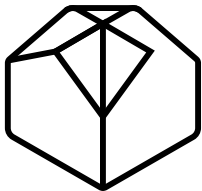


**LOCH  
LOMOND  
& THE TROSSACHS  
NATIONAL PARK**



**LIVE PARK**

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR NATIONAL PARK



DRYMEN AND GARTOCHARN  
LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

FEBRUARY 2010

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**ATTACHED REPORT:  
DRYMEN AND GARTOCHARN LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASESMENT**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2009, the Park Authority engaged consultants, David Tyldesley and Associates, to undertake a Landscape Capacity Assessment for the settlements of Drymen and Gartocharn. This assessment has been used to help inform the finalised draft local plan.
- 1.2 This cover report provides information on the rationale for the assessment. It also highlights that this study was undertaken to assess landscape capacity and this cannot be considered in isolation from wider planning issues when used to determine housing allocations within the finalised draft local plan.
- 1.3 **This cover report should be read prior to the attached report to understand the context in which the assessment was undertaken in relation to the preparation of the finalised draft local plan.**

# 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The settlements of Drymen and Gartocharn are located within the Loch Lomondside area of the National Park. This area is considered to be under heightened housing pressure as:
  - The area is a nationally important landscape, much of which is designated as a national scenic area;
  - It is a highly desirable and accessible area located within the commuter belt of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling;
  - Pressure remains for housing development to meet wider market demands; and
  - Local households and incoming key workers have limited housing choices<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.2 Given the particular sensitivity of the area, the local plan's housing allocations in Drymen and Gartocharn must be appropriately located and positively contribute to the character and creative development of these settlements.

# 3. LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

## **Draft Local Plan Consultation (28 November 2008 – 28 February 2009)**

- 3.1 The Park Authority consulted on the draft local plan between November 2008 and February 2009. The draft plan's locational strategy provided the overall guidance on housing development within the Park based on the principles of sustainable development and in keeping with the National Park aims. Proposed housing allocations within individual settlements were based on a site by site assessment of all planning considerations (see paragraph 7.4 of this cover report) undertaken by the Park Authority's planning and landscape officers.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information refer to the Park Authority's *Background Report on Local Housing Needs in the Loch Lomondside Area* (February 2010).

- 3.2 Given that housing is one of the key issues that the local plan needs to address, there were a large number of responses received regarding the proposed housing allocations within the Park. Responses to the proposed housing allocations in Drymen objected to the amount of development, location of the sites, and a small number of alternative sites were suggested. There was support for an alternative housing site in Gartocharn<sup>2</sup>.

### **Preparation of Finalised Draft Local Plan (February 2010)**

- 3.3 Park Authority planning officers considered all responses received to the draft plan consultation and further work was undertaken on some policy topics to inform preparation of the finalised draft local plan. Consultation on this plan is from 19<sup>th</sup> February and 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010.
- 3.4 As part of this programme of further work, the Park Authority considered it was necessary to undertake a landscape capacity assessment for Drymen and Gartocharn. This was to provide an in depth assessment of these settlements to help inform the proposed housing allocations within this particularly sensitive area of the Park. This assessment was undertaken by the planning and environmental consultancy, David Tyldesley and Associates, and was an independent study used to confirm work previously completed by the Park Authority's landscape officer for the draft local plan.
- 3.5 The recommendations of this assessment in relation to proposed housing allocations presented in the finalised draft local plan are discussed further in Section 7 of this cover report.

## **4. ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES**

- 4.1 The project brief stated that the main objective of the assessment was to identify the opportunities and constraints for largely new housing development and potential settlement expansion within Drymen and Gartocharn. For each settlement this would involve:
- Taking into account the landscape capacity of the area through detailed survey and analysis of the landscape and its sensitivity to change;
  - Taking into account settlement setting, character, form and original focus;
  - Identifying areas of landscape within and adjacent to the settlements that provide a significant community amenity/recreational resource and warrant protection from development;
  - Identifying new housing development opportunities for development during the lifetime of the plan (2009-2015) and/or long term (2016-2020) and place them within the overall context for protection for the key environmental and recreational assets of the area; and
  - Identifying proposals and enhancement measures that may be required on identified new development sites which would promote and maintain the character and local identity of individual settlements.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on responses received to the draft local plan consultation, please refer to the Park Authority's *Draft Local Plan Report on Consultation* (March 2010).

## 5. METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The methodology was provided by the Park Authority and was based on recent Scottish examples of landscape capacity assessments. The methodology is summarised in Section 3 (page 8) of the report and included a desk based review, site visits and survey, and preparation of the final report.

## 6. REPORT FINDINGS

- 6.1 The attached report presents the findings of the assessment.
- 6.2 Section 5 (page 55) of the report provides a series of recommendations in respect to site identification for further housing development in Drymen and Gartocharn based upon the landscape and built environment's capacity to accommodate change without significant harm to the valued characteristics of the Park.
- 6.3 It must be highlighted that these recommendations are purely based on an assessment of landscape capacity and do not take into consideration wider planning issues (see Section 7 of this cover report).
- 6.4 The report recommends the location of potential housing sites categorised as follows:

### **1. Priority Sites**

Sites which present the best options for accommodating housing growth in respect to the landscape's capacity to accommodate change without significant harm to it or to important settlement characteristics. They require generally lower levels of mitigation measures than other sites and should be prioritised for delivery before other options are pursued.

### **2. Secondary Option Sites**

Sites where development may be accommodated but where landscape and/or village character impacts may be more pronounced. A greater degree of mitigation work would be expected in comparison to Priority Sites in order to minimise landscape impacts.

### **3. Lower Priority Sites**

Sites where there is some inherent development potential but where landscape setting impacts and/or village character changes through development would be more significant. Such sites will normally be those which would constitute a marked extension of current village envelopes and would consequently benefit from more significant mitigation measures to moderate impacts upon current character.

## 7. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS IN THE FINALISED DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

- 7.1 At a strategic level, the total number of housing allocations shown in the finalised draft local plan is based on their contribution to the plan's target of

75 new dwellings per year to support household growth within the Park. The Park Authority's *Background Report on Population and Housing (February 2010)* provides further information on how the housing land requirement was calculated.

- 7.2 From the outset, the Park Authority generally considered that the historical housing allocations shown in the adopted local plans would be brought forward into the new local plan. This is because these sites had already withstood scrutiny through the previous local plan process and the appropriateness of these allocations in planning terms remained unchanged. A number of other sites with existing planning permission were also identified and included as housing allocations within the plan.
- 7.3 To determine additional new housing allocations for the local plan, Park Authority staff assessed the development potential of:
- Sites suggested by landowners with development aspirations who had expressed their interest prior to the start of the local plan process;
  - Sites which were identified through local plan consultations, either by landowners or the wider community; and
  - Sites identified by Park Authority staff.
- 7.4 Through initial desktop assessment, some sites were considered inappropriate as they did not meet the principles of the plan's locational strategy. Those sites that were in keeping with the strategy were subject to an in depth desktop assessment and a site visit undertaken by the Park Authority's planning and landscape officers. This in depth assessment and site visit considered planning issues such as:
- Location
  - Access
  - Topography
  - Risk of flooding
  - Designations (international and national nature conservation sites, ancient woodland inventory, landscape designations and scheduled ancient monuments)
  - Landscape
  - Biodiversity
- 7.5 Putting the landscape capacity assessment into context, it is noted that landscape considerations form only one element of determining the appropriateness of a site in terms of its development potential. The landscape capacity assessment was specifically undertaken to provide an independent assessment based on a robust methodology. It provides the landscape element of wider planning considerations when determining appropriate housing allocations in Drymen and Gartocharn within the finalised draft local plan.
- 7.6 Thus, the recommendations contained within the attached report cannot be considered in isolation from wider planning issues. It is noted that some sites identified in the report as being 'priority sites' are small sites located within the settlement boundary. Under the finalised draft plan's Policy HOUS1 New Housing Development in Settlements these sites have the potential to come forward for housing development irrespective of not being an allocation, subject to other local plan policies. This is known as 'windfall' development.

- 7.7 There are also other issues which must be considered when determining the suitability of a site as a potential housing allocation. This includes the existing use of the site, ownership and the landowner's willingness to develop within the five year local plan period. The local plan has a target of 75 new dwellings per year and the delivery of housing allocations is vital to meet this target. Thus, it is important to ensure that new housing allocations identified in the plan will be delivered. The local plan's action programme outlines a continuing programme of work and commitment by a range of partners and stakeholders to ensure delivery of the plan's policies and proposals, including housing allocations.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The attached report assesses landscape capacity for new development within Drymen and Gartocharn. This information has been used to help inform the finalised draft local plan. It provides the landscape element of wider planning considerations when determining appropriate housing allocations in these settlements.

**Loch Lomond and the Trossachs  
National Park Authority**

**Drymen and Gartocharn  
Landscape Capacity Assessment  
FINAL REPORT**

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# 1. Introduction

This report examines the capacity of the landscape settings of Drymen and Gartocharn in the southern part of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park to accommodate housing development to meet needs arising within the two lowland settlements and their rural hinterlands.

Within the newly formed National Park, consideration of landscape and settlement character impacts from meeting identified housing need, and how these can be properly planned for is particularly important if National Park aims (as established within the National Parks (Scotland) Act, 2000) are to be furthered. Those aims set the underpinning principles for all actions undertaken by the National Park Authority, including its land use planning functions. They are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area,
- To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area,
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public, and
- To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

In this context the report seeks to inform the development planning process, and particularly the preparation of the first Park-Wide Local Plan as to where landscape and townscape character has the ability to absorb development whilst furthering those aims. In doing so it also examines where more sensitive landscape or built environment characteristics suggest that a restrictive approach to development should be set in place.

The National Park Authority attaches great importance to the desirability of strengthening or re-establishing 'sense of place' across the National Park and has a corporate priority 'place making' agenda in place. By recognising what the special qualities of settlements are, particularly their landscape settings, identifying them and recognising where other elements are not so critical in place making, forward

planning can seek to restrict unsympathetic development trends and foster development which will help deliver such environmental priorities.

## 2. Summary Findings.

The report has established that both the study villages of Drymen and Gartocharn present a range of opportunities for the integration of new housing (and car parking capacity in the case of Drymen) whilst presenting some opportunity to safeguard the most important elements of landscape setting and settlement character. It has also established that there are areas within and out-with both settlements where accommodation of new growth would be likely to have harmful effects in respect to their 'landscape fit' and coherence and established character of their built environments.

In-between these areas of opportunity and constraint the report recognises that there are other sites which could be brought forward for development, but where some negative landscape or village form impacts would be likely to varying extents, and that mitigation works would be necessary to reduce such harmful effects. Because of the need to accommodate housing growth in sustainable locations such as these villages which have relatively good provision of rural service opportunity, it is reasonable and necessary to have to consider sub-optimal sites for community growth needs, albeit where these should be reserved for longer term planning horizons. After all, provision of housing for local people is an integral component of fostering more sustainable rural communities, even within treasured and nationally protected landscapes.

The study prioritises sites for development potential based on detailed analysis of each village and its wider landscape context. Because of the considerable character differences between both settlements, and the range of sites they each present, prioritisation has been made based upon professional assessment and judgement rather than by a more systematic scoring system, which itself would require value judgements on relative values and importance of environmental components to be made. Method is set out in more detail in chapter 5.

The recommendation chapter therefore presents: 'Priority sites' within which immediate housing growth should be focused; 'Secondary options' where housing

growth exceeding the capacity of priority sites should be directed subject to mitigation works, and; 'Lower priority' sites offer potential to accommodate growth but which present some inherent negative impacts upon either wider settlement context or settlement form. Those lower priority sites should be reserved for longer term release, and subject in most cases to advanced structural screening or will require location-specific designs to mitigate landscape impacts.

The study makes it clear that wherever sites for development are identified, 'change' to the immediate vicinity, and sometimes to wider setting is inevitable, and that this must be acknowledged when considering the community needs of settlements to deliver necessary housing growth. In most cases mitigation work can of course lessen the impacts of growth proposals and serve to enhance some aspects of the National Park's special qualities, but some change will nevertheless occur which locally may stimulate objection or concern.

Drymen's landscape setting, despite its raised location above the low lying landscape of Endrick Water is identified as having positive attributes in respect to growth because of its heavily wooded environs where screening of potential growth areas by structural planting would be broadly in keeping with its established character and local landscape components. A clear priority site is nevertheless identified for Drymen between Stirling road and Gartness Road where landscape impacts, and to a certain degree village form considerations are generally safeguarded despite a relatively substantial capacity across the site. Beyond this site options tend to be more conspicuous or begin to extend the settlement further beyond its northern boundary. Advanced structural planting in these areas would however help to mitigate wider impacts whilst maintaining landscape character in these areas. Elsewhere open sites to the village fringes are identified as being more important to wider setting, particularly to lower east, west and southern sides, where new housing should be constrained if local character and village identity is to be safeguarded.

Gartocharn is a smaller settlement than Drymen and retains a more intact linear form. Development within this context is therefore difficult to achieve without some alteration of that linear settlement character. The village's relationship with the

landscape is perhaps more diverse than in Drymen because of contrasts between well wooded boundaries to the south and open areas of transition between the village and open farmlands which stretch northwards towards Loch Lomond. Nevertheless, housing opportunity is identified within the existing limits to the settlement that offer well established wooded settings off Duncryne Road, which subject to sensitive layout and boundary treatment could accommodate significant growth with little wider landscape harm. Alternative sites are also identified which offer growth opportunity but also present more pronounced implications for landscape impact and settlement form change. Opportunities do arise within Gartocharn however for development to be delivered which have the potential to mitigate less sensitive elements of the existing built environment and its prominence within the landscape, although inevitably this would constitute expansion across areas not presently developed or within the village envelope, such as to the north of the Old Military Road and towards France Farm.

Sites particularly sensitive to change, and which are considered unsuitable for further development are identified mainly to the south of the settlement where views from the prominent and important Duncryne hill would be affected and the 'hidden' nature of the village from this approach and from upper School Road should be safeguarded.

### 3. Study Method and Scope.

Method utilised for the preparation of this report and its findings is based upon that prescribed within the project brief prepared by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA). Primarily this required the following stages to be undertaken:

- **Desk based review** of the relevant background information covering wider context, National Park purposes, other relevant studies including the emerging LLTNP Landscape Character Assessment;
- **Site visits and survey** for familiarisation with study area including analysis of the strategic and the local landscape character and visual context of the villages;
- **Preparation of final report** to present detailed survey and analysis of the locally distinctive character areas within each village and make recommendations for the prioritisation of sites for development within the landscape's capacity to accommodate change.

The project report seeks to present analysis and recommendations which address the following points for the settlements of Drymen and Gartocharn:

- the survey and analysis of the strategic context in terms of landscape character and visual assessment;
- a detailed assessment of the setting of the settlements in terms of landscape character and visual characteristics;
- an indicative housing development capacity for each village identifying development opportunities and constraints;
- an indicative car parking development capacity for Drymen identifying opportunities and constraints;
- a concept statement for the significant areas of development and or expansion;
- a concept statement for potential landscape proposals, possible mitigation measures and enhancement proposals for identified new housing sites, settlement edges and approaches.

Maps have been prepared for each village to support the report reflecting:

- the existing settlement structure, key issues and characteristics which are most important in creating the character of the settlement.
- the survey and analysis of the villages in terms of landscape character and visual context.
- Landscape Opportunities for development divided into preferred and potential sites, for and Landscape Constraints on development.

Report preparation, including all field work, analysis and recording was undertaken by two experienced senior Planning and Landscape professionals between August and October 2009. The project leaders have over 40 years of combined experience working within rural planning (development control and forward planning), landscape conservation and assessment, and landscape design. This experience has often entailed working within designated landscape areas across the U.K. The project team was selected partly because of its experience but also because there was no previous working experience within the study area, and consequently preconceived opinions on local issues, landscape sensitivity or previous planning history of the two settlements could not influence the findings of this report.

The study analysis and findings are therefore based on a methodology which has regard to a clear set of considerations but where the assessment and recommendations are based upon professional judgement, as informed by extensive relevant experience. The report's findings are therefore considered to be robust. No community or stakeholder input has been taken or used to influence the report's findings

Fieldsheets, annotated mapping and extensive photographic recording methods were used to gather survey information. Description, analysis, and development of recommendations also utilised aerial photographic records (Google Earth) to supplement ground level field records.



