



Gourdon



Built Heritage Appraisal

July 2012



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The historic centre of the east coast fishing village of Gourdon had been proposed as a conservation area for some time and was recently the subject of a conservation area appraisal by Aberdeenshire Council.

Following extensive consultation and consideration it was decided that the area did not warrant designation as a conservation area. However, the appraisal did identify special features and interest in respect of the historical development and association of the village. The village illustrates the very important relationship between the built environment, the topography and the coast.

The community value their heritage and wish to protect the singular identity of the village. Therefore it was agreed and noted by the Area Committee at their meeting on 5 June 2012 that the appraisal document should be used as planning advice to inform and guide future development and environmental improvements in Gourdon. The document has been amended to reflect the decision not to designate any part of the village as a conservation area. However it is hoped that it will still provide the necessary guidance to encourage sympathetic development and redevelopment in the area.

1.2 Historical Significance and Key Features

Although recent developments have altered the townscape of Gourdon, the essential character of the old fishing and trading settlement remains. Original street patterns and traditional building forms and materials survive and land use and activity at the Harbour continue to reflect the village's long association with the sea. Physical location and topography have helped to shape the evolution of the village and the interest and investment of historical figures such as the local Laird have also played a part.

The Gourdon Built Heritage Appraisal identifies the following as essential character elements of the village which contribute to the sense of place and appearance of the area:-

- Significant historic buildings and features.
- Original streets and townscape.
- Plot patterns.
- Open spaces and their relationship with the buildings and topography.
- Particular views and vistas.
- Utilitarian character of the commercial core.

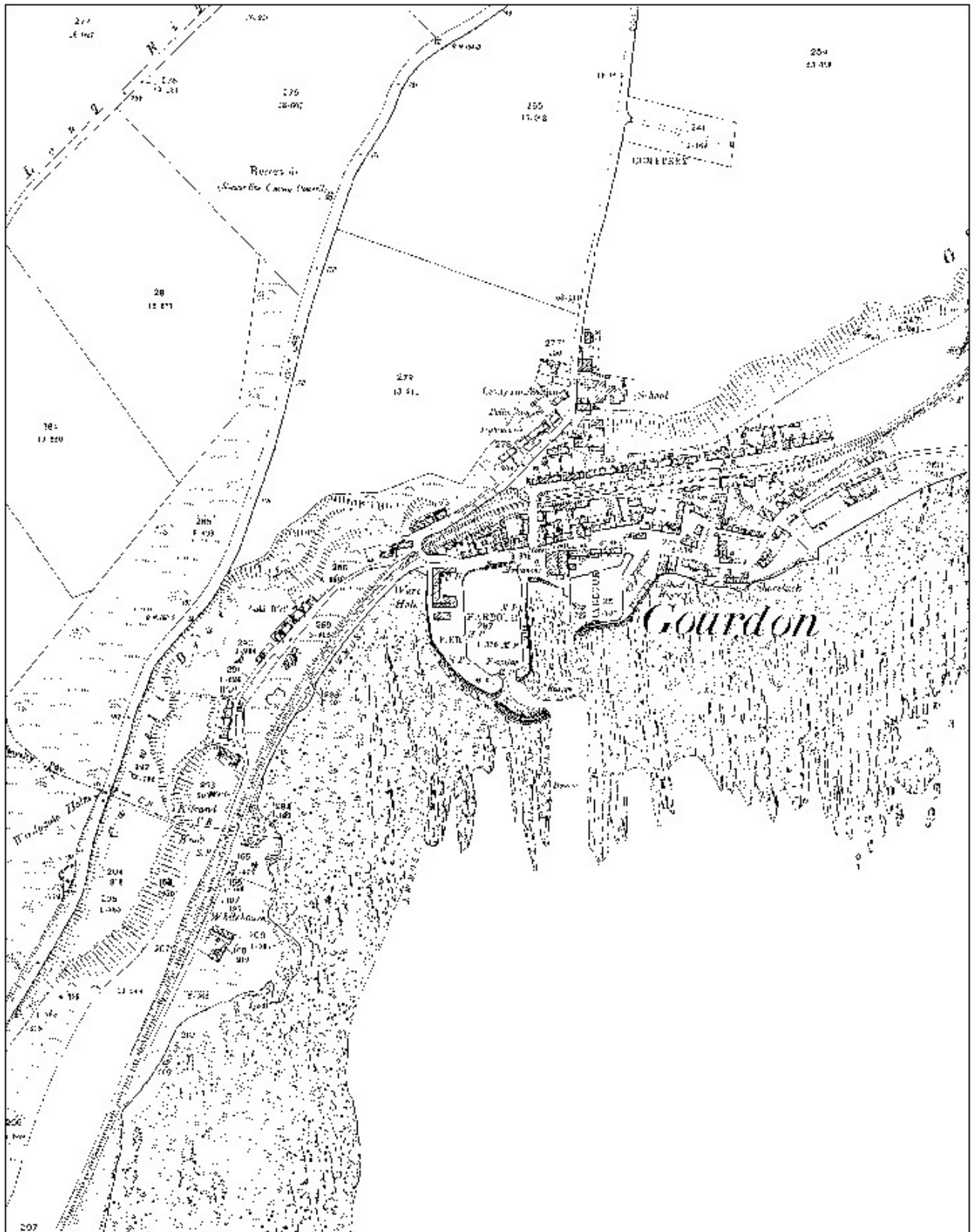
1.3 Planning Advice

Adherence to a number of general principles would support the retention of these essential elements.

