appearance. It would be recommended that if this is a possibility, a development brief and masterplan be produced by the Planning Authority in the first instance to ensure appropriate development and protect of this unique village.

In addition within the existing village layout, the Planning Authority should promote the use of development briefs for key sites and encourage applicants to provide design statements for significant sites within or immediately adjacent to the conservation area. Development briefs and design statements should take account of the context of the conservation area as outlined in this appraisal, and demonstrate both an understanding of the special characteristics of the area, and that development will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

6.7 Opportunities for Planning Action

Stirling Council, primarily through Development Management and Enforcement, should ensure that the special interest created by the historic form and special qualities of the conservation area outlined in this report are not eroded by poor quality development, unsympathetic alteration and replacement, and inappropriate repair.

The previous draft of this appraisal recommended that the current Article 4 Direction for Ashfield (1977), whereby planning permission is required for Classes I, II, IV and XI of the 1975 General Development Order, be revised to bring it up to date with current legislation and to extend the Article 4 coverage in relation to those issues outlined in sections 6.1 and 6.2 of this appraisal. However, it is considered that the recent changes to the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) that took effect on 6th February 2012, generally remove the need for Article 4 coverage. Planning Permission is now required for most development within conservation areas including alterations and extensions to buildings, walls, gates and railings, creation or alteration of hard-standing areas, satellite and micro-renewals equipment. The need for Article 4 Directions to further control development that is of a non-householder nature will be assessed on a priority basis across all of Stirling Council's conservation areas.

Whenever required statutory consents are not obtained for development, enforcement action should be taken to ensure the protection of the special character and appearance of the conservation area.
6.8 Opportunities for Enhancement

The following should be considered:

- Introduction of interpretation on the history and significance of the factory village, possibly in conjunction with improvements to the bus shelter and surroundings.

- Improved and more sympathetic parking surfaces in The Square and parking area behind Ochil View.

**Generally**

Enhancement would be achieved through the encouragement of appropriate reinstatement of lost elements (e.g. traditional windows and doors) and appropriate repair, particularly to masonry walls. Enhancement requires Development Management to encourage reinstatement when opportunities arise, support repair over replacement, and where replacement is absolutely necessary, that replacements follow strict guidance on appropriate materials and design. Raising awareness of the quality, practicality and overall contribution made by traditional materials and design would assist property owners.

6.9 Monitoring and Review

As outlined in PAN 71 (2005) consideration should be given as to how to “put in place appropriate monitoring indicators and agree a mechanism for review”. Regular review of the conservation area should set management priorities and seek to identify opportunities for enhancement. Justification for designation and validation of boundaries should also be reviewed on a regular basis.
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Appendices

Appendix A


4 categories from Lynch’s analysis have been adapted for use in the appraisal to describe the basis urban structure of the conservation area.

1. **PATH** or *route*
   a) most influential factor in our ‘image’ of the environment
   b) channels along which the observer moves e.g. motorways, streets, pedestrian streets, residential pathways etc
   c) traditional focus of major urban design projects
   d) importance of land use and spatial qualities

2. **EDGE** (*urban*)
   a) linear elements not used or considered as paths e.g. railway tracks, city walls, edges of development areas
   b) act as boundaries between two distinct areas i.e. can cause isolation
   c) most dominant are continuous in form and impenetrable to cross movement

   **Green Edges** have been used to indicate strong areas of open green spaces and / or strong enclosures created by green space, trees or other landscaping features.

3. **DISTRICT** or *Character Area*
   Smaller parts of an area which can be differentiated by
   a) physical character – layout – design – architectural style or period
   b) land use – residential – commercial – industrial

4. **LANDMARK**
   a) External points of reference
   b) Usually vertical built form which can be seen throughout the area or beyond
   c) Prominent natural features
   d) Local townscape features