## 4. Survey Analysis: Description and Assessment of Landscape Context and Settlement Character.

### Strategic Landscape Context:

#### Lowland Landscapes of Loch Lomond South.

Both Drymen and Gartocharn lie close to the south-eastern edge of Loch Lomond, falling within the 'Loch Lomond' Landscape Area and the 'Loch Lomond South' Landscape Character Zone as identified within the National Park Plan.

The National Park Plan identifies *Loch Lomond South* as an iconic landscape, uniquely straddling the highland / lowland transition defined by the Highland Boundary Fault to the north of Drymen. This lowland landscape has a distinctive sense of place considered by the National Park Authority to be of high

importance. The mosaic of farmland and woodland with field boundaries, trees and shelterbelts creates a distinctive and intimate landscape that contrasts with other parts of the Park, especially the neighbouring upland areas.

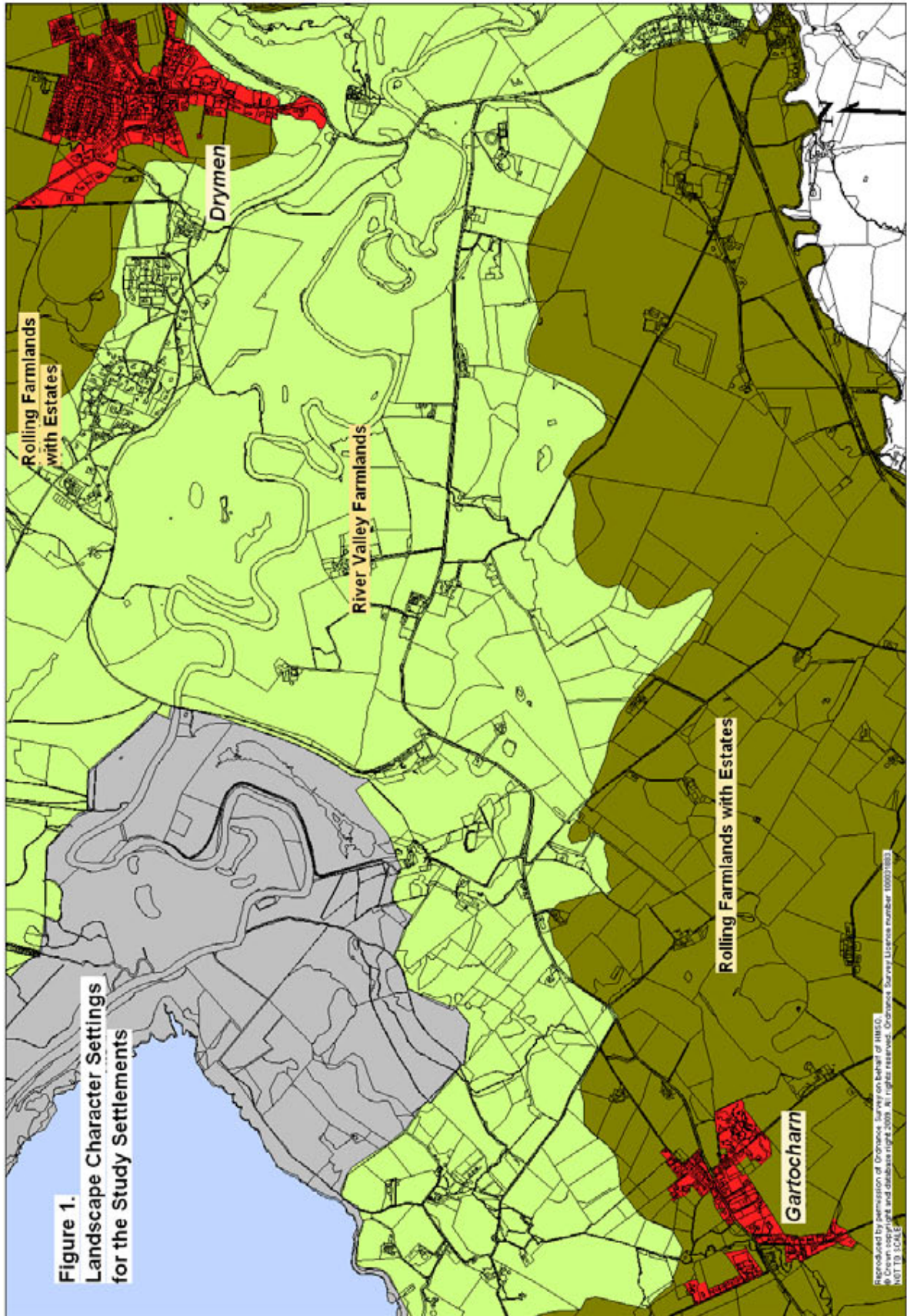
Historic designed landscapes and country houses make an important contribution to the visual qualities of the area, with their individual landmark trees, parkland, historic buildings and estate boundaries. The vernacular of stone-built cottages, farmsteads and villages contributes to and emphasises the settled lowland character of the area.



*North across Loch Lomond from Duncryne hill, Gartocharn.*

The National Park Authority's Landscape Character Assessment identifies the rolling landforms, wide straths and river valleys as the main topographic features of the lowlands. Unlike the highlands, where rugged relief is the principle factor in determining landscape character, the pattern of land use becomes more significant in the lowlands. The areas of rolling and strath landscapes and improved carse are divided up into farm and estate lands, where fields, meadows, parkland, farm and policy woodlands (mixed), shelterbelts and areas of more natural vegetation are functionally and visually integrated within a mosaic. Particularly important as high quality, attractive landscape in their own right, the lowlands are also appreciated as a contrasting juxtaposition to the highland landscapes.

The National Park Authority's Landscape Character Assessment further breaks down the lowland landscape south of the loch into several smaller Landscape Character Types (LCTs) (see **figure 1**). Drymen and Gartocharn both lie almost entirely within the character type identified as '*Rolling Farmland with Estates*', which is divided by the '*River Valley Farmland with Estates*' Landscape Character Type centred on the valley of the Endrick Water which flows into Loch Lomond west of Drymen and north of Gartocharn.



**Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT.**

The smooth undulating landforms of the lowland farmlands vary in elevation from around 30m-40m up to 150m, their rolling character contrasting with the neighbouring strath and carse lands within the river valley farmlands which are predominantly flat. The *Rolling Farmland with Estates* are distinct from the neighbouring 'Moorland' Landscape Character Type to the north of Drymen where poorer soils and drainage have restricted land improvement and farming.

The overall character of the rolling farmlands is of a settled, enclosed, small-scale, intimate, humanised landscape, with a diverse patterned mosaic of fields of mixed farming, and woodlands, with a network of roads and tracks linking rural settlement. The high proportion of estate lands, including designed landscapes, introduces a range of particular aesthetic qualities and added order to the landscape. Mixed policy woodlands are a particular feature. These characteristics contrast dramatically with the unenclosed, rugged and wilder surrounding uplands, with larger-scale land use patterns.

**River Valley Farmland with Estates LCT.**

This Landscape Character Type lies between Gartocharn and Drymen, splitting the 'Rolling Farmland with Estates' LCT. North of Gartocharn it follows the lower lying, gently rolling or flat plain of the course of the Aber Burn as it flows eastwards to join the Endrick Water south of Drymen.

Elevation is typically from loch level to 20m – 40m. Meandering rivers are characteristic, with either open sandy banks or riparian woodland and riverbank trees.

This is a fertile, traditional farming area, where drainage has allowed soil improvement and cultivation, with mosaics of small-scale meadows and woodlands.

The floodplain has been less suitable for settlement or communication routes, although these are not absent.

Significant areas of designed landscape parkland have been sited within this LCT to take advantage of the aesthetic qualities of the loch shore, as with the Ross Priory landscape north of Gartocharn, or meandering river landscapes as with the Buchanan Castle estate west of Drymen.

The following sections set out in detail the landscape character types context for both Drymen and Gartocharn, identification of landscape sensitivities and interrelationships and examination of village form and components of the two settlements.

## Drymen.

### Settlement Character and Landscape Setting.

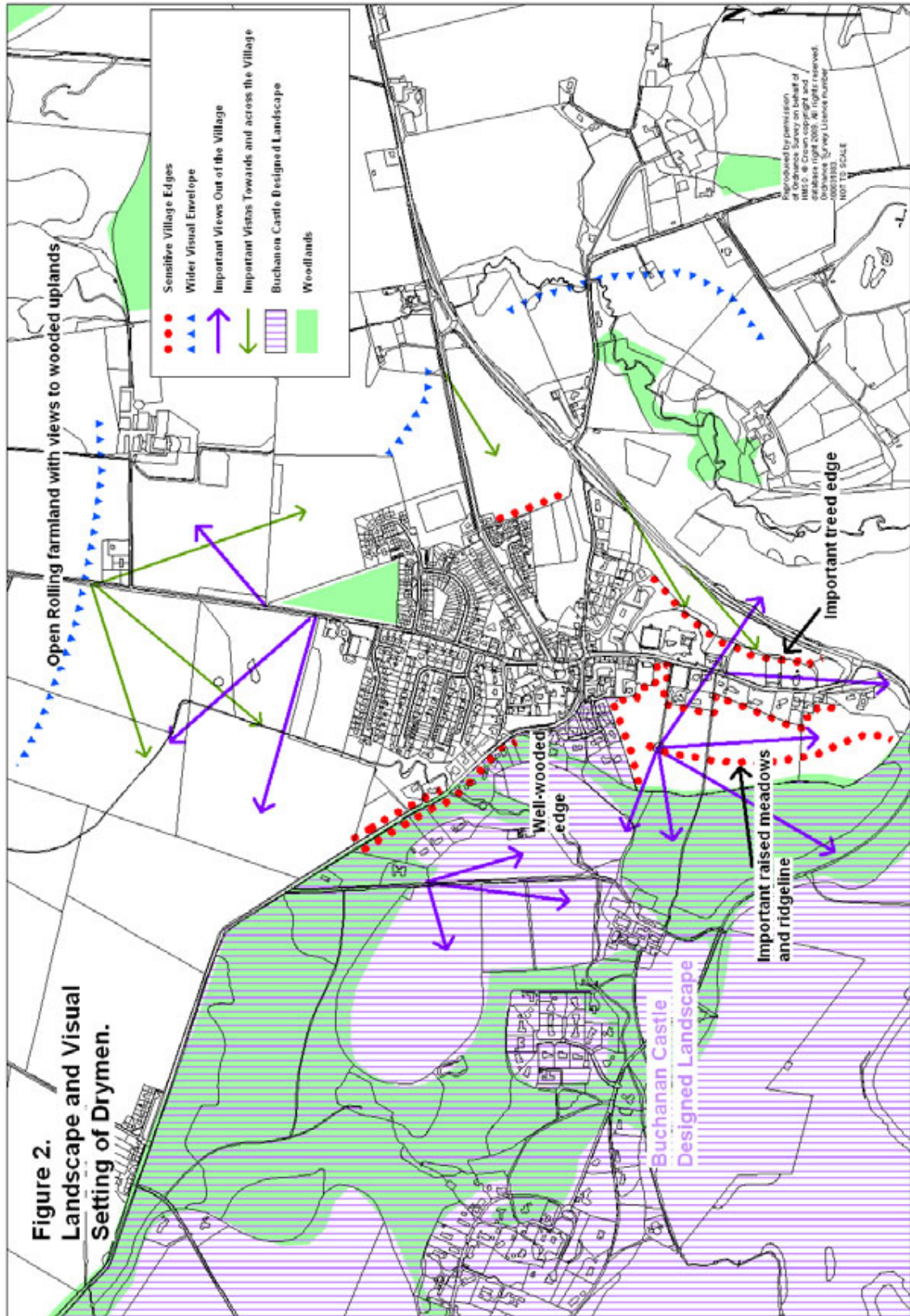
#### General Setting and Visual Analysis.

The village's relationship to landscape features and immediate topography is significant and important to local character if not particularly dramatic given its wider geographic setting.

The visual envelope surrounding Drymen is defined by the location of the village at the edge of the Rolling Farmland and bordering the much flatter River Valley Farmland Landscape Character Types (see **figure 2**). Views within a lowland landscape are predominantly determined by local variations in land cover, although local topographical changes can also have a bearing on what can be seen. Land cover either prevents or enables distant views out to higher ground beyond. The extent of views can change readily, often by taking only a few steps in one direction or another, which often opens out views around buildings, trees or hedges.

The topography and its heavily wooded margins, particularly to its south, west and north serve to screen or significantly dilute the full extent of the settlement from many directions and particularly from the uplands to the north and from the river valley to its south. Consequently vistas towards fine and dramatic landscapes to all directions are often foreshortened by woodland setting and terrain from within. This is further pronounced along several routes into the village being further enclosed by frequent mature roadside and field side trees. Vistas out of the settlement are occasionally possible at the margins of the village where topography and tree cover permits, and are sometimes spectacular.

Drymen lies partially within the transitional landscapes of the rough grazing, moorland and highland areas to its north, with their gradually contrasting topography and land uses. This provides a different visual experience in extensive middle distance views out towards the north and north-west to those occasional views southwards over the flat Endrick Water river valley landscape and lowland hills beyond in the distance.



The fringes of the settlement and its transitions between built development and open countryside are varied in character, and are explored in more detail below. However with the exception of the lower west side of Main Street and the land between Gartness Road and the Stirling Road, the settlement's delineation from its landscape



*Views across Endrick Water towards Drymen*

setting is often well defined. This is facilitated by clearly delineated limits to development, such as around its housing estates to its north side, and / or by strong woodland cover and other treescapes such as that along Balmaha Road and to the east of Main Street which contain the settlement even where its built extent is less distinctly defined.

Hence despite its elevated position above Endrick Water on the long gradient towards the Garadhban Forest and the highlands immediately beyond, Drymen's impact and prominence in the landscape is for the most part relatively discrete.

Beyond the southern village boundary, the land falls gradually southwards to the Endrick Water valley at around 10m. Views of the valley from the village are extremely limited, predominantly by buildings but also by higher ground rising to 60m west of Main Street and dense woodland within the Bachanan Castle designed landscape to the west. This higher ground, where there is a viewing point, allows distant views over the river valley and beyond. Similar though less extensive views southwards are also possible from high ground a little under 60m along the Ballyconachy Loan.

The dense woodland within the designed landscape, including exotic evergreens and mature individual specimen trees within the parkland, screen most views into the village from the south. The village is inconspicuous in views from the south, where the flat river valley in the foreground, middle distance designed landscape



and uplands beyond provide a tiered panorama with few buildings. The top of the ruined Buchanan Castle is just visible in views from the A811.

In sharp contrast, open rolling farmland rises gradually northwards towards the Garadhban Forest and Queen Elizabeth Forest Park at over 200m, Conic Hill at over 360m and uplands and highlands beyond. Views are again limited northwards by buildings within the village, but from its northern edge, including where the B837 and B858 leave the village, and when walking northwards along the West Highland Way, there are more open views. Spectacular views of the northern edge of the village, with the relatively flat grazed fields in the foreground, school and recent, white painted houses and Gollowhill Wood in the middle distance, and exposed hills beyond the National Park boundary are possible from the Balmaha Road west of the village.

Similarly views into the village from the north are limited to views from the Old Gartmore Road and from a small number of properties on the edge of the forest, such as Tangier Shandon Farm. Here there are clear views over the rolling fields, hedges and stone walls and in between individual mature trees of the School, mountain rescue station and recent housing development on the northern edge of the village. Further views into the village from the north are mostly screened by these buildings and dense vegetation, including Gallowhill Wood, but there are more distant views southwards from these locations over the village to hills beyond.

To the east, the Rolling Farmland LCT gives way to a narrow finger of the much flatter River Valley Farmland LCT a short distance from the built up edge of the village, before reaching the A811 'bypass'. Here the land falls gradually to a minor burn before rising up more steeply to a little over 50m at Drumbeg. The rolling fields then continue to gradually rise and fall further eastwards around a number of other small tributary burn to the Endrick Water. Higher ground at around 70m forms the immediate visual envelope just east of Drumhead Farm, but there are more distant views of hills beyond from limited viewpoints within the village.

Views into the village from the east are principally from the A811, with occasional glimpses through hedges alongside the route of the Gartness Road (beyond the

bypass) along which the West Highland Way tracks. Dense roadside vegetation and the 'treescapes' within the village, including exotic conifer trees within the hotel grounds, provides a strong edge to the village, screening most buildings apart from a few on the extreme eastern edge including the white-washed church. From here the village appears to sit neatly within the landscape and only hints at its true extent. Views from the Stirling Road entering the village from the east are limited by the roadside hedge and mature hedgerow trees. Gaps within the hedge, such as where the road bridges over a small burn or ditch, allow views into the eastern edge of the village across the football pitch. These buildings and surrounding vegetation, and the taller trees within Gallowhill Wood, screen further views into the village, but there are views across the rolling fields to the north of the village to Tangier Shandon Farm, the forest, moorland and uplands beyond.