- Recognition of and adherence to the vernacular style. In particular steep roof pitches, the scale and symmetry of buildings and the location and design of windows and doors particularly on main elevations and street frontages.
- Retention of historic buildings and features of note. Wherever possible older traditional buildings and traditional features such as chimneys and stone boundary walls should be retained, refurbished or rebuilt.
- Use of traditional materials, such as slate and corrugated iron for roofs and wet harl and timber for walls. This is particularly relevant for older properties but also for new build where appropriate. Use of modern materials such as plastic or concrete may be acceptable provided the scale, design and finish of the building or feature is sympathetic.
- Retention of historic street patterns and traditional street frontages and recognition and expression of the historic pattern of development. Variable building heights, irregular plots and high densities characterise the central core of the village. The historic relationship between buildings and spaces as indicated by the traditional drying greens to the front of the coastal cottages and the steep open slopes to the rear is also important and should be recognised and retained and/or reflected in any proposed developments. Particular views and vistas through the village are also important elements in the townscape.
- Reinforcement of the simple utilitarian character and historic association of the commercial heart of the village around the Harbour in building design and detail.
- Protection and enhancement of existing public parks and open spaces. Sympathetic development and redevelopment of public areas and features such as street surfaces, lighting and street furniture.

These principles are applicable to the whole of the settlement. However they are particularly relevant to the historic core of the village. This area, is centred around the Harbour and includes the areas of nineteenth century expansion shown on old maps.

The support of the community in the use of these general principles should help ensure that Development Plan Policies and Development Management decisions are consistently applied to protect and enhance Gourdon's distinct and valuable built heritage and that any proposed works or projects, whatever the scale, will not detract from the area's historic character and unique identity.



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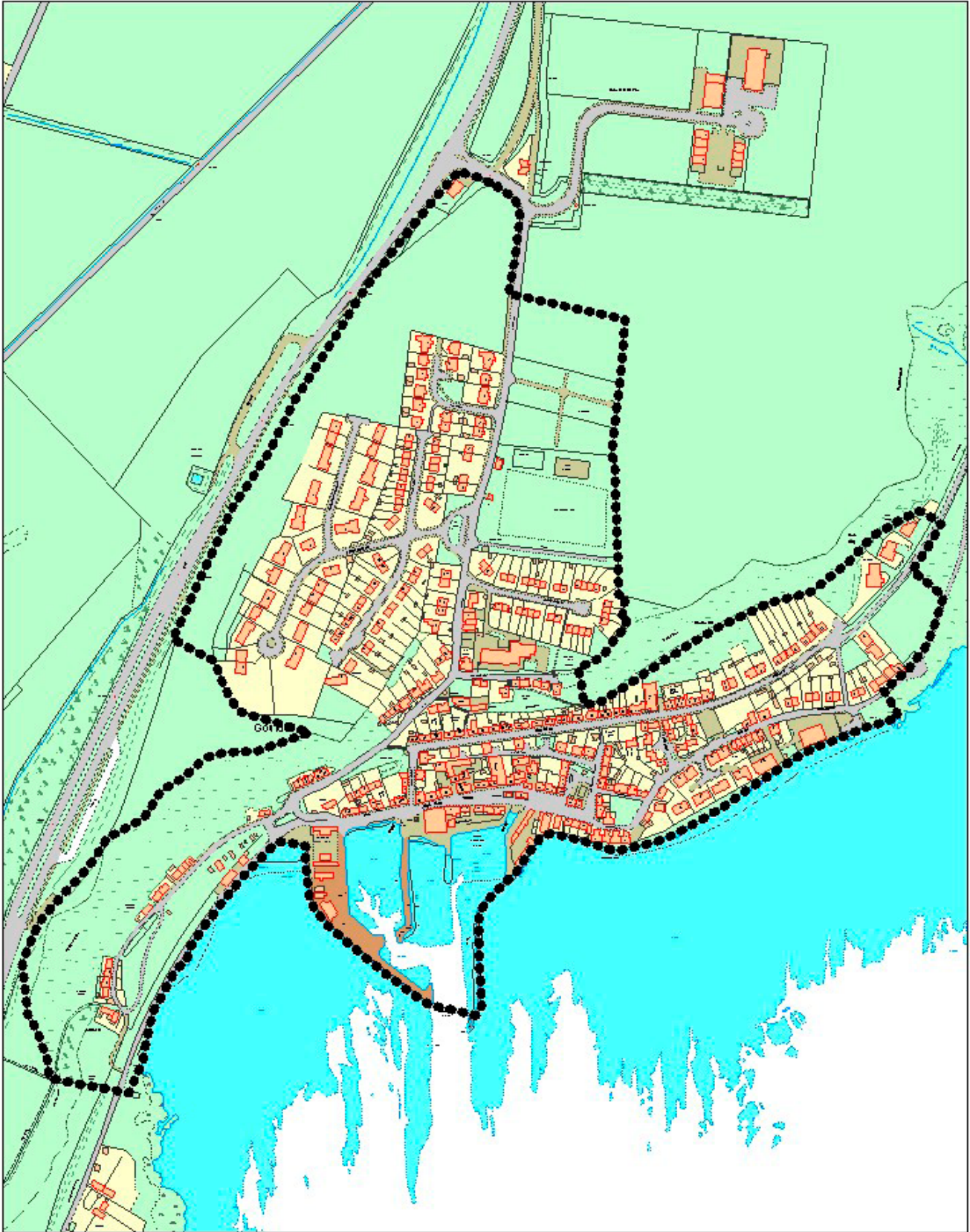
Aberdeenshire Council

