



# DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Character Appraisal  
March 2010

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## 1. CONSERVATION AREAS AND CHARACTER APPRAISALS

Conservation Area designation is the main instrument available to Local Authorities to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or area. Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of un-Listed Buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

It is the quality and interest of areas, rather than that of individual buildings, which should be the prime consideration in identifying Conservation Areas. Our experience of a historic area depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings, it depends on the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares; on a particular mix of uses; on characteristic materials; on appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings; on the quality of advertisements, shop fronts, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of spaces between buildings

*“Conservation Areas are places where buildings and the spaces around them interact to form distinctly recognisable areas of special quality and interest.”<sup>1</sup>*

Conservation Area designation is seen as the means of recognising the importance of all these factors and of ensuring that conservation policy addresses the quality of townscape in its broadest sense as well as protecting individual buildings.

### Definition of a Conservation Area

Darlington Town Centre Conservation Area was designated on 1 July 1976. In May 1990 the boundary was altered to bring in the Crown Street and Bondgate areas now included. Conservation Area designation is the main instrument available to Local Authorities to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or area. Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of un-Listed Buildings, some control over works to buildings in commercial use and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or

enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

### Impacts of Conservation Area Designation

Its main practical use is to aid decision-making on planning applications received for works and development within the Conservation Area.

The designation of a Conservation Area by the Council introduces additional planning controls that are intended to ensure that any alterations do not detract from an area's “character or appearance” and to conserve or improve the “special interest” of an area.

In normal circumstances, householders have Permitted Development rights to carry out certain minor works to their properties, such as the erection of garden buildings, front porches or satellite dishes. However in a Conservation Area these rights are much reduced. For example:

- The consent of the Local Planning Authority is required for the demolition of buildings, whereas in normal circumstances, only notification is required.
- The removal of boundary wall, fences and gates usually require permission.
- The pruning or felling of trees requires six weeks prior notification.
- Alterations to front elevations may require permission.
- Applications for proposals that affect the character or appearance of the area are advertised in local newspapers.
- Any new development (including extensions) is expected to be in keeping with or improve the character or appearance of the area.

In addition to the above, works to non-residential properties, such as commercial properties and flats, will require planning permission if the work involves change. An example of this is replacing timber windows with uPVC on a block of flats, office or shop. Permission is unlikely to be granted where the works are to the detriment of the Conservation Area.

It is an offence not to comply with these requirements.

1. Archaeo-Environment Ltd (2008) Barnard Castle Conservation Area Character Appraisal, Barnard Castle: Teesdale District Council.

## Character Appraisal Contents

A process of change within a Conservation Area is inevitable and should be managed rather than prohibited. The purpose of a Character Appraisal is to define as clearly as possible the historic (and by implication, archaeological), architectural and natural components of the Conservation Area that are considered especially important and contribute most to its character in order to manage change and guide new development.

The principal aims of this document are intended to define:

- What influences have given Darlington Town Centre its particular character
- What chiefly reflects this character and is most worth conserving
- What has suffered damage or loss and may need reinstating
- Areas that may be improved

The document highlights the key features and unique qualities that give the town its special character. It aims to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of a designated area, and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through the development of management proposals. Undertaking an appraisal offers the opportunity to re-assess the designated area and to evaluate and record its special interest.

Further guidance on new development can be found on page 34.

## 2. THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Darlington Borough Council's Development Plan is currently its Local Plan, adopted in 1997 (incorporating Adopted Alterations in 2001). In 2004 the Government introduced changes to the Planning System with the aim of speeding up development plan preparation, making it more flexible and improving community involvement. Therefore, Darlington's Local Plan will need to be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF) for which work is underway.

Conservation policies within the Local Plan were deleted on 27 September 2007 because they replicated national policy. Since then, and until Darlington's Local Development Framework is in place, conservation planning decisions are made based on national guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic environment, and eventually will be made by its replacement, the forthcoming Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning for the Historic Environment.

The Local Development Framework is a suite of documents intended to replace Local Plans. Conservation policies are likely to be found within the Core Strategy, and potentially Supplementary Planning Documents, providing detailed policy (as found in the Design Supplementary Planning Document) for Development Management and possibly Conservation itself.

## 3. HISTORY, LOCATION AND SETTING

Darlington is located in the heart of the North East region, approximately mid-way between Newcastle and York. It is a market and industrial town dating from at least the eleventh century.<sup>2</sup>

“...the first good crossing of the Skerne from its junction with the Tees would invite settlement...it was a good site and perhaps this explains why Darlington sprang up on this particular spot”.<sup>3</sup>

This is reflected in its position along the great northern route of the A1 and east-west A66. Darlington is also well sited along the east coast mainline, as a result of Darlington’s role in the birth of the Stockton–Darlington Railway, the first public railway in the world. The town has large suburbs and a large hinterland including Teesdale and Wear Valley, rural areas of Stockton Borough and parts of North Yorkshire for whom York is some distance. Throughout its expansion over the years Darlington has maintained its position as the market town for the agricultural region around it and this is reflected in the town centre.<sup>4</sup>

The centre of the Town Centre, around High Row and the yards and wynds between that and Skinnergate, has medieval origins. Suburban Victorian development focused on the more affluent west of the town (rather than the east, due to prevailing winds carrying industrial smog in an easterly direction during the height of Darlington’s industrialisation, which coincided with its greatest period of growth). This has been followed by modern development at the edges, again predominantly to the West (for example West Park) and in gap sites.

Historic maps for the area are provided in Appendix 1.



2. Darlington first appeared in written records with the grant of the maor by Styr son of Ulf to the see of Durham in c. 1003. Taken from Cookson, G (ed) (2005) The Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington, London: Boydell and Brewer.  
 3. Sunderland, N. (1972), A History of Darlington, Scolar Press Limited Yorkshire, Darlington Historical Society. Pg 12.  
 4. Pevsner, N (second edition revised by Williamson, E.) (1985) The Buildings of England: County Durham, London: Yale University Press. Pg 140.

## Early Darlington

Darlington has Anglo Saxon origins as the site of the only certain pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery in the county<sup>5</sup>. By 1195 the town was a borough; St Cuthbert's Church formed the east limits of the market place and its other limits were Houndgate, Tubwell Row and High Row. Darlington first appeared in writing in the early 11th century and at various times it has had a different name: Dearthington (1050), Dearnington (1148) and Derlington (1196). Longstaffe's history of Darlington<sup>6</sup> advances various alternatives although everyone is agreed that the name is thoroughly Saxon<sup>7</sup>.

The Black Death and later plagues in the later 14th and early 15th centuries brought considerable hardship, which led to "economic stagnation" although trade was by no means extinguished<sup>8</sup>. In 1569 a rebellion occurred known as the Rising of the Northern Earls; following its defeat a number of men were executed in Darlington.

In the Middle Ages (commonly considered as having lasted from the end of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century until the rise of national monarchies, European overseas exploration and the Renaissance, after the Black Death around the 15th century) Darlington belonged to the Bishop of Durham. In the 12th century the Bishop turned part of the settlement into a market town, a small town with a population of several hundred. It was also largely an agricultural settlement and many of the inhabitants of Darlington made their living from farming. Nevertheless there was some industry in medieval Darlington, the main trades being weaving and dyeing wool and several mills on the River Skerne to grind grain. There was also a leather industry and skinnners lived in Skinnergate; the street name 'gate' does not mean a gate in a wall, it is derived from the Danish word 'gata' meaning street.

On 7 May 1759 there was a "most fierce and terrible fire" that swept through Darlington. It was said to have consumed 273 houses, amongst them 'the...fairest...in the town' gutting the houses along High Row and Skinnergate, where highly combustible commodities such as pitch, flax and gun powder were stored in the chief mercers' houses<sup>9</sup>. The speed at which the properties burnt suggests they were crowded together and constructed out of wood. This is part of the reason why so little of Elizabethan Darlington survives: the constant risk of fire, the fact that the town was not walled and fortified and because at that stage the town was not wealthy. Nothing more of Tudor Darlington survives than parts of the Nag's Head, originally a house and at one time the vicarage, on Tubwell Row. Although rebuilding took place within the ancient street plans, nevertheless the character of the medieval town had to a large extent been destroyed in the blaze<sup>10</sup>.

Although the fire had brought much destruction, major buildings, including the church, deanery and Bishop's Palace or Manor House apparently escaped unscathed;<sup>11</sup> the Bishops Palace was then partly destroyed by the Civil War and bought in 1870 by Richard Luck and demolished to make room for a terrace that took his name<sup>12</sup>. By the eighteenth century, like most towns, Darlington was becoming industrialised through the woollen and linen industries run mostly by the Quaker families, who had settled in the mid 1600s<sup>13</sup>.

5. Found in 1876 near the hospital, under Dodds Street, off Greenbank Crescent. Taken from Pevsner, N (second edition revised by Williamson, E.) (1985) *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, London: Yale University Press. Pg 139.

6. Longstaffe, W.H.D (1973) *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Darlington*

7. Sunderland, N. (1972), *A History of Darlington*, Scholar Press Limited Yorkshire, Darlington Historical Society. Pg 11.

8. Cookson, G (ed) (2005) *The Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington*, London: Boydell and Brewer. Pg 109.

9. Lamentable N[ewes] from the Towne of Darnton, (1585) in Sunderland, N. (1972), *A History of Darlington* Scholar Press Limited Yorkshire, Darlington Historical Society. Pg 35-36.

10. Cookson G. (ed) (2005) *Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington*, London: Boydell and Brewer. Pg 20.

11. As above. Pg 21.

12. Cookson G. (ed) (2005) *Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington*, London: Boydell and Brewer. Pg 40.

13. Pevsner, N (second edition revised by Williamson, E.) (1985) *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, London: Yale University Press. Pg 139.

## Markets

Darlington has had markets since at least the early seventeenth century<sup>14</sup> and the markets still play a key part in the town and borough's vitality today. Before 1800 there were 12 shambles south of the tollbooth with fish stalls, a butter market and a dozen shops and by the eighteenth century Darlington's Markets were substantial including horned cattle, sheep, horses, hogs and pigs.<sup>15</sup>

From 1800 the weekly Monday market continued alongside a cattle market on alternate Mondays and a seasonal sheep and wool show, and merchants selling linen, woollen cloths, leather goods and metal items<sup>16</sup>, but by the mid 19th century market facilities had become inadequate with public health concerns; therefore the existing covered market was built in 1863, designed by the then relatively unknown Alfred Waterhouse, incorporating a market cross and drinking fountain.<sup>17</sup>

The market survived various attempts to relocate it although sales of live animals were moved to Bank Top in 1920.<sup>18</sup> Darlington still has many markets both outdoor and indoor to this day, and won 'Market of the Year' in 2008.



Geese on High Row for market, pre-1904.  
Source: www.pbase.com/image/48544986



Fair in Market Place



Markets on High Row

14. Sunderland, N. (1972), A History of Darlington, Scolar Press Limited Yorkshire, Darlington Historical Society. Pg 43.

15. Cookson, G (ed) (2005) The Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington, London: Boydell and Brewer. Pg 119.

16. Sunderland, N. (1972), A History of Darlington, Scolar Press Limited Yorkshire, Darlington Historical Society. Pg 45.

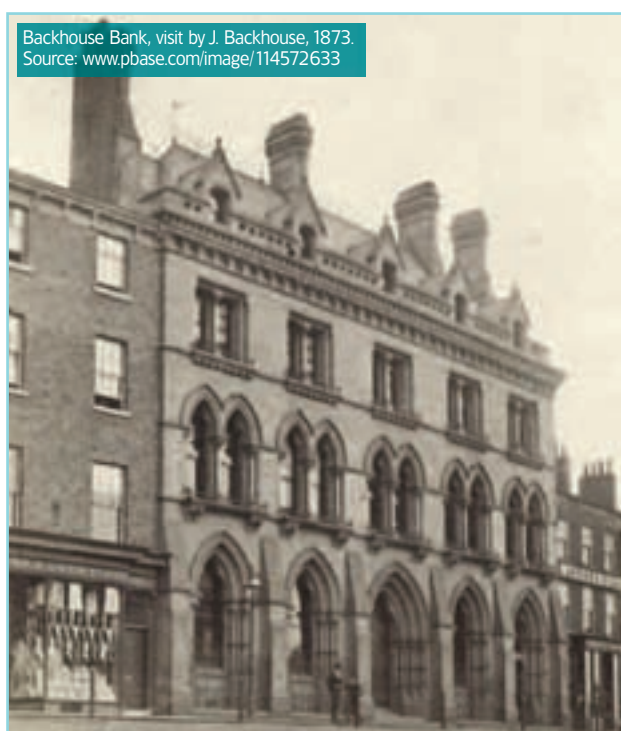
17. Cookson, G (ed) (2005) The Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington, London: Boydell and Brewer. Pg 121.