## **Drymen's relationship within the 'Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT' and 'River Valley Farmland with Estates' LCT.**

### **Key Landscape Characteristics in relation to the Drymen study area.**

The Landscape Character Assessment (2009) (LLTNPA and SNH) identifies two Landscape Character Types to which the study area applies. The characteristics of those Character Types as they affect the settlement of Drymen are set out under the characterisation headings of the LCA itself:

#### **(a) Land Cover and Land Use**

Semi-natural deciduous and mixed woodland with plantations and shelterbelts, policy and farm woodlands, of small to medium scale are found to the north of the settlement. Gallowhill Wood is a straight sided, triangular wood abutting housing and the school and rescue centre, and there are several smaller, rectilinear shelterbelts on rising land further to the north, in particular around the farm known as Tangier Shandon.

To the east beyond the A811 bypass road landform and native woodland around Drumberg is more natural and irregular alongside burns and other minor water courses.

Improved grazing predominates on the lower slopes around the village, with some arable to the west, and semi-improved grazing higher up. Rectilinear fields with predominantly drystone wall boundaries, and some hedgerows and hedgerow trees, particularly oak are found on the managed estate farmland on the northern slopes.

The Buchanan Castle designed landscape, with its large, irregularly shaped mixed plantations, parkland, distinctive trees and avenues including exotic conifers, lies immediately to the west of Drymen, straddling both the *Rolling Farmland with Estates* LCT and the *River Farmland with Estates* LCT with Endrick Water at its focus.

### **(b) Settlement, Development and Leisure**

Drymen is a clustered, nucleated settlement which has expanded particularly northwards and eastwards around the convergence of a small number of routes converging on a distinctive (and somewhat uncommon in Scotland) village green. The rows of terraced housing, shops and public buildings along Main Street are characterised by red sandstone or whitewashed elevations, with dormers and gable end chimneys. The village centre and buildings radiating out along the minor routes lie within a Conservation Area reflecting its historic and architectural character.

Outlying farms to the north and east are mostly traditional, often white painted or red sandstone buildings. To the west the designed landscape has been the focus of significant housing development, including large modern houses set in large grounds, amongst the parkland plantation woodland.

The Buchanan Castle estate landscape has also been the focus of recreational development, being the location of the Buchanan Castle Golf Club. The Strathendrick Golf Club lies alongside the Endrick Water to the east of the A811, just south of Drymen.

### **(c) Access and Recreation**

Drymen and the surrounding landscape is very accessible via the A811 (Old Military Road) and B roads entering the village. The West Highland Way long distance

footpath between Glasgow and Fort William passes through the heart of the village, contributing to its function as a service centre and tourism gateway to east Loch Lomond, being 12 miles along the route north of Glasgow.

A number of other tracks and core paths are accessible, which is likely to increase under the Core Path Networks initiative and agri-environmental incentives.

#### **(d) Biodiversity**

The mosaic of natural, farm shelterbelt and policy plantations and woodlands are significant individually and combined with hedgerows as part of the wider habitat network.

Native and riparian woodland and associated wetland around minor watercourses provide important habitats, as do veteran trees and dead wood associated with the estate policies and parkland around Buchanan Castle.

Endrick Water is a SSSI and SAC, with important wetland ecosystems. The shore fringes of Loch Lomond to the west of Drymen are recognised as a National Nature Reserve, a Ramsar site and SAC.

#### **(e) Cultural Heritage**

This is traditionally farmed land, where well-drained and fertile soils have favoured improvement and enclosure with drystone walls, hedges and fences, farms and farm buildings.

Distinctive rectilinear field patterns to the north and east of the village typify historic improvement period enclosures.

The designed landscape at Buchanan Castle is a defining characteristic, with the castle (now in a ruined state), country house (Buchanan Old House, now the golf course club house), entrance drive, lodge house, avenues of trees, parkland and policies. There are numerous listed buildings within the designed landscape.

The planned, nucleated layout of the village alongside minor routes and the historic Old Military Road, with surrounding agricultural farmsteads and small settlements, are characteristic features. There are a number of listed buildings within the Conservation Area.

There have also been Roman discoveries, including a Fort and other artefacts within the sand quarry at Drumbeg to the east of the village. The southern approach to Drymen is of heritage significance, with the listed stone arched Drymen Bridge over Endrick Water, the Motte and other buildings at Catter House at the junction of the A811 and A809, and the listed church opposite the entrance to the Buchanan Castle parkland.

#### **(f) Visual and Scenic Qualities**

The mosaic of fields and woodlands interact with the rolling landform to create a distinctly patterned and small-scale, enclosed landscape, which strongly contrasts with the simpler and more open uplands. The area to the north of the village has a more regular, humanised pattern due to the rectilinear fields and shelterbelts, and drystone walls, than the more natural and sinuous pattern to the east.

The plantation woodlands of Garadhban Forest and Queen Elizabeth Forest Park on the lower slopes of the Moor Park moorland provide a transition between the lowland and highland areas further north.

The Buchanan Castle estate contributes to the particular aesthetics, order and patterns of the designed landscape to the west. Generally the woodland within the designed landscape screens views both from the village and into the village over adjacent lower lying land. However there are dramatic views from the viewpoint opposite the Buchanan Arms Hotel and from the Ballyconachy Loan track west of the village, across the Endrick Water valley and the rolling lowland farmland further south and west.

## Settlement Structure.

Drymen is a settlement of around 700 people, lying approximately 3 km to the east of Loch Lomond in the lowland, farmed landscape of the National Park. Its wider landscape context is set out in the previous section.

The modern settlement's origins relate primarily to the 18<sup>th</sup> century market function it developed at a junction of drover roads at a strategic point between lowland Scotland and the highlands immediately south of the Highland Fault Boundary.

Whilst the medieval or earlier origins of the settlement may be located south-west of its present location, the historic heart of Drymen lies atop and to the eastern side of a low north-south ridge which raises above the Endrick Water from the south. The village is then bounded by a small tributary burn within a pronounced small valley defining its eastern extent, and by open grazing land and coniferous plantation and shelterbelts which fall to the village from the north. Main Street, which climbs from the south (at around 20 m elevation) up this central ridge with the Square at its northern end (at about 52 m elevation), constitutes what remains of a prominent historic spine to the settlement.

The village today takes a more nucleated form than the historic core would reflect with a clear focus of the settlement based around the village 'square'. This historic centre point, formally the market place, marks the approximate confluence of five roads or highways: Balmaha Road; Old Gartmore Road; Stirling Road (formerly part of the Old Military Road); Gartness Road and Main Street. These roads, some of which have historic origins as drove roads today serve to form important radial branches out of the village which subsequently present distinctive pockets of built development in-between. A significant but extremely well screened area of low density housing within the Buchanan Castle estate lies to the south west of the main village, but there is little visual relationship between the two.

Some of the buildings around the Square and down Main Street have 19<sup>th</sup> Century heritage, but despite its historic origins and previously significant greater population, the village's greater mass is predominantly of more recent times. Today the wider village's nucleated form is heavily influenced by 20<sup>th</sup> Century housing development,

particularly to the east, west and north of the village in the quadrants defined by Balmaha, Old Gartmore and Stirling roads. Whitewashed stone and red sandstone with Scots slate roofing characterises the build fabric of the village.

Whilst a Conservation Area has existed around Main Street, the Square and inner reaches of Balmaha, Gartmore and Stirling Roads since 1973, the built environment of the wider village is perhaps not of any particular note. Significant buildings do include the Church and Manse to the south of Main Street, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Buchanan Arms hotel in mid Main Street. However, the architectural and townscape focus of Drymen is around the Square, where a concentration of historic but often modified and altered buildings partially enclose the open green north and west of the road itself, notably the Winnock Hotel and the Clachan Inn present a semi-continuous horse-shoe line of enclosure west of Main Street/Stirling Road. This area does present a pleasing built environment to those passing through the village, and is of special relevance as a recognised overnight stop on the 'West Highland Way' long distance footpath.

Any strong 'sense of place' is therefore relatively constrained to the spine of Main Street and to the cluster of historic buildings around the Square. Even here, modern highways delineation and bus stops serve to dilute the special character of the vicinity. Elsewhere, it is reasonable to suggest the village is, in built environment terms unremarkable.

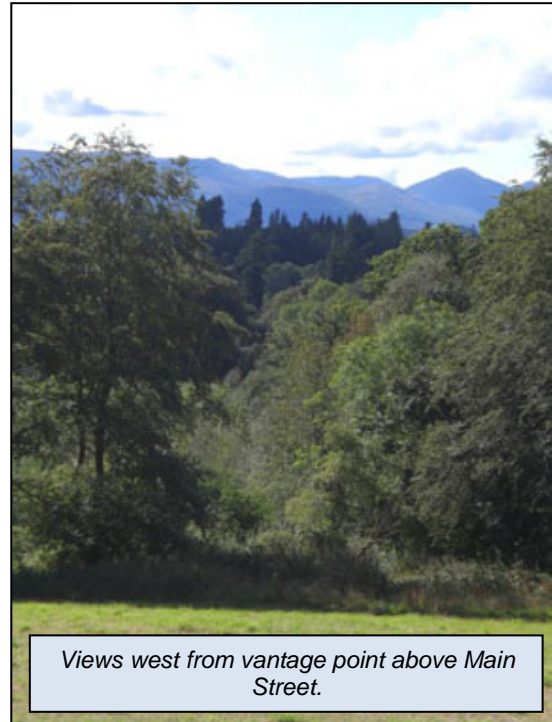
## **Village Sectors and related Landscape Characteristics:**

(see figure 3).

### **Main Street and The Square.**

Perhaps Drymen's most important inter-relationship with the landscape from within the village itself is the extensive vista to be enjoyed down Main Street to the south over the low lying Endrick Water towards Croftamie, across its lowland farmed landscape and on to the more distant uplands of the Kilpatrick Hills. Its elevated position in relation to the Endrick Water valley enhances these views which become more open as one moves south from the Square towards the mid section of Main Street prior to it being limited by tree cover.

At its southern and mid points, the ridge along which Main Street eventually reaches continues to raise to the west to a rounded crest of open meadow some 20 metres above the road elevation. A small view point and memorial garden is located to the top of the crest, directly opposite the dominating Buchanan Arms Hotel. From here outstanding vistas can be taken a short distance from the village centre. A series of meadows fall away southwards and westwards to the heavily wooded Buchanan Castle estate to the west and south, which in turn form an abrupt landscape transition to



*Views west from vantage point above Main Street.*

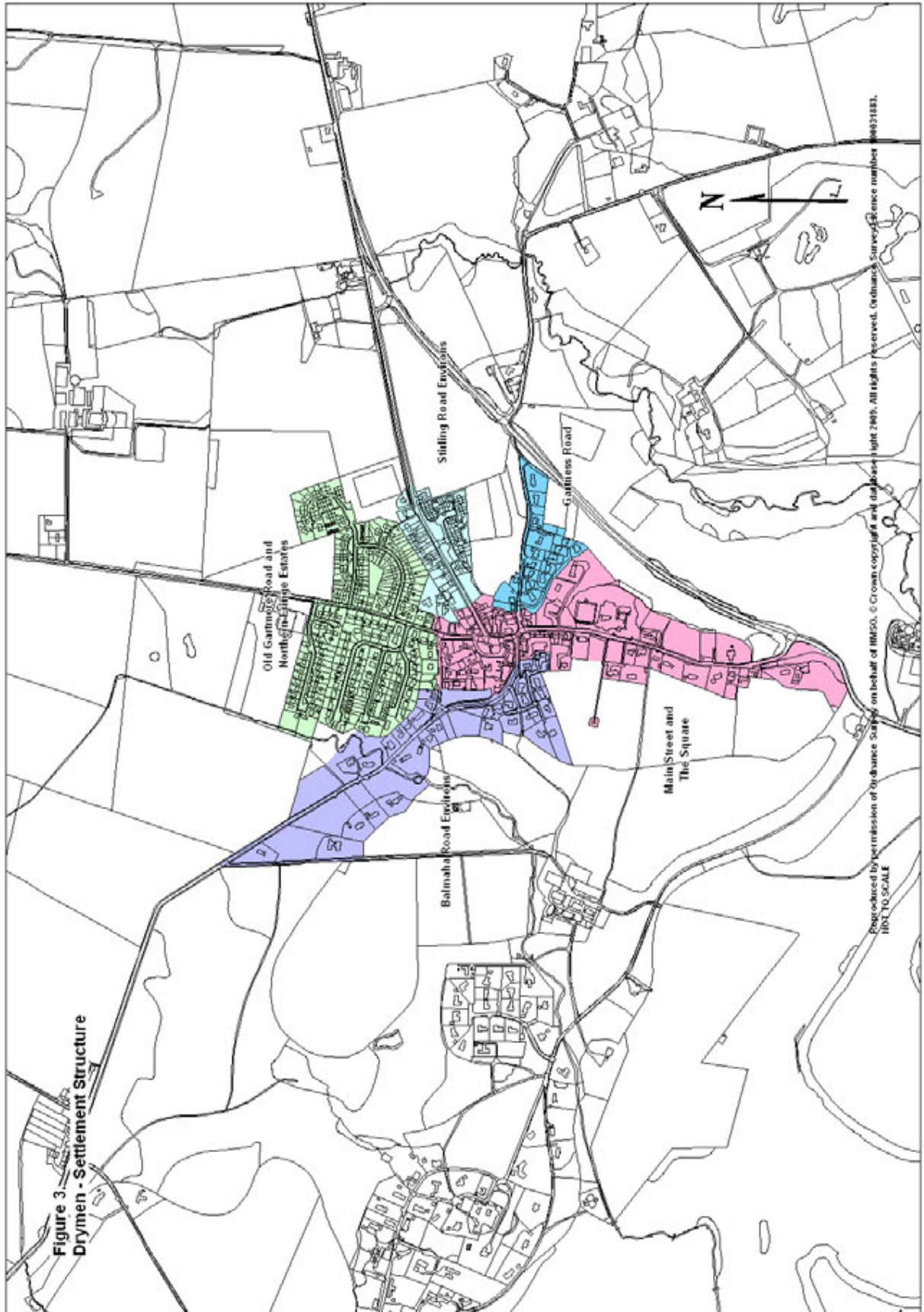
the wide open Endrick Water valley floor. The views presented by this location are particularly important. They comprise a panoramic arching vista from the south over Gartocharn the prominent Duncryne knoll, before sweeping west and northwards over the Endrick Water and the woodland of the Buchanan Castle estate. Beyond, the more distant, brooding mountainous landscapes of the highlands encircle the northern reaches of Loch Lomond, which itself is glimpsed through the tree tops in the middle distance. To the east, slightly less dramatic but still expansive views are enjoyed over Main Street out to a transitory landscape along the Highland Fault line as farmland meets rising moorland and fell. Even from this prime elevated position, the full extent of Drymen itself is masked by the village's heavily treed townscape. The views from this point are a major attribute for any resident or visitor to Drymen and should be safeguarded from interruption or obstruction.

This point is also significant as an indicator of the setting of the village from within the wider landscape. From the A 811 which runs along the south of the Endrick Water valley floor giving an extended series of vantage points from the south west, the village of Drymen, whilst elevated and relatively close by, is almost completely screened from middle distance views by the woodland of the Buchanan Estate. The open meadows on which the memorial garden is sited offers the only reference



point within this otherwise densely wooded valley side which protects the village from views into it along its complete western side.

To the east of Main Street, between the Square and the imposing Buchanan Arms Hotel, and south of Gartness Crescent, is located a steeply falling compact parcel of undeveloped – or previously developed land. This is characterised by dense scrub vegetation, and bounded by an incongruous timber rail fence in the heart of Drymen. Its western fringe appears to have been previously used as parking, but steep falls may have deemed such use unsafe or unstable. A track from Main Street descends the bank to twin properties at its base. Nevertheless the site, which constitutes a sector of the wooded fringe prominent from the bypass occupies a key site in the heart of the village, yet it is not particularly significant as a townscape feature.



### **Gartness Road**

Separated by a shallow valley lying south of the properties fronting Stirling Road, Gartness Road runs from the Square eastwards, initially dipping and then rising to trace the ridge of the southern valley side before eventually being separated from its further extents beyond the settlement by the bypass. The road was once of far greater significance as a highway before Stirling Road became the main easterly approach. It is relatively narrow and quiet in character, in no small part due to its now cul-de-sac function. Beyond its western end at the square where its built character reflects the historic core of the village, development is restricted to its southern side and is characterised by late 20 century bungalow development within large garden plots. Gartness Close, a development of more recent properties extends south from the western end of the road and introduces a dilution of the historic road pattern of the village. These properties are however generally well screened within the wider landscape setting as a consequence of falling relief and treed limits.