Scale - 1:5000

E2 Kincardine 1888-1915

Historic Gourdon





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ALDP 2012 Settlement Boundaries

Gourdon

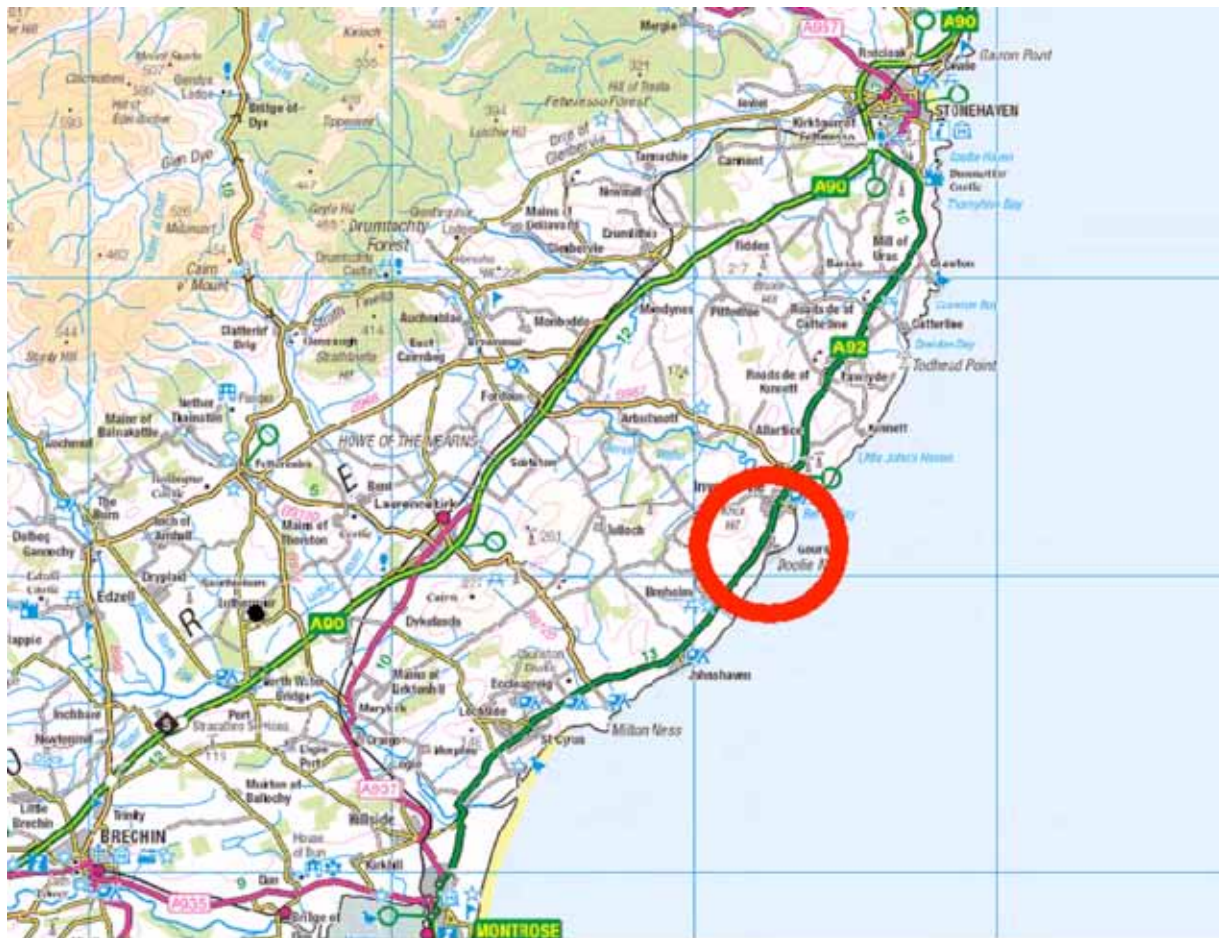


2.0 LOCATION

2.1 Geographical Context

The village of Gourdon is located on the north east coast of Scotland, within Kincardine and Mearns, the most southerly of the six administrative areas of Aberdeenshire. It lies within the Parish of Bervie, 1.5 km to the south of the Royal Burgh of Inverbervie.

An historic sea port and fishing village, the settlement grew up on limited flat ground around a natural Harbour. Inland a single access road rises up the steep coastal slope to the A92. This main arterial route links the village to the main towns and villages to the north and south and to its agricultural hinterland.



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3.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Early History

The origins of the village itself are uncertain although the area surrounding it has been inhabited for a very long time and is rich in archaeological remains. Historical records and accounts indicate that the development of the present village was well under way in the sixteenth century when there appears to have been an export trade in wool, hides, salmon and saltfish.

