

APPENDIX 3

Analysis of Responses received on proposed Parkgate Conservation Area and draft Character Appraisal February 2015		
	Comment	Action
Member of the public	Agrees with the proposed designation of Parkgate Conservation Area.	Noted.
	Works at Borough Road Nursery School and would like to see the building, with its bell tower, preserved and also the garden.	Noted. Conservation Area designation can help with building preservation.
	Concerned about the lack of greenspace and loss of trees within the area.	Noted. Whilst it is an urban area, pockets of greenspace and trees are important.
	Supports and Article 4 Direction.	Noted. We will consider in the future and would consult residents and businesses again should we decide to progress an Article 4 Direction.
	Thinks the key issue within the Conservation Area is to preserve fascia, attractive architecture and individual character for years to come.	Noted. This is a key aim of Conservation Area designation that will be achieved through good planning decisions in the area.
Member of the public	Agrees with the proposed designation of Parkgate Conservation Area.	Noted.
	The area around the Civic Theatre needs substantial improvement to create a more welcoming and secure environment. At present walking from the railway station to the town centre is a depressing experience. Improving the facades of the buildings on Parkgate would enhance the appeal of the area for Darlingtonians and visitors. Darlington ought to be the focus for the celebrations in 2025 to mark the birth of the railways. Hopefully we will have many visitors passing through Parkgate and their first impressions will be vital to the success of their experience. The area has an interesting history and played a vital role in the development of the early railways as well as being the site of extensive tanneries and brickworks. There is no acknowledgement of this in the area. Adding a discovery trail would give people a reason to spend more time in Parkgate.	Noted. The designation of Parkgate as a Conservation Area is part of other regeneration plans in the area that link with the town's railway and industrial heritage.
	Supports and Article 4 Direction because conservation area can be compromised by minor alterations undertaken by private businesses.	Noted. We have planning control over external alterations to buildings in commercial use, but this is used more when those buildings lie within Conservation Areas. Therefore it is hoped that the designation of Parkgate Conservation Area will encourage piecemeal improvements to signage and shopfronts.

	Comment	Action
	Thinks the key issue within the Conservation Area is to make the designated area and its environs a more desirable and interesting place for those who live there and for visitors to enjoy through cultural and recreational activities.	Noted and agreed.
	The area around Parkgate must not be neglected. It has an interesting history and played a vital role in the development of the early railways as well as being the site of extensive tanneries and brickworks. There is no acknowledgement of this in the area. Adding a discovery trail would raise the profile of the area. Please do not allow developers to "gentrify" to area. We need a mix of housing and businesses to create character and social	It is hoped that this process will help with regenerating the area by improving the planning decisions made. There is no intention to gentrify the area, the mix of uses is part of the current character of the area. There is value in retaining that as well as making the best of the Edwardian character.
	My own particular interest is as part of a group of volunteers developing the grounds of the YMCA in Middleton Street. Along with the disused railway sidings, this is a vital "green lung" for the area. The project will provide opportunities for groups of children and young people to visit and learn about the natural world. It will also give them the freedom to explore the outdoors, an experience which many of them rarely get in their own lives.	This area is not brought within the proposed Conservation Area because it does not relate to the Edwardian development in the area. However we are mindful of the importance of greenspace even within urban areas. Ecology and Countryside colleagues are aware of the value of this area and it may be better addressed through their work.
Member of the public	Agrees with the proposed designation of Parkgate Conservation Area.	Noted.
	Having looked at the map on page 40 it came to my attention that you have included the school grounds and car park that is shared with The Forum in the area for new developments. I understand from the meeting that the trees on this land would be protected but I must stress the grounds are an essential educational part of the school as most of the children who attend only have back yards to play in. Once this problem has been rectified the proposal would have my full support.	This was a mistake in the draft document , a genuine error on the plan, and has been rectified in the current version and communicated directlt to the respondent. There is no intention to encourage development on this land. Trees within Conservation Areas are protected from pruning, lopping or felling without notifying the Council, which gives us the opportunity to put Tree Preservation Orders on those that are worthy.
	Could the absence of the school grounds in the map on page 40 be an inaccuracy?	We use Ordnance Survey map bases and can only show what they show.
	The key issue within the Conservation Area is maintaing the historical aspects of the buildings.	Agreed, they make a large contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