### **Eastern Edge.**

A pronounced but localised valley to the east of the village to the south of Gartness Road (which is now dominated by the A811 'bypass') sets an important landscape dimension to the village itself along its eastern fringe. It is characterised by rough grazing steep pasture with a densely treed upper west side. From here the 'back' of properties to the east of Main Street are intermittently visible to the top of the valley side through a dense tree cover to its ridgeline.



*Drymen's eastern fringe, wooded ridge to rear of Main Street.*

The Church (1771) is clearly visible at the foot of the valley and is a marked reminder of the origins of the village to the south of its present day focus. This is a well defined edge to the village in landscape terms, with the prominence of the church a

positive and important historic attribute which hints at the importance of the settlement beyond the treed ridge.

### **Southern Approaches.**

Approaching the village from the south from the junction of the Old Military Road and the A809 Croftamie Road stands the red sandstone arched Drymen Bridge, a historic structure in its own right which compliments the setting of the distinctive valley flat floor landscape of the meandering Endrick Water. Moving northwards and climbing slowly from the bridge, the village is almost completely screened by the eastern wooded fringes of the Buchanan Castle estate only with out lying facilities such as the Strathendrick golf course, tennis courts and pavilion hinting at the existence of a community nearby.

### **Balmaha Road Environs.**

Immediately to the north of the viewpoint above Main Street lies a small late 20<sup>th</sup> century estate around Winnock Crescent, with around a dozen large, low density properties accessed from Balmaha Road close to its junction at the Square. This small estate does not contribute significantly to the built heritage of the settlement but neither is it prominent in the landscape, as like many other components of the village is heavily screened by the north eastern reaches of the Buchanan Castle estate woodlands. It does however relate well to the settlement in terms of its close proximity to the historic focus of the Drymen.

The north-western approaches to the village along the Balmaha Road, the main access to Loch Lomond are also heavily wooded, and the topography less pronounced in terms of elevation change. From this direction the settlement appears to be enclosed by dense woodland until relatively close to the meeting of Balmaha Road with Main Street at the southern edge of the Square. Low density, larger detached houses are embedded within the woods along this artery and are characteristic of this part of the village but belie their proximity to its centre and denser areas of later 20<sup>th</sup> Century housing to the north of the square. From the junction of the historic track Ballyconachy Loan which leads due south to Buchanan Home Farm, glimpses of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing of the Clairinch Way estate

can be had from the Balmaha Road, although not prominently and seen within a context of woodland and shelterbelt planting.

Gradually rising topography of rough grazing and large drystone wall enclosed fields, interspersed with woodland shelter-belts characterise the landscape to the north of the village between the Balmaha Road, through an arc to the Stirling Road. Beyond the immediate vicinity of the square this area of the village is predominantly of 20<sup>th</sup> Century housing, with two distinct housing estate developments either side of the straight, gradually climbing Old Gartmore Road.

### **Old Gartmore Road and the Northern Fringe Estates.**

The landscape setting of the northern edge of the village to the west of Old

Gartmore Road is one of an open but slightly fragmented meeting of open pasture and modern two storey housing of the 'Clairinch Way' estate, with a backdrop of the mature woodlands which partly enclose Balmaha Road. The interface between a relatively level and wide open pasture with the northern edge of the



*View south-west to Drymen from Old Gartmore Road*

village is softened slightly by immature shelter-belt planting which partially defines the grounds of Drymen School, its playing fields and the adjacent Mountain Rescue station, both of which are of modern design and stand prominent in their setting slightly beyond the perceived edge of the settlement. The lower reaches of the Old Gartmore Road, are characterised by mature field-side trees, mainly of oak and ash which again soften the prominence of the housing to the traveller on this historic route into the village from the highland ground to the north. Consequently the contrast between the built environment and the wide open landscape setting are not as abrupt as the juxtaposition might imply, but the open space beyond the current line of development (school grounds) is particularly open and distinctive.

This situation is replicated to some extent to the east of the Old Gartmore Road. Here the land falls with a distinct long slightly undulating profile through very large rectilinear pastures interspersed with shelterbelts. The housing estate between the road and the Stirling Road is of slightly earlier date than the Clairinch Way estate, and focused around Charles Crescent, former local authority housing dating from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and Stuart Drive, a more recent cul-de-sac of mixed two storey and single storey housing which arcs north-eastwards from the crescent. This sector of the village enjoys significant screening from the northern approached as a consequence of the mature triangular woodland which lies between Old Gartmore Road and the Charles Crescent housing, which fans outwards as it stretches southwards from its northern 'point' which lies well outside the current village extent. Hence, unless within the estate, or adjacent to it as Old Gartmore Road meets the Square, this area of the village is not prominent within the landscape setting or dominant in the village character, despite its relative size.

Stuart Drive however somewhat diminishes the effective screening of its older neighbouring housing by extending north eastwards as a small but exposed development visible from both Old Gartmore Road and from Stirling Road. The development is locally prominent within an immediate setting of open pasture, although this is slightly ameliorated by the siting of single storey properties to its outer fringes and use of darker walling and roofing materials and its relatively small scale. Nevertheless this represents a less sensitive extension to the village in landscape terms.

### **Stirling Road Environs.**

The long fall of gently undulating rough pasture and shelter-belts which run down alongside the east of Old Gartmore Road terminate at the northern side of Stirling Road. This fall is only interrupted by the incursion of Stuart Drive. Here hedgerow replaces drystone wall, a telling indicator of a transition from highland to lowland landscape. On the settlement edge a football pitch is located, prominent locally as a consequence of its railings and hoardings. Otherwise this sits relatively closely to the built area of Drymen.

The landscape context of the village from the approach westwards along Stirling Road and to its south is characterised by rolling rough pasture which increases in undulation as it rises and then falls sharply to bound the bypass to the south. Whilst simple in composition this pasture has some considerable inherent landscape value and attractiveness. Again, mature hedgerows and frequent



*North-west from Stirling Road towards northern fringe estates.*

mature roadside trees soften the approach to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century mixed housing along the Stirling Road. This is an important approach into the village and the tree lined road sets a pleasant, level avenue-like route which converges onto the historic Square shortly after passing more recent housing and slightly incongruous mid /late 20<sup>th</sup> century 'Ardmore Gardens' development on its southern side. This housing is mostly screened from the approach along Stirling Road as a consequence of topography, and its true prominence only emerges on passing into the village.

Where the quadrant of land which falls between Stirling Road, the Gartness Road and the bypass reaches westwards towards the heart of the village the landform changes into a shallow valley, delineated by the rear of Ardmore Gardens and public car park to the north and low density 20<sup>th</sup> century detached properties to the south of Gartness Road on the southern valley side crest. This area is notable for its scrub vegetation and relatively significant extent so close to the heart of the settlement. The sunken terrain may explain the historic absence of development. Its valley profile does allow for a degree of seclusion to be experienced even well inside the wider extent of the settlement.

### **Drymen Character Assessment and Development Considerations Summary:**

The following sub-headings summarise specific issues set out within the project brief, and are derived from the detailed village and landscape contexts set out in the previous section.

**Positive attributes for future development:**

- Extensive settlement seclusion afforded by woodland and relief.
- Sense of arrival from several converging routes, but particularly focused at the Square.
- Historic character of Main Street and Square, although development elsewhere predominantly post 1900.
- Elevated vistas across southern and western hinterlands from limited locations.
- Sense of a small village centre and spine along Main Street to the Square

**Elements of the landscape which are likely to assist in designing developments which have a strong sense of place:**

- Lowland / river valley delineation from south and burn to east should not be interrupted by new development.
- Strong woodland framework, from west in particular (although opportunities for secluded development within woodland openings such as between Ballyconachy Loan and the Balmaha Road are also presented by these factors, although this would relate poorly to existing village structure).
- Shelterbelt and Policy woodlands are common features in the landscape, and screening planting to new housing would be consistent with that character.
- Abrupt transitions to open pasture across the northern limits to the settlement present opportunity to improve the transition through further planting or 'landmark' design of new development.



**Elements which could be used to define, strengthen or contribute to settlement boundaries or enhance the sense of arrival when approaching new development:**

- Investigate possibility of an improved relationship of Stuart Close with immediate open pasture landscape. This relationship is currently harsh and incongruous.
- Opportunity for woodland screening to be introduced almost anywhere which would not be out of character with landscape or settlement character/form.
- Mountain Rescue station and school on Gartmore Road harsh and exposed.

**Built structures likely to form boundaries:**

- Not a significant factor in Drymen outside the Square and Main Street. Boundaries more often defined by trees and thick vegetation.
- Mountain rescue post and school to northern edge of settlement stand prominent and exposed. No new development would be desirable beyond to the north despite favourable relief.
- The Church to the southern end of Main Street should remain as the southern extent of built development on the east side of the street. No development should be permitted to its south.
- The eastern end of Ardmore Gardens, south of Stirling Road presents an appropriate extent but aesthetically poor limit to development south of Stirling Road.

**Landscape features which make a contribution to the setting of the settlement to wider scenic quality:**

- Wooded fringes, various locations, hide the settlement from many approaches and present an intimate landscape mosaic.
- Elevated meadows west of Main Street allow open space into the heart of the village although diluted by ornamental planting and recent housing.
- Extended falling and open rough grazing land either side of Old Gartmore Road interspersed with shelter belt planting emphasises the transition between upland and lowland landscapes.
- Valley to the east (or 'rear') of Main Street, upper wooded fringe to western

side.

- Rough rolling pasture south of Stirling Road emphasises pastoral setting to east.
- Treed southern entry to the village around the junction and church allows the settlement to remain secluded until almost within.

**Settlement Edge – Settlement and landscape inter-relationship:**

- Abrupt relationship between settlement to its landscape setting across several parts of northern estates.
- Elsewhere the settlement has predominantly wooded fringes to its edge, such as east of Main Street and across most of its western fringes.
- Marked crest of open higher land west of lower Main Street allows open space to reach down to main thoroughfare, but has become diluted on lower slope by late infill development above the road frontage.

**Degree of cohesiveness or fragmentation:**

- Significant contrast between the historic core of the Square and Main Street with late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estates to the northern fringe and ribbon development of mixed post-19<sup>th</sup> century and later development to radial routes.
- Wooded environs of Balmaha Road to west of settlement feel secluded from village centre despite relative proximity.
- Some property in Ballyconachy Loan area relates very poorly to the settlement form despite coverage by Conservation Area designation.

**Experience of the existing approaches:**

- Maintain the avenue character and pasture approach to south of Stirling Road.
- Maintain / do not weaken the heavily wooded 'hidden approach' from the south from junction of Main Street and the bypass.
- Avoid development fronting Balmaha Road beyond the existing heavily wooded limits.

## Gartocharn.

### Settlement Character and Landscape Setting.

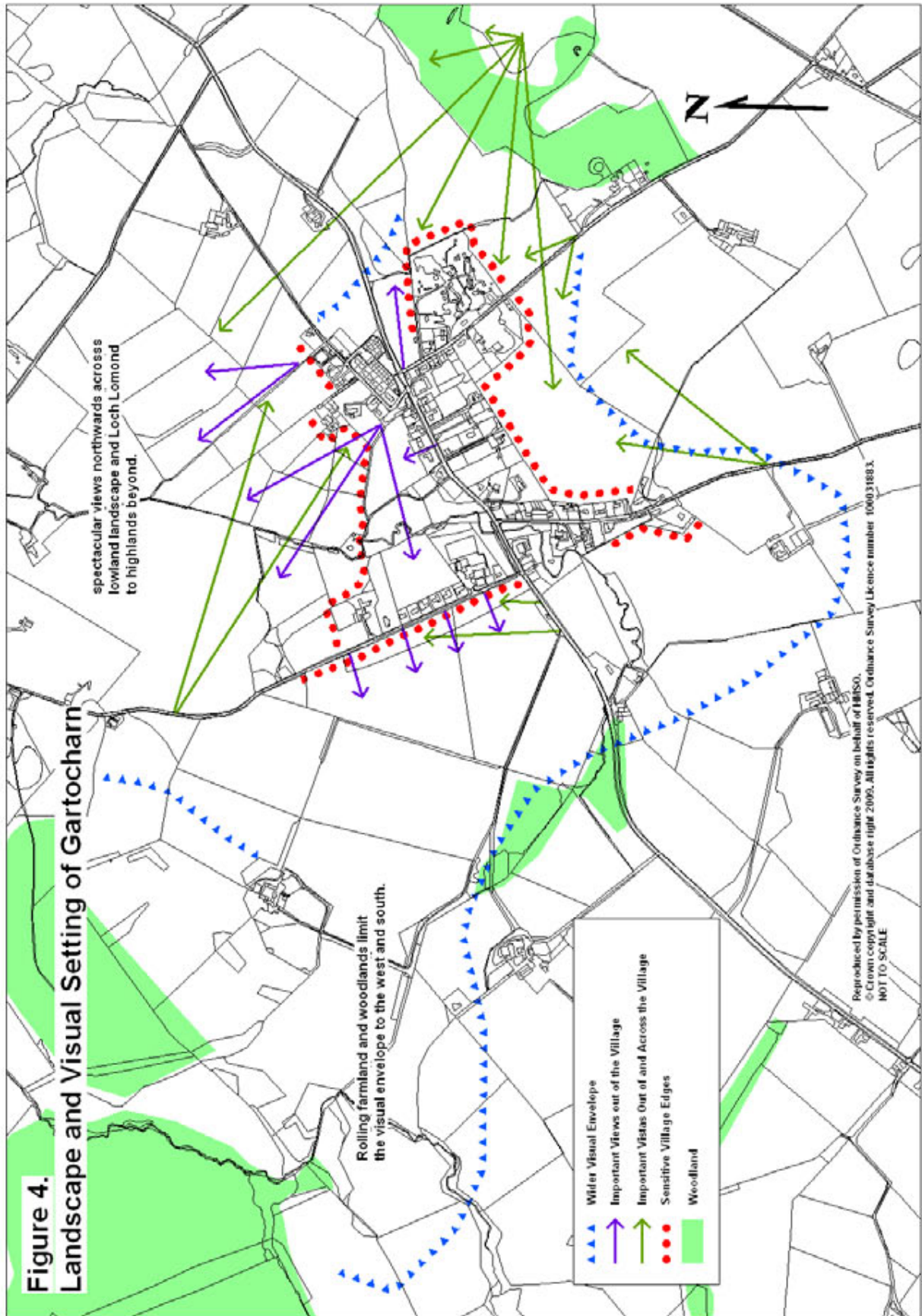
#### General Setting and Visual Analysis

The village of Gartocharn has both at once dramatic and subtle relationships with its landscape setting. Terrain and topography appear to be less influential on village form and distribution than the does the convergence of highways onto the Old Military Road and the desire to avoid losing fertile land to development away from the main thoroughfare. Its wider landscape setting between Loch Lomond and Duncryne hill is, however, significant.

The village's relationship with its landscape (see **figure 4**) is influenced by the gradual slope which falls relatively gently from higher ground in the south-east to the low lying north-west by the loch shore. This setting results in the village being seen clearly in the landscape from a number of vantage points along the long loop of Ross Loan as the lane maintains some height on the slope below Ardoch farmstead. In addition, occasionally significant views towards the loch are presented from the main road between gaps in buildings over a vale-like farmed and wooded landscape afforded by the general dip in the landform.

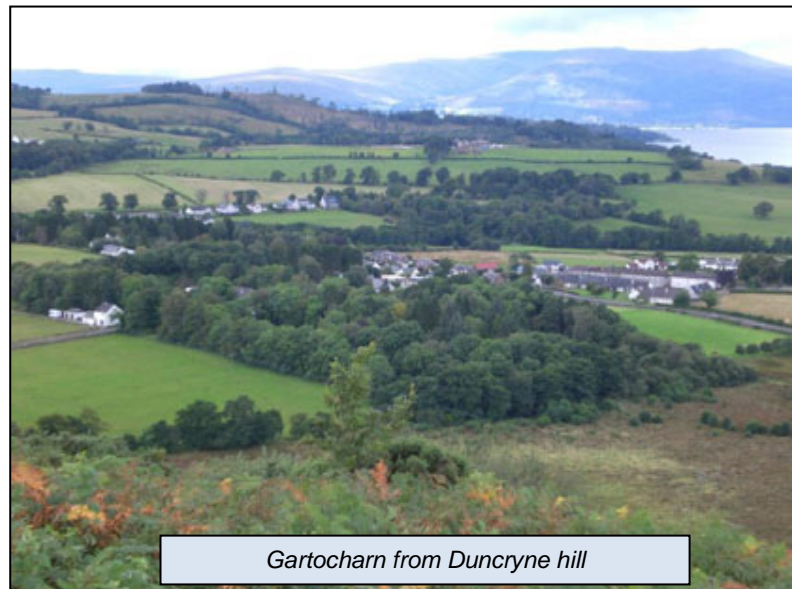
The route of the main road through Gartocharn does appear to follow a rather subtle ridge across this general slope, which itself falls between two slightly higher crests in the road at either entrance to the village, affording a sense of 'dropping into', or 'climbing out of', the village from both directions, although there is only a slight loss of elevation.