The early history and growth of the village appears to have been closely linked to the investment by the local Lairds of Hallgreen and Arbuthnott.

3.2 18th Century

During the eighteenth century both fishing and trade continued to expand. Coal and lime imports began in the middle of the century as local peat mosses were exhausted and farmers began to improve their land.

However little is known about the physical appearance of the village at this time. On early maps Gourdon is depicted as a small scattered village. There is one main street, William Street (then known as Shorehead), and various houses scattered on the side of the Brae and extending northwards to where Mowatt's Lane is today. There were other buildings in the village, including stores or 'victual houses' most of which belonged to one or other of the Lairds. The houses were small and probably built of stone. There were no made up roads. The road at the top of the Harbour was a shelving beach on which boats were drawn up. Middens were found outside each door. Once a year they were sold to the local farmers as manure. A long stagnant strip of water, referred to as the 'Slough of Despond', covered an area from the foot of Bridge Street to Clover Yard.

An old account of 1792 mentions that the village consisted of 42 houses along with stables barns and granaries. The total population was 188.

3.3 19th Century

During the nineteenth century Gourdon experienced significant growth with associated economic and social change. Much of the development was again associated with a local laird, James Farquhar, MP and Lord of the Admiralty, who purchased Hallgreen Estate in 1806. The development of trade was also aided by the construction of the present A92 in about 1820. The old turnpike road, the Lang Rig, subsequently fell into disuse.

The main Harbour was built around 1819 to a design by Thomas Telford and was extended in 1842. The Guppy Harbour to the east was added in 1859. Large granaries and warehouses were built adjacent to the Harbour. A herring fishing station opened in 1830 and resulted in a large number of vessels from other ports visiting the Harbour and in the development of many occupations engaged in the herring industry. Other developments included a clay pit and a brick and tile works in 1844.

Growth in trade continued with the arrival of the Montrose to Bervie railway in 1865. The population grew rapidly.

Year	Population
1792	188
1821	225
1831	238
1861	497
1871	714
1881	919
1891	919
1891	1091
1901	1197

As a result of this rapid expansion, a large numbers of buildings were erected. Many of these buildings were to house fishermen and workers, others to provide facilities for the people. The first elementary school was opened in the 1840s. It occupied one of the ground floor rooms of the first property on Queen Street.

A new school was built on the site of the existing school building in 1873. The site for the Mission Hall was gifted in 1867 and for the public hall in 1887.

In 1878 the Lifeboat station was established and in 1890 the surf boat 'Maggie Law' was built and equipped by public subscription.

However despite these facilities and developments, rapid growth brought problems. Overcrowding was an issue. According to the census in 1881 some 44 people were living in 4 houses in the Lang Close.



Garden's Map of Kincardineshire 1774

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Ordnance survey c1864 1st edition 6 inch to the mile
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3.4 20th Century

Further expansion and development occurred in the early part of the twentieth century. In 1908 the Selbie Works were erected and continued in operation until 1997, by which time it had become the last working flax spinning mill on mainland Britain.

Kincardine County Council attempted to tackle some of the physical problems resulting from over crowding and the rapid expansion of the population over previous decades. The War Memorial was dedicated in 1921, and in 1926 ex Provost DC Boath of Inverbervie gifted the Boath Park. The original school was replaced following a fire in 1955 and in 1959 a new breakwater was erected at the Harbour entrance.

The later part of the 20th century witnessed a rapid decline in the fishing industry in Gourdon. Although still busy and successful in the 1960s, employing 70-80 fishermen in a fleet of over 20 full time boats, by 1993 only about a dozen boats fished from the Harbour. Now only a handful of fishermen operate from Gourdon, the majority part time. The lifeboat station was closed in 1969.

The oil boom in the North Sea has brought some developments to the village. Some cottages and other buildings have been bought and modernised and new executive style houses have been built at either end of the village and adjacent to the A92. Some fishing survives and buildings and sheds located around the Harbour and in the new industrial estate to the north provide premises for small businesses. However the village has become predominantly a commuter settlement for Aberdeen and the larger towns of the north east.

4.0 Townscape Analysis

4.1 Setting and Topography

The village has an attractive setting derived from its coastal location. It commands impressive views out to sea although topography restricts views of the Harbour and the historic heart of the village from the higher ground. Topography also forms a physical barrier between the historic village and neighbouring land and settlements.

The historic heart of the village, the Harbour and the land immediately surrounding it, lie at the base of a steep slope which is characteristic of this part of the east coast, between the estuaries of the Rivers Bervie to the North and the North Esk to the south. Around the Harbour the flat land is formed by a raised shingle beach around 100m wide. Inland the ground rises steeply up the Caldwell and Gourdon Braes to the wide tract of gently undulating land which characterises much of the Mearns coastal strip.



4.2 Gateways

The three gateways into the village reflect its historical development although their form and function may have changed over time. These gateways and the development associated with them have shaped the historic character of the village and provide the context within which its special interest can be considered.

The Harbour

From its early beginnings the Harbour has been extended and improved. Although no longer a major trade or fishing port it continues to operate as a working Harbour for both fishing and pleasure craft.



4.3 Brae Road

The main and only route for vehicular traffic into the village is Brae Road. Apart from being surfaced in tarmac this road has changed little over the centuries. It follows the contours down the steep slope of the coastal braes, passing between more recent extensions of the village into its historical core and the Harbour.