18. As above. Pg 122.



## Quaker Influence

No history of Darlington would be complete without some discussion of the positive influence the Quakers have had on the town. In 1662, 15 Quakers were recorded in Darlington, who gathered initially in private houses risking harsh penalties.<sup>19</sup> In 1677 a house with land in Skinnergate was bought and repaired for use as a Quaker meeting house. Even after the Toleration Act of 1689, dissenters, including Quakers, suffered civil and legal disabilities. Membership of the Society amounted to 160 by 1776.<sup>20</sup> While disqualified from many aspects of public life until the 1830s, Darlington Quakers played an active part in government of the town



Backhouse Bank, visit by J. Backhouse, 1873.  
Source: [www.pbase.com/image/114572633](http://www.pbase.com/image/114572633)



Quaker meeting house, Skinnergate

and during the 18th and 19th centuries were extremely influential in industry, commerce and development.<sup>21</sup>

The Pease family were heavily represented in most of the new industries of iron and engineering works, collieries and brick manufacturers, in the town and the Borough.<sup>22</sup> Quakers were also involved in banking, the most well-known of which being Jonathan Backhouse's 'Backhouse Bank', established in 1774, whose bank on High Row became part of Barclay and Co. Ltd in 1896 and still exists today as Barclays Bank on High Row.

In 1839-40 the old frontage on the meeting-house on Skinnergate was replaced by the building that is still used for as the meeting-house today, at No.6 Skinnergate. Joseph Pease had the Old Town Hall built in 1853 as a gift to the Town and later added the Clock Tower and Covered Market in 1864.

By the middle of the 19th century there were numerous wealthy Quaker families in Darlington, yet few ostentatious properties. Many of the most prosperous individuals, as members of the Society of Friends, still adhered to a code of "relative modesty in worldly goods."<sup>23</sup>

Major suburban development began in the early 1800s and continued with the advent of the railways, in which Quakers played a large part.



Statue of Joseph Pease

19. As above. Pg 211.

20. Longstaffe, W.H.D (1973) *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Darlington*. Pg 251.

21. Orde, A. (2000) *Religion, Business and Society in North-East England: the Pease Family of Darlington in the 19th Century*, p.8-10.

22. Cookson G. (ed) (2005) *Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington*, London: Boydell and Brewer. Pg 116.

23. Cookson G. (ed) (2005) *Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington*, London: Boydell and Brewer. Pg 43.

## Stockton and Darlington Railway

The North East was known as the “cradle of the railways”,<sup>24</sup> providing important technical innovations and witnessing in 1825 the first passenger journey (although the railway was formed to carry coal).<sup>25</sup> The route of the original Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) line passes through North Road Station, built in 1842 and is one of the oldest in Britain.<sup>26</sup> The railway was the first in the world, proving that the steam power could work on an industrial basis; it was 26 miles long and its earliest trains weighed 100 tons. It represented the biggest step in the industrial revolution, from little inventions on a cottage industry level to a truly industrial scale.

The Stockton and Darlington railway was the first public passenger railway in the world. In 1821, “far-sighted Quaker citizen”<sup>27</sup> Joseph Pease and a group of Quaker businessmen including Jonathan Backhouse decided that a public railway, rather than canal, was the best mode of transport for much needed coal, lead and lime.<sup>28</sup>

This historic event could not have happened without the pioneers of the railway age, foremost of which was Edward Pease, a Quaker born in Darlington in 1767 and the eldest son of Joseph Pease.<sup>29</sup> Like his father, Edward joined the wool trade, and during his time buying and selling wool he realised that there was a need for a railway to carry coal from the collieries of West Durham to the port of Stockton. Pease and a group of businessmen formed the Stockton & Darlington Railway Company in 1821.<sup>30</sup>

The railway was not without its opponents in the form of “local gentry” and “turnpike interests”.<sup>31</sup> On 19th April 1821 the Stockton & Darlington Railway Act was passed to allow the company to build a horse-drawn railway that would link West Durham, Darlington and the River Tees at Stockton.<sup>32</sup>



Steam Locomotive in Bank Top Station, c. 1900  
Source: [www.pbase.com/csdesign/darlington\\_railways](http://www.pbase.com/csdesign/darlington_railways)

George Stephenson met with Edward Pease at the latter’s home in Northgate and persuaded him to use steam powered locomotives on the railway, when all previous discussion had involved using horsepower<sup>33</sup>. Stephenson also convinced Pease that the locomotive should run on rails raised above the ground rather than tram tracks set into the ground. These two factors (especially the first) separated the Stockton & Darlington Railway from all the other colliery railways and changed the history of Darlington, the North East, and probably the world. Pease was so impressed with Stephenson that he gave him the post of Chief Engineer of the Stockton & Darlington Company. Following intense lobbying, a second Act of Parliament was passed to allow the company “to make and erect locomotives or moveable engines”<sup>34</sup> and that was the beginning of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

Despite intensive development in and around the town centre, by 1879 the architect G.G. Hoskins was able to write, “Our town is a pleasant town, a clean town with picturesque surroundings and on the whole a healthy town”.<sup>35</sup>

24. The Northern Echo, North East History website: [www.northeasthistory.co.uk](http://www.northeasthistory.co.uk)

25. Dean, D. (2000), *A Place in History – Darlington Railway Centre and Museum, 1975- 2000*, County Durham: Scarsdale Books. Pg 4.

26. As above. Pg 10.

27. Pevsner, N (second edition revised by Williamson, E.) (1985) *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, London: Yale University Press. Pg 139.

28. Sunderland, N. (1972), *A History of Darlington* Scolar, Press Limited Yorkshire, Darlington Historical Society. Pg 63.

29. The Northern Echo, North East History website: [www.northeasthistory.co.uk](http://www.northeasthistory.co.uk)

30. As above.

31. Cookson G. (ed) (2005) *Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington*, London: Boydell and Brewer. Pg 130.

32. The Northern Echo, North East History website: [www.northeasthistory.co.uk](http://www.northeasthistory.co.uk)

33. Cookson G. (ed) (2005) *Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington*, London: Boydell and Brewer.

34. As above.

35. Hoskins, G.G. (1879) *An Hour with a Sewer Rat; or, a Few Plain Hints on House Drainage and Sewer Gas* in *Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington*. Pg 40.

## Modern Darlington

Towards the end of the 1960s employment in the railway, engineering and woollen industries declined, leading to a degree of local degeneration. For a time the town centre retained its status as the key route into Darlington from the north, being part of the Great North Road – and subsequently A1 – until the opening of the A1(M) bypass in 1966.

The construction of the ring road in the early 1970s cut a swathe through the north of the Town Centre, dissecting it to such a degree that it has since led to the development of two separate streets with different characters.<sup>36</sup>

A number of buildings were demolished to the south of the Technical College. The route, now the A167, remains very important locally and regionally and has some of the heaviest traffic flows in Darlington.

The arrival of the Dolphin Centre, opened by Roger Banister in 1983, and the construction of the Cornmill Centre between 1988 and 1992,

marked a distinct change in the town centre Conservation Area, filling vacant or gap sites and providing an improved retail and leisure offer for the town. In 1997 Darlington Council became a unitary authority, taking on all Council roles.

The Pedestrian Heart development was completed in the summer of 2007 and involved the removal of the Victorian-style (some original, some replacement and repaired) street furniture, modernisation and pedestrianisation of the upper and middle level of High Row (with the lower level for bus, taxi and commercial use only). Landscape architects, Gillespies, aimed to increase Darlington Town Centre's competitiveness as a shopping destination, restore the simplicity of pre-1904 High Row and reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflict.

A contemporary composition of modern, high quality materials and engaging, public art features including large, granite planters with barcode design, and the award winning 'Market Cascade' designed by Michael Pinsky, were utilised.



St Cuthbert's Way construction c1960s



Market Cascade, High Row



Cornmill Centre, Tubwell Row



Dolphin Centre, Horsemarket

36. Cookson, G. (2003), *The Townscape of Darlington*, London: University of London. Pg 160.

## 4. COMPONENT AREAS

“Although an industrial town, firmly planted north of the Tees, Darlington is different to the tightly-knit [former] communities of the mining towns of Durham. Although a market town, leaning heavily towards the south, it is not the centre of the entirely rural community of North Yorkshire. This duality gives the visitor, on arrival, a feeling of not having quite left Yorkshire and not having quite arrived in Durham”.<sup>37</sup>

### Blackwellgate

The street runs between High Row and Coniscliffe road and is multi-level with granite paving, stone paving and pre-Pedestrian Heart paving. Vistas past Binns are to trees on Coniscliffe Road, offering one of the few views of trees, apart from those around St Cuthbert’s Church, to be found in the area. Scale is comparable with mainly red brick buildings having two to three storeys and there are some flat roofs to be found although most have mock parapet and some are dual pitch. The Market Cross is the key feature in Blackwellgate and contemporary street furniture, including finger posts can be found on the street. Again use is retail and the primary usage is pedestrian because no vehicles (other than access for deliveries) are allowed.

‘Life Pulse’, the light feature at the western end of Blackwellgate, was commissioned as part of the Pedestrian Heart scheme, which saw the pedestrianization of Darlington Town Centre, with artist Michael Pinsky working on the design team. This piece of public artwork modifies public lighting columns to respond to human touch creating ever-changing rhythms and patterns of light, providing a focal point.



Blackwellgate facing East



Blackwellgate facing West



30 32 Blackwellgate

37. Darlington Borough Council (1978) Darlington Central Area Plan – Report of Survey 1: Townscape Quality, the Appearance of the Town Centre

## Bondgate

Located beyond Prospect Place from the east and ultimately adjoining St Augustine's Way, King Street, Skinnergate and Salt Yard to the west, Bondgate rises to the west. Active frontage lines the north and south side of the street until the junction with St Augustine's Way. There are views to the telecommunications masts mounted above the Telephone Exchange, interrupted by contemporary high-level street lighting, when viewed from the east. From the west, views pass across Prospect Place to the Kings Hotel, currently enclosed by sheeted scaffolding displaying an image of the original frontage prior to the fire and once restored, during restoration works following fire.

The street opens out, stops being in primarily pedestrian use where it meets the ring road. The floorscape is a tarmac carriageway lined by stone paved walkways at raised kerb level, with paved inspection chambers. With two to four storey building scales, varied frontages with first and second floor bay windows in places, plus multi pitched rooflines, interrupted by dormer windows and flat sections, massing is varied.

Street furniture is contemporary in grey with the aforementioned high-level lighting, waste bins and bollarding in places. Highways mounted signage litter the pavement edge, particularly on approach to the junction with St Augustine's Way. Noise stems from the nearby ring road and pedestrian users and commercial vehicles delivering to predominantly retail premises along Bondgate.

Bondgate was bisected by the construction of the inner ring road to its detriment and is therefore now isolated from the main town centre; the feeling is of shortly leaving the town centre for the fringe. Some weak residential development and shop fronts have eroded the original qualities of the street.



## Bull Wynd

Located between the junction with Horse Market, Bull Wynd has vistas of two storey period town-housing, including Listed 'Pease's House', the ornate Listed fountain to the south and the fringe of the Market Hall to the north. Bull Wynd has no active frontage, with the exception of the relatively new disabled access to Bennet House (the Citizen's Advice entrance to the Registry Office). Bull Wynd is predominantly flat with a gentle decline at the junction with Houndgate.

Floorscape is a cobbled carriageway, with a raised kerb to a stone paved walkway. To the south, grassed public amenity space is retained by an unsympathetic, modern blue brick 0.3m high retaining wall, bordering the public highway. Scale and massing of properties to the north of Bull Wynd between the gables of no.s 14, 13, 12a is comparable in excess of three storeys high, however vary greatly progressing south, with the recessed amenity area adjacent Central Hall. Roofscape is primarily slate, pitched off differing orientations.

Street furniture includes bollards, timber slatted cast iron framed bench (opposite fountain), fountain, semi-mature tree and directional highways signs. The atmosphere is quieter, cooler and darker, however vehicular background noise from St Cuthbert's Way is audible. Street structure, given the recessed amenity area, is irregular, providing for a rougher texture. Users comprise motorists, and passing pedestrians and uses comprise commercial (Registry Office), residential (no.s 31 and 32), and one redundant former commercial premise at no.12A (former residence of Joseph Pease).