The north-western fringes of the settlement abut relatively open farmland, although well treed in many parts, on the gradual, undulating slope away towards the loch. This is a distinctly farmed landscape with, in parts, a relatively dense network of hedgerow enclosed fields with hedgerow trees, with farmsteads, some of which now abandoned such as 'Middle of Gartocharn', punctuating the outlook.



The small valley of the upper Aber Burn presents a heavily treed feature running through the village from south to north, and this wooded characteristic is reflected along the western parts of the main road, particularly within the long front gardens of the larger properties and to their rear as the hillside slopes rather more markedly than its general fall in gradient. Wooded features, such as garden and boundary line trees are also prominent along the three 'tributary' lanes which meet the main road in Gartocharn. In particular more substantive sections of 'habited' woodlands are found by the south-eastern settlement limits along Duncryne Road, one of which appears to be used as a haulage yard.

Without question, Gartocharn's key landscape asset is 'the Duncryne', standing alone and prominent to its immediate east. Known locally as 'the Dumpling', this ancient volcanic plug now stands as a prominent conical knoll raising some 100m above the general settlement elevation, only half a kilometre from the village centre. Emerging from heavily wooded sides of oak and ash in particular, a small exposed summit and 'trig' point offers outstanding and



suddenly exposed views in all directions. However it is but especially dramatic over the immediate farmland to Loch Lomond, its many islands and spectacular highland glen setting. Whilst Gartocharn sits at its foot, a combination of its own wooded character, narrow linear form and more dramatic backdrop to the Loch almost result in the village being overlooked, both literally and figuratively.

Viewed from several points to the west, particularly from vistas from Ross Loan where it maintains some elevation above the vale, Gartocharn appears to nestle at the foot of the Duncryne, sheltered by its mass and by the woodlands which appear to

sweep to its eastern boundary, screening the thin strip of open fields that lie between.

The visual envelope is defined by the location of the village at the edge of the Rolling Farmland and bordering the much flatter River Valley Farmland LCT. Views within a lowland landscape are predominantly determined by local variations in land cover, although local topographical changes can also have a bearing on what's seen. Land cover either prevents or enables distant views out to higher ground beyond. The extent of views can change readily, often by taking only a few steps in one direction or another.

The small, intimate, agricultural village sits neatly within the rolling landscape. The main built up area close to the A811 lies at approximately 45m, with a ridge of high ground at 50m at its eastern end where a track leads to Middle Gartocharn. The surrounding wooded hills to the west and south gently rise to approximately 150m, limiting views in these directions.

The western built up edge of the village abuts open farmland, with regularly spaced mature oak trees lying alongside the road sides. From the minor road running northward from the A811 at the western edge of the village, the land falls gently down to the Aber Burn. Central and eastern parts gently roll down to the north towards Loch Lomond at around 24m, and eastwards along the Aber Burn towards Endrick Water at around 10m.

To the south and west, topography and vegetation limit the visual envelope. There are occasional views beyond the immediate visual envelope to hills and woodland beyond, but generally views in these directions are of small scale rolling grazed fields gently rising to the wooded hills close by.

Although topography is much flatter to the north and east, signifying the change of LCT from rolling farmland to river valley farmland, the immediate visual envelope around the village is constrained by a number of small plantations, woodlands, shelterbelts and hedges. Isolated mature trees also limit localised views. However, there are spectacular distant views beyond the loch to the highlands, although

views of the water are limited from the village. Perhaps the clearest view of Loch Lomond is from the footpath to the side of the Millennium Hall.

The main road winds its way through the village in a series of gentle dips and bends. Narrow footpaths and a mix of dense garden vegetation, other roadside trees and scrub, areas of green open space and narrow footpaths add to the intimate character of the village. Views are foreshortened to the south by these land uses, and generally also to the north but there are important glimpses to the north between the buildings and vegetation across rolling farmland to the higher ground in the distance.

## **Gartocharn's relationship within the 'Rolling Farmland with Estates and 'River Valley Farmland with Estates' Landscape Character Types.**

### **Key Characteristics in relation to the Gartocharn Study Area**

The Landscape Character Assessment (2009) (LLTNPA and SNH) identifies two Landscape Character Types to which the study area applies. The characteristics of those Character Types as they affect the settlement of Gartocharn are set out under the headings of the LCA itself.

#### **(a) Land Cover and Land Use**

Traditional mosaic of small-scale, enclosed, mixed though predominantly pasture rolling farmland, especially abutting the northern and eastern edges of the village, with larger medium-scale fields and numerous small and medium sized natural and semi-natural deciduous, mixed farm woodlands beyond and to the south and west. A more natural land cover than at Drymen, with less policy, shelterbelt or rectilinear plantation woodland.

Medium-scale wooded hills and mixed plantations beyond but close to the village, and extensive tree cover amongst the buildings and alongside the Aber Burn flowing

from south to north through the village, combine with the rolling topography to create a very intimate landscape setting.

Improved grazing fields predominate on the lower slopes and higher ground to the south within an extremely well-preserved, managed enclosure landscape. Drystone walls, post and wire fencing and clipped hedges and hedgerow trees are characteristic features in the landscape.

This is more of a traditional farming landscape than at Drymen, although the designed landscape at Ross Priory on the shore of Loch Lomond includes features characteristic of the landscape character type, including a gate lodge, avenue of trees and other distinctive trees within a parkland setting. There are some rectilinear shelterbelts along field margins beyond the village.

### **(b) Settlement and Development**

Gartocharn is a small linear village which stretches along the A811. Single storey often white painted cottages dominate the main street with some later 19<sup>th</sup> century red sandstone villas with front gables and eave dormers. More recent development has occurred on infill sites, within large back gardens and alongside the minor routes to the south and north of the main road through the village, with no large-scale 20<sup>th</sup> century housing development, which has helped to preserve its traditional, quiet rural character.

The village is surrounded by numerous farmsteads and other individual properties along a network of small narrow minor roads and tracks.

The Lagganbeg Caravan Park lies close to the shore of Loch Lomond, off the narrow horse-shoe shaped minor road to the north of the village.

### **(c) Access and Recreation**

Gartocharn and the surrounding landscape is very accessible from the A811 and minor roads north and south. A Right of Way path leads from alongside the Millennium Hall in the village northwards across the Aber Dam bridge to Loch



Lomond. The number of other tracks and core paths could increase under the Core Path Networks initiative and agri-environmental incentives.

#### **(d) Biodiversity**

The mosaic of woodlands and plantations are significant individually and combine with hedgerows and hedgerow trees as part of the wider habitat network.

Native and riparian woodland and associated wetland around minor watercourses provide important habitats, as do veteran trees and dead wood associated with the parkland around Ross Priory.

#### **(e) Cultural Heritage**

As at Drymen, this is traditionally farmed land, where well-drained and fertile soils have favoured improvement and enclosure with drystone walls, hedges and fences, farms and farm buildings.

Distinctive small-scale rectilinear field patterns to the north and east of the village typify historic improvement period enclosures. Elsewhere some field boundaries have been lost creating larger medium-scale fields, although in several locations lines of mature trees mark the locations of previous field boundaries.

The designed landscape at Ross Priory is a defining characteristic, with the entrance drive, lodge house, avenues of trees, parkland and policies. There are three listed buildings within the designed landscape.

The planned, linear layout of the village alongside the A811, with surrounding agricultural farmsteads and small settlements, are characteristic features. There are three listed buildings within the village.

The Dam of Aber Bridge, over the burn which shares its name with the township of Aber, marks an historic turning point and location of where the burn was dammed to provide water to power the local corn mill.

**(f) Visual and Scenic Qualities**

The mosaic of fields and woodlands interact with the rolling landform to create a distinctly patterned and small to medium-scale, enclosed landscape, which strongly contrasts with the simpler and more open uplands and loch to the north. The area immediately to the north and east of the village has retained its traditional small-scale landscape enclosed by hedges and mature hedgerow trees.

The landform rolls up to a series of wooded hills up to 150m high to the south, west and most noticeably at Duncryne Hill to the east, a parish landmark and core of an old volcano, affectionately known locally as 'The Dumpling'. From this well known beauty spot there are arguably the best views across Loch Lomond, providing a spectacular panorama of the loch enclosed by interlocking slopes, ridges, promontories and islands, and clearly displaying the transition of highland and lowland at the Highland Boundary Fault. By contrast the ground rolls steadily northwards down towards the shores of Loch Lomond from around 50m at the village, providing dramatic views of the highlands but only glimpses of the loch, for example from the Right of Way alongside the Millennium Hall down towards the loch. This land lies within the '*River Valley Farmland with Estates*' Landscape Character Type.

The Ross Priory estate contributes to the particular aesthetics, order and patterns of the designed landscape to the north-west, although this is only evident from the quiet minor road leading northwards from the village.

**Settlement Structure.**

Gartocharn is a small settlement of less than 400 residents lying only 2 km from the south-eastern shores of Loch Lomond. The village straddles the main A811 'Old Military Road' from Balloch in the south-west towards Drymen to its north east. Its setting is one of a carefully managed farmed landscape standing on gently sloping ground falling from the south-east towards the loch. At its highest point in the west it stands at around 50m elevation, and the main road through it rolls and undulates but varies only slightly from this height. To the west and south west of the village the land climbs markedly to elevations around 150m, whilst to the north and north-east

the low lying strath of the Endrick Water separates the village and its wider parish of 'Kilmaronock' from Drymen on the elevated north side of the river some 6km away.

Whilst slightly separated from the built environs of the village, Gartocharn has a close relationship with the prominent and heavily wooded 'Duncryne' hill, a freestanding, distinctive conical knoll of about 142m elevation which appears to stand guard over the settlement on its eastern fringe.

The settlement essentially takes a very simple linear form, with single rows of buildings generally fronting the main road through it and then alongside three minor roads linking to it at right angles from the north-west and south-east:- Duncryne Road, School Road and Ross Loan. Occasionally 'backland' development dilutes this general form, particularly along the southern side of the main road, but this is rarely prominent from public vantage points. The upper reaches of the Aber Burn transects the settlement as it meanders north-westerly to the loch resulting in a slight dip in the main road and a notable heavily wooded corridor hinting at its course through the western end of the village as it runs parallel to Ross Loan towards the loch.

The village does not present any clearly defined focal point, although the slight concentration of garage, shop and hotel/pub/restaurant to the north-western end of the main road close to its junctions with Duncryne Road and Church Road perhaps indicates its functional centre. Buildings are generally varied in style and architectural importance, with low single and one- and-a-half storey whitewashed buildings tending to hug the minor lanes and sections of the Old Military Road. Elsewhere, larger Victorian and Edwardian villa style properties sometimes set in very deep plots are also significant along the central spine of the village. A number of more recent dwellings are also prominent on Infill sites across the settlement.

The village has few significant buildings in respect to prominence or obvious architectural merit. Gartocharn primary school stands prominent at the junction of Ross Loan with the main road and is of 1960's heritage, presenting a rather harsh grey and rectilinear mass at a particularly visible location and entry to the settlement. At the opposite end of the village from the school, set back from the

main road, the church and Millennium Community Hall stand side by side within a small grouping of significant but unremarkable community buildings within a prominent area of mature trees delineating the northern edge to the settlement.

Farmsteads are also important in the context of the village and reflect its role as an agricultural community on the relatively fertile and gentler terrain of the loch shores. Prominent farm complexes are found on the south western entrance to the village close to the main road and again towards its northern edge with the range of buildings at France Farm. The village is noticeably surrounded by a relatively dense distribution of working and now residential farmsteads across its agricultural hinterland.

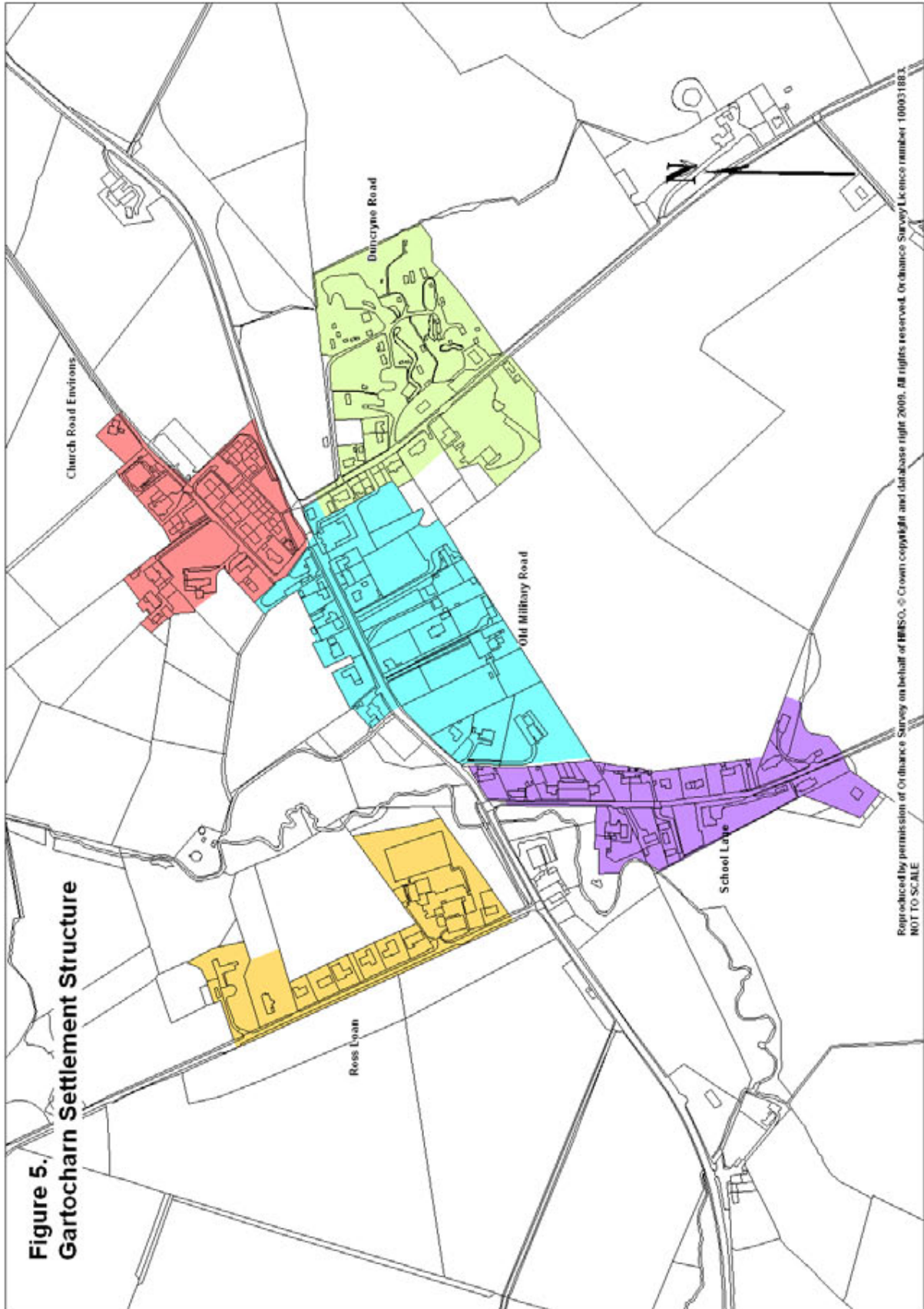
The linear pattern of development along the four public highways within the village do not reveal any obvious indication of the historical growth or expansion of Gartocharn as more recent buildings have been built in the spaces between its older housing stock, which appears to be predominantly 19<sup>th</sup> century with a small number of older properties scattered around the village. This process appears to continue today with evidence of infill development in several locations. However there has been little in the way of medium or large scale housing development apart from a concentrated area of 'sheltered' and local authority developed housing on the north eastern edge of the settlement between the A811 and Church Road. Consequently the linear, rectilinear form of the village has been mostly maintained.