The Former Railway Line

The old branch line from Montrose to Inverbervie was finally closed to goods traffic in the 1960s. The station and track have been removed and much of the area occupied by the railway and associated buildings and infrastructure has been infilled. However the line of the former railway now forms part of a coastal path. It provides an attractive non-motorised route linking the village with Inverbervie to the north and Johnshaven and beyond to the south. The route is well used by local residents and provides an important tourist and visitor attraction.

Boundaries and Edges

The historic village is centred on the Harbour and the original streets and properties, which grew up during the 18th and 19th centuries. It encompasses the areas of 20th century infill and redevelopment within this historic core.

To the south the boundary of the old settlement follows the Harbour piers and the coast. The steep banks of Caldwell Braes form an important element in the landscape and strong defining feature in the character of the area.

To the north the historic settlement follows the line of the original village as it extends up Brae Road. It excludes the modern extensions to the village on upper Brae Road.

To the east the boundary of the original settlement is less clearly defined although it largely correlates with the age of buildings and the gradual expansion of the settlement eastwards.

4.4 Street Pattern

The street pattern in the village clearly reflects the topography and evolution of the village.

The main road into the village, Brae Road and the streets around the Harbour and along the shore such as William Street, East End and West Brae follow the natural contours and form of the land. The main streets tend to be wide perhaps because of the historic requirements for trade and movement. However back lanes and minor streets are narrower and display a more erratic, irregular pattern.

4.5 Plot Pattern

The historic core of the village is mostly a dense grain of rows and terraces. Plot sizes tend to be small, restricted in size by the high density of building and by the limited flat land and steep coastal slopes. Many of the older properties front onto the street and garden ground and space to the rear, where they exist, tend to be small and shared. At the south western end of the village, on West Bay, dwellings still use the traditional shared drying greens to the front of the properties.

Later nineteenth century expansion and modern infill tend to have more individual, relatively larger plots, some with gardens to the front and to the rear, in line with modern expectations and standards. This variance in plot size and pattern is yet another reflection of the evolution of the settlement.



4.6 Open Space

The dense urban form in the heart of the village contrasts sharply with the openness of the Harbour, the coast and the countryside beyond.

There are playing fields and play parks on Brae Road and at the eastern end of the village, but no formal public open spaces or parks within the historic core. Some pockets of open ground exist, eg the area surrounding the electricity substation at the top of Bridge Street. However, for the most part open space within the area is provided by the coastal slopes and the sea front, expansive spaces, which contribute significantly to the character of the area.

The steep slopes of the coastal braes, although not suitable or generally accessible for use by the public, define the settlement boundary. They enclose the historic heart of the village and form a prominent and open backdrop of rough grass and scrub.

At the foot of the coastal slopes beyond the Harbour and the village centre, the raised beaches above the shoreline allow the public easy access to the coastal path along the route of the former railway and to the adjacent pebbled beach.

Around the Harbour the expansive width of the roadway and piers with their seating and flower tubs encourage informal activity. The historic quayside and the sea views provide an attractive outlook.

4.7 Landscape and Trees

The coastal location, steep slopes and limited garden ground discourage the establishment of any trees or woodland. Rough grass along the shore and on the surrounding braes dominates the landscape. Some scrubby trees do exist on the slopes and there are a number of small trees and shrubs within the pocket of landscaping around the sub station at the top of Bridge Street. A few trees and taller shrubs can also be seen within the gardens of properties on Brae Road and Queen Street. Although there are no particularly good specimens, the trees that do exist achieve greater importance due to their scarcity value.

Around the Harbour opportunist wild flowers and plants can be found in loose cracks and crevasses along the Harbour wall and track sides and the formal tubs located on the Harbour add some colour and interest to what is largely a hard landscape.

4.8 Circulation and Permeability

The Harbour area retains its status as the main focus for access in the village. All the streets converge on to William Street at the Harbour or to the foot of Brae Road just to the west. The wide streets around the Harbour allow for shared pedestrian and vehicular traffic although lack of physical segregation around the Harbour could result in some conflict.

Elsewhere on-street parking, bends and corners restrict traffic circulation. Although the majority of streets have pavements, there are some parts of the area, where narrower streets and pavements, combined with poor visibility, impede movement, for example on Shoretack. Concerns regarding bus turning and access have led to the introduction of waiting restrictions in Clover Yard.

Pedestrians and non motorised users, enjoy a greater degree of flexibility of movement. Roads and narrow lanes allow access through parts of the village and a number of stepped routes link Queen Street to Bank Street and Brae Road. Paths provide access along the coast.

Views

The topography and layout of the settlement does not allow for many long distance views into the historic core. From the Harbour there are lovely vistas out to sea and inland across the Harbour to William Street and up the Braes. However, within the residential streets away from the Harbour, views of the sea are restricted by the buildings located close to the Harbour with only occasional glimpses through lanes and gap sites. From Brae Road and along the coast line, wonderful sea views are apparent. The openness and exposure at the Harbour and on the coast contrasts starkly with the sense of enclosure and intimacy within the heart of the village.