A prominent feature is the attractive fountain of 1858, with a wide cast iron bowl, moved here in 1970 from Tubwell Row; it is not currently functioning, which is to the detriment of the Conservation Area. Stone plaques set in the wall (one with a relief of a bull, the Bulmer family emblem – and the other showing the names of Anthony Bulmer and Mary Lasenie, who married in 1665) are all that remains of the Bulmers' inn, which was demolished, probably in the mid eighteenth century.<sup>38</sup>



Bulmer family detail on Bull Wynd entrance



Bull Wynd facing north



Pease House No. 12a Horsemarket

38. Cookson, G (ed) (2005) *The Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington*, London: Boydell and Brewer. Pg 21.

## Church Row

This is the short street that runs from the Bakehouse Hill to Tubwell Row. Viewed from the Market Place (Bakehouse Hill end) it is dominated by the modern Cornmill Centre, the town's larger indoor shopping centre, which opened in 1992. Whilst the Cornmill Centre is a significant departure from earlier buildings styles, it sits reasonably comfortably in the town, if overly dominant in places. The narrow street, which descends to Tubwell Row, is cobbled with granite stone pavements. Like a number of streets within the site area there is a mixture of street furniture, both 'heritage' small scale and 2006 contemporary large scale.

There are a number of fine, predominantly red brick, buildings making up the streetscape, including the Grade II Listed Boot & Shoe Public House, with outdoor seating that spills onto the pavement towards St Cuthbert's Church in the warmer weather. The buildings are a mix of three storey (East facing) and the Bakehouse Hill end (Grade II Listed Pennyweight Public House, West Facing) and then the West facing side drops to two storey as it descends to Tubwell Row mainly used for pubs and then retail as they reach Tubwell Row. Whilst access is not restricted, it is primarily used by pedestrians walking to and from the Market Place, buses, taxis and cars that park in the Town Hall car park.



Church Row facing south



Church Row facing north



Stone detail on former Officer of Darlington Transport Company

## Coniscliffe Road

Running directly from Houndgate out of town towards Barnard Castle, only a short stretch of Coniscliffe Road lies within the Town Centre Conservation Area, ending at the terrace of 41-61 Coniscliffe Road. The small stretch of Coniscliffe Road within the Town Centre Conservation Area begins with four storey Victorian buildings on both side of the street, with the Imperial Centre to the south and the County Court to the north.

Building height, scale and massing continues for a short way on the southern side until the introduction of the Georgian terrace, comparable with that further out at 41-61 Coniscliffe Road, which previously spanned the length of the road prior to construction of the inner ring road. At one of the gateways to the Conservation Area, lies the large and prominent Larchfield House, now in use as flats, in a sensitive location. The scale and massing of the large 4 storey buildings is interrupted earlier on the north side so the majority of this side of the road is characterised by smaller scale buildings, both in height and massing including Grade II Listed no. 26, The Bishop's House, former restaurant.

Floorscape is concrete tiles for the pavement but this section of the road is in use as a bus lane and for taxis only, including a taxi rank, so the tarmac is inflected with red-coated chippings to identify this. Buildings are mainly red brick as is prevalent in Darlington, although render and mock-Tudor gabling is also found.





## Crown Street

The street runs north to south from Northgate to Tubwell Row / Stonebridge. Prominent features include views to St Cuthbert's Church when facing south, the Crown Street Library (formerly the 'Edward Pease Free Library'), and the Post Office, which demonstrate Victorian prosperity. There is also fine ceramic tiling on 1-5 Crown Street, where an arched entrance formerly used for horse and cart entrance, is evident; one of its neighbours, 9-13 Crown Street, also makes a positive contribution to the area, although is unlisted.

The street is rather dominated by the Cornmill Centre and the car park for the Cornmill Centre; the former sits reasonably comfortably in the area but the latter is not especially sympathetic to its neighbouring buildings, although it does sit at the same height. The Cornhill Centre itself has made efforts to follow the form of the Northern Echo building, with comparable elevations. Pease's / Priestgate Mill stood on the site of the Cornmill car park until Part of Pease's Mill on Priestgate (on what is now the MFI site) was demolished in 1964 and the rest of the Mill (on what is now the car park site) was demolished in 1984.

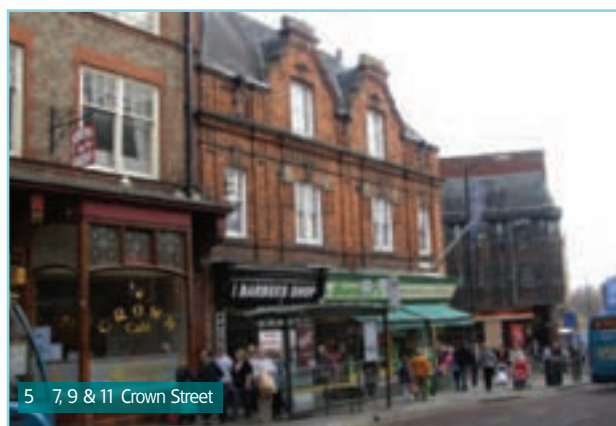
Most buildings are red brick, three storeys and all are set immediately off the pavement. Floorscape is concrete-tiled pavements and tarmac roads. Street furniture includes high-level street lighting, contemporary so neither the 'heritage' furniture nor the '2006 Pedestrian Heart' street furniture. The street is dominated by signs and posts, which could be better rationalised.



Crown Street facing north



Crown Street, View of St. Cuthbert's Church



5, 7, 9 & 11 Crown Street



Door detail on former Crown Street Chambers

## High Row

This is probably the most well known of the streets within the site area and is entirely pedestrianised. It is the most visible due to its topography, being higher than the rest of the streets in the site area; it also is the busiest shopping street and contains a large number of high quality, historic buildings (mainly banks), with Barclays' (Backhouse) Bank being particularly fine. High Row formed a major part of the Pedestrian Heart scheme, when it was altered from the three Victorian levels introduced in 1904 to the earlier two stepped levels, in order to improve pedestrian access, better manage vehicular access and improve the town centre's competitiveness as a retail destination.

Floorscape is granite paving and the street furniture is the '2006 Pedestrian Heart' choice of seating, bins, lighting and signage. The street lighting is dominating when High Row is viewed along its length from either the North of the South and perhaps over scale, but the Pedestrian Heart development has opened clear vistas of the main buildings, which were previously obscured. The Market Hall and Clock Tower, whilst not on High Row, form part of its eastern boundary. The noise of the market permeates along High Row, as does the 'Market Cascade', the contemporary water feature; the other dominant noise, as expected in a busy town centre, is pedestrians and the access-only traffic, mainly buses on their route through the town. Smells waft in from the Market and street vendors selling takeaway food on market days leading to a vibrant feel.

The scale is large, with most buildings being three or four storeys, massing is comparable with individual shops, with the exception of Binns department store, a prominent curved building rebuilt following fire from 1925 and extended during the 1930s, which dominates the corner to Blackwellgate. The northern end of the street sees a 1960s addition, with concrete canopy on Kenneth House.



First black & white photo of High Row, c. 1880s  
Source: [www.pbase.com/csdesign/image/62346344](http://www.pbase.com/csdesign/image/62346344)



Second black & white photo of High Row, c. 1907  
Source: [www.pbase.com/csdesign/image/85479175](http://www.pbase.com/csdesign/image/85479175)



High Row facing north



High Row facing south



Granite planters on High Row

## Horsemarket

It runs from the Town Hall West past the Dolphin Centre to Binns on High Row. It is positively dominated by the open space of the Market Place to the north (which is often empty, although it is used occasionally for special outdoor events and markets) and also by the Market Hall and Clock Tower.

The south side (the side with buildings rather than the open space of the Market Place) is mainly made up of the Dolphin Centre, which fares better than its contemporary peer the Cornmill Centre, appearing from its north-facing Market Place façade to be a number of separate buildings; therefore scale and massing appear, if are not actually, comparable. However its south-facing rear, onto Houndgate is less subtle. After the Dolphin Centre, buildings include the Hole in the Wall Public House, which is a fine example of the use of external ceramic tiles; and then the Grade II\* Listed Bennet House, a three storey 18th century town house that is now used as the Citizens Advice Bureau, which has been eroded by non-original (although timber, sliding sash) windows and poor 1970s internal alterations.

The floorscape is Indian stone paving, descending to the Church and rooflines are pitched, multi-directional. Street furniture is that mix of 'heritage' and '2006 Contemporary', with numerous benches, planters full of flowers during the summer, street lighting and bins.



## Houndgate

Located, running west to east from Blackwellgate and Coniscliffe Road to Feethams (although only to 12 Houndgate – the vacant sites and car parks at Feethams are adjacent to the Conservation Area) Houndgate is parallel to Horsemarket. It is connected to Horsemarket via Bull Wynd. The eastern end of Houndgate is faced onto by a number of Listed Buildings in use as offices and backed onto by the cumbersome Dolphin Centre, whose front elevation is more sympathetic to its neighbours. The street progresses west to ground floor retail use and opens out to public realm where it meets Blackwellgate.

Currently buildings are either two or three storeys. Floorscape is concrete-tiled pavements and tarmac roads. Street furniture is heritage cast iron bollards and bins, with modern, high level, street lighting. Originally Houndgate formed the southern row of the Borough and c. 1297 it was the site of a well, connected by a vennel to the Bishop's Palace (which stood on the site of the current Town Hall).



Southern side of Houndgate facing east



Rear of Dolphin Centre on Houndgate



10 11 Houndgate

## Grange Road

This street runs north to south following on from Skinnergate at Coniscliffe Road to Victoria Road, which is the boundary with the Stanhope Road – Coniscliffe Road Conservation Area. The section within the Town Centre Conservation Area functions as home to a growing number of designer boutiques and stylish interior stores and is therefore primarily in retail use. Consequently the street usually feels affluent, busy and brimming with purpose.

Scale is mainly three storeys and massing is comparable, with individual buildings operating as shops, with the exception of The Imperial Centre at the North West end of the street and 25 Grange Road. Floorscape is concrete-tiled pavement and tarmac roads. Street furniture is contemporary although minimal in comparison with other streets, although street signage competes with the street scene, often partially blocking the pavement.



Grange Road facing north



16 18 Grange Road



10, 12 & 14 Grange Road

## The Market Place

Located between Horse Market to the south, Church Row to the east and East Row to the west, the Market Place provides for open aspect vistas of a great deal of the core of the Conservation Area. To the east, St Cuthbert's Church dominates the skyline, and to the west, the Market Buildings, Clock Tower and Binns department store. The Market Place gradually ascends west to the carriageway intersecting it to the Market Buildings.

Massing and scale, given the open nature of this public amenity space is less applicable but determined by the surrounding structures to Horse Market, Market Buildings and Bakehouse Hill. Roofscape is dominated to the west by the horizontal nature of the Market Buildings, contrasted by the vertical Clock Tower. Floorscape is modern granite paving, in places contemporary stall fixings for market traders, cast iron grated surface water drain covers, plus granite paved inspection covers. Kerbing is marginally raised to adjoining the stone paved walkways lining Bakehouse Hill and Horse Market to the north and south respectively.

High-level modern 'down-light' street lamps, heritage cast iron bollards to the east and west make up the street furniture, with numerous highways signage to the periphery. Other than a crossing point for pedestrians, and delivery area for commercial vehicles, no significant use dominates the Market Place, which is often used for staging outdoor events and activities.



View of St. Cuthbert's Church from the Market Place



Market Place facing north west



Former Town Hall, Market Place



Last granite sett laid in the Market Place, 1996

## Northgate

Running from Prospect Place in the south to just past where Crown Street meets it, only this section of Northgate lies within the Town Centre Conservation Area. The majority of Northgate within the Town Centre Conservation Area is pedestrianised, up to Crown Street. Traffic restrictions and the use of paving have created a pleasant shopping environment. After leaving the Town Centre Conservation Area and leaving the resultant Northgate Conservation Area, the road runs north to Durham.

The western side of the street beginning at Prospect Place is mainly 3 and 4 storeys, which become two and three storey when nearing the inner ring road. There is the former Post Office with 'Post Office' incised in stone; a number of plain Victorian buildings at nos. 36-44; and past Crown Street, 52 Northgate, all on the eastern side of the street. On the western side of the street there is an attractive Art Deco building (a former cinema) spoilt only by some ground floor shop front treatments; the poor Queen Street indoor shopping precinct; and a number of flat-roofed 60s and 70s buildings from no.43 until no.57, which are just outside the current Conservation Area boundary and which interrupt the design and form of the existing buildings in the area.

The street is in retail use on the ground floors of buildings and is dominated by large buildings to the height of the King's Head Hotel on the eastern side of the street.