## **Village Sectors and Landscape Characteristics:**

(see **figure 5**).

### **The 'Main Road' – the Old Military Road.**

The main road through the village acts very much as its spine, with most of the few local services fronting it, such as garage, shop, post office and pub – restaurant, as well as a number of houses. The road follows a slightly curved and undulating route whilst never varying far from a direct line.



The main entries into the village are along the A811 when approaching from Balloch or Drymen directions. Neither entry is dramatic or provides any significant sense of approach with rolling farmland with hedgerow and small woodland pockets mostly screening approaches along the gently twisting road before they give way to relatively recent buildings, including Gartocharn School from the south west and social housing and the community playing fields from the north-east. From the Balloch direction, even upon entering the village, the heavily treed area means that the transition from countryside to village is gradual rather than abrupt. Burnbrae Farm takes a roadside position to the south of the road on entry from this direction and its open yard, agricultural buildings and stacks of silage sacks present a 'working', if not particularly attractive signal of entry to Gartocharn. To the rear of the farm is the back of

School Road, screened from immediate view by substantive tree cover which arcs around to the south to frame a meadow fronting the road at this point.

Development on its north-western side is restricted by the Aber Burn wooded valley at its western end so



*Low-key entry to Gartocharn from the Balloch direction approach.*

that most properties are found once well into the village when arriving from Balloch direction. Once built development is evident it is in the form of pleasing if unremarkable low stone traditional buildings with shallow front gardens and deeper gardens to the rear. Differing plot depths results in a rather staggered and disjointed transitions from village to meadow when seen from the west. This meeting of open countryside to settlement is one of the most important landscape relationships of the village because of its prominence from some points to the west along Ross Loan. From there the foreground of gently falling and enclosed meadow and background of the dominating wooded Duncryne 'sandwiches' a sliver of visible village between distinct landscape attributes. Across the central part

of this vista, trees are less prominent, hence emphasising the meeting of pasture to village more than most other parts of the settlement.

To its southern edge between the Duncryne Road and School Road, development is characterised by large secluded villa and more recent detached properties of late 19<sup>th</sup> century or 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage set often to the rear of deep, extremely well treed plots with hedgerow boundaries to the road.



In this segment of the village

'backland' development is sometimes evident. The heavily treed nature of this area, and the general dip below hedge height of the main road means these properties, despite their size are rarely prominent. Some however, and particularly new infill properties are visible from along upper reaches of School Road as the large open field pattern dips from the south east to meet the 'back' of the village.

### **Church Road and Environs.**

The far north eastern end of the main road sees the most significant area of incongruous development to be found in the village. Church Road leads off main road to the north and west as a metalled part of the otherwise rough track leading to the isolated Middle Gartocharn farmstead. Between Church Road and the main road a group of local authority 'sheltered housing' bungalows stands as a staggered row and small horseshoe group fronting main road over open, undivided communal lawn. To their rear, fronting Church Road three short terraces of imposing but austere two storey housing dominate this small segment of the village, and are consequently prominent from various views from the west.

To the west of Church Road is the church itself, again a rather inelegant heavy set grey stone building set within well treed grounds. Adjacent to this, the Millennium Community Hall is a significant piece of modern but functional social architecture

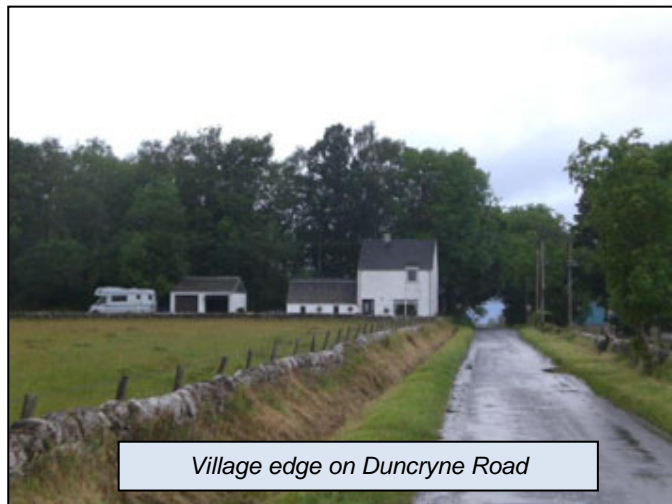
with distinctive pyramid roof and two storey elevation to the open meadows to the north and west.

To the west of this compact section of development stands France Farm set slightly lower from the lane as the terrain falls gently west and northwards, with a low form and whitewashed farmhouse and outbuildings, slightly divorced from the main settlement. This stands prominent in the landscape when viewed from Ross Loan. Between France Farm and Church Road stands a grand, relatively recent detached dwelling with a ranch like character in open paddock, set at a diagonal plane to most of its surrounding neighbours. This building is somewhat incongruous in respect to both its agricultural neighbour and the village proper.

### **Duncryne Road**

This narrow minor road meets the southern side of A811 at the north eastern end of the village and heads in a straight line south easterly to skirt the foot of the Duncryne on its gradual climb towards Little Duncryne farmstead. The community playing field and playground nestles between Duncryne Road and the main road out of the village. The lower reaches of the lane, in the heart of the settlement are characterised by single depth traditional whitewashed, low set dwellings fronting the lane on both sides with shallow front gardens or yards, particularly to the southern side.

As the lane climbs to the edge of the settlement well wooded areas enclose upon it from both sides. The south eastern sides of this woodland present a very clear and abrupt delineation between the



open large fields beyond and the village itself. However, within this wooded area to both sides of the lane area a series of buildings and uses, including haulage yard and storage areas which are on the whole very well screened from all but the closest vantage points.



From outside the settlement looking down Duncryne Road, Gartocharn is mostly very well screened by thick tree cover from that woodland. A distinct increase in downward gradient leading to the rear of the deep set properties on the main road further belies the existence of the settlement.

### School Road

School Road has similar properties to Duncryne Road. It meets the main road towards its western end at almost 90 degrees and climbs steadily to the south and is interspersed with mainly traditionally proportioned low whitewashed dwellings in short terraces or as free standing dwellings in garden settings. The original school house is prominent, although now a dwelling. Characteristic of the western end of the village the lane is well wooded and almost has a 'sunken lane' appearance with embanked boundaries and dense hedging to some of its properties. As the lane rises and moves away from the main road infill housing is apparent although this maintains the linear form, fronting the road with now 'backland' development apparent until emerging into the open fields to the south where recent development of two dwellings has slightly diluted the linear character.



On approaching Gartocharn from the upper reaches of School Road the village remains well screened by a finger of woodland which traces the uppermost reaches of the Aber Burn, as well as the generally well wooded delineation between the 'rear' or south side of the main road and the sweeping large meadows which fall down to meet it. As seen from Duncryne Road also, this slope steepens as it meets the central parts of the settlement between the two lanes, and hence further screens it from view.

## Ross Loan

Ross Loan is an ancient byway which sweeps in a full arc to the north of the village from its 90 degree junction with the main road at the south-western entry to Gartocharn, to its point at the boundary of Ross Priory on the shores of the loch, then curving south east again where it meets the A811 a few hundred metres to the north east of the village.

Only the first 200 metres of the lane is developed as part of the village. This is characterised by mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century large detached dwellings which stand prominently but only to the east of the lane or its 'inside'.



*Ross Loan from main approach to Gartocharn.*

To the rear, open meadow and the school playing fields drop into the heavily wooded shallow valley of the Aber Burn. The western side of the lane stands at the top of a distinct shallow dry valley which emphasises the prominence of the dwellings on its other side. The lane is punctuated by evenly spaced mature oak and ash trees within a strong hedgerow which help soften the abruptness of the housing on the approach from the west.

Between this housing and the main road stands Gartocharn Primary school, fronting to Ross Loan but conspicuous and slightly raised from the main road. A prominent 1960s building with little architectural merit yet is the largest building in the village. The impact of the building is only marginally softened by its position on a dip towards Aber Burn to its rear.

## **Gartocharn Character Assessment and Development**

### **Considerations:**

The following sub-headings address specific issues set out within the project brief, and are derived from the detailed village and landscape contexts set out in the previous section.

#### **Positive attributes for future development**

- Distinctive landscape location between gentle pastoral setting of farmland meadows and drama and prominence of the Duncryne and its woodland.
- Relatively strong linear form to the village with only minor dilution to this around Church Close.
- Well screened limits to the village by woodland and gently dipping relief, particularly when arriving from the south on School Road and Duncryne Road.

#### **Elements of the landscape which are likely to assist in delivering development which has a strong sense of place**

- Maintain the contrast between those elements of the settlement which have a wooded setting and those which meet the open meadows to the north and west.
- Maintain the occasional glimpses of gently dipping pasture and meadow to the north of the main road through gaps in properties.
- Safeguard the experience of clear 'entry and exit' to and from the settlement when travelling on School Road and Duncryne Road.
- Wooded components to the settlement along the main road and then around its western and northern approaches offer opportunity for localised development sites with limited landscape impacts and opportunity for further planting consistent with established character.

**Elements which could be used to define, strengthen or contribute to settlement boundaries, or enhance the sense of arrival when approaching new development .**

- Boundaries to the south of Old Military Road and around both sides of Duncryne Road and School Road are well defined within the landscape and extensions out from these areas should not breach current settlement limits.
- The meeting of Gartocharn and the farmland to the west and north is slightly fragmented around France Farm and the rear of the main road properties. Whilst this is a characteristic of the settlement, any future development in these areas may be designed to present a less piecemeal transition between pasture and village, including infill between the farm and Church Road.
- Development to the south-west of Ross Loan should be avoided so as to maintain the undeveloped dry ditch and oak and ash line feature as a semi-natural boundary to the settlement from the Balloch direction.

**Built structures likely to form boundaries.**

- Not a significant feature of Gartocharn.

**Settlement Edge – Settlement and landscape inter-relationship:**

- Discrete but well defined wooded edges to the whole village from the south.
- Exposed mid 20<sup>th</sup> century housing along Ross Loan presents an abrupt edge, slightly softened by hedgerow trees to its western side.
- Northern transitions between the linear village and open meadowlands falling to the loch is a more complex boundary but essentially free from treed screening or well defined boundary treatments.
- Village edge to the north of the Old Military Road is abruptly defined by unsympathetic 1960's social housing fronting the road. Hedgerows and localised raised relief slightly soften this impact until almost within the village.

**Degree of cohesiveness or fragmentation:**

- Linear settlement form remains significantly intact with the main exception being around the Church Road and France Farm environs.
- Backland development to the south of the main road remains obscured by relief, boundary treatments and thick wooded gardens, and has little negative impact upon visible settlement character.

**Experience of the existing approaches:**

- Subtle crest and dips in the main road at either end of the village present natural relief limits to Gartocharn's extent.
- From the south along School Road and Duncryne Road, falling relief and wooded fringes present a secluded relationship in the landscape until the linear development along there approaches is reached.
- The main north-eastern entry to the settlement along the Old Military Road affords a somewhat sudden but less than handsome approach because of the prominence of the 'sheltered' housing development and managed appearance of the recreation ground. This approach would benefit from a more traditional architectural context or improved woodland screening.
- Approaches from Balloch direction are signalled more by the 'perched' linear development of the housing along Ross Loan, and by the prominent school than historically would be the case.
- The 'entry' role formerly played by the outlying cottage and Burnbrae Farm has been diminished by Ross Loan's development.
- Entry to the settlement centre is more subtle as the dip of Aber Burn and its well wooded margins opens gradually to the linear form of its historic centre.

## 5. Recommendations.

### Approach to prioritising sites for housing development.

The following section sets out this report's key recommendations in respect to site identification for further housing development in Gartocharn and Drymen based upon the landscape and built environment's capacity to accommodate change without significant harm to the valued characteristics of the National Park.

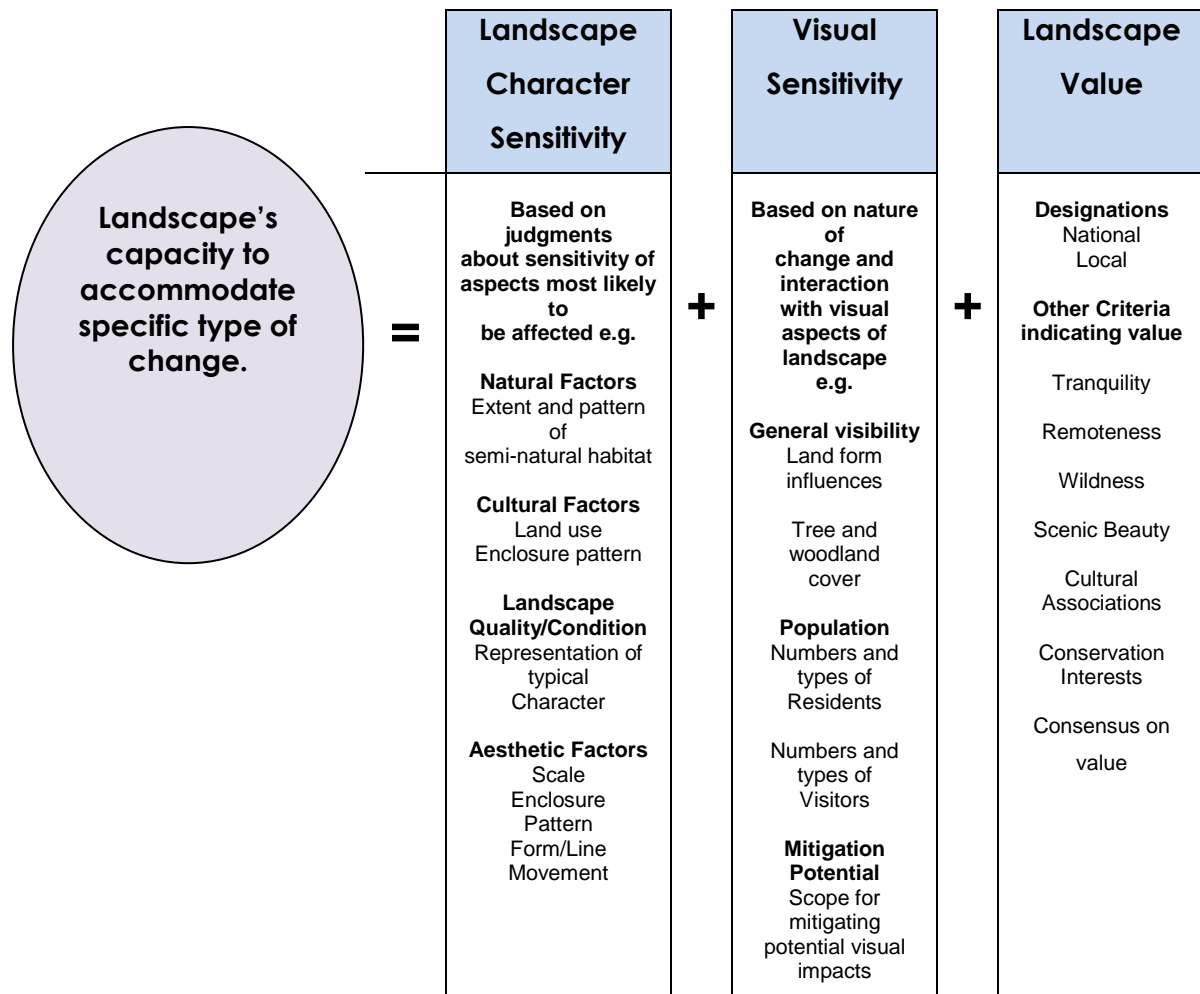
Sites have been selected based upon their relative ability to absorb the impacts their development would have on both the landscape integrity of their setting within the National Park, and effects that they may have on village form and valued built environments. Together these are key physical components which help create localised sense of place.

Capacity for growth or change has been anticipated in relation to:

- The landscape's character;
- Sensitivity of that character to a particular type of development (housing in this case);
- A site's visual prominence (localised and longer views);
- The significance of that relative prominence in the wider context;
- The ability of the landscape to accommodate change whilst retaining established character (including and having regard to mitigation works such as structural planting);
- A site's relative 'value' in respect to the settlement's visual setting and wider scenic qualities; and
- The ability or desirability for development and associated landscape measures to strengthen character and to mitigate existing harmful elements to landscape character.