With the exception of the Harbour itself, the coastal slopes and sea views, there are no outstanding or overbearing landmarks within the village. However there are a number of buildings which catch the eye from certain vantage points and which although not significant in terms of scale are visually prominent and of interest. The Beacon on Brae Road and the Lifeboat Museum on William Street are two notable examples.



Activities and Uses

Although not now operating as a major port, fishing vessels still land their catch in Gourdon. Shellfish, including lobster and crabs are brought ashore by local full-time and part time fishermen. At the Harbour, local small businesses process fish and associated produce for sale there and in local towns and villages. Other businesses exist, including joiners workshop, bar and restaurants. The Harbour is also used by pleasure craft, with several moorings and other occasional visitors.

There is still quite a lot of activity from fishing related and other small businesses and from visitors around the Harbour during the day. However the village is now predominantly residential reflecting the transformation of the village during the latter half of the 20th century into a commuter village. Therefore the highest volume of traffic occurs during peak hours.

Essential services exist for residents. There is a shop with post office, a primary school and other amenities. The school together with the Mission hall and the Public Hall remain the focus for community activities. However the proximity of Inverbervie to the north limits the need for other services.

Architectural Character

The majority of buildings within the historic area date from the 19th century. Individually few are of particular merit and many have been altered or extended without due regard to original architectural character. However when viewed within the streetscape, the layout, scale, form and design of the buildings and their interrelationships embody the special interest of the area and contribute positively to its overall character and appearance. Older buildings retain the simplicity and symmetry of their original architectural style reflecting the economic and social background to their construction.

4.12 Buildings of Merit

Whilst the area currently contains no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments, the Harbour and a few of the buildings and structures associated with it are noted in Aberdeenshire Council's Sites and Monuments Record and included in RCAHM's records. It is important to stress that it is the combined effect of all the buildings in the streetscape which contribute to its special interest.

Individual and groups of buildings and structures worthy of note and protection include:-

- Harbour walls and piers
- Triple Gable Fish House
- Farquhar Monument
- Former Lifeboat Station
- Lifeboat Museum (the former Coastguard Apparatus Shed)
- Beacon (circular pillar housing the upper Leading Light)
- Mission Hall
- Public Hall



Building Materials

The traditional materials found in the conservation area include:-

- Sandstone
- Slate
- Corrugated Iron
- Cast iron
- Timber
- Wrought iron
- Harl render
- Traditional Brick
- Clay

Modern materials are also found

- UPVC
- Aluminium
- Modern Brick
- Artificial stone
- Concrete
- Felt
- Asbestos
- Dry Dash

4.14 Townscape Detail

Although some details in the townscape have changed with recent alterations and developments, the core character and the essence of the traditional fishing and trading port remain. Simple vernacular principles are still evident although much of the detail has gone. Where they remain, the presence of the following traditional features, add significantly to the character of the area:-

Steep roof pitches and slate roofs

Metal roof lights.

Chimneys stacks and skewes (the parapets at the gable end of a pitched roof).

Sash and case sliding windows

Panel doors

Stone boundary walls

Cast iron railings

Dormer windows

Stone outhouses and stores.



4.15 Public Realm

Roads are surfaced with tarmacadam and footpaths in the village are predominantly surfaced with concrete paving slabs, although other materials are used including tarmacadam and concrete setts. The condition varies. At the Harbour the road surface has been patched and replaced over time. To the west of the Harbour Bar an informal car park accommodates recycling bins. Overall the visual effect is not good.

There are a variety of boundary treatments. Rubble stone boundary walls of varying heights are important features of the historic landscape. However, many have been completely or partly demolished badly repaired or replaced with timber or other materials. On Brae Road metal barrier safety fencing has been erected on some downhill stretches of the steep slope. A few cast iron railings survive.

Street lighting and street furniture in the area are modern and not in keeping with the historic character. Ordinary standard lighting columns are used and signs are also standard.

There is very little amenity planting although planters around the Harbour add interest. Seating is also limited to the Harbour where a few wooden benches provide opportunity for visitors and residents to rest and enjoy the setting. The public realm is enhanced by the existence of some public structures, notably the barometer memorial and the beacon. It could be further enhanced by public art works and additional planting.



4.16 Condition

Within the majority of the area the overall condition is fair. Some buildings and areas are well maintained but there are some areas and buildings where lack of maintenance and neglect, have had a negative impact on the amenity and appearance of the area.

5.0 Character Assessment

5.1 Key Features

The historical and architectural interest of the historic fishing village is largely derived from its historic setting. The approaches to the Harbour, the Harbour itself and the various buildings and spaces around it together help to define its special character.

Like many coastal villages in the North East, Gourdon was essentially a working village. Original buildings, although attractive in terms of their form and material finishes are rather plain and unpretentious, lacking embellishments. Building density is relatively high and there is a lack of parkland and amenity ground. The surroundings are also rather stark with few trees.

There are two distinct character zones evident within the historic area; the commercial area of the Harbour and its immediate hinterland and the predominantly residential streets which surround it.

The Harbour

In the Harbour area the traditional uses and occupations at the historic heart of the village can still be seen. Commercial land and buildings still dominate, although vacant areas and newer residential replacement and infill have altered the townscape somewhat. Commercial buildings range from larger industrial warehouses to small fish houses reflecting historical uses and economic development.