View from High Row



East side of Northgate



37-45 Northgate

## Northumberland Street

This is a short street that runs between Grange Road and Coniscliffe Road and Victoria Road parallel to Coniscliffe Road. The north eastern end of the street is characterised by three storey buildings, with the ground floors in commercial use, included the Imperial Café at Grade II 2 Northumberland Street. Aside from no. 2 Northumberland Street, this land was garden land for the properties on Coniscliffe Road from at least the mid seventeenth century to the early twentieth century.

The grain alters part way down the street when it opens out to a car park, which is a former timber yard, on the southern end and the courtyard into Westpoint on the northern side of the street. There are a number of modern infill buildings in red brick, which make attempts to follow the scale and form of neighbouring buildings, including the use of sliding, if uPVC, windows.

During the day and on Saturdays the street is characterised by parked cars as a result of parking bays on both side of the street, in addition to the car park and the parking bays on adjoining Grange Road, which can cause the car to dominate the area somewhat. Associated parking metres and signage would also benefit to rationalisation and the utilisation of buildings for signage, rather than individual posts. Users are primarily shoppers and those using the businesses on the street. Floorscape is tarmac for the road and concrete tiles for the pavements.





## Prebend Row

Starting where West Row finishes, paralleling High Row and finishing near the statue of Joseph Pease, Prebend Row opens out into Prospect Place, just before where Northgate starts. The statue of Pease was unveiled in 1875 to mark the Golden Jubilee of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway; it is an electroform casting – zinc dipped in copper – one and a half times life-size (approximately 9ft) and Pease is represented in middle age, wearing a Quaker, lapel-less coat. As part of the Pedestrian Heart development, the statue has been returned to its original location.

Prebend means: “Originally: the estate or portion of land from which a stipend is derived to support a canon of a cathedral or collegiate church, or a member of its chapter”,<sup>38</sup> which clearly shows its close relationship geographically and functionally, to St Cuthbert’s Church.

The street is again part of the bus route through town and is therefore usually busy as a result of buses, taxis and pedestrian. Street furniture is modern and dominated by bus stops, as to be expected in a town centre. The floorscape is a mixture of tarmac for the road and granite paving with raised kerbs and the bus halts. The main building on the street is the Cornmill Centre, which with its canopy stands higher than its 3 storey neighbours, but the dominant vista is that of the King’s Head Hotel, the frontage of which was lost behind a branch of Woolworths (now also departed) in 1939. Currently it is covered in scaffolding and covers following the August 2008 fire and hopefully work will soon begin on repair and refurbishment.



Prebend Row facing north



1, 1a & 2 Prebend Row

39. Oxford English Dictionary

## Priestgate

This street is at the junction with Prebend Row to the west and Crown Street and St Cuthbert's Way to the east and provides for vistas to the Cornmill Centre archway from the west, and from the east, High Row and the Clock Tower, intersected by the aforementioned archway. Priestgate descends east to the junction with St Cuthbert's Way. Access to the carriageway is restricted to western section of Priestgate, to commercial access, buses and taxis.

The floorscape is a tarmac carriageway, with a raised kerb to the stone pavement, plus additional higher kerbing to the two bus halts. With a high proportion of active frontage, and two to three storey heights, scale and massing is comparable, with the exception of the Cornmill archway, in excess of the height of mainly red brick, traditional frontages. Roofscape is varied, comprising tiled dual pitched, flat, with the occasional mock parapet features evident (No.s 9 to 11 plus Cornmill archway).

Street furniture is dominated by the taxi rank lining the southern fringe of the carriageway between the junction with Prebend Row and the Cornmill archway. Contemporary grey finger posts provide pedestrian direction, with highways signs restricting public parking. Noise in the area comes from pedestrians and buses.



## Prospect Place

This is located at the junction with Prebend Row and High Row and provides for a vista west up Bondgate, and south along Prebend Row to West Row and along High Row. Viewing Prospect Place from the south, the main vista incorporates the dominant curved stone building currently occupied by HSBC bank. In the foreground the zinc, dipped in copper, statue of Joseph Pease, mounted on granite, fronts public amenity space on Prebend Row to the south. Prospect Place ascends west towards Bondgate and is seen as one of the outdoor spaces for staging outdoor events and activities in Darlington.

Prospect Place floorscape includes a granite carriageway with a non-raised stone pavement, intersected by grated rainwater gulleys. The scale of surrounding, predominantly red brick buildings is comparable at three-storey height, as is massing, primarily of structures to the north of Prospect Place. Roofscape is largely dual pitched with the exception of the flat roof evident on Kenneth House.

Bespoke granite planters shared largely with High Row to the south, with contemporary grey coloured waste bins and street lighting, make up the street furniture. The inner ring road and pedestrians are audible from Prospect Place. Users of the area comprised pedestrians and commercial delivery traffic and the area is a commercial, primarily retail zone. Texture of the area appears bright, smooth and spacious to the east, however darker and narrow progressing west.



Prospect Place from High Row



Prospect Place facing the statue of Joseph Pease



The statue of Joseph Pease built 1875

## Skinnergate

Running parallel to High Row, Skinnergate is connected by the yards and wynds as well as at either end by Houndgate at the south and Bondgate at the north. The usage is primarily commercial, a mixture of retail and public houses with the clear exception being the Friends Meeting House at no. 6. Therefore the street is busy with pedestrians during the day in the week and during the evenings can be equally busy, especially at the weekend, functioning as part of the evening economy.

To the north end of the street small, mainly two storey buildings dominate. The southern end of the street has a number of individual buildings of note that are larger, in scale and massing, buildings, including the aforementioned Friends Meeting House, no. 1 Skinnergate and the Mechanics' Institution, currently in use as a nightclub. The street has suffered a number of modern, flat-roofed buildings, whose design is out of character with the surrounding buildings and the townscape of the street. Whilst shop fronts dominate on the ground floor building materials are not homogenous, with brick and render in common usage.

The street benefits from some sympathetic highways lines in 50mm primrose and pre-painted lines on granite sets at the West end of the street, which are particularly successful as well as the use of use of bollards to display appropriate highways signs. The floorscape is much improved on Skinnergate with no use of tarmac for the Highway, where setts are in use instead providing a much softer feel, as does the cobbled banding between the pavement tiles and the highway. The street has none of the imposing qualities of the Market Place; most of its architecture is unpretentious and domestic in nature.



## Tubwell Row

This street is so named because of the water well, which was closed off in the late 1800s after several hundred years of serving the population of Darlington. During work on repaving in 1992 the well was discovered again and the pump replaced. It is another street that descends, this time west to east from High Row to the River Skerne. It is a very busy street due to being part of the main route through town for buses since the pedestrianisation of High Row and the Market Place in the Pedestrian Heart Scheme.

During the day it is full of pedestrians shopping, buses, taxis and vans parking to unload at the Market Hall. The view standing on High Row looking west to east is of St Cuthbert's Church spire and the River Skerne, but this view is dominated by parked buses, oversize, contemporary street lighting and the banners hanging vertically on the Cornmill Centre. Main usage is shops and public houses, again with the modern Cornmill Centre dominating on the south side; this part of the Cornmill Centre is the former home of the Co-operative's main store from the 1960s, which was demolished for development of the Cornmill Centre.

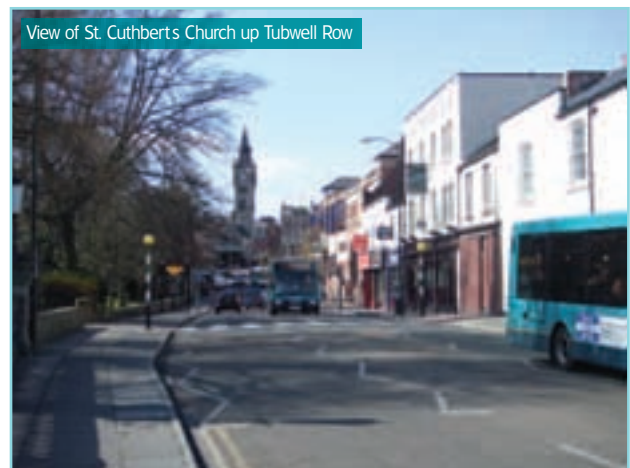
The road is tarmac with double yellow lines and the pavements are granite stone. Rooflines are flat, mock parapet and dual pitch to the North side and similar rooflines to the South side but one building (37 Tubwell Row) dominates with its Mansard roof. From the High Row end of the street, the sound of pedestrians and the Pedestrian Heart water feature are audible.



View down Tubwell Row facing east



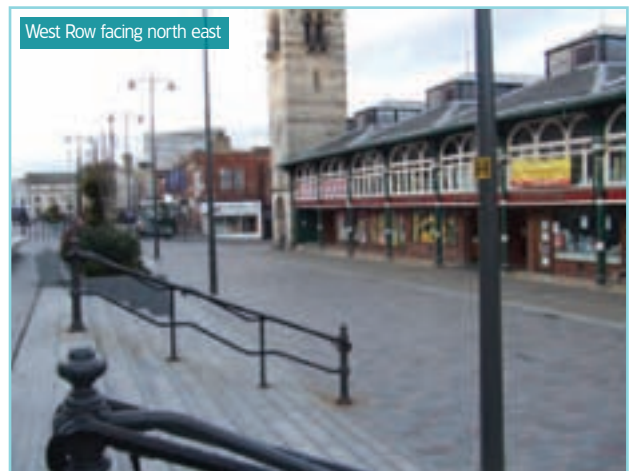
Tubwell Row from High Row



View of St. Cuthbert's Church up Tubwell Row

## West Row

This street parallels High Row, at a lower level, running south to north from Horsemarket until it becomes Prebend Row. It is dominated by bus stops, pedestrians and buses and also, on occasion, temporary market stalls and their accompanying sights, sounds and smells. The buildings begin, walking south to north, with Waterhouse's Town Hall, now used as part of the Market; the buildings continue to the Market Hall itself. The horizontal roofline of the market place contrasts with the Clock Tower and with the buildings on High Row. Noises and smells come from the Market and users are entirely pedestrian in the heart of the retail centre.



## The Yards and Wynds

These areas are a locally distinctive feature of Darlington. They run between High Row and Skinnergate, providing a welcome break from the hustle and bustle of the busier shopping streets. From High Row each is identified by their name engraved in stone and projecting, hanging signs at the entranceways and from Skinnergate they are identified by projecting hanging signs at entranceways. The yards, particularly, have similar characters to one another and two of the widest and busiest of the yards and wynds are Clark's Yard and Post House Wynd.



Aerial View of Yards and Wynds

## Clark's Yard

This is east of, and accessed from High Row, or Skinnergate to the west ascending to the west. Vistas are dominated by modern festive fairy lights, and a clay pantile above brick commercial premise at the first deviation from the linear street form. The floorscape is stone paving edged with cobbles covering former basement accessways, Scoria blocks and cast iron service and surface water drain covers.

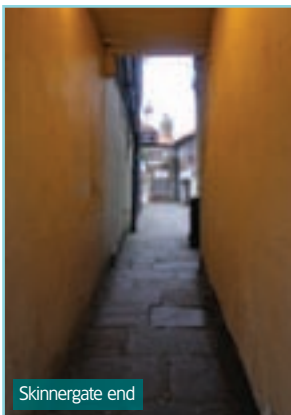
Mid way along Clark's Yard, adjacent the modern residential development, a plastic water valve and concrete British Telecom covers interrupt the traditional floorscape, however Scoria blocks provide a link. Building scale and massing varies from three storeys to the south of Yard, and two storeys to the north; roofscape is dual pitched of varying materials, mainly natural slate.

Little is often audible from Clark's Yard and the atmosphere differs along the length of the street; a claustrophobic entry from High Row led to a less than inviting frontage, however the recessed corner and deviation from the linear form mid-way along the yard add character to the area, resulting in a smooth texture.

Street furniture includes cast iron down-pipes, wall-mounted hanging signs, cigarette stub boxes, green painted British Telecom junction box, boundary metal railings to the residential area, and security cast iron railings to shop fronts.



New development in Clark's Yard



Skinnergate end



High Row end



19thC building



19thC building

## Post House Wynd

Accessed from High Row from the east and Skinnergate from the west, Post House Wynd also ascends to the west, providing for vistas of wall-mounted hanging signage, ornate former gas, iron framed with glass street lamp (Dunn Cow Public House), and supporting wiring affixed across the yard for festive fairy lighting. The width of the wynd restricts users to pedestrian traffic only and its character is defined by its small scale, narrowness and the retail use.

With a mix of differing building storeys, Post House Wynd comprises a built environment of varied scale and massing. Roofscape is predominantly dual pitch, with occasional dormers, but is difficult to assess given the restricted viewing area and structure heights. Floorscape is a mix of cobbled central sections, surrounded by granite paving, littered with cast iron drain covers.