The assessment and decision making process utilised within the study reflects good practice as presented within the Landscape Character Network's 'Topic Paper 6 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity' (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2004)), as summarised within the following diagram:

**Diagram 1. - Summary of factors to consider in judging landscape capacity for a particular type of change:**



(after Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2004))

The assessment and evaluation of landscape sensitivity and the capacity of landscapes to accommodate development is to some extent a subjective judgment. However, the project team were commissioned by LLTNP to make informed judgements and objective evaluation, as professional landscape and planning practitioners, using our experience, standard methodology and guidance, in accordance with the brief.

Identification and subsequent prioritisation of sites suitable for the accommodation of future housing need has been based upon the professional assessment and judgment of the report authors, having regard to the critical factors listed above. In each case, a unique combination of factors and immediate characteristics is at

play which demands that a view is taken of the combined sensitivities, opportunities and development implications on a case by case basis. No community engagement has been undertaken in coming to the recommendations set out below.

It is important to acknowledge that seeking optimal outcomes for the two key environmental elements of the study (landscape character and settlement setting / character / form) may not always be achievable. A site which may present the best location in terms of wider landscape impacts may not necessarily work well in respect to historic village form or character, for example where existing planting or woodland screens from inward views, but which would demand a layout which does not reflect a linear village pattern. This scenario arises within recommendations for growth in Gartocharn. Conversely, new development may present opportunities to mitigate negative elements of the existing built environment, or the village's relationship with its wider setting, yet be prominent in the wider landscape context. For example, where existing housing has an abrupt or unsympathetic interface with its landscape character and new development, more sensitively designed and delivered, could reverse or serve to mitigate previous unsympathetic development, but extend the village extent away from its historic focus or form. This scenario arises within recommendations for growth within Drymen.

As this report presents a landscape capacity driven study, priority is afforded to mitigating wider landscape impacts and village setting than to village form issues where these are otherwise incompatible, although both are important. Wherever possible these considerations are taken together to present minimal impacts upon both. Where mutually beneficial solutions are not immediately apparent, suggestions for the mitigation of potential negative effects are set out within Concept Statements for each identified site.

Prioritisation of sites is not based upon any systematic scoring or ranking mechanism. It is considered that such approaches are beyond the remit and resources available for the study. In any case, more 'mechanical' assessment approaches are unlikely to be any more appropriate than the approach adopted here given the significant variation in the characteristics of the sites and landscape settings within and across



each village. Such methodologies are also likely to require the introduction of inherently subjective 'weightings' to various considerations within a structured ranking process, which may demand stakeholder or community inputs.

Sites are categorised as follows:

**'Priority sites'** – Sites which present the best options for accommodating housing growth in respect to the landscape's capacity to accommodate change without significant harm to it or to important village characteristics. they require generally lower levels of mitigation measures than other sites and should be prioritised for delivery before other options are pursued.

**'Secondary Option Sites'** – Sites where development may be accommodated but where landscape and / or village character impacts may be more pronounced. A greater degree of mitigation work would be expected in comparison to Priority Sites in order to minimise landscape impacts.

**'Lower Priority Sites'** – Sites where there is some inherent development potential, but where landscape setting impacts and / or village character changes through development would be more significant. Such sites will normally be those which would constitute a marked extension of current village envelopes and would consequently benefit from more significant mitigation measures to moderate impacts upon current character.

### **Recognising inevitable localised impacts and identification of mitigation and compensatory measures.**

This study primarily seeks to identify opportunities for accommodating necessary housing development to meet identified needs, whilst respecting the National Park landscape's capacity to do so. The built heritage and distinctive village form of the study settlements are also important components of the National Park's special qualities, which too require significant consideration in order to protect the settlements from insensitive development.

The findings as set out within this chapter seek to identify spaces or sites where development may be permitted to meet important needs for housing whilst reflecting established character, strengthening positive attributes of that character and/or ameliorate negative contributors to wider valued characteristics.

However, by its nature, new development will always result in a degree of 'change' to its immediate or sometimes wider setting, even where the net result of that change is positive. Where development is 'new build' as opposed to building conversion, as is necessarily the case within the study areas, that change can be locally significant, and potentially affect the setting and prominence of the settlement within its landscape context. Some proposals if not carefully designed may result in significant increased prominence of the settlement in the wider landscape, particularly for sites identified as possible later phases of development to be considered when priority sites are exhausted.

The study cannot expect to present recommendations where immediate environmental impacts are not effected, which in some instances, might result in localised loss of valued characteristics which could constitute harm to National Park valued characteristics (for example localised loss of trees, habitats, or alter historic settlement form). This is an inevitable consequence of development in constrained areas. However, localised impacts can and should be mitigated through the positive and aspirational exercise of the Development Management process. Well designed proposals, which are sensitive to locally valued characteristics, can be appropriate where less well considered proposals would not. Delivery of environmentally sensitive development can therefore allow for an actual increase in the settlement's and its wider landscape's capacity to absorb development.

The proposals and recommendations set out to positively minimise any harmful impacts upon the landscape setting of the two settlements. Where appropriate, proposals offer opportunity to ameliorate insensitive or neglected elements of the built environment and their consequent landscape impacts. Where proposals involve development of 'greenfield' spaces, mitigation proposals, particularly structural planting and identified limits to development, should serve to restrict harm and increase integration with the wider landscape setting. In other cases an open

transition between new development and the landscape setting actually reflects important established character where improved design, massing and external materials can further enhance such transitions.

Recommendations are made with the understanding that, consistent with established development plan design policy, all further development should comprise well designed developments which are locally sensitive and reinforce sense of place. Often within the study settlements, low density development predominates within garden settings which occasionally allow for open aspects to be maintained between buildings which offer views outwards. It is for the local land use policy and Development Management processes to determine whether such characteristics should take priority over the generally prevailing approach to making more sustainable use of land through delivery of higher density housing schemes. Consequently no housing number capacity is afforded to each site as this will be dependent upon site specific constraints and density aspirations.

The locations of main sites identified are generally accessible directly from existing roads. Where this is not the case the issues is identified. Detailed consideration of matters pertaining to safe highway access and impact upon neighbouring properties, should be addressed through the Development Management process. Ownership matters have not been considered nor has the 'deliverability' of sites in respect to infrastructure or services provision. This report considers only landscape and settlement character related issues. Other considerations may determine that some sites set out in the report will be unsuitable for allocation within the development plan for reasons other than those considered here.

## Drymen.

### Development Opportunity Recommendations.

(see **figure 6**).

The most significant areas of more recent growth of Drymen have occurred primarily to the northern side of the village, thus avoiding the more sensitive eastern, southern and western sides where there are better defined edges to the village. In doing so the village form may be seen to have evolved from one of a radial pattern based around the five converging roads, to one where the village can be seen to reflect a more nucleated form. Beyond the historic core of Main Street and the Square, and along Stirling Road, the impact upon village form is less important than protection of vistas into and out of the village and its wider landscape impacts. Moreover, the strong woodland screening which characterises much of the settlement's landscape setting allows for structural planting to be established to screen proposed housing growth whilst remaining completely consistent with the established landscape character.

Consequently the village does retain some latent capacity for infill housing within some of its currently undeveloped spaces within its built envelope. These may not however be sufficient to meet emerging development plan requirements in respect of housing quanta, and larger spaces are anticipated to be required to meet expected need.

The density, design and layout of any housing development within the village should be carefully considered, respecting the local surroundings, especially within the Conservation Area. Higher densities of development may increase the capacity of the village to accommodate new housing, but this may not be appropriate from a village character perspective. High design standards will be expected within the National Park whatever development density is deemed appropriate.

Consideration should also be given to the need for a further site for car / coach parking within the village to ameliorate peak season visitor congestion. A recent report by Atkins on behalf of the National Park Authority and Drymen Community Development Trust (Drymen Parking Study Final Report, November 2006)

recommended an extension to the existing car park on Stirling Road. An alternative site off Balmaha Road on land owned by Stirling Council is also put forward for consideration within the report. Both these sites could potentially accommodate new parking and/or housing development, subject to detailed design and access considerations. Car park considerations are integrated within the following section of detailed development site recommendations.

### **Infill Opportunities in Drymen:**

#### **Priority Site: - Balmaha Road - Area A.**

Opportunity for a planned development of a small number of units is available at site 'A', a narrow grassed area between Balmaha Road and the rear of the Winnock Hotel. Whilst a relatively pleasing open space at present, it is not significant in respect to wider village form or the landscape setting of Drymen. Design and access considerations will be of greater importance than impacts upon wider village characteristics through loss of the space if development were to be permitted in this site.

#### **Priority Site: East of Main Street – Area B.**

More significant in village form and landscape context, but more problematic in respect to delivery is the undeveloped space off Main Street to the immediate north of the Buchanan Hotel bowling green, Area 'B'. This steeply falling site is well vegetated with what appears to be self set trees and undergrowth. Its frontage has an important situation along Main Street which would benefit from a sensitively designed façade, possibly reflecting the long terrace of red sandstone buildings which delineates the opposite side of this most important area of the village. This character may favour higher development density which in turn may suit affordable housing delivery, a situation supported by accessibility to village services and a possible difficulty in providing individual off street parking. To the rear the steep fall in levels would require sensitive design and terracing, whilst the rear of the site's importance as part of the village's overall treescape must be retained. Views from the bypass area will be important in this regard.



**Priority Site: South of Gartness Road – Area C.**

A small area of undeveloped space adjacent to the bypass and south of Gartness Road, on the eastern limits of the settlement also presents opportunity for limited Infill without threatening Drymen's landscape setting or causing harmful visual impact. Subject to retention and strengthening of its vegetation screening to its south boundary and introduction of further planting along the bypass boundary, this site would be appropriate for development reflecting the density of housing along the ridge of Gartness Road. There appears to be good access off Gartness Road although consideration of impacts on residents of what would constitute backland development is required. The site is not important or valuable in landscape and visual terms.

**New Housing Sites for Drymen:**

Infill development is unlikely to provide sufficient capacity to meet the emerging development plan's housing requirements however. The following sites for multiple units are therefore presented:

**Priority Site: Land North of Gartness Road – Area D.**

Land lying parallel to Gartness Road, south of the developed parts of Stirling Road is characterised by a significant area of undeveloped land. This segment of land reaches into the heart of the settlement from the pastures to the east, extending right up to the rear of the properties which cluster around the eastern side of the Square. The site occupies a marked but relatively shallow valley although there is no obvious watercourse in its bottom. Because of its sunken nature, changes in relief at its eastern end and the built boundary to the north of the public car park and the Ardmore Gardens estate, the site is inconspicuous from most directions apart from its southern boundary which runs along the ridge of Gartness Road. The site is not in agricultural use and is characterised by rough grassland and scrub, which to its central sections presents the foundations of a vegetated screen from points east.

Because of its central location, significant size (in relation to the settlement and likely housing delivery expectations), its natural screening and insignificant wider landscape impacts, this site is considered to be highly suitable as a site to meet a substantial proportion of Drymen's housing need in the short to medium term,

depending on housing densities secured. Furthermore, its proximity to the village centre would result in a strengthening of the now predominant nucleated form of the village if it were to be developed.

The western half of the site which is the most open should initially be developed, leaving the better vegetated, scrubby eastern half as a landscape / wildlife buffer for later development. Development should not be allowed beyond the current extent of housing on Stirling Road, since the open grazed field immediately east (to the south of the football pitch) is considered a sensitive, undulating natural edge to the village which should remain undeveloped

The site bounds the existing public car park on Stirling Road. This has been identified by Atkins (2006) as one of the most appropriate sites for an increase in parking capacity within Drymen. This study concurs with that position. Proposals to extend the car park to its rear, into the site hereby being proposed for housing



are not considered mutually exclusive. Dependent upon housing figure expectation, it is suggested that the site's north-eastern fringe may be dedicated to a car park extension, with new appropriate boundary treatment (possibly a wall with supplementary tree planting behind) between it and the new housing site. Because of the narrow nature of Gartness Road, it is also likely that such remodelling should involve creating the access to the housing site through the existing car park area.

### **Concept Statement Aspirations;**

- Sloping valley site will require a tiered approach to delivery. This will emphasise the importance of its roofscape, and hence orientation and roofing materials will be significant design considerations.



- Access to be secure through current car park site.
- Development to be prioritised from western end of site, possibly by phasing if site is adequate alone to meet housing demand of the development plan.
- Existing scrub to east of site to be retained, managed and supplemented as landscape screen and feature.
- Extension of this site to the east of the current scrub boundary to only be considered should advance screening be established and development is restricted to lower slopes so as to avoid being visible from Stirling Road approaches to Drymen.

### **Secondary Option Site: Stirling Road Football Pitch – Area E.**

This study recognises the social importance of community playing fields, and the need for such facilities to be on level ground as far as possible. However in respect of landscape capacity considerations, the current football pitch site north of Stirling Road (accessed from Stuart Drive) presents opportunity for housing development delivery with limited landscape impacts. Development of the site within a line roughly north to south from the outer edge of Stuart Drive would allow for a clearer delineation of the settlement limits in this area, reducing the impact of the incongruous extension of Stuart Drive into open pasture. This would of course also constitute development into undeveloped open space, but that space is bounded on two sides by existing development and by Stirling Road to its frontage. With appropriate design measures, specific siting of units and attention paid to use of materials, the site is considered to offer an appropriate site for housing delivery in Drymen. Options exist in terms of the treatment of public approaches to the site from the east. The vicinity to the north is characterised by open pasture and rectilinear shelterbelt planting. Consequently screening of the site by such measures would be likely to enhance, or at least reflect established landscape character. An alternative approach may be to deliver development of higher architectural standard, reflecting local vernacular character rather than the predominant low density estate housing of other areas of recent growth, so as to present a stronger sense of arrival to the settlement on this important approach route.

The delivery of the site should be dependent on securing relocation of the playing field facility in advance of development commencing, which may be possible in the area off Old Gartmore Road in the vicinity of the school.

**Concept Statement Aspirations;**

- Important entry site to the village. Architectural quality (materials, massing, design, detailing etc) is important to frontage along Stirling road and offers opportunity for landmark gateway to the village.
- Development along the eastern boundary of the site to pay full regard to its role as interface between the settlement and open countryside. To be achieved by combination of careful design, orientation of buildings and structural landscaping.
- Boundary treatments to be carefully controlled along south and east boundaries. Drystone walls or traditional species hedging most likely to be sympathetic to east boundary.
- Vehicular access to be taken from Stuart Close to allow strong design integrity along Stirling Road.
- Development of site to be dependent on relocation of football pitch of equivalent standard and amenity elsewhere within the settlement.

**Secondary Option Site: West of Clarinch Way – Area F.**

To the northern limit of Drymen an area of open pasture extends between Balmaha Road, close to its junction with Ballyconachy Loan and the western end of the 'Clarinch Way estate', late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing development. The southern limits to this large open pasture is bounded by established woodland north of Balmaha Road and



*Land west of Clarinch Way from Balmaha Road*

consequently may offer development potential without causing significant harm to the wider setting of the village, its character and form. Subject to advance

structural planting to its western limits adjacent to Balmaha Road and to the north, as an extension of the immature shelterbelt north of the school, development of the mostly level site could be acceptable in landscape terms within a redefined limit to the settlement, if not being particularly sympathetic to the village's historic form. Access to this site may be problematic because of poor visibility to the Balmaha Road end of the site, and the desirability from a community coherence perspective to link the area with the main settlement from the eastern side of this site. No obvious access point has been integrated within the housing of Clarinch Way and garden or single property loss may need to be considered to accommodate such development.

#### **Concept Statement Aspirations;**

- Delivery of site dependent on access through Clarinch Way estate. Access via Balmaha Road unlikely to be suitable on highway safety grounds or in respect to community linkages and connectivity due to distance and separation from the settlement's centre.
- Advanced structural planting (indigenous species mix with appropriate boundary treatment) to north and west of the site up to Balmaha Road important in respect of wider landscape impacts.

#### **Lower Priority Site: Extension to Football Pitch Site along Stirling Road – Area G.**

Subject to more extensive delivery of structural shelterbelt planting, further development along the northern side of Stirling Road, east of the Football pitch site could support housing delivery, although the impacts in respect to extending village envelope would be more pronounced as would landscape intrusion. This extension should only be considered should other sites be developed and additional housing demand is demonstrated.

#### **Lower Priority Site: North West of Clarinch Way estate – Area H.**

Areas to the immediate north of site x (above) may provide potential for necessary longer term growth to be accommodated within Drymen. This extension to village limits should however be strictly controlled to areas south of the line of the sharp bend in the Balmaha Road just west of the junction with Ballyconachy Loan, and linking to the northern boundary of the school's grounds. Whilst extending the

settlement to open ground and further distorting the original village form, the site, subject to adequate advanced planting could accommodate housing development whilst having only relatively localised landscape impacts.