The main Harbour walls and remaining 19th century buildings located on its eastern side are not particularly large or imposing. However, constructed of stone with strong clean lines, they convey a solid utilitarian style clearly reflecting their historic function and value. The breakwaters and walls of the 'Gutty' Harbour to the east have collapsed, the resulting 'pile of stones' giving this part of the area a sense of abandonment and neglect. This sense of abandonment to some extent is reflected in other buildings and premises located along the eastern seaboard from the Harbour. Older

vacant and underused properties are interspersed with modern houses and flatted developments. The scale and variety of architecture and building style is as varied as the age and quality of the buildings.

To the west of the main Harbour a sporadic assortment of new buildings and sheds occupy the area. Here there is no particular style or pattern to the plots or buildings.

The Residential Areas

The majority of the buildings within the residential area are 19th century and of stone and slate construction. Most of the properties are terraced and built onto the footpath. Housing was developed speculatively as individual and pairs of plots. This explains the variety of scale which adds considerably to the quality of the street. There is a mix of single, two and two and a half storey properties. The majority of buildings would have been small and humble in origin, lacking basic amenities. Many of them have since been altered and extended to make them fit for habitation and 20th century living.

Building density is relatively high and predominantly it is the main frontages which face onto the sea. This perhaps relates to the limited space available and the need to house as many workers and families as possible during the rapid expansion of the village in the 19th century. Some of the two and two and a half storey flatted properties built to house a large number of workers and their families during the expansion of the village have been converted to single houses. Others remain as flats.

Architectural style is simple and understated with little decorative detail or carvings. However it is quintessentially 19th century with smooth facades housing symmetrically positioned and traditionally proportioned windows and door openings. Most of the original panel doors and sliding sash and case windows have been replaced and altered. Traditional steep roof pitches survive along with many regular brick chimneys with clay pots. Most properties have dormer windows although many of these are more recent, less attractive additions.

Within the residential areas, few of the original non-residential buildings remain and most have been converted, eg the post office and the police station. These buildings are modest in scale and type. On Brae Road and West Bay the housing shows a similar form. However, here the restricted plots front onto traditional drying greens which still retain the shared use and the character of the past.



5.2 Key Challenges

The utilitarian character and the simplicity of the original architectural detailing and materials help to define the appearance of the historic area. Reduction in the number of commercial enterprises, disrepair, demolition and ad hoc rebuild could erode the distinctive character and appearance of the commercial core of the area around the Harbour.

With the evolution of the village into a commuter settlement, there is a danger that the character of the historic village will be changed by gradual additions and alterations more appropriate to a conventional modern settlement.

Positive Buildings and Areas

These are considered to be buildings or areas which contribute positively to the character of the historic area and which are considered desirable to retain and enhance.

The Harbour and piers, which provide the focus for the historical development of the village.

On the eastern side of the main Harbour, the solid sandstone building, a fish shed and the barometer memorial erected in memory of the Laird's son are of particular note.

William Street, where the original street pattern and the architectural style of buildings remains although most of the original houses have been somewhat altered. In the centre of the street, separating two squares is the coastguard's building. This building, now home to the local Lifeboat Museum, is unique and special to the area.

West Bay and the approach into the village from the west. Here a straggle of traditional buildings, some of which are virtually unspoilt lie under the grassy cliffs of the Cauldwell Braes which form an imposing backdrop to the village. These properties look across garden and wasteland occupied by a collection of huts and garages. The line of the former railway track skirts the shore above the low sea wall.

Brae Road, where groups of traditional cottages survive. On the south side, a main feature on the street is the Beacon and the views down to the Harbour and out to sea. The Mission Hall is tucked down below the road virtually out of site. Stone steps lead down to Queen Street and Bridge Street.

Queen Street, which follows the line of the railway through the town. A long very straight row of stone, some largely unaltered houses front the street. The variety in size and height of the buildings is distinct. Some are substantial two and a half floor buildings, some small cottages. The Public Hall is located towards the eastern end. To the south of the street a few of the original buildings and spaces associated with the railway remain.

Bridge Street (formally New Street), Arbuthnott Street and Mowatt Lane also retain their original pattern and architectural style, reflecting the historic development of the village. Arbuthnott Street is occupied by larger, rather more imposing houses although they have been completely gutted and the original features largely replaced.

East End where some of the buildings and land associated with the former Selbie Works and the railway survive.

Negative Features

Regrettably the extent of loss, intrusion and damage to the historic fabric of the area is significant. Negative buildings and features which detract from the character and appearance of the historic village include:-

Loss of traditional streetscape and features such as street surfaces, railings and walls;

Loss of architectural details (e.g. original sash and case windows, doors and other joinery) and loss of original materials (e.g. harling, slate roofing, stone and iron work).

Insensitive infill and modern developments especially twentieth century box dormers and large flat roofed garages which are out of scale and character with the historic properties;

Vacant buildings and sites resulting from loss of traditional activities and occupations.

Traffic and prominent car parking especially along William Street which diminishes the overall amenity of the area especially during peak traffic periods.

Unsympathetic signs.

Lack of maintenance in some parts of the area particularly of older commercial buildings around the Harbour and the former Selbie Works.

5.5 Sensitivity Analysis and Buildings at Risk

Within the historic area gap sites and open spaces can be sensitive to potential development. It is as important to protect the historical links and inter-relationship between the buildings and the open spaces between them and surrounding them as it is to protect the character of the buildings and the streetscape.