Street furniture includes a green painted British Telecom junction box, with cast iron heritage refuse bins, cast iron 0.5m high bollards inset to the corner of 31 Post House Wynd. A quieter atmosphere surrounds the wynd with no vehicular noise, and a despite the dark, enclosed vistas, the built environment exudes smoothness.





## 5. ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

### Key Views and Vistas

There are a number of important views into and out of the Conservation Area and landmark buildings, which are identified and illustrated on the Key Map.

#### Crown Street

There is a key view of St Cuthbert's Church when stood on Crown Street facing south.

#### Parkgate

Near the junction of Parkgate with the inner ring road there is a full view of St Cuthbert's Church, Tubwell Row and the Clock Tower. This is a key view because of the fine setting of the church and it's juxtaposition with the aforementioned Clock Tower.

#### St Cuthbert's Church

This Grade I Listed, mostly 13th century, church has been described as "one of the most important churches in the county...uncommonly beautiful...with a crossing tower and spire which seems to possess just the right height."<sup>40</sup> The church can be seen for some distance in the Borough and forms part of the Council's logo and can be found on numerous local documents, brochures and tourist guides, it is one of the Borough's distinctive buildings.

#### The Market Hall and Clock Tower

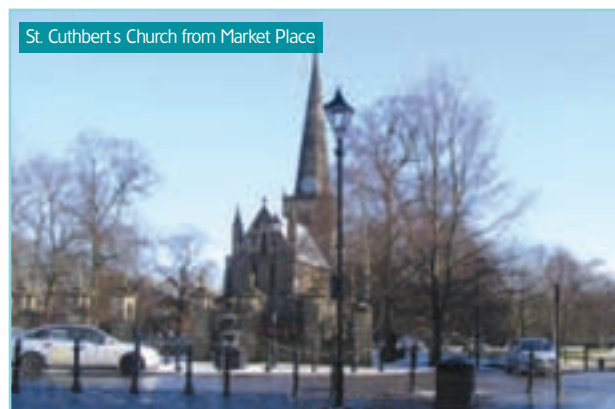
This middle-late 19th Century Waterhouse designed, Grade II Listed Building in the Market Place is an important landmark building, dominating from High Row and further out of the Conservation Area, providing a vertical contrast to the horizontal Covered Market building. Again, the Clock Tower is used as part of the Council's logo and on numerous Council documents, brochures and tourist guides as one of the Borough's distinctive buildings. The Clock Tower is seemingly designed to be seen from a far due to the intensity of the detail near the top and the relative lack of detail at the base of the tower.



St Cuthbert's Church from Crown Street



Town Hall and St. Cuthbert's Church from Parkgate



St. Cuthbert's Church from Market Place



The Market Hall and Clock Tower from West Row

40. Pevsner, N (second edition revised by Williamson, E.) (1985) *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, London: Yale University Press. Pg 140.

## Gateways

Development in these gateway areas needs to be particularly well designed to preserve and enhance these prominent parts of the Conservation Area. Inappropriate and unsympathetic development in these locations could have a particularly negative impact on the Conservation Area.

### Bondgate

As you leave Woodland Road and enter Bondgate it is clear you have left the suburbs and the town centre fringe behind and are heading in to the town centre. The terraces past Portland Place on the south side and the funeral directors at 59a–61 Bondgate past Salisbury Terrace on the north side are prominent buildings at an entrance to the Conservation Area.

### Coniscliffe Road

9–19 Westpoint, a modern flat development and Larchfield House, a large, prominent building now converted into flats are in a sensitive location. Larchfield House sits next to nos. 38 and 44 Coniscliffe Road and opposite the Georgian terrace of nos. 41–61 Coniscliffe Road, the latter which lie within Stanhope Road – Grange Road Conservation Area and all of which are Listed Buildings. This area forms the boundary between the Town Centre Conservation Area and Stanhope Road – Grange Road Conservation Area.

### Northgate

This gateway offers a vista of High Row and the numerous Listed Buildings including the King's Head Hotel. You are clearly entering the heart of the Conservation Area and the Borough's main town.

### Stonebridge

Following crossing the River Skerne you will enter the Conservation Area and be aware of St Cuthbert's Church to the South as well as views to the Town Hall behind it. Despite the open space surrounding the church because of the numerous trees the area can feel quite enclosed until it opens out upon entering the Market Place.

Clearly the boundary of the Conservation Area includes other roads, so this in no way encouraged less than sensitive development elsewhere in the Conservation Area, but the above are the prominent gateways where alterations, additions and new development are most sensitive. Prominent gateways are identified on map x.

## Duke Street

With the addition of Duke Street into the Conservation Area, a new gateway emerges where the Town Centre Conservation Area meets West End Conservation Area, almost where Duke Street meets Stanhope Road. There is a distinct character change from the suburban, residential terraces of the West End Conservation to the becoming more urban, commercial street, although some of the materials and detailing continue until Skinnergate.



## Open Space

Whilst little green space is evident within the Conservation Area (with the exception of that surrounding St Cuthbert's Church and the River Skerne and the burial ground at the back of the Friend's Meeting House), urban public space is more prevalent. The Market Place, the heart of the town, which is full of flowers in planters and hanging baskets in the summer, is the most prominent open space, allowing the user to stand back and appreciate the buildings surrounding it.

Prospect Place is also open public realm, with steps, seating and planters as well as the Listed statute of Joseph Pease, which allows greater views of the imposing building housing HSBC bank and the fine King's Head Hotel. The junction between Blackwellgate, Grange Road and Coniscliffe Road forms an important urban space. Although it is not as tightly defined as the Market Place, it is dominated by large Victorian and early twentieth century buildings occupying corner sites.

All areas of open space within the Conservation Area are well provided for in terms of seating and planters, which are full of flowers in the summer, and are in regular use for cultural and retail activities and event, but the Conservation Area could benefit from additional green space. Open space is identified on the Key Map.



Blackwellgate public realm



Prospect Place



Burial ground behind Quaker Meeting House



Burial ground behind Quaker Meeting House

## Uses

As made clear by the street-by-street assessment, usage in the Conservation Area is predominantly commercial, with some public and residential uses. This is as expected and as desired in the heart of the Borough's only town, one of the borough's greatest assets as home to many thriving businesses.

A large part of the Conservation Area is pedestrianized, with buses, taxis and access-only

traffic permitted to pass one-way through the heart of the area along Priestgate, Prebend Row and out again along Tubwell Row; this leads to numerous bus stops along the route. There is a taxi rank alongside the Market Hall, for which additional signage appears on a regular basis; this could be better managed without the need for the amount of signage fixed to or in the setting of the Listed Buildings in the area.

## Shopfronts

As previously discussed, the Town Centre Conservation Area has a primarily commercial use. The design and form of Shopfronts have a considerable impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The aim is to encourage good shopfront and advertisement design within the Conservation Area, with a preference to retain existing traditional shopfronts. New shopfronts, particularly on modern buildings in the Conservation Area, need not be traditional in design; contemporary, well-proportioned designs with high quality materials can be just as successful.

- Planning permission is normally required for material alterations to existing or new shopfronts, therefore it is not usually granted for shopfronts that do not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.
- Advertisement Consent can also be required for new or altered advertisements. Banners are not encouraged within Conservation Areas.

- Listed Building Consent is required for most shopfront and advertisement alterations on a Listed Building.

Detailed information on shopfront design is available in 'Shopfronts: Design Guidelines in County Durham' as produced by Durham County Council, available on our website and on request. Detailed information on what requires Advertisement Consent can be found in the 'Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers', produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government and available on their website.

If you are considering undertaking shopfront alterations we recommend you contact the Council prior to undertaking any work to a shopfront. Work carried out without the required permissions or consent may result in enforcement action, which will cause disruption and can lead to considerable expense.



## Shopfront Security

Shopfront security can be an important and at times emotive issue for retailers. Our aim is to guide retailers towards effective security measures for individual premises that also respect the character of the existing building and the street scene. Poorly thought out responses to security concerns can have a dramatic impact, degrading the quality of the Conservation Area.

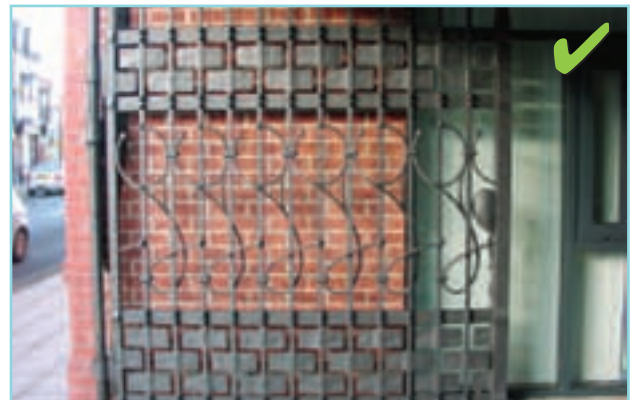
- Planning permission is usually required for shopfront security additions, particularly external shutters and grilles.
- Listed Building Consent is almost always required for all forms of shopfront security, as modern additions. Consent is very rarely granted for visually intrusive and physically damaging measures such as grilles or shutters.

Retailers should evidence alternative, less visually intrusive measures such as toughened glass and CCTV have been employed before applying for permission for external grilles or

shutters. Solid metal shutters are unlikely to receive permission because they result in 'dead frontages', offering opportunities for fly-posting and graffiti. A variety of internal and external open (perforated) designs exist that provide a secure, more sympathetic solution.

Detailed information on shopfront security is available in 'Planning Guidance Note No.8: Shopfront Security' and 'Shopfront Security: Design Guidelines in County Durham' as produced by Durham County Council, available on our website and on request.

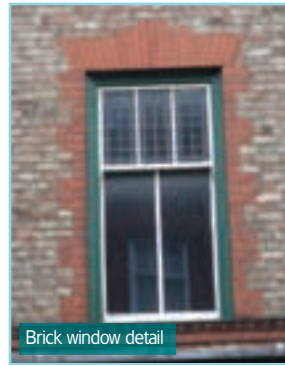
If you are considering make shopfront security changes to your premises we recommend you contact the Council prior to undertaking any alterations, so we can provide advice on measures to aid retailers whilst not damaging the Conservation Area. Work carried out without the required permission or consent may result in enforcement action, which will cause disruption and can lead to considerable expense.



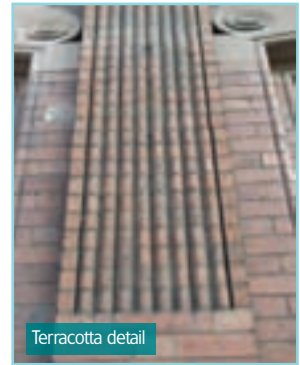
## Architectural Details and Materials

Architecturally, like most towns, there are varying styles, because the town has developed over many years and when new development occurs it is often in the style of the day. Darlington expanded most rapidly during the industrial revolution under the reign of Queen Victoria and many of the designs of Victorian architects John Middleton, J.P. Pritchett, Alfred Waterhouse and G.G. Hoskins can still be seen today. This leads to the dominant use of red brick with terracotta dressings, Ashlar dressings and natural slate roofs with some High Victorian, Gothic styles in evidence, particularly for civic or commercial buildings. There is also some fine ceramic tile detailing on a number of buildings, some of which are unlisted. Overall the cumulative impact of buildings is positive, with some individual exceptions.

Modern development within the Conservation Area has not always been successful in being considerate to its older, more traditional neighbours, but the front elevation of the Dolphin Centre, a façade implying separate buildings, is more successful. Hopefully we can learn the lessons of some 1960s and 1970s additions when it comes to new development; it need not mimic neighbouring traditional development, but should consider its form and materials. See the following section for guidance on new development within the Conservation Area.



Brick window detail



Terracotta detail



Window detail



Ceramic detail

Terracotta detailing on Crown Street Library



The following materials make a positive contribution to and are characteristic of Darlington Town Centre Conservation Area, so their use will be encouraged, where appropriate. This list is not exhaustive.

## **Building Materials:**

- Red brick
- Terracotta dressings and ceramic tile cladding (for detailing only)
- Dressed stone (for important buildings only)
- Glass (on contemporary buildings)

## **Roofing Materials:**

- Natural slate
- Clay Pantiles
- Lead (small areas only on domestic buildings, larger areas may be appropriate on community buildings)

## **Windows and Doors:**

- Timber, style dependent on age of building

## **Boundary Treatments:**

- Railings (style appropriate to building)
- Walls (material and detailing appropriate to building)

## **Landscape Materials:**

- Local stone
- Granite for public realm

The following materials do not make a positive contribution to and are not characteristic of Darlington Town Centre Conservation Area, so their use will be discouraged. This list is not exhaustive.