## **Gartocharn:**

### **Development Opportunity Recommendations.**

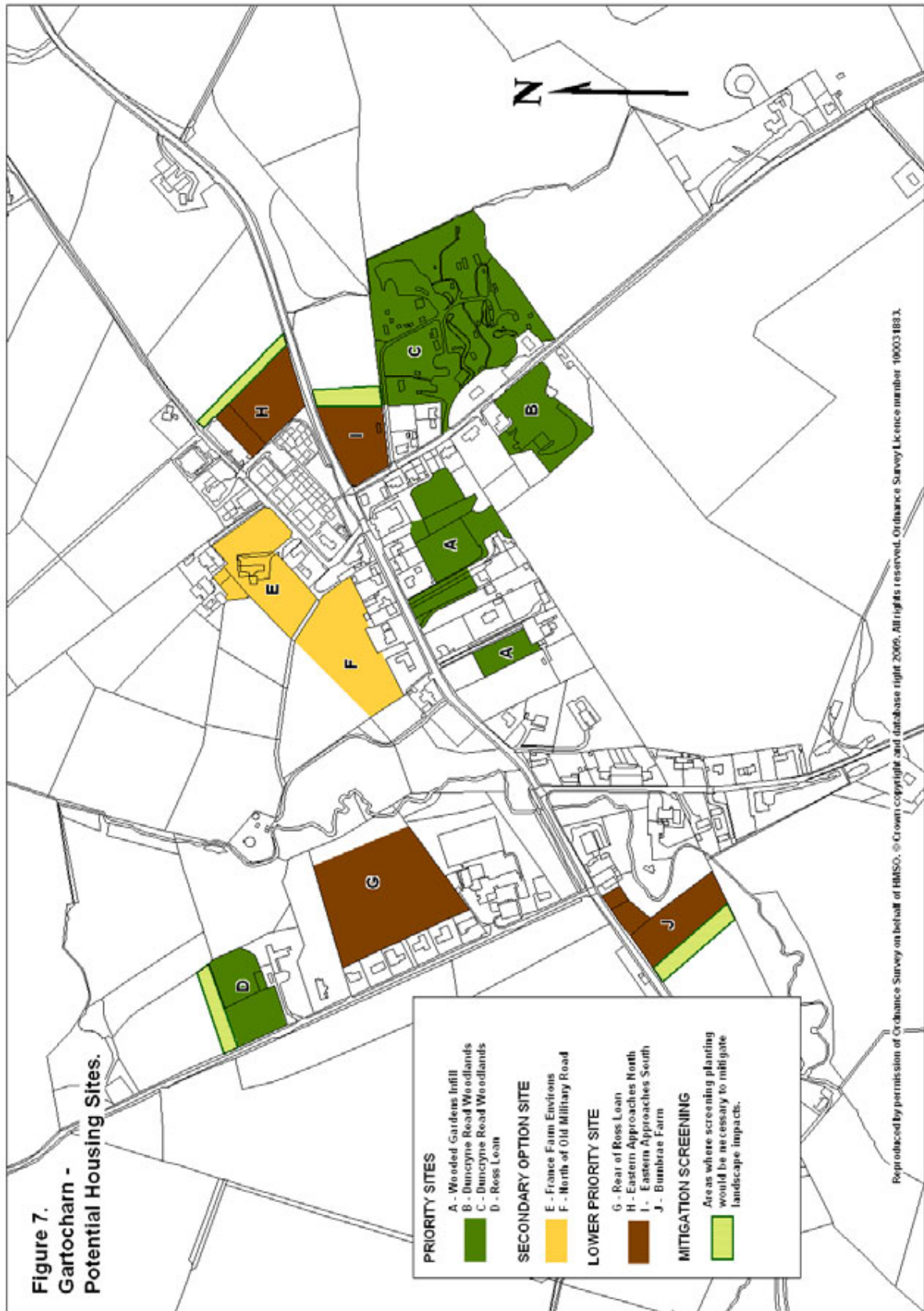
(see **figure 7**).

The village has retained its intimate, low density, linear character because development has predominantly been restricted to roadside and occasional 'backland' development. Buildings are mostly a mix of detached traditional cottages and late 20<sup>th</sup> century designs, often single storey or with dormer windows or are larger villa-type dwellings, usually fronting on to the roads through the village. Anomalies to this general situation are few with the only significant exceptions to this pattern being the small cluster of local authority housing around Church Road at the eastern end of the village, and the prominent large detached house standing within an open paddock on land immediately south of France Farm.

The village form is therefore sensitive to any development which is out of scale or dilutes the predominant layout of existing village character. Its relatively small size means that these defining characteristics may be particularly vulnerable to harm by even relatively modest development proposals. Its important traditional agricultural character and scale would be diluted if housing development unsympathetic to this character and form was allowed. Therefore, in order to retain its intimate setting within the rolling farmlands, development beyond those more sensitive village edges as shown in Figure 7 should be avoided.

Nevertheless the settlement can be seen to possess a degree of capacity for further housing delivery which would work with its existing character, address and ameliorate anomalous development impacts or be contained sufficiently so as to have little impact upon wider landscape setting and village character.

The following sites are presented in order of preference or priority in respect to their overall impact upon landscape capacity and visual impact:



## Infill Opportunities within Gartocharn:

### **Priority Site: - Wooded Gardens, South of the Old Military Road -Area A.**

Gartocharn has some capacity to accommodate limited additional small-scale infill housing in remaining plots and open areas to the south of the main road where the treescape and deep plot size can absorb visual impacts upon the wider landscape. Limited development would not expand beyond the clear established settlement limits in this area, and should not obviously front the main road as its character is notable for its heavily vegetated frontage. Such development should be in keeping with previous infill / backland development density, and therefore the number of units possible to deliver may be small.

Infill development of individual properties, reflecting local vernacular characteristics would be acceptable in landscape terms along Duncryne Road and in more limited sense on School Road where settlement boundaries are not extended and the properties front the road. 'Backland' development would not be appropriate from a village form or landscape perspective.

Infill development is unlikely to provide sufficient capacity to meet the emerging development plan's housing requirements however. The following sites for multiple units are therefore presented:

## **New Housing Sites for Gartocharn**

### **Priority Site: Duncryne Road Woodlands. – Area B.**

At the south-eastern end of the village there are two larger wooded but 'occupied' areas lying either side of the Duncryne Road, the southern boundaries of which define the village edge. Both areas are well screened by dense tree and shrub vegetation. It appears that the western site have been a former minerals site, and is now used as a haulage yard, and consequently has a large level surface with strong treed boundaries presenting very effective screening to it. This site offers clear development potential for a number of properties, dependant on density and housing type needs.

**Priority Site: Duncryne Road Woodlands. – Area C.**

To the north-east of Duncryne Road a similar but larger area of woodland is found which is again occupied by a mix of uses which are obscured from public vantage points, but appears to include a small number of older chalet style dwellings, unmade tracks and storage containers and sheds. The site is still partially wooded within its interior, and again presents a very well screened extensive site within the perceived village limits. Ownership may be split, and assembly therefore problematic, but in landscape terms offers significant potential to accommodate multiple housing units in relation to the likely housing need arising within Gartocharn.

**Duncryne Road Woodlands Concept Statement Aspirations:**

- Maintain well established wooded boundaries.
- Where practicable retain internal tree groups.
- Strengthen weaker boundary areas with managed planting of complimentary indigenous species, particularly on boundaries away from Duncryne Road.
- Avoid development, particularly roof design and materials which would be conspicuous through tree canopy from important vistas from Duncryne Hill.
- Frontage design and distribution of dwellings to Duncryne Road should reflect older development, density and orientation established to its north.
- Opportunity exists within the wider sites for greater variation in development density so as to maximise housing delivery on a site with minimal landscape impacts.
- Apart from on Duncryne Road itself, building lines to properties on outer fringes to the site should be set back so as to maintain the wooded setting and screening function it affords.

**Priority Site: Ross Loan – Area D.**

A small site to the north of the last property along Ross Loan offers a limited development opportunity. Whilst this would extend the settlement envelope, the low prominence of the site in the landscape and the possibility to introduce a limited screening belt of vegetation to its northern flank - which would reflect current character and scale of the immediate setting, suggests a site for housing would be acceptable in landscape terms. The rear boundary of the field is heavily vegetated



by the woodlands of the Aber Burn and is not prominent from any direction apart from approaching from the north. In this direction the site would not extend beyond a distinct dip in the road which helpfully defines an entry point into this more recent element of the village.



### Concept Statement Aspirations:

- Secure significant wooded screen to northern boundary of site to reflect that currently established beyond the existing last property.
- Strong design of frontage development in particular to be secured so as to emphasise the role the site offers as an entry point into the village.
- The site to be retained as a long term limit to further development within Gartocharn.

### Secondary Option Site: France Farm Environs – Areas E.

The area of properties and community buildings east of Church Road encompassing the France Farm environs displays one of the most prominent transitions between the existing settlement and open countryside to be found in Gartocharn. Whilst this is distinctive it is not an attractive characteristic. Building design in the sector is at best mixed, with examples of insensitive and poorly scaled buildings which have detrimental impacts upon both the settlement character and its landscape relationship. A late 20<sup>th</sup> century and particularly prominent 'ranch' type house south of France Farm sits within an open paddock at an incongruous angle to the rest of the village which, with the backdrop of the Church Road local authority housing, further compromises this visually confused transitional area. Whilst the paddock may present a pleasing open space to immediately neighbouring properties, it is not consistent with established village character.

In a similar way to Area F (below) this area presents an opportunity to improve a rather fragmented meeting of pasture and village through development of well designed and sensitively scaled housing which could serve to consolidate village form and hence distinction between the built environment and the open landscape to the north. At the same time however, this would be prominent in the landscape, particularly from points along Ross Loan north of the village. Sensitive redevelopment of the pasture area between France Farm and Church Road (which from a landscape perspective, could ideally see the replacement of the ranch property) could present significant settlement form and landscape benefits.

#### **Concept Statement Aspirations:**

- Seek to consolidate the fragmented relationship between pastures to the north and the village itself through well designed infill between France Farm and Church Road.
- Landscape prominence of the site will demand sensitive use of materials (including roofing) , orientation, scale and layout. Screening of the existing housing on Church Road in wider landscape terms would be beneficial.
- Clear boundary delineation should be achieved through establishing clear limits to development and consistent boundary treatments. Structural planting is unlikely to respect the transition from open pasture to the village, emphasising the need for comprehensive design and landscape fit, particularly on the western and northern boundaries. Some planting to the north eastern boundary, north of the church may be appropriate to link in with the mature trees in the Millennium Hall environs..
- Access to be taken from Church Road.

#### **Secondary Option Site: North of the Old Military Road - area F.**

Land to the north of the properties fronting the main road is characterised by gently dipping small and medium scaled meadows which appear to 'fall away' from the village towards the loch to the north. Various viewpoints, particularly along the elevated Ross Loan to the west make the meeting of pasture and village a prominent one. However the interface between the village and its landscape setting is somewhat piecemeal and presents a rather fragmented boundary between the two, partly caused by subdivision of traditional meadow boundaries by

'stake and ribbon' fencing, immature tree planting and by irregular rear domestic boundaries and building designs. This fragmentation is not however particularly important in respect to village form, character or its landscape setting, a situation exacerbated when seen in conjunction with the area to its east around France Farm (above).



The proximity of the area to the village centre and the opportunity to present a better designed interface between landscape and village suggests the site offers development opportunity, but one which would inevitably be prominent – if not harmful, in the wider landscape setting. Access can be easily achieved via Church Road. Development here would however dilute the generally linear settlement form of Gartocharn.

#### **Concept Statement Aspirations:**

- Seek to consolidate the fragmented relationship between pastures to the north and the village itself through well designed infill to the rear of properties on the Old Military Road between the corner of Church Road and the hedged boundary which marks the track to the water treatment works to the north.
- Landscape prominence of the site will demand sensitive use of materials (including roofing materials) , orientation, scale and layout.
- Clear boundary delineation should be achieved through establishing clear limits to development and consistent boundary treatments. Structural

planting is unlikely to respect the transition from open pasture to the village, emphasising the need for comprehensive design and landscape fit.

- Control over ancillary development within gardens to the north
- Access to be taken from the corner of Church Road.

**Lower Priority Site: Rear of Ross Loan – Area G.**

An open field on sloping ground stands to the rear of the single line of properties on Ross Loan. This site which would be accessible from a gap in housing along the lane or via a new shared drive arrangement at the school offers some development potential. However whilst offering a site within the perceived confines of the village, and one which has a relatively significant capacity within a discrete area, the site is visible from several locations within and out with the village, and development could be intermittently prominent. To mitigate the visual impact of the site, development would need to be delivered to high design standards. The site would have a significant impact upon the existing eastern aspects from existing properties on Ross Loan.

**Lower Priority Site: Eastern Approaches North – Area H.**

On approaching Gartocharn from the east along the A811, two sites offer accessible options for development although both would present significant impacts upon current extent and character. To the northern side of the road is an open meadow which abuts the sheltered housing of Church Road area. The field is relatively well screened from the highway by well established hedgerow, and apart from views from the elevated Duncryne, would not be particularly harmful to village form. However, access to the main road to reflect the character of the village would unlikely to be acceptable because of highway safety due to a crest and bend in the road to the immediate east. Access from the rear on Church Road may be feasible, but any development should nevertheless front the main road for character reasons.

Possible benefits of the site would be to present a better designed built environment on the important entry to the settlement in comparison to the current situation, and to soften the impact of the sheltered housing area from its currently exposed situation.

**Lower Priority Site: Eastern Approaches South – Area I.**

Opposite site H, along the main road and abutting the initial section of Duncryne Road is the community recreation ground consisting of football pitch and children's play area. This rectangular parcel of open space lies slightly lower than the road and is generally flat. This would offer very similar opportunities and access constraints from a townscape perspective to the opposite side of the main road. It would however introduce development beyond the junction with Duncryne Road for the first time, and of course require the relocation of the recreation ground. In order to secure a relatively level area, such a site would probably mean relocation to the north of main road, and east of the Church Road corner, hence suggesting a mutually exclusive relationship in respect to both site's potential for housing development.

**Lower Priority Site: Burnbrae Farm – Area J.**

Opposite the junction of the main road and Ross Loan stands Burnbrae Farm. This appears to remain as a working farm. It is currently the first building to the south of main road on approach from Balloch, and sits in a marked dip on the upper banks of the burn. To the west of the farmhouse an area of roadside hardstanding is used for silage sack storage which does not enhance that village approach experience. Before the farm buildings is a roadside meadow, strongly delineated to the rear by woodland and fronted by a strong hedgeline. The land falls slightly away from the roadside and is consequently relatively well screened from approaching view. Development of the hardstanding area and the eastern reaches of the meadow may be possible with relatively constrained landscape impacts and built environment benefits if good design is secured, although development which 'returns' to the rear of the field would dilute overall village form integrity. It would also introduce development to the west of the junction with Ross Loan which currently delineates the western extent of the village, even though development along it is not particularly distinctive.

## 6. Glossary

### Definition of terms used within this report:

<b>Analysis (landscape)</b>	<b>The process of breaking the landscape down into its component parts to understand how it is made up.</b>
<b>Compensation</b>	The measures taken to offset or compensate for residual adverse effects that cannot be mitigated, or for which mitigation cannot entirely eliminate adverse effects.
<b>Element</b>	A component part of the landscape (for example, roads, hedges, woods).
<b>Enhancement</b>	Landscape improvement through restoration, reconstruction or creation.
<b>Field Pattern</b>	The pattern of hedges and walls that define fields in farmed landscapes.
<b>Heritage</b>	Historic or cultural associations.
<b>Landform</b>	Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land.
<b>Landscape</b>	An area, as perceived by people, where character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors.
<b>Landscape capacity</b>	The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.
<b>Landscape character</b>	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetations, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.
<b>Landscape quality (or condition)</b>	Is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of

repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.

**Landscape sensitivity**

The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type with unacceptable adverse effects on its character.

**Landscape value**

The relative value or importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.

**Visual amenity**

The value of a particular area or view in terms of what is seen.

**Visual envelope**

Extent of potential visibility to or from a specific area or feature.

**Zone of visual influence**

Area within which a proposed development may have an influence on visual amenity.

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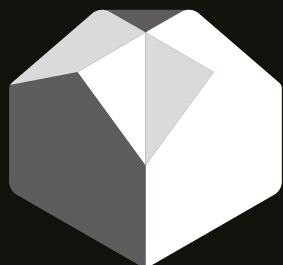
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