There are no buildings currently listed on the Scottish Civic Trust's Buildings at Risk Register. However some traditional buildings, which remain unaltered, although in poor condition, contribute significantly to the character of the area, for example Thornbush, 22 East End. Some, for example Straitbraes, are ruinous. If possible, these buildings, which are vulnerable and at risk of demolition, should be retained and refurbished.

5.6 Assessment of Significance

The townscape of Gourdon has altered in recent years with developments both within and outwith the historic core of the village. However at its heart, the essence of the old fishing and trading settlement still exists. Simple vernacular features can still be found and the activity in and around the Harbour area continues to reflect its historical importance to the area and its close relationship with the sea. The restrictions and advantages imposed by topography and the coastal location which influenced its evolution are also still clearly evident in the layout and character of the area. Of special note is the role that people have played in the village's development and the physical evidence that remains of their involvement. Whether it is individuals such as the local Laird and a famous engineer or the sheer numbers of folk who lived and worked there, the memorials, structures, buildings and dwellings are a testament to their existence and the special interest of the area.

6.0 MANAGEMENT

6.1 Opportunities for Preservation and Enhancement

The application of planning policies through Development Management and the provision of information and advice to encourage sympathetic repair and maintenance are important tools in the preservation of the area's unique character. With respect to the historic village of Gourdon the following opportunities have been identified:-

Work in the Public Realm

Review the design and materials used in paving and streets; identify principles for public space design to provide co-ordinated, safe and enjoyable features appropriate to the surroundings.

An innovative approach to lighting and the use of public art could further enhance the amenity of the area.

Edges and Gateways

Preserve the open character and habitats of the coastal braes and paths.

Promote links to the Harbour and the sea, raising historical and cultural awareness and improving economic vitality.

Repair and Renewal

Encourage appropriate and sympathetic improvements and/or redevelopment of gap sites, vacant property and/or vacant backlands.

Encourage the repair, reinstatement and conservation of buildings, features and architectural detail (where there is historical evidence), especially frontages, timber windows and doors, chimney stacks and roof slates, boundary walls and treatments.

Encourage the removal, alteration, demolition and redevelopment of buildings, features or areas which do not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the village.

Protecting Buildings and Features of Merit.

Control inappropriate alterations and loss of detail through use of the statutory framework.

Raise awareness of the value of small items such as stone steps and small buildings which add considerably to the area's distinct local identity but which are not statutorily protected from removal or demolition. Provide owners and those responsible for their upkeep with advice.

Protect focal points, views and vistas which have been created by the historic street pattern and the topography.

6.2 Regeneration

Gourdon lies within the Coastal Mearns Regeneration Area. Through initiatives relating to regeneration areas and strategic priorities it is hoped to identify and if possible initiate some enhancement actions in the short to medium term ie 2011-15. The Council has provided funding for the regeneration in the area which will be tackled through initiatives aimed at the provision of quality improvements around the Harbour and potential improvements to the coastal path.

The provision of Quality Improvements

The principle focus of activity will be in the Harbour area which is, most importantly, a public space.

The main Harbour area is in need of a facelift. Some effort had been made with some rather lovely hanging

baskets and support should be given to any group who maybe interested in this and other small environmental improvements.

Overlooked by the backs of houses in William Street, the small Harbour to the east appears deserted, even in summer when used for mooring pleasure craft.

Improvements worthy of consideration include :-

- Refurbishment of the memorial to the son of the Laird.
- Tidying up piers and removal of weeds from the walls,
- Partial resurfacing
- Lighting
- Railings
- Litter bins and other street furniture
- Replacement/additional signs and Interpretation.
- Refurbishment of the Maggie Law Museum
- Planting and other small environmental improvements

Coastal Path

The long distance coastal route passes through the centre of the village. Improvements to the route and actions to encourage and enhance its use and enjoyment will help to restore and retain the area's character and vitality.

6.3 Policies

The Council, through its Development Plans will implement policies to protect the character and amenity of towns and villages as well as support proposals to bring vacant buildings and sites back into active use.

The policies against which development proposals will be assessed are currently contained within the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan and the associated Supplementary Guidance which was formally adopted on 2 June 2012. Development Plan Policy and Supplementary Guidance will be used to determine applications, guide enforcement action and advise members of the public on how best to alter their properties.

6.4 Development Management

The day to day work of Development Management provides a primary means to implement Local Development Plan policies.

There are no sites within the historic area specifically identified for development in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. However, existing buildings, gap sites and land within the area could be the subject of development proposals. Development Proposals will be carefully considered in light of the adopted policies of Aberdeenshire Council and current planning advice.

6.5 Planning Advice

Although the historic village is no longer proposed as a conservation area, the historical features and character which reflect the area's heritage are still regarded of great value. Therefore it is important to retain, protect and where appropriate enhance those elements which contribute to the village's unique historic identity and sense of place.

This document should be used as Planning Advice to inform and guide future developments and redevelopments. The general principles listed in section 1.3 of this document have been drawn up to support the retention of the historic character and unique identity of the village.

REFERENCES and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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National Library of Scotland ; Historic Maps

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Gourdon Built Heritage Appraisal