## **Building Materials:**

- Render
- Non-red brick (such as buff or blue)
- Timber cladding
- Metal

## **Roofing Materials:**

- Artificial slate
- Shingle
- Felt or glass reinforced plastic

## **Windows and Doors:**

- uPVC
- Metal (although may be appropriate for windows and doors on some buildings, dependant on age)

## **Boundary Treatments:**

- Fencing

## **Landscape Materials:**

- Concrete paving stones
- Concrete setts
- Tarmacadam or Asphalt as pavement



Dolphin Centre new development in the Conservation Area

## **New Development**

National policy and guidance requires that new development within Conservation Areas preserves and enhances and that it has a positive, or at the very least no negative, impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Further guidance on new development within the borough can be found in the Council's Design for New Development Supplementary Planning Document. The document identifies character zones. The Town Centre Conservation Area falls within zone 1.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

### Strengths

- The preserved architecture offered within the Market Place and by the Market Buildings offers a clear focal point with many valuable buildings, which are generally well maintained. Main points of entry either from the North (Prebend Row), from the West (Blackwell Gate), from the South (Bull Wynd) and from the East (Church Row), direct attention towards the key features of the Market Buildings, High Row and the Clock Tower. These features help characterise the area and enrich the experience for residents and visitors alike.
- Architectural variety within the area is great and of high quality, making for a rich tapestry of building style and age that are distinctively Darlington, many of which we have our Quaker forefathers to thank for. Such features are cleverly offered in a relatively formal setting, as in the case of High Row, however further exploration of the yards and wynds reveals an irregular and contrasting setting, offering comparative peace from the hustle and bustle of the main street.
- Market and cultural events combined with the busy retail and commercial environment using the historic setting as its backdrop help create a vibrant town centre at the heart of the Borough.

### Weaknesses

- Unsympathetic alterations to unlisted properties and some 1960s and 1970s development has provided for an architectural style somewhat at odds with the structures that have formed the dominant character. Some pastiche development has introduced uneasy modern architecture to a historic setting.
- Insufficient coordination surrounding the piecemeal introduction of replacement street furniture is weak and highways signs and lines can be overly dominating in some areas.
- Views into the area from the south are dominated by the rear of the Dolphin centre, and beyond this opened out by the recently demolished former bus depot, currently in use as a car park. Views of and around the Telephone Exchange on Larchfield and Barnard Street, sited adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary on Bondgate are also weak.

### Opportunities

- Replacement of some of the weak, modern shopfront fascias with sympathetically designed alternatives would offer a harmonised frontage for buildings in their own right, and raise the overall quality of the external appearance of the area; contemporary can be as successful as traditional shopfronts, dependant on the building and there are good existing examples.
- Future utilisation of the flexibilities allowed in 'environmentally sensitive areas' within The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 including the removal of unnecessary signage would significantly benefit the Conservation Area.
- Consideration for the introduction of planting along High Row, Blackwellgate, and through the Market Place to existing copses within the churchyard to the east would enhance the character of the locality and soften the impacts of some of the 1960s and 1970s development.
- Development opportunities include the car park site of the former bus depot and Feethams and the Oval, comprising the existing surface car parks at Commercial Street and Kendrew Street at the north end of the Conservation Area.

### Threats

- Loss of remaining traditional or well-designed shop fronts to poorly designed alternatives would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The introduction of additional street furniture and highways signs and lines needs to be done sensitively, making use of the allowed flexibility within The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002.



## Conclusions

Clear patterns emerge to give a picture of the character and townscape of the Conservation Area as a whole. It is an area with mixed topography, vistas of landmark St Cuthbert's Church and the Clock Tower, dominated by fine historic buildings interspersed with larger modern buildings. On one side the Market Hall plays a subservient role to High Row while on the other it has gained a storey as a result of topography and plays a major part in defining the Market Place. Similarly the Clock Tower dominates from High Row but less so in the Market Place, where its impact is reduced by Bakehouse Hill and the Market Hall itself. St Cuthbert's Church plays its part as an enclosing element. All of these features play a major part in defining the town centre's distinctiveness.

Relating the heart of the town centre to the rest of the area highlights its vitality as the busiest shopping street during the day, still adhering to the medieval street patterns to a large extent, where the Market Hall and regular outdoor market is located and its role as part of the evening economy with its restaurants and pubs. It connects well to Skinnergate and Grange Road, running parallel to High Row, which can be reached with a short walk through Darlington's distinctive yards and wynds that offer a break from the hustle and bustle. The inner ring road provides a visual break but can act as a barrier to the town centre fringe areas.

There is a mixture of ground treatments, although, positively, tarmac dominates less following the Pedestrian Heart development. Floorscape ranges from granite stone tiles, concrete tiles on pavements, Scoria blocks, tarmac and cobble roads, which can be rather busy; greater ground treatment harmony but not total homogenisation, would be of benefit to the character and appearance of the area.

Building materials are widely mixed, although the Quaker and Victorian influence on Darlington can be observed through the use of red brick, terracotta dressings and the use of Ashlar (dressed stonework) on grander often commercial buildings (such as Barclays – Backhouse – Bank on High Row). Roofing materials are predominantly natural slate or pantile, although more recent buildings have a variety of less traditional roofing materials.

Street furniture is either predominantly black, 'heritage' small scale or the 2006 Pedestrian Heart-introduced, predominantly grey, contemporary large scale. Rationalisation and reduction of unnecessary Highway signs would benefit the Conservation Area.

Despite many valuable individual buildings, due to some modern unsympathetic elements and the mix of street furniture and floorscape materials, the area seems unsure whether to look to the future or gather strength from the past when it can achieve both successfully, enhancing a distinctive Darlington town centre.

## 6. BOUNDARY ADDITIONS

The proposed boundary additions are shown on the Proposed Boundary Additions map in Appendix 2.

### Duke Street

The full stretch of Duke Street clearly functions as part of the Town Centre and has many of the architectural styles and details characteristic of the Conservation Area. This area was only left without the Conservation Area, when designated in 1976, because of the potential for the inner-ringing road route to affect Duke Street. Therefore it is now proposed to rectify this and bring Duke Street into the Town Centre Conservation Area.



Duke Street

### Four Riggs

Covering the area of Four Riggs, Upper Archer Street and Sun Street, this area is proposed because of some good examples of town centre fringe terraced housing and the use of ceramics on the Three Crowns PH on Archer Street. There are also areas of potential future development in the Archer Street car park and the warehouse between Four Riggs and Sun Street, which, as currently adjacent to the Conservation Area, would benefit being included.



Four Riggs

### Northgate

This extension includes some more of Northgate, although not the entire area up to the roundabout. It is proposed because to some extent it bridges the gap between the Town Centre Conservation Area and Northgate Conservation Area, bringing in more of the town centre buildings currently overlooked, up to 'Marks and Spencers corner' before the roundabout.



Northgate

### Riverside

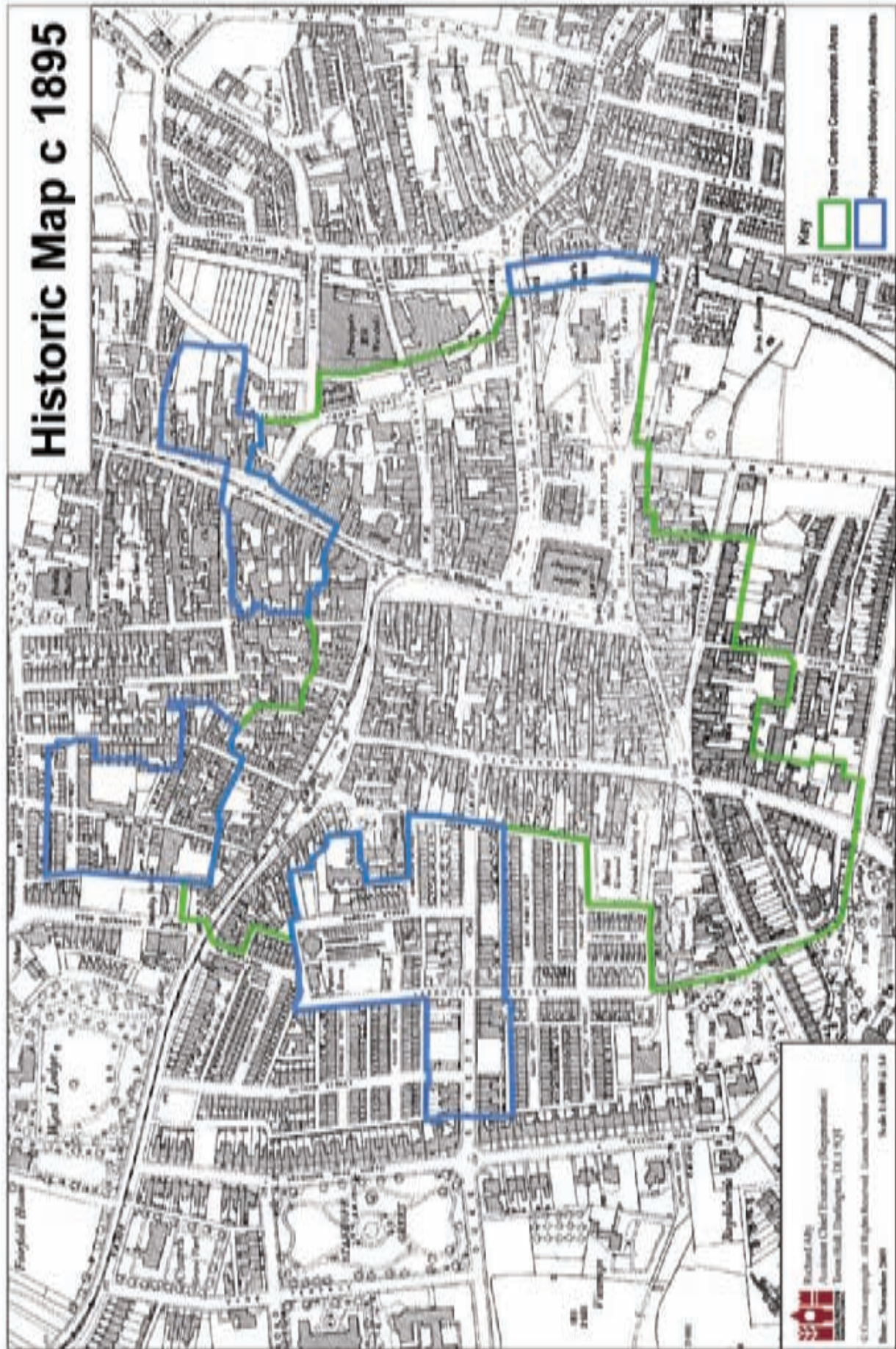
The river in this location currently adjoins the Conservation Area boundary and it therefore forms part of one of the entrances to the Conservation Area, currently unprotected; it would be beneficial to bring this area into the Conservation Area to guide future enhancement. This area also includes St Cuthbert's Bridge, an unlisted bridge worthy of Conservation Area protection.