	Comment	Action
Member of the public	<p>The area is a small and packed space of great importance to Darlington's history: brick kilns; tanneries; railway; and close to iron foundries and coal power stations.</p> <p>There are buildings of significant merit which need to be renovated and drawn to the public's attention.</p> <p>There is also green space that is both important as it relates to the railway and has been a corridor for wildlife and plants since the lines became disused in the mid-20th century. However, the area is rundown and has always historically been so. Although there has always been a tight community of residents and shopkeepers.</p> <p>The area is a well-contained one that is a short walk between the station and town, and could be an attractive place for visitors, residents and workers in the area.</p>	<p>It is a compact area well suited to Conservation Area designation, which should encourage sensitive restoration of traditional buildings. Regeneration is hoped to make physical improvements but also to stimulate commercial activity in this area, which was once part of the Town Centre.</p>
	<p>Conservation Area designation better defines the planning criteria and therefore makes discussion more accessible to local people. Architectural competitions could be held to underline the need for an Article 4 directive in this proposed conservation area. By holding competitions for building design it's possible to attract inventive, energy efficient buildings that are outstanding in their design, and can be noted as architect name, competition date and sponsors thus ensuring a complementarity of 21st century design with Victorian. Adds another layer of protection to buildings of historic note and their surrounding open spaces.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed. If we decide to return to an Article 4 Direction we we re-engage with residents and businesses.</p>

	Comment	Action
	<p>The key issue in the Conservation Area is the buildings are on the whole shabby, many are of poor quality with inappropriate facades and signage. Renovation of facades to their historic origins (using modern materials where appropriate) and creating either office or living space of good, energy efficient quality to encourage people to live in the area.</p> <p>Darlington connects with London in only 2.5 (?) hours. Durham is a short distance away as are Newcastle and York.</p> <p>Temporarily rehouse (but only if necessary) whilst upgrading the interiors of existing housing stock. Where appropriate give back to houses their original front open space.</p> <p>Ensure public spaces are free from dog muck, possible designate certain areas for dogs only.</p> <p>Clean streets behind dustbin lorries to keep litter and mess to a minimum. Encourage painting parties by distributing paint to cover any graffiti. Encourage snow clearing and gritting of pavements by all householders.</p> <p>Ensure safe streets for children by appropriate traffic management</p>	<p>Agreed that the condition of the buildings in the area is a key issue although much of the quality is good and can either be retained or reinstated.</p> <p>Colleagues in Streetscene work to clean and tidy our public areas and colleagues in Highways have made improvements to the ring road around Parkgate, mindful of pedestrians.</p>
	<p>Extend boundary of conservation area to include and continue the designing of a green space walk that YMCA in Middleton Street has begun (landscaping, outdoor woven installations, creation of an orchard walk) to extend between Melland Street and Brunswick street and onto green space adjoining railway lines (ex-sidings)</p> <p>Facilities for younger people including educational. Design green space based on YMCA land in Middleton street gives a safe, clean environment for school children to explore their local history and industrial archaeology. Disadvantaged children can safely explore this land through land-based workshops. Brunswick school holds sessions for Healthy Families, they have an outdoor space that includes the site of historic orchards, a link can profitably be made between YMCA green site and their green space</p>	<p>We have considered whether it is appropriate to extend the boundary of the Conservation Area as suggested, however have come to the conclusion that because the focus is Edwardian development this is not the best way forward and nor would it result in the greenspace improvements sought. Ecology and Countryside colleagues are aware of the value of this area and it may be better addressed through their work.</p>
Member of the public	<p>The condition of the railings to St John's Church has been improved since the Appraisal was drafted.</p>	<p>Noted, this has been reflected in the current version of the Appraisal.</p>