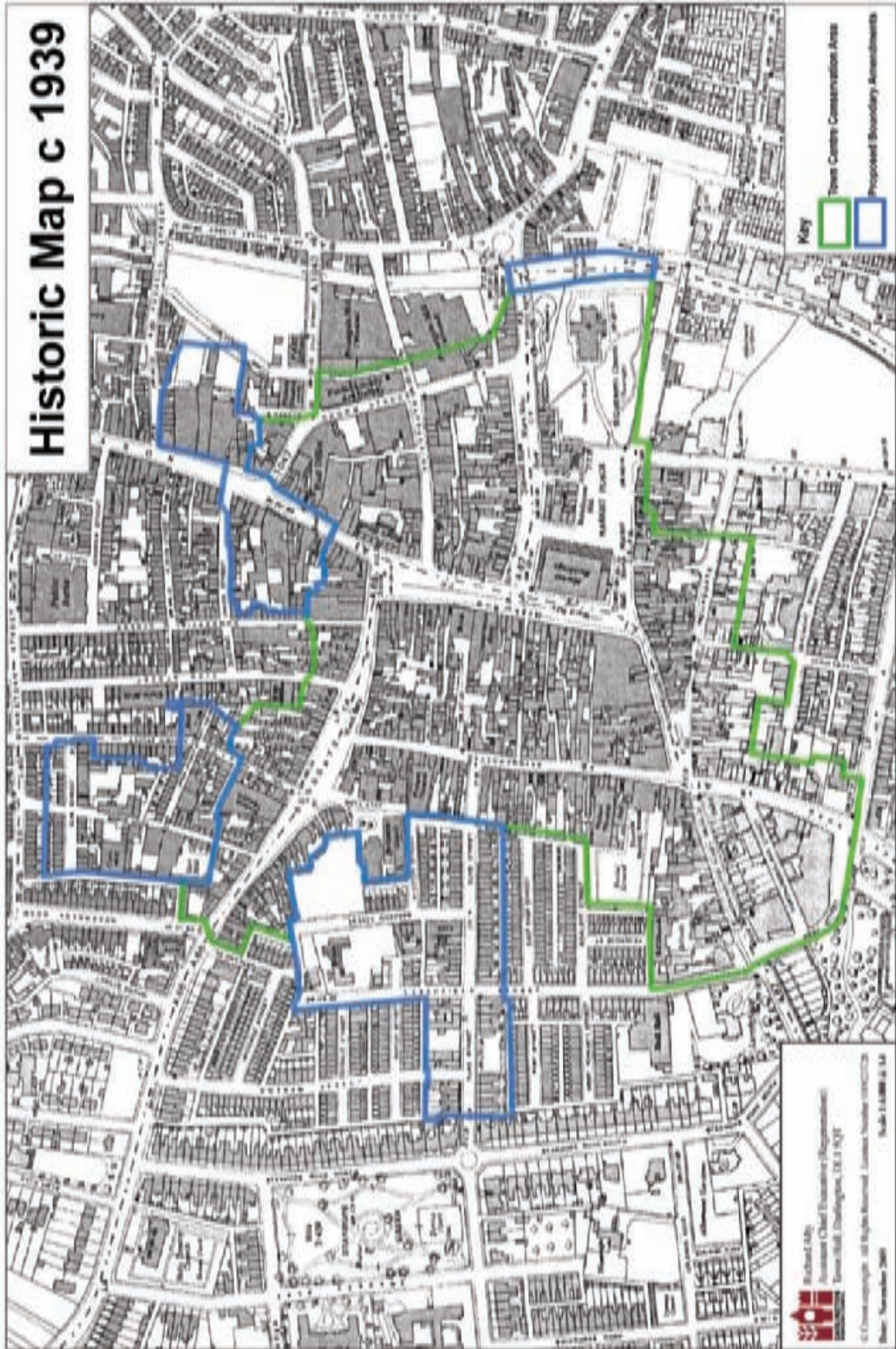
Riverside

# APPENDIX 1: MAPS - HISTORIC AND MODERN

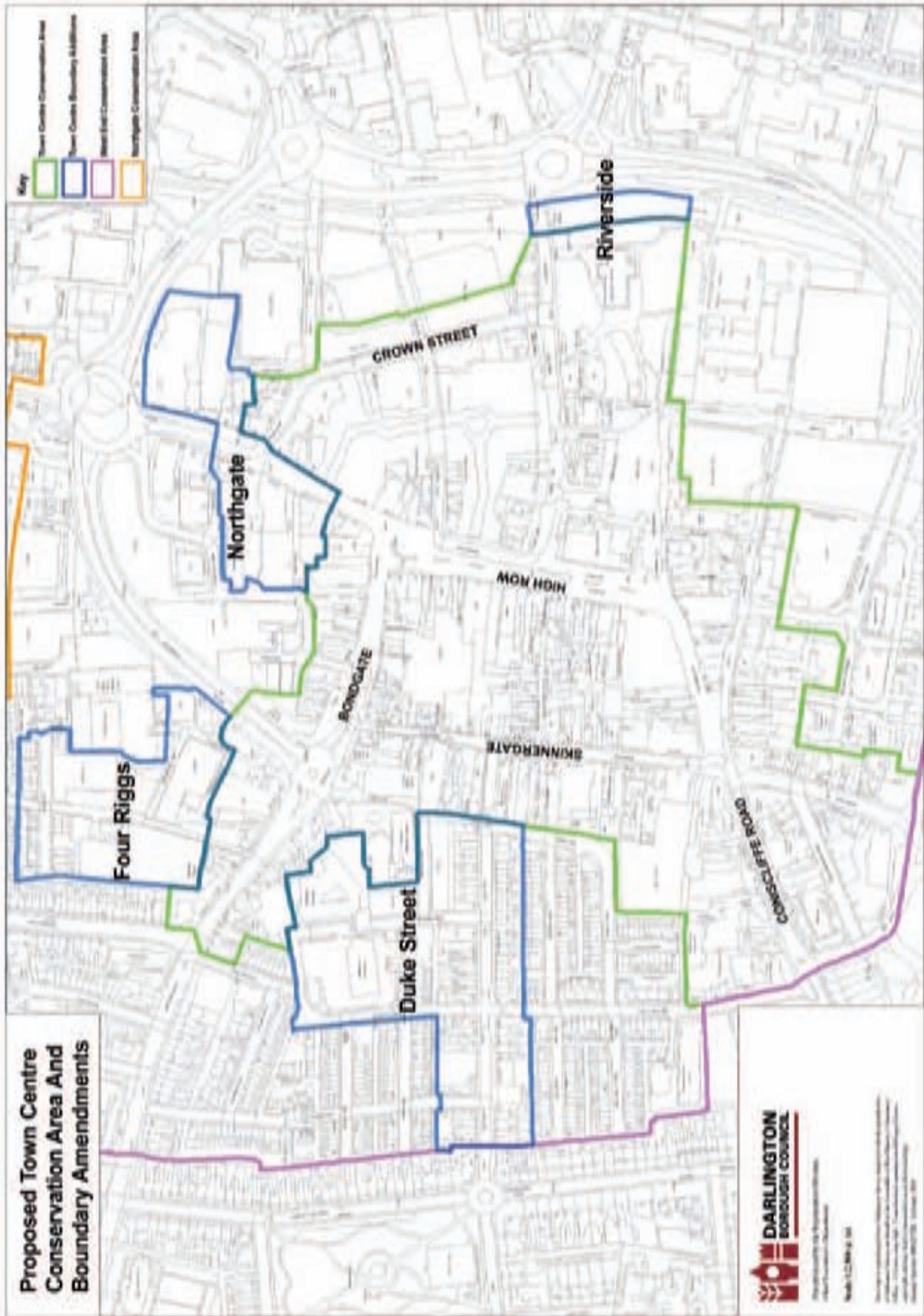








# APPENDIX 2: MAPS - BOUNDARY ADDITIONS



## APPENDIX 3: LISTED BUILDINGS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area are shown on the Key Map.

There are 88 Listed Buildings within the Darlington Town Centre Conservation Area and all but four (the statue of Joseph Pease on High Row, the War Memorial in the grounds of St Cuthbert's Church, the wall in front of St Cuthbert's Church and the wall to the rear of the Nag's Head public house) are buildings.

### Grade I:

- St Cuthbert's Church

### Grade II\*:

- Bennett House, 14 Horsemarket
- 81 Bondgate
- Bondgate Methodist Church
- The Friends Meeting House, 6 Skinnergate
- 27 High Row (Barclays / Backhouse Bank)

### Grade II:

- 1 Archer Street
- 6 Bakehouse Hill (Hogarth's)
- 7-8 Bakehouse Hill (The Pennyweight PH)
- Bainbridge House, Skinnergate
- 24 Blackwellgate
- 30-32 Blackwellgate
- 35-36 Blackwellgate
- Blackwellgate House, 37 Blackwellgate
- 30-32 Bondgate
- 33 Bondgate / 33-34 Bondgate
- 35 Bondgate
- 44 Bondgate
- 45-47 Bondgate
- 49-50 Bondgate (Slaters PH)
- 53 Bondgate
- 55-56 Bondgate
- 67 Bondgate
- 92 Bondgate
- 107 Bondgate
- Turk's Head PH, 21-22 Bondgate
- Fountain, Bull Wynd
- Central Hall

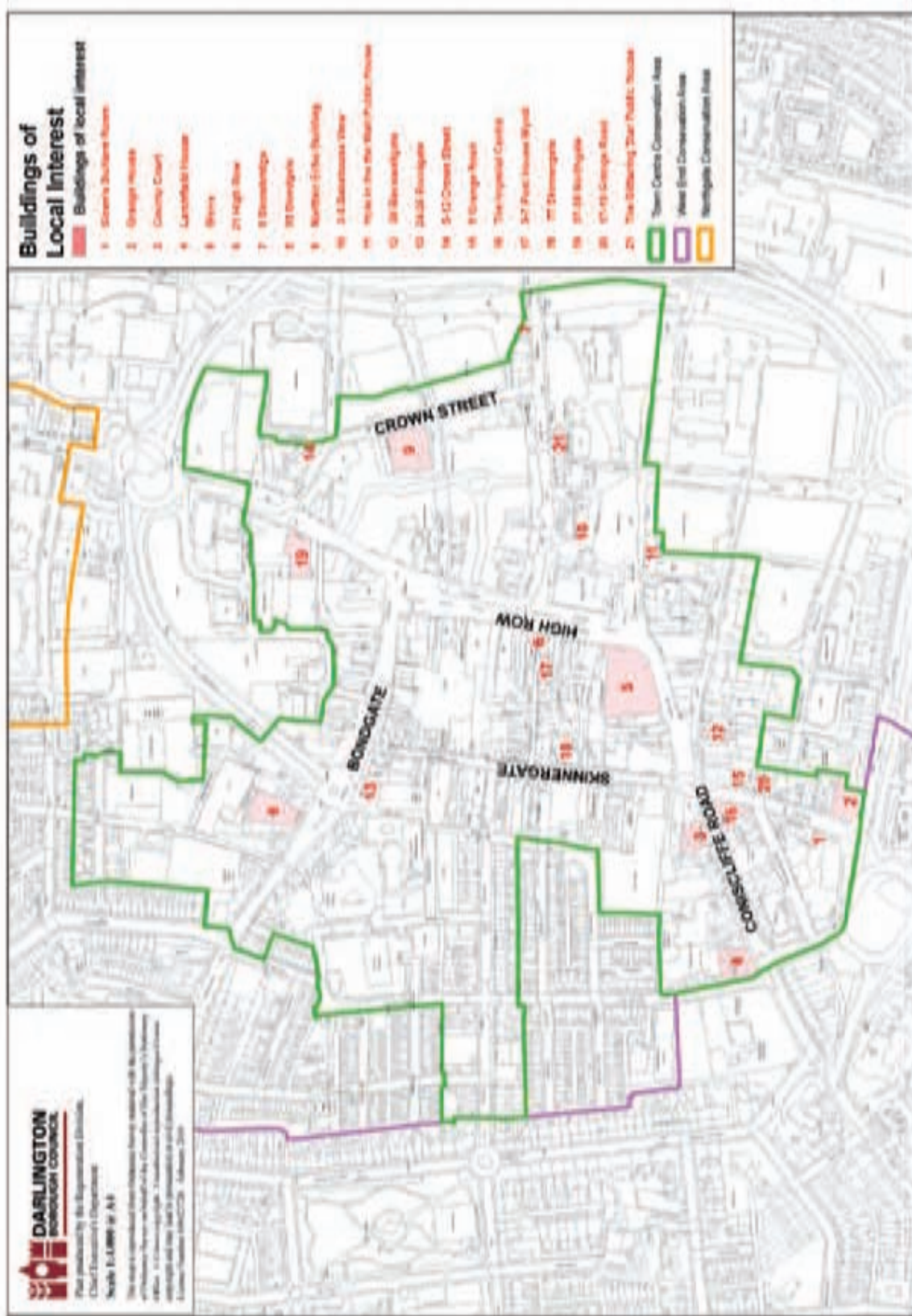
- 2-8 Clarks Yard
- Darlington Post Office, Crown Street
- Crown Street Chambers
- 1-7 Crown Street
- Central Library, Crown Street
- 21 Coniscliffe Road
- 38-40 Coniscliffe Road
- 26 Coniscliffe Road
- The Presbytery, 30 Coniscliffe Road
- St Augustine's Roman Catholic Church, Coniscliffe Road
- The Boot & Shoe Public House, Church Row
- 8 Grange Road
- War Memorial, St Cuthbert's Church
- 8 High Row
- 12-16 High Row
- 17-18 High Row
- 19-20 High Row
- 25 High Row
- 32-33 High Row
- 34 High Row
- 38-40 High Row
- Joseph Pease statue, High Row
- Clock Tower, Horsemarket
- Covered Market Hall, Horsemarket
- Old Town Hall, Horsemarket
- 4-8 Horsemarket
- 9-10 Horsemarket
- 13 Horsemarket
- Pease House, 12A Horsemarket
- 9-10 Horsemarket
- 10-11 Houndgate
- 12 Houndgate

- 1 Mechanics Yard
- 2-3 Mechanics Yard
- 4-10 Northgate (King's Head Hotel)
- 38-32 Northgate
- 2-8 Northumberland Street
- 16a & 17 Post House Wynd (Green Dragon PH)
- 22 Post House Wynd
- 25 Post House Wynd
- 7-8 Prebend Row
- 35 Priestgate
- 37 Priestgate
- 39 Priestgate
- 40 Priestgate
- 1-2 Prospect Place
- 1 Skinnergate
- 2-5 Friends School Yard, Skinnergate
- 11 Skinnergate
- 12 Skinnergate
- 20 Skinnergate
- 21 Skinnergate
- 39 Skinnergate
- 74 Skinnergate
- 75-76 Skinnergate
- 78-79 Skinnergate
- 5 Tubwell Row
- 12 Tubwell Row
- 35 Tubwell Row
- 36A Tubwell Row
- 37 Tubwell Row
- Former Museum (Weaver's Cottage), Tubwell Row



# APPENDIX 4: BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Darlington does not currently have a Local List, but it is a target we are working towards. Therefore, the identification of locally valuable buildings that are not listed can provide them with some protection and certainly further consideration prior to potential development proposals that may affect them. Historic and architectural interest as well as location and prominence are sound reasons for recognition.



# DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA



Sloan's Billiard Room



Grange House



County Court



Larchfield House



Binns



21 High Row



8 Stonebridge



80 Bondgate



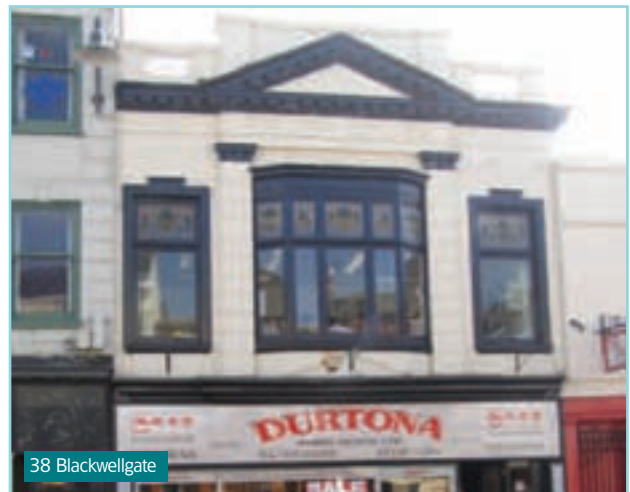
Northern Echo Building



3-5 Bakehouse View



Hole in the Wall Public House



38 Blackwellgate

# DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA



24-26 Bondgate



9-13 Crown Street



9 Grange Road



21 High Row



The Imperial Centre



5-7 Post House Wynd



77 Skinnergate



37 39 Northgate



The Glittering Star Public House

## APPENDIX 5: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### References

Archaeo-Environment Ltd. (2008) Barnard Castle Conservation Area Character Appraisal, Barnard Castle: Teesdale District Council

Cookson, G. (ed) (2005) The Victoria History of the Counties of England, A History of the County of Durham, Volume IV: Darlington, London: Boydell and Brewer

English Heritage and the Planning Advisory Service (2006) Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, London: English Heritage

Hardscape Darlington Pedestrian Heart - Case Study accessed from [www.hardscape.co.uk/uploads/files/Darlington%20Case%20Study%20updated.pdf](http://www.hardscape.co.uk/uploads/files/Darlington%20Case%20Study%20updated.pdf)

Longstaffe, W.H.D (1973) The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Darlington

Orde, A. (2000) Religion, Business and Society in North-East England: the Pease Family of Darlington in the 19th Century

Pevsner, N. (second edition revised by Williamson, E.) (1985) The Buildings of England: County Durham, London: Yale University Press.

Sunderland, N. (1972), A History of Darlington, Scolar Press Limited Yorkshire, Darlington Historical Society

### Thanks

Thanks go to Colin Bainbridge, for his kind agreement to use the old photographs and postcards of Darlington, found on the PBase website as sourced throughout the document"

### Further Information

Please note: If you are unsure whether your property is in a Conservation Area, or if you would like guidance on appropriate alterations and what requires planning permission, the quickest way to find out is to call the Council's Conservation Officer on: 01325 388604.

Council-produced leaflet Living in a Conservation Area: A Guide for Residents (also available as a paper copy on request)

[www.darlington.gov.uk/dar\\_public/Documents/Development%20and%20Environment/Development%20and%20Regeneration/Planning%20Services/Conservation/CAGuide.pdf](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/dar_public/Documents/Development%20and%20Environment/Development%20and%20Regeneration/Planning%20Services/Conservation/CAGuide.pdf)

English Heritage guidance on Your Home in a Conservation Area [www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.20516](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.20516)

Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment.

[www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) - The government's online planning and building regulations resource.

## GLOSSARY

### Advisory Groups, Panels or Committees

Government policy encourages Local Authorities to set up Conservation Area advisory committees. Local Authorities may have one conservation advisory committee to cover all their Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, or committees for individual Conservation Areas if they are large. Most advisory committees consist of a mixture of representatives from local groups and representatives from national amenity societies and professional bodies. The purpose of the committee is to provide the Council with advice on conservation area management plans and enhancement proposals, as well as on all applications for Conservation Area consent, planning permission and listed building consent.

### Amenity Notices Section 215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990

A useful way for Councils to take action in Conservation Areas, and indeed any space visible from the public highway. Because they apply to ‘any land’ and not just buildings, they can be used to deal with other problems such as broken walls and fences, accumulated rubbish or overgrown gardens and hedges. More information can be found in Town & Country Planning Act 1990,

Section 215: Best Practice Guide, ODPM (now DCLG) 2005, which can be found on the DCLG website: [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

### Appraisals

Conservation Area appraisals identify what is special and needs protecting and help in the area’s management. They can, and should ideally, be carried out with the involvement of the local community, so that the appraisal is owned by the whole Council and the community who live and work in the area. There are various ways to carry out appraisals, depending on the size and scale of the area. An appraisal needs to combine historic records and maps with a visual analysis of the present state of the area. Further guidance is given in English Heritage’s Guidance on Conservation Area appraisals.

### Article 4 Directions

Article 4 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (as amended) enables local planning authorities to make ‘directions’ withdrawing certain permitted development rights that the Order permits such as the right to change windows and doors. ‘Article 4(2)’ of the General Permitted Development Order allows Councils to take away that right (‘permitted development right’) from houses within Conservation Areas. This would involve the service of a legal notice (‘Article 4(2) Direction’) upon property owners and occupiers informing them of the rights that have been amended. Planning permission would then be required for the specified alterations however the planning application fee is waived. Article 4(1) of the GPDO can be used to withdraw permitted development rights on any type of land or building, but they need to be approved by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, via the Government Regional Office. For further information, please see Guidance on the management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage 2006.

These permitted development rights do not apply to flats or commercial properties – planning permission is required for alterations that ‘materially affect the external appearance of the building’.

### Building Regulations

Nearly every building project needs to comply with the Building Regulations. They exist to ensure the health and safety of people in and around all types of buildings, so ensure safe construction techniques and completed structures. They also provide assessment for energy conservation and access to and use of buildings. Even works that are “permitted development” will require Building Regulations approval from the Council’s Building Inspectors. In Conservation Areas when refurbishing an unlisted building the issue of the energy efficiency of the existing windows may well be raised by the Building Inspector, and the Inspector needs to be convinced of the historic merit of the building to allow any exemption from the requirements to upgrade the insulative properties of the windows (which can mean their replacement).

## Conservation Area Consent

Conservation Area consent is required for the demolition of buildings or structures over a certain minimum size in Conservation Areas.

## Designation of Conservation Areas

Local planning authorities designate Conservation Areas to protect parts of their area that they have assessed as being of special architectural or historic interest. In some exceptional cases the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and English Heritage can designate areas. Normally Council officers will identify the area and define its special interest and boundary, then identify all the addresses within the area. Public consultation is required before the preparation of a report to the appropriate Council committee, and the report to the committee must include the consequences of designation as well as the results of the consultation, and notification of the committee date needs to be published at least three days prior. If the committee resolves to approve the designation at the meeting then that is the date of designation, but the Council needs to place a notice in the local newspapers and the London Gazette and inform English Heritage and their Government Regional Office.

## Enforcement

Where works have taken place in a Conservation Area that the local planning authority considers needed Conservation Area consent or planning permission (for Conservation Area Consent this would mean the unauthorised demolition of a building and for Planning Permission this would mean works that required planning permission because they affected the character or appearance of the Conservation Area), the local planning authority may issue an enforcement notice. The owners then have a right of appeal against the notice, but if not upheld or appealed and the unauthorised work is not rectified the Council may either put it right themselves and seek to recover the costs or prosecute.

## Floorscape and street furniture

These are the two main elements that make up the public realm. If you think of outdoor spaces as rooms, then the floorscape is the floor covering and street furniture the furniture. In a living room you choose the best floor covering for the room to set off the décor and appropriate furniture that you carefully arrange attractively to make the room look as its best. This is what should happen in our streets – floor covering should match or be appropriate to whatever local buildings are made from, the local stone or brick. Street furniture should be of an appropriate design, be kept to a minimum, and be carefully arranged.

## Historic Street Furniture

Historic street furniture such as drinking fountains, cattle troughs, lamp columns, bollards, post boxes, milestones and rural fingerposts, together with monuments and memorials, make a major contribution to local identity. Local groups have an important role to play in identifying examples and working to ensure their long-term preservation and routine maintenance.

## Litter Abatement Notices

Under Section 91 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 anyone aggrieved by litter can apply to the Magistrate's Court for a litter abatement notice. If the owner fails to comply with the notice, they are guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine, together with a further daily fine for each day the offence continues. Local amenity societies and groups may find this a useful tool for encouraging landowners to clean up neglected road verges and railway embankments where accumulated litter has become a damaging eyesore.

## Management Plan

Local Authorities are required to “formulate and publish proposals” and a Conservation Area Management Plan is a tried and tested way of ensuring that all relevant considerations have been taken into account. A comprehensive Management Plan includes policies for enhancing the Conservation Area's streetscape, highways, landscapes and public spaces.

Management plans help ensure that the special character is protected when making decisions on planning applications or in identifying projects to improve the public spaces.



### Management Strategy

Essentially the same as a management plan, although a management plan deals principally with the controls in a Conservation Area and will sometimes include a forward programme while a management strategy will always include positive enhancement proposals.

### Permitted Development

Under planning legislation (General Permitted Development Order 1995 as amended in 2008) owners of single dwelling houses have the right to alter them in certain ways without needing planning permission from the Council. For example, a house can have its windows, front door or roof covering changed, its front garden paved over or its front elevation painted in a striking colour without the need for consent. In Conservation Areas, such alterations can be very harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

### Planning Portal

The Planning Portal is the UK Government's online planning and building regulations resource for England and Wales. The site can be used to learn about planning and building regulations, apply for planning permission, find out about development near you, and appeal against a decision and research government policy: [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

### Public realm

Public realm is the term used for the spaces between and within buildings/built up areas that are publicly accessible, including streets, alleys, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.

### Regulation 7 Direction Removing Deemed Consent

This useful part of the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) England Regulations 2007 allows local planning authorities to apply to the Secretary of State DCLG for a direction removing the rights of estate agents to put whatever boards they want up in a defined area, normally part of a Conservation Area. They may be restricted to a single board per property or to boards of set dimensions. The fact that estate agents boards are damaging the character and appearance of a Conservation Area first needs to be demonstrated.

### Repairs Notices

Can be used by the Council to force an owner to carry out emergency works to halt further decay of a Listed Building.

### Stopping the Rot

Local amenity societies and groups can identify neglected buildings in Conservation Areas, and, where appropriate, encourage the local authority to take statutory action. See English Heritage's guidance on our website under Heritage at Risk > Buildings at Risk > Reducing the Risk, which has a link to detailed Stopping the Rot guidance in the guidance library on: [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)

### Trees in Conservation Areas

Trees in Conservation Areas have some extra protection, though not as much as if they were covered by a tree preservation order. Before the intended works are carried out to the trees, the Council must be given 14 days notice of what you intend to do, which gives them time to go and see the site and agree to the works or suggest an alternative approach or serve a Tree Preservation Order.

### Unauthorised Works

Unauthorised demolition of a whole building or structure in a conservation area is a criminal offence. Other works of development that have been carried out with the necessary planning permission can also be regarded as unauthorised works and the local planning authority can serve an enforcement notice requiring the works to be undone.

### Urgent Works Notices

These allow Councils to carry out emergency work on neglected Listed Buildings.



# **DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA**

Character Appraisal  
March 